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Wilder Derbyshire




Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust


Wilder by nature


www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk


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 DerbyshireWildlifeTrust

On the cover

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Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
**T Best Places
to Work 2024**



Dr Jo Smith
Chief Executive Officer

Welcome

Our recent State of Nature report shows the challenges we face. In Derbyshire, key species like willow tit, marsh tit and spotted flycatcher are disappearing from places they used to call home. The lesser spotted woodpecker is now barely hanging on. These aren't just losses of wildlife. They're signs that the health of our landscapes, our climate and our communities is under severe strain.

But we're not standing still. Our new strategy – Wilder 2030 – sets out a bold and positive direction. It's about bringing nature back at scale. It's about working alongside people and places to create real change. And it's about making sure nature recovery is fair, inclusive, and rooted in community.

We're already taking bold steps. We are rewilding urban spaces like Allestree Park, supporting green jobs and skills, creating more room for rivers, meadows and woodlands, and working hard to ensure pine marten, black grouse and white stork return.

Over the next few years we aim to support 250 communities across Derbyshire to lead the way in nature recovery, in ways that work for them.

We'd love to tell you more. That's why we're inviting you to join us for our Annual General Meeting and Family Fun Day at Common Farm.

Come and explore our newest site, meet the team, and hear how the new strategy is already coming to life. There'll be time to ask questions, connect with others, and enjoy nature, together.

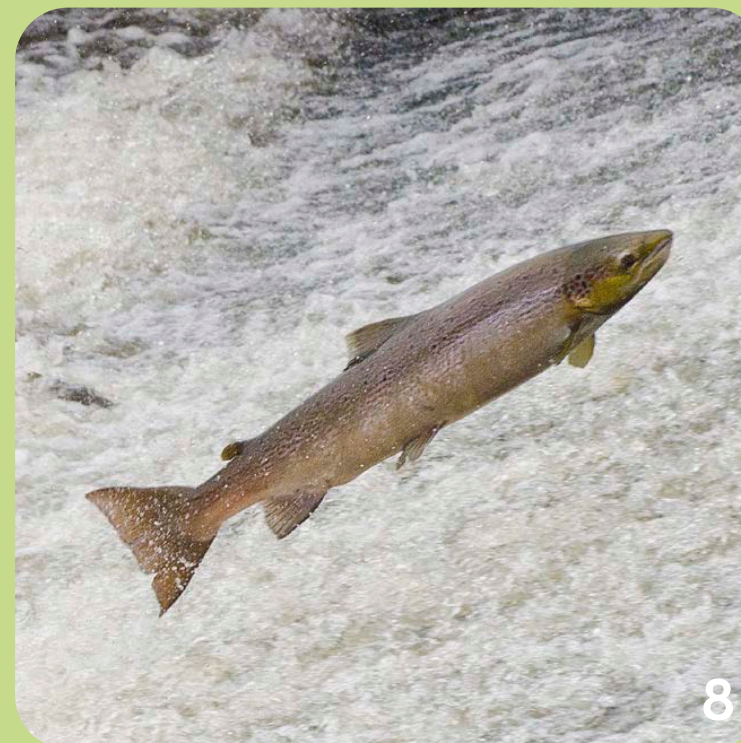
We hope you'll come along and help shape a Wilder Derbyshire for the future. But if you can't make it, look out for other ways to get involved and find out more.

Together, we can make Derbyshire a place of hope, recovery, and action.

Thank you for your support

Jo Smith

Chief Executive Officer



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Derbyshire News

SPOTTED



Share your images with us

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting



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1. Woodpecker – Drakelow Nature Reserve
July 2025 © Nige A
2. Elephant hawk-moth – Whitfield Wells
July 2025 © Jane Doyle
3. Hummingbird hawkmoth – Hoe Grange
July 2025 © Mike Backler
4. Peacock butterfly – Thornhill
July 2025 © Joanna Mackey
5. Kestrel – Hathersage
June 2025 © Peter Bull



All Aboard! New Hub for Community, Connection and Nature Now Open!

We are delighted to announce that our Whistlestop Community Wellbeing Hub, located on the platform at Matlock Bath Railway Station, is now available for groups to use for sessions and activities that improve the local community's health and wellbeing, and connect people to nature.

We're inviting local groups, wellbeing organisations and charities from across the county to use the new space to meet and connect with nature.

We've transformed the space into an inviting meeting place to suit a variety of users, with comfy sofas and working fireplaces for cosy gatherings, a kitchen area and tables and chairs for busy workshops and get-togethers, and open spaces for mindful movement.

There are nods to nature and wildlife wherever you look, from the wall art and planters to the reading materials and mindfulness activities dotted around each of the tables.

Emma Dickinson-Wood, our Wild Wellbeing Team Leader, explains why she is so excited to see the space come to life:

"The benefits of nature for our wellbeing are well

known, and we hope everyone who uses the space will feel that.

"We are already working with a local dementia support group to host their craft workshops in the space, a walking group who meet and end a circular walk here, and a balance and stability movement class aimed at older people.

"Special thanks go to the Community Hub Network for their support with funding. We can't wait to welcome local groups, organisations and charities to use this space for their own events.

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Visit www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/community-hub to find out more.



Latest News



Championing Fair and Inclusive Work

We have been recognised at the House of Commons for outstanding leadership in promoting fair, secure and inclusive work!

Chief Executive, Dr Jo Smith, and Director of Values and Resilience, Alex Rogers, represented the Trust at the Living Wage Foundation's Parliamentary Reception, where MPs, employers and leaders came together to celebrate the powerful, positive impact of the real Living Wage on individuals and communities.

We are one of only a few employers nationwide to be accredited as a Living Wage Employer, Living Hours Employer, and Living Pensions Employer, an achievement that marks a significant milestone in our commitment to providing colleagues with fair pay, secure hours and stability now and in the future.

We first partnered with the Living Wage Foundation in 2020. In a bid to better reflect and represent the communities we serve, we launched a transformative Early Talent Programme to create pathways into careers in conservation.

We moved away from unpaid traineeships, which were only accessible to those who could afford to work without pay, and we were proud to become an accredited real Living Wage employer through the Living Wage Foundation.

Since then, we've deepened our commitment to staff wellbeing even further by becoming accredited as a Living Hours and Living Pensions employer, offering stability in both income and future financial security.

The work doesn't stop here. There's more to be done to break down barriers and connect new audiences with green jobs. We'll continue growing our Early Talent Programme, and we encourage others in the sector to do the same, so that everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to help shape a wilder, more sustainable future.

For more information about careers at DWT visit: jobs.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/

£1.1 million in funding helps deliver Trust's vision

Two of our projects, awarded funding totalling more than £1.1 million, have recently come to a close, and we're proud to announce the success both have had for people and wildlife.

Climate Change Fight Takes Root

Working with partners, we have made significant impact with our Nature Returns project across the Derwent Catchment, restoring habitats and tackling climate change as part of the broader Derwent Living Forest programme.

Backed by over £890,000 from Natural England, it was one of six national pilots exploring nature-based climate solutions and carbon capture.

Since its launch in January 2023, the project has delivered over 270 hectares of habitat creation and restoration, and developed a pipeline for the creation of over 800 hectares of new woodland.

Volunteers have planted almost 20,000 trees across 20 locations, natural flood management has been introduced, and efforts have been made to reduce excessive riverbank erosion – supporting habitat for invertebrates and refuge for juvenile fish.

Community action has been at the heart of the project, with over 3,400 people attending 103

events. We collaborated with nine parish councils, 11 schools (setting up 10 school tree nurseries), and reached over 1,300 students through outreach and career days.



Inspiring Future Conservationists

Our second project, Learning through Nature, has empowered educators, communities and young people across Derbyshire to connect with nature and take action.

Awarded £222,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the two-year initiative scaled up our Nature Tots and Junior Rangers programmes and provided subsidised accredited training to schools in five areas.

Programme highlights, made possible thanks to National Lottery players, include training 24 early years professionals to run nature connection sessions with SEND charities and nursery staff.

We've engaged 35 Junior Rangers in sessions focused on campaigning and conservation,

with 42 more enlisted for new groups. 36 school staff have been trained in Outdoor Learning and Forest School leadership, and we've supported five trainees with qualifications, mentoring, and work experience, alongside 90 others in career workshops.

We're hoping to continue the project's legacy as a leading provider of accredited training courses for outdoor learning and forest school, and through our new online Wilder Schools Network providing teaching resources and support.

For more information visit www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderlearning.

Our highlights 2024–2025

Making more space for nature

Our pioneering Biodiversity Net Gain work is leading the way in creating spaces for people to access high quality, nature rich spaces near where they live.



Bringing Wildlife Back

We're leading active species recovery projects at a huge range of scales, from reintroducing small species at Rose End Meadows, creating ark sites for crayfish and preparing for the return of wild beavers and ospreys. We're also working with 500 landowners in the Dove catchment to restore habitats for water voles.



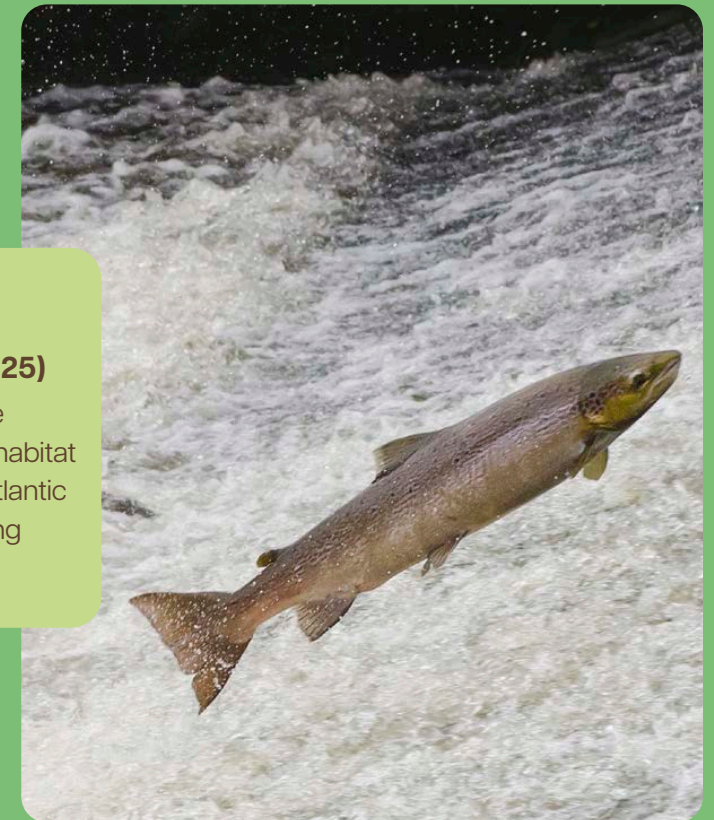
Building a greener future for Derbyshire

By hosting national events and advising on green finance, we're putting Derbyshire on the map as a key place for investment in nature and the green economy.



Innovative salmon restoration on River Ecclesbourne (July 2025)

A major project to remove barriers and restore river habitat – enabling the return of Atlantic salmon after a century-long absence.



Supporting Grassroots Rewilding

Through the Wild Peak fund, we've helped local communities launch their own rewilding projects – designed by them, for their local areas, creating spaces that benefit both people and wildlife.

THE SUNDAY TIMES Best Places to Work 2024

A great place to work

We're proud to have been named one of the Times 100 Best Places to Work in the UK.

Five years of bold progress 2020–2025

Over the last five years, we've made big strides for nature, climate, and communities. Guided by our 2020–2025 strategy, we've laid the groundwork for long-term change. Here are just some of the highlights:

Rewilding the city

We launched the UK's largest urban rewilding project at Allestree Park – making Derby a national trailblazer for rewilding in cities.



Beavers are back!

For the first time in 800 years, wild beavers have returned to Derbyshire – 4 beavers, 6 kits and 1 restored landscape, and a milestone for nature recovery.

Restoring land for wildlife

We've worked with farmers and landowners to bring over 8,500 hectares of land into wildlife-friendly management across key landscapes.



Powering up people and communities

More than 70,000 people have taken part in our programmes – from community action and youth leadership to green skills and nature-based learning.

Leading on Biodiversity Net Gain

We've become a national leader in nature-based solutions, offering high-quality Biodiversity Net Gain units that deliver real environmental benefits.

Growing our reach and influence

We've raised more charitable income than ever before, built strong partnerships, and deepened our influence with decision-makers.

Expanding our wild spaces

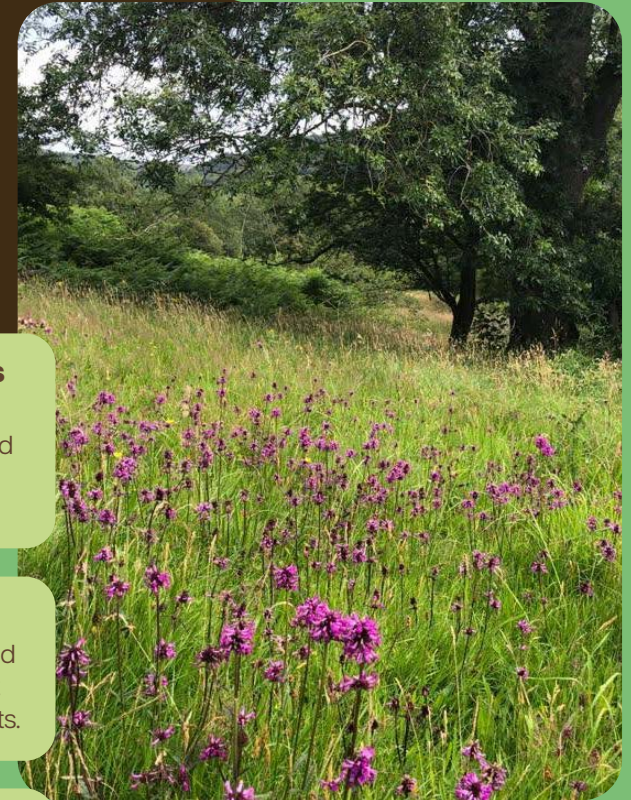
We've created new wilded spaces for nature to thrive, adding to our nature recovery networks, including acquiring and rewilding new land at Rose End Meadows, Dunsley Meadows and Slinger Wood, Willington Wetlands, Thornhill Carrs, Common Farm and Wild Whittington.

Recognition at House of Commons

The Trust was honored in Parliament for championing fair, secure, and inclusive employment.

Looking to the future

We launched our bold new brand and Wilder Derbyshire 2030 strategy – focused on urgency, fairness, and working together for nature.





If you don't count it, it doesn't count!

Did you know that Derbyshire Wildlife Trust hosts the **Derbyshire Biological Records Centre**? We collate and combine data on all species across Derbyshire. We work closely with County Recorders, local natural history groups, charities and individuals to collect new records on an annual basis. It's so important that we know what is out there – even the common species we need to know about. So get sharing today!

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Share what you're seeing in your local area:
derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting



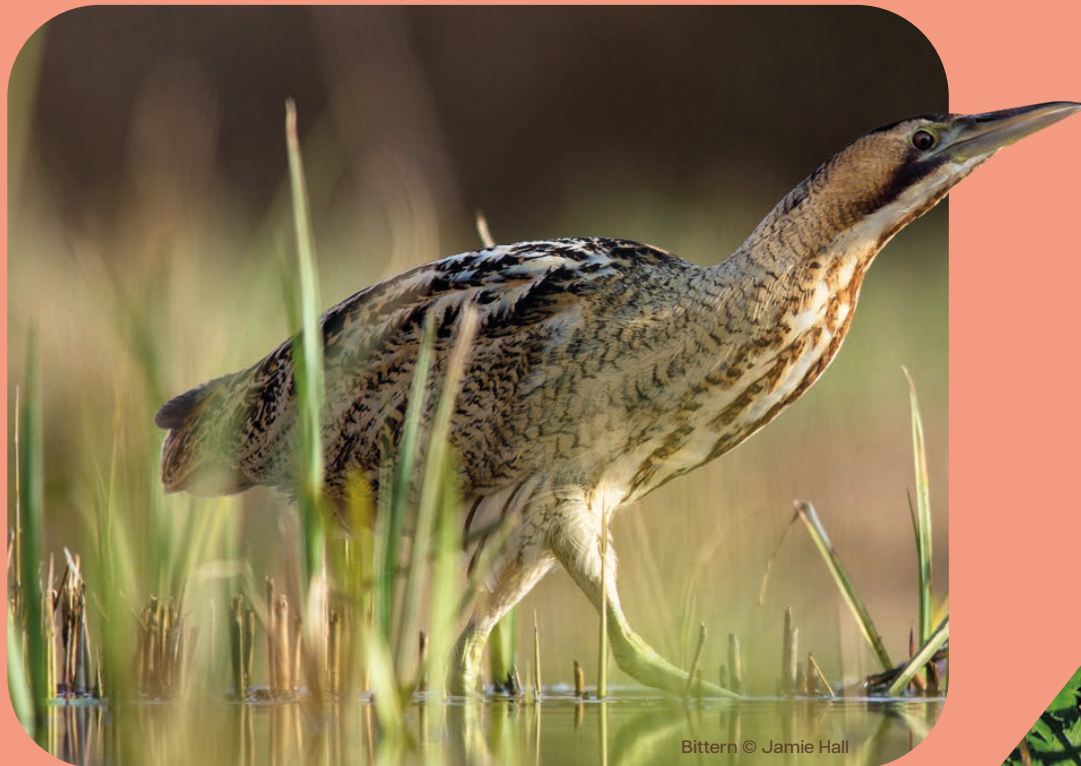
Nature on the Edge

The State of Nature in Derbyshire 2025

The 2025 State of Nature Report, compiled by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust with support from the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre and hundreds of passionate volunteers, offers the most comprehensive picture yet of wildlife and habitats across the county. And while it doesn't shy away from hard truths, it also charts a path to a wilder, more resilient future – with people at the heart of the solution.

The Challenge

Derbyshire's natural environment faces a critical juncture. While the county's 263,000 hectares encompass extraordinary landscapes from upland moors to lowland wetlands, closer examination reveals a complex and concerning picture. Wildlife continues to decline at an alarming rate, with many habitats under increasing pressure despite superficial appearances of environmental health.



Barn owl © RSWT

Globe flowers at Dale Road
© Kieron Huston

Key Findings

Drawing on over 3 million biological records, the most comprehensive dataset ever assembled for the county, this report reveals significant biodiversity challenges across all major habitat types:

Protected sites are failing: of approximately 37,000 hectares under statutory conservation designations, only 6,186 hectares are in good ecological condition. Even our best-protected areas are failing to support the wildlife they're meant to support.

Widespread habitat degradation: from woodland (only 8.1% coverage compared to 13.2% UK average) to grasslands (97% of species-rich grasslands lost nationally since the 1930s), Derbyshire's habitats reflect national trends of decline and fragmentation.

Species in Crisis

- Mammals across the county are in trouble: seeing previously common species such as hedgehogs and water voles is a rare occurrence, although otters are coming back
- 61 bird species are recognised as Species of Principal Importance, and several species are on the brink of local extinction (lesser spotted woodpecker, corn bunting, turtle dove)
- 245 plant species (1 in 5 native species) on the Derbyshire Red Data List
- White-clawed crayfish is near local extinction.

Progress and Opportunity

Despite these challenges, significant opportunities exist. Over 200 Local Wildlife Sites have received support through agri-environment schemes and there's an ever growing recognition among landowners of their role in nature's recovery. The county's unique geographical position, where lowland and upland Britain meet, makes it critical for **species migration as climate change shifts habitat suitability northwards.**



Pine Marten

Our Vision

Our Wilder2030 strategy sets out our vision for A Wilder Derbyshire, where people and wildlife thrive together. Our overarching goal remains to see at least 30% of Derbyshire (around 87,000 hectares) managed for wildlife by 2030. While pockets of real progress exist, the pace of change must accelerate dramatically to reverse biodiversity loss and build a wilder, more resilient future.

Strategic Approach

Recovery requires a people-centred, collaborative and landscape-scale approach rooted in the Lawton Review principles: more, bigger, better, and joined-up natural areas. Key strategies include:

- Restoration of natural processes and ecosystem function: Reinstating natural processes such as herbivory, succession, hydrological processes and reintroducing lost species to create diverse and dynamic habitat mosaics
- Connectivity: Creating networks of bigger, better, more and connected spaces for nature
- Partnership Working: Collaboration between farmers, landowners, communities, and developers

Immediate Priorities

1. Restore and connect ancient woodlands, particularly converting plantations on ancient woodland sites back to native broadleaved woodland
2. Rewet and restore peatlands to reverse carbon loss and support specialist species
3. Enhance farmland biodiversity through regenerative agriculture and expanded agri-environment schemes
4. Create and restore wetlands to improve water quality, reduce the risk of flooding and support aquatic species
5. Develop urban green networks to enable people and wildlife to thrive, near where people live



Lesser spotted Woodpecker
© Stefan Johansson

Beech copse

A Future for Nature – and For Us

The State of Nature 2025 report delivers a clear message: time is running out, but hope is far from lost.

With bold action, strategic restoration and the power of people, we can build a **Wilder Derbyshire** where nature is not only surviving – but thriving.

If you would like to read the report in full please visit: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/state-nature-report-2025

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Make a deluxe hedgehog house

You will need

- 20mm FSC plywood boards cut to the sizes shown

- Hammer and nails



- 2 metal hinges



- Soil



- Dry leaves



- Pet straw

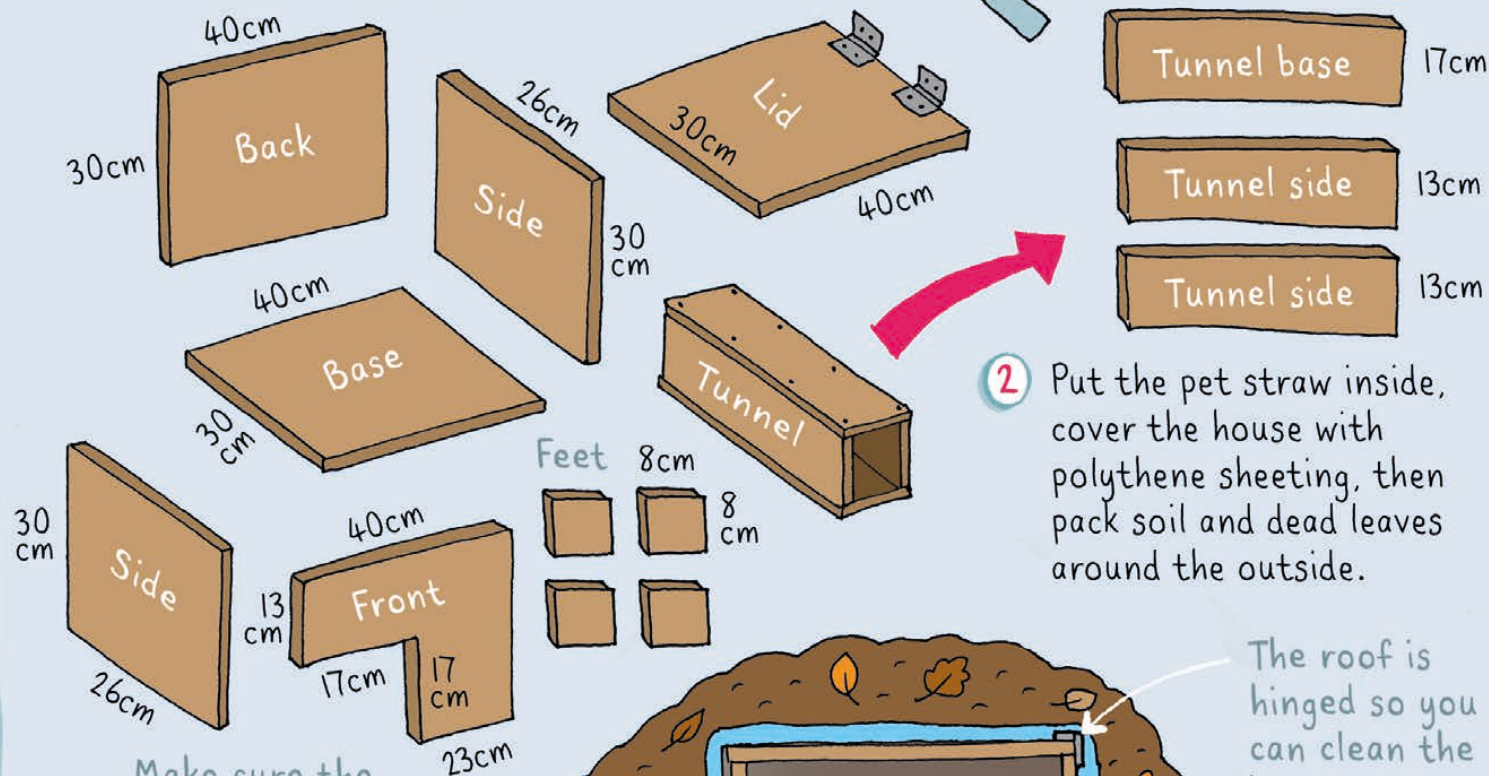


- Polythene sheeting



Birch is ideal

- 1 Construct the hedgehog house from the following diagram and dimensions.

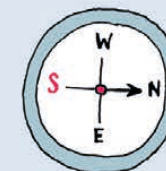


- 2 Put the pet straw inside, cover the house with polythene sheeting, then pack soil and dead leaves around the outside.

Do not creosote or treat the wood

Make sure the entrance tunnel faces south, and is kept clear at all times

The roof is hinged so you can clean the box in future



raised up on feet

The path to

Wilder 2030

Our strategic plan



Our **vision**
is simple:

**A wilder
Derbyshire.**

Where people and
wildlife thrive together.

And our **mission**
is clear:

Inspiring and enabling bold,
transformative action, where everyone
plays their part to make it happen.

Nature connects us all.
It shapes our landscapes.
Nurtures our communities.
It's where we find adventure.
And where we go to escape.
But nature needs our help.
We need more untamed spaces.
More ways for wildlife to thrive.
And all of us to make it happen.
It'll take bold ideas.
An abundance of energy.
And unwavering belief.

But we're all up for the
challenge. We're

**wilder
by nature.**



By **2030**, we aim to:



rewild 100,000 acres of land and water



reintroduce pine marten, black grouse
and white stork



support 250 communities to lead nature
recovery in their own neighbourhoods



grow a greener, fairer economy with people,
wildlife and climate at its heart

What **success** will look like

Our four strategic pillars



People are **closer** to nature

- Ensuring the creation of more nature-rich and accessible wild spaces
- Creating inclusive and accessible volunteering and skill sharing opportunities
- Ensuring everyone can connect with nature in their neighbourhood by supporting creative community-led solutions
- Collaborating closely with communities to dismantle systemic barriers to accessing and connecting with nature.

So that...

People take **action** for wildlife

- Building diverse, sustainable and resilient networks that drive transformative change
- Supporting a stronger, more joined-up voice for nature
- Telling stories of activism, action and hope
- Championing and supporting community-led rewilding.

So that...

There is more **space** for nature, and more people benefiting from nature

- Supporting the delivery of landscape-scale change to create more space for nature
- Delivering evidence-led rewilding and reintroductions
- Delivering and campaigning for natural solutions that address the biodiversity and climate crises
- Advocating for wildlife friendly and climate resilient developments.

So that...

Wildlife and people **thrive** together

- The current declines in nature and community wellbeing are reversed
- Wildlife and communities flourish and thrive together
- People are closer to nature, driving an ever more inclusive cycle which continually strengthens connections and creates a wilder and better society for generations to come.

Full strategy:
<https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-2030>

People Are Closer to Nature

Growing Nature and Community at Laverstoke Court



Adam Dosunmu Slater
Community Organiser

In our mission to bring people closer to nature, ensure more accessible, nature-rich spaces, and support community-led action, sometimes the most powerful transformations begin in the most unexpected places. In Derby, our Community Organiser Adam Dosunmu Slater worked alongside asylum seekers and local residents to turn an overlooked patch of land behind a housing block into a thriving shared garden – proving that no space is too small, and no community too marginalised, to lead the way in rewilding and reconnection. In the following reflection, Adam shares how one abandoned patch of grass became a symbol of community, connection and new beginnings.

When I reached the gates of the Laverstoke Court housing block, I looked at the site and it reminded me of my student days. The different blocks looked like a university hall of residence but instead of students, the residents now are asylum seekers.

Laverstoke Court is one of several dispersal accommodations across Derbyshire that house refugees who are starting the asylum process and awaiting results. For the residents staying there, it is a place of limbo. New arrivals to the UK are unable to work before their claim is processed and must stay at places like Laverstoke Court until a decision is made – this can often take several months.

As a Community organiser, it seemed an unusual place for me to be doing my work on creating new green spaces in Derby city. However, Urban Housing, the management team behind the building wanted support with an abandoned space at the back of the site.



Asylum Seekers plant fruit trees in their garden

Next to the large courtyard area where the bikes were stored, there was a patch of grass that had been left to grow wild. Urban Housing and the asylum seekers who lived there hoped this space could become a quiet garden and an additional space outside of their crowded rooms.

As a community organisers, I hoped that the community and residents could join together and transform this overgrown area into a new space for residents and wildlife. I sent out posters to local community groups and organisations that supported asylum seekers in the city, inviting them to join our work party.

On a hot summers day last year, the community responded to our call to action. Volunteers from the local church, councillors in the area and asylum seekers housed in other parts of Derby all came to Laverstoke Court to create the garden space.



Before the area was restored and replanted

Armed with our gardening tools, an international brigade of local people began to work. We had asylum seekers from Central America, Africa and the Middle East all mucking in with shears and shovels in hand.

All were enthusiastically taking part, and you got the sense that for many of the asylum seekers, a day like today gave them a chance to feel useful and productive. Being unable to work, these volunteer sessions gave a sense of achievement and a chance to connect with local people in their new home.



Derbyshire Wildlife Trust volunteers lay down membrane



Spaces for wildlife were incorporated into the garden

I had originally thought the garden would be finished over a few days, but miraculously it was done in five hours. All the garden was cleared, and bark was placed down to create a space for residents to sit on benches. At the end of the garden, a space for wildlife was made. Seeds were put down for a wildflower meadow, donated bird boxes went up and a log pile for insects was installed.

As we packed away our tools and said a goodbye to our friends for the day, I thought about the impact of this new garden space. It may not be the largest space for bio diversity – but it is new space for the community and most importantly, it gave everyone who created it a new sense of achievement.



Volunteers earn a well deserved rest once the garden was complete

People Take Action for Wildlife

How Derbyshire's Communities are Rewilding the Future



Katherine Clarke
Strategic Lead, Urban Rewilding

Across Derbyshire, communities are stepping into the role of nature's allies – and even nature's engineers – in a growing movement for wildlife recovery. From blocking drains to mimicking beavers, to planting acorns like jays, people are taking action for nature in creative and joyful ways. These community-powered projects are not only restoring habitats and reviving species but also reconnecting people with the wild world around them. It's community-led rewilding, rooted in action, wellbeing and deep local pride – and proof that when people are supported to lead nature's recovery, the results are both resilient and remarkable.

Our approach to rewilding across our complex and varied county is through a rewilding hierarchy. We first consider whether passive rewilding is possible, asking if we can do nothing at all. If not, we consider delivering interventions to introduce missing, or strengthen weak, natural processes to give nature a head-start to recovery – we are in an emergency, so urgency is essential!

Some of those interventions are non-actions; leaving drains to block to enable water to form wetlands, stopping mowing to allow plants to grow and leaving deadwood where it falls to create new micro-habitats for insects, small mammals and fungi.

Some interventions include the introduction of native species to act as ecosystem engineers, engineering habitats to become the best they can be for wildlife to colonise in sustained populations.

We have reintroduced beavers at Willington Wetlands to create dams and pools that slow the flow of water and create rich aquatic habitats. Often proxy species are used: swapping out wild boar for pigs, and wild ponies and aurochs for domestic breeds of ponies and cattle. The proxy species graze the land to give a diversity of flora a chance to flourish, poach the soil to awaken dormant seeds, give fallen seeds bare ground to germinate, and deposit dung to aid soil health.



Be A Beaver Day at Allestree



Be A Wolf Day at Allestree

Sometimes it has not been possible for herbivores to be reintroduced to a site, so we have created opportunities for people to step into the role of 'ecosystem engineers.' Not only has this been a fun way for people to spend a day, but it has also delivered an essential intervention to improve a site's natural health, at the same time improving people's wellbeing from being outside and connected to nature.

At Allestree Park, home of the UK's largest urban community rewilding project, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and partners, have been facilitating the people of Derby to 'Be a Jay', 'Be a Boar', and 'Be a Beaver', and visiting dogs (with their owners) to 'Be a Wolf'!

Through these fun and social events, school children, community groups, Derby residents and visitors, have contributed to the health of the rewilded park. 'Be a Jay Day' saw people collecting acorns and planting them across the park, mimicking the actions of Jays hiding acorns in secret larders in autumn, and often not returning for them all, aiding natural regeneration of oak trees.

Many volunteers turned out for 'Be a Boar Day', mimicking the actions of wild boar rooting around in the ground for food, using tools in place of snouts, turning over the invasive grass and giving dormant wildflower seeds a chance to waken and grow.

The once highly managed drainage system at Allestree Park, which served to draw water from the manicured golf course, has been left to block up.

The result is the natural creation of ephemeral pools appearing on the grassland below a small brook. These seasonal habitats provide breeding grounds for amphibians and aquatic insects, and a water and food source for birds and mammals. 'Be a Beaver Day' saw school children and other volunteers building beaver dams upstream of the pools. Their beaver skills brought instant results with multiple pools of water appearing along the stream. These pools will offer a new dynamic habitat for many creatures on the park, including dragonflies, damselflies, frogs and toads.

We've been overwhelmed with the enthusiasm from local community groups to think and work like ecosystem engineers. Our events demonstrated 'community rewilding' at its best, with groups developing a sense of ownership of their beaver dams and rooted boar patches – small spaces that will make a big difference to nature, and a place where groups can return time after time to enjoy the positive changes that are happening.

The next stage of all these activities is to monitor changes over time and, where necessary, repeat, scale up or alter to ensure they are improving habitat health and benefiting nature, long term.

Our ambition is to support communities to be at the heart of nature recovery in Derbyshire. We are in a nature and climate emergency, but by acting for wildlife, people can make a real difference and create reasons to feel optimistic.



Be A Boar Day at Allestree

To learn more about what is happening at Allestree Park, see our pages here.

SCAN ME



www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/about/projects/rewilding-allestree-park

More Space for Nature

Wilder Trent



Mariangela Veronesi
Wilder Trent Programme
Manager



White stork © Derek Moore

At the heart of our strategy is a bold ambition: to create more space for nature through landscape-scale change. Wilder Trent is one of our four priority landscapes offering a rare opportunity to transform a region currently shaped by intensive agriculture, pollution, and development into a thriving, connected network of wetlands. Our vision is to restore 70,000 hectares by 2050, bringing back natural processes, revitalising habitats, and supporting the return of lost species. Wilder Trent isn't just about nature's recovery – it's about building a future where both wildlife and local communities can flourish.

The Trent's Iconic Past

The River Trent is the longest river in England, when measured from source to sea, at 225 miles long. It was once described by Shakespeare as 'smug and silver'. To some, it's an important historical navigation route, a connection from England to the continent for trade, where goods such as wool, salt, coal, and pottery flowed. For others that navigation route was also the lifeblood of the community, an icon of the Midlands and was once rich in nature, supporting huge numbers of migratory fish species, such as sturgeon and salmon. Stretching from its source in Staffordshire to the Humber Estuary, the Trent flows through the heart of the Midlands, linking a network of tributaries that connect major cities, such as Birmingham, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.



Trent Canoe © Jack Roper

Wilder Trent Vision

Historically, its floodplains were rich wetlands, teeming with life and home to iconic species like salmon, beaver and migratory birds. Today, however, much of the Trent Valley is dominated by intensive agriculture, industrial and urban development.

Our vision is to restore the river and its floodplains, creating a resilient landscape for people and wildlife. We aim to create 70,000 hectares of connected wetlands in the Trent Valley by 2050. This ambitious plan will reintroduce natural processes, restore habitats, and bring back lost species, creating a resilient ecosystem that benefits both nature and local communities.

Through natural flood management, rewetting and reforesting landscapes and implementing other nature-based solutions, our long-term programme seeks to tackle flooding, drought, pollution, and climate change while boosting biodiversity and the local economy.

Bringing Back Lost Species

One of the most exciting aspects of the Wilder Trent Programme is the opportunity to reintroduce keystone species that once shaped the region's ecosystems. Beavers – nature's ecosystem engineers – are already shaping landscapes



Hilton

from within their fenced enclosures at Willington Wetlands in Derbyshire and Idle Valley in Nottinghamshire. Their return as wild, free-living species is possible, and these industrious mammals will shape wetlands that alleviate flooding, store water during droughts, and improve water quality by filtering out sediment and pollutants.

But the vision doesn't stop with beavers. We're also exploring the potential for Eurasian elk to return to this landscape. Elk are a charismatic large herbivore that has been absent from England for thousands of years. They play a vital role in wetland ecosystems – grazing floodplains and helping create diverse habitats that support a wide range of species. With support from Rewilding Britain, we're exploring bringing elk back into two existing beaver enclosures. The elk enclosures could be the catalyst to engage people in the creation of a connected corridor of wetlands – habitat that elk will need if they are to return to the wild in the future. In turn, keystone species like elk and beavers play a crucial role in restoring these floodplain wetlands into thriving, self-sustaining ecosystems.

Another species set to make a triumphant return is the white stork. These elegant birds, once native to Britain, are perfectly suited to the Trent Valley's wetlands. Storks are not only ecological ambassadors but also cultural icons, capable of inspiring communities and driving ecotourism. Their presence will amplify wetland restoration efforts, creating a ripple effect of benefits for nature and people.

People and the River

The Wilder Trent Programme is all about nature-based solutions. By restoring wetlands, re-meandering rivers, and restoring floodplain forests, the ecologically functioning landscape of the future will reduce flood risk for urban areas like Nottingham and Derby while storing water to buffer against drought conditions.

Wetlands act as natural sponges, holding water during heavy rains and releasing it slowly during dry periods. They also sequester carbon, helping to combat climate change. Restoring natural floodplains and creating treatment wetlands will filter out pollutants, improve aquatic habitats, and support species like salmon and eels. These efforts will also have knock-on benefits for estuaries and coastal ecosystems, ensuring cleaner water flows into the North Sea.

Wetlands aren't just great for wildlife, they're great for people too. We all need nature in our lives, and we benefit from what nature gives us.

Access to nature is powerful for improving physical and mental health, yet many communities along the Trent lack opportunities to connect with the natural world. We aim to change this by improving access to rivers for walking, cycling, and water-based activities, where safe for wildlife and people, like canoeing.

Ecotourism will play a vital role in funding these efforts. By creating a Trent-wide tourism economy, the programme will generate sustainable income for landowners and boost local businesses. Visitors will be drawn to the region's rewilded landscapes, where they can witness beavers building dams, elk grazing floodplains, and storks soaring overhead.



Eurasian elk

Imagine a landscape where wetlands stretch as far as the eye can see, teeming with life and providing clean water, flood protection and carbon storage. Picture communities connected to nature, enjoying the health and wellbeing benefits of green spaces. This is the future we're working toward. A healthier, equitable, and more resilient Wilder Trent!

Wildlife Postcards

HEDGEHOG

Hello! Currently busy gathering leaves for weatherproofing my cosy spot for winter. The air is crisp, and the nights are getting cooler. If you see me snuffling through fallen leaves and finding tasty insects before I settle down for a long nap, just wish me well in my hibernation.

Wishing you a cozy autumn!

Erin



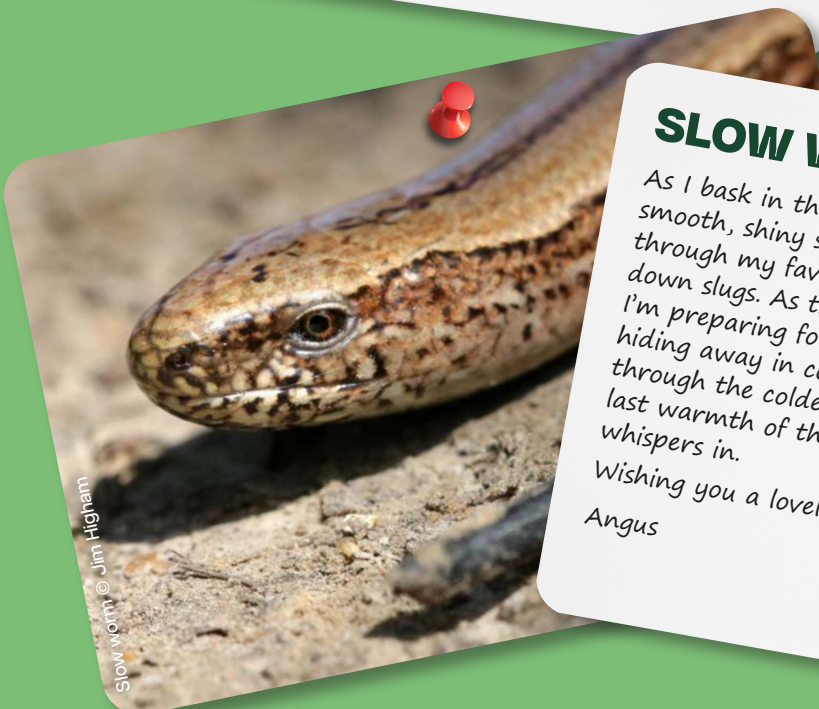
Hedgehog © Surrey Hills Photography

SLOW WORM

As I bask in the late summer sun, my smooth, shiny scales help me to move through my favourite allotments, hunting down slugs. As the days start to cool, I'm preparing for my underground rest, hiding away in cozy nooks to hibernate through the colder months. Enjoying the last warmth of the season before winter whispers in.

Wishing you a lovely autumn!

Angus



Slow worm © Jim Higham

SWIFT

Finally got to Africa! It was a long-haul flight of roughly 40 days. I'm welcomed here as a 'storm bird' and have great fun riding the pressure changes at the front of incoming storms and stuffing myself with insects in preparation for the return to the UK. I hope my nest site is still there!

See you next Spring

Apus



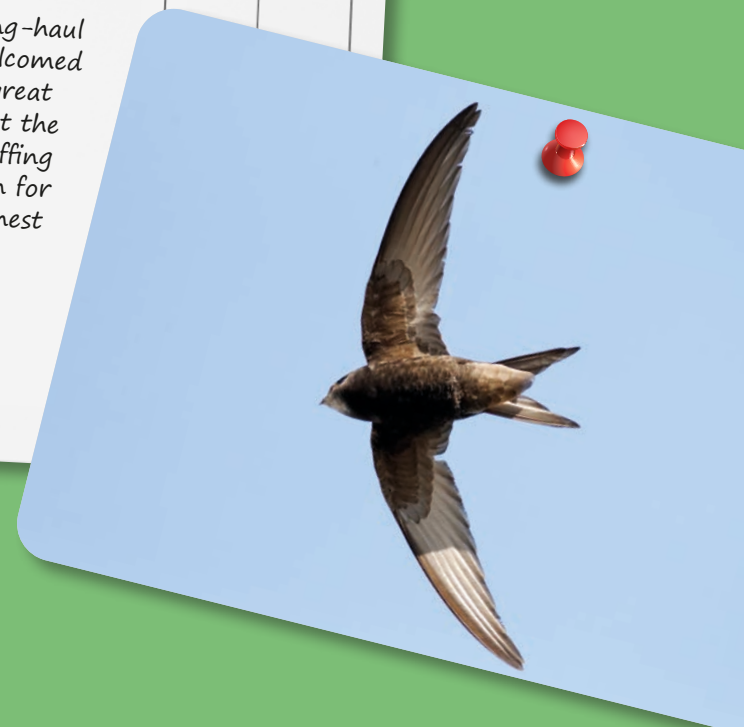
© iStock

RING OUSEL

Just spreading my wings and heading south this September. It's been a wonderful stay among the moorlands and heather – such a lovely place to raise a family! Now, I'm off to find milder skies and the Spanish mountains for winter. Wishing you all the best until I return next year.

See you soon!

Tordo



© iStock

My Wildlife



Gill Forrester

Community & Wellbeing
Manager at the National
Forest Company

The 'Understory' of connecting communities to the Forest

Through our Wilder Learning programmes, we are working to empower educators, communities and young people across Derbyshire to connect with nature and take action. By training others, we know we can engage even more people and ensure nature recovery can be led by the communities for years to come.

Passionate about the environment and education, Gill's work focuses on connecting communities to the forest around them and we are thrilled to have been part of her journey. Here she talks about what nature means to her and why she feels connecting young people with trees is so important.

What is your favourite way to connect with nature?

As one of four children, I was fortunate to grow up in a family that spent a lot of time outdoors. From my parents' perspective it kept us entertained for hours and was free! I am sure this is what fostered my love of nature, which has stayed with me. I can't let a day go by without going for a walk somewhere 'green'.

Tell us about your role at National Forest Company. What led you to a career in environment sector?

I joined the National Forest Company as Community and Wellbeing Manager in 2022. With a focus on education and outdoor learning, community engagement and working in partnership with others to increase people's access to and enjoyment of green spaces, it was an opportunity to make a difference.

The environment has been a common thread throughout my career, from starting out as a volunteer, to becoming a Countryside Ranger, Environmental Education Advisor and Country Park Manager, and working for environmental charities focusing on communities, biodiversity, health and young people.

What have been the highlights of your career?

I have loved working with young people, watching their initial reluctance to engage with nature change to enthusiasm through environmental education programmes. I have known adults who weren't aware that potatoes grew in the ground, but who became passionate allotment holders as a result of local food growing projects. I have worked with many dedicated teams of people, equally passionate about connecting communities to their environments, raising awareness of their natural and heritage value and encouraging sustainable lifestyles.

What challenges are you facing when it comes to the future of our forests?

Since its inception in the 1990's, the National Forest Company has worked with landowners, partners, communities and funders to plant 9.8 million trees, with more planting underway, to create a vibrant forest that connects people, the environment and the economy.

Connecting communities with local green spaces plays a vital role in sustainable woodland management. Thousands of people are involved in activities ranging from tree thinning, habitat management and wildlife surveys, to litter picking, organising events and guided walks.

Many groups face difficulties recruiting, particularly younger members, and there is also a green skills gap.

A standout achievement of this project was a tailored training programme, designed with community groups and delivered in partnership with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. This flexible programme addressed specific needs, covering leadership and organisation; practical skills like coppicing, small tree felling, and hedge-laying; and accredited certifications in first aid and forestry, chainsaw use, and tree inspections.

Uptake was high with overwhelmingly positive feedback. Volunteers felt it had enhanced their skills

and confidence to manage woodlands effectively, and helped foster stronger community ties. This blend of networking and training has built a resilient, empowered volunteer community, capable of sustaining long-term benefits for the future of our forest.

For you, how important is it to connect children and young people with trees?

As early as primary years, children are expressing anxieties around social interaction, their health and the environment. It's clear how important it is to start creating connections with nature from the early years, to help young people value nature on their doorstep as they grow.

Research supports that connecting with nature has a lasting positive impact on health and wellbeing, social skills, behaviour and academic achievement¹. Unfortunately, young people's connection to nature drops sharply from the age of 11, with implications for their wellbeing.

The National Forest Company's Creating a Forest for Learning education programme engages the next generation in caring for and enjoying woodlands. Engaging with secondary and SEND schools in particular has never been more important if we are to increase young people's participation in nature activities.

Working closely with the DWT accredited training centre to support secondary schools with delivery of an accredited Level 1 vocational award linked to the forest has meant we could offer 14–16-year-olds who might struggle with classroom-based learning an alternative.

The Level 1 Forestry in the Community Award helps young people connect with the forested environment on their doorstep, providing vocational learning, improving employability, and guiding them towards forestry careers.

By offering multiple mechanisms for connecting with treescapes, we provide opportunities for young people to make these meaningful connections. Benefits include improved resilience, social skills, academic achievement, and increased awareness of their heritage. For many, nature connection leads to a greater sense of ownership and desire to protect not just their local treescapes, but also for the wider environment. In short, the importance of connecting children and young people with trees shouldn't be underestimated.

For more information about our training courses, visit <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderlearning>

We Care About What Matters to You



Helen Watkinson –
Membership Manager

Membership survey results

Thank you to all of you who were able to complete our survey in the spring. We're delighted to share with you some key insights, including what having a membership means to you, how you want to support us more and how you want to get more involved.

90%

of you enjoy knowing that your membership contribution supports the work of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

67%

of you watch our video content on YouTube and/or your wild weekly emails.

71%

of you are members because you are worried about the state of nature and its impact on the climate.

73%

of you would like to see videos on the projects that Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is working on.

93%

of you told us you are supportive of and would donate to appeals, and are particularly interested in us securing more land for nature and species reintroductions.

64%

of you would like to see video tours exploring our nature reserves.

57%

of you said you'd like to get more involved, including volunteering, doing more for nature in your local green spaces, and through donations.

64%

of you would like to see videos on wildlife that has been spotted.

SCAN ME



Update to Privacy Policy: To aid our collaboration as a federation with the Wildlife Trusts, we sometimes share data with each other. At all times we follow the principle of data minimisation as set out in UK GDPR. To read full policy please visit <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/policies> or scan here.

In Memory of Debbie Bailey

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the passing of Debbie Bailey, our much-loved Badger Vaccination Coordinator, who died peacefully in hospital on 1st August following a sudden medical emergency.

Debbie was an extraordinary advocate for wildlife, dedicating her life to protecting badgers through vaccination rather than culling. Her tireless efforts, alongside her devoted team of volunteers, kept the cull out of Derbyshire for eight years, an incredible achievement that earned her national recognition and respect.

Always going above and beyond, Debbie was as at ease vaccinating badgers at dawn with MPs and TV personalities as she was mentoring new volunteers. She vaccinated over 1,600 adult badgers, rescued and rehomed countless orphaned badger cubs and otter pups, and left an indelible mark on all who worked with her.



Meeting Debbie was an experience made special by her unwavering energy and infectious passion for wildlife conservation.

Though she left Derbyshire Wildlife Trust after almost 10 years in February to set up her own business and continue her vital work, she remained a beloved part of our community. To lose someone so inspiring, so warm, and so young is an immense tragedy.

Our hearts go out to her parents, her partner and other close family members. Debbie's legacy lives on in the lives she touched and the animals she so fiercely protected.

She will be deeply missed.

Jo Smith – Chief Executive DWT

"Working with Debbie was always a true privilege. I first met her a decade ago and was immediately struck by her vibrant energy, warmth, and unwavering passion for wildlife. She played a vital role in bringing an end to the cruel and unnecessary badger culls, a legacy that will continue to protect badgers for decades to come. Her influence reached far beyond what she ever recognised, and those who knew and loved her can be deeply proud of all she achieved."

Sue Mayer (Chair 2016-2021)

"Debbie was instrumental in establishing the groundbreaking badger vaccination program in Derbyshire. Not only did this help Derbyshire badgers but had a huge impact nationally by demonstrating a clear alternative to shooting badgers which transformed the TB debate. Debbie was energetic, inspiring and with a huge depth of knowledge. She was a fabulous person to work with and I miss her deeply."

From all at Wild Justice

"Debbie Bailey stood up for badgers when it mattered most. Her courage, dedication, and deep compassion helped protect Derbyshire's badgers through peaceful and practical conservation. She showed the power of determination in the face of cruelty, and she made a huge difference. Wild Justice is deeply grateful for her tireless work, and her unwavering belief that nature deserved better."

Notification of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's

SAVE
THE
DATE

63rd Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 27th
September 2025**

**Common Farm, Spanker Lane,
Nether Heage, DE56 2AT**

We are happy to notify you that our Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 27th September at Common Farm, Nether Heage.

There will be a day of activities, including walks, crafts and Forest School from 11am.

The formal AGM proceedings will start at 1pm.



Below is a brief agenda of what can be expected

- Find out about our ambitious plans to do more for Derbyshire's wildlife!
- Approval of 2024 AGM minutes
- Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025
- Appointment of the Trust's auditors
- Election of committee
- Any other business / Question and Answer session

For more information and to register your attendance please see:
derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-derbyshire

You are kindly asked to submit any questions by email to
enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk before 8th September 2025.

The full annual report and supporting documents will be available
and emailed to all members in advance of the meeting.

If you require information in another
accessible format or via post please email:
enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk
or call 01773 881188 so we can ensure the
communications reach you.