

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's

annualreview



Herts and
Middlesex

2015-2016

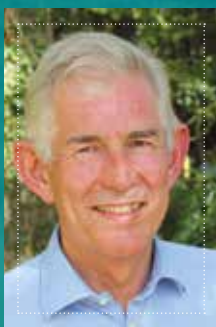


A BETTER
FUTURE FOR *wildlife*



Introduction

Over the last year we have continued to help people to value and become more aware of wildlife and the need for its conservation. We continue to contribute to the growing populations of endangered species such as the water vole and small blue butterfly, with many more people actively involved in protecting their local wildlife.



Our members are so important to the wildlife of Hertfordshire and Middlesex and as membership continues to grow we want to encourage you to get out into nature, come along to our guided walks, volunteer, submit wildlife records and continue to protect our wildlife. With over 22,000 members we are collectively a strong voice standing up for wildlife.

Natural habitats are under threat and continue to be lost and fragmented whilst species continue to decline; we have some of the most valuable habitats for wildlife in our nature reserves and it remains crucial that these are managed and protected for the future. Our work with local landowners, including farmers and golf clubs, continues to be of utmost importance, increasing areas of refuge for wildlife and realising our vision of a Living Landscape, an environment rich in wildlife for everyone.

Our Living Rivers project remains successful with restoration carried out on our precious chalk rivers and many more volunteers being trained in riverfly monitoring, whilst our Local Wildlife Sites team rolled out a new winter monitoring programme with the aim to increase management advice for the future. We achieved another milestone with the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) reaching two million records. Continued campaigning around High Speed Two has taken place, as well as our work with local planning authorities to ensure that impacts upon wildlife are properly considered.

This year we have delivered a fantastic programme of walks, talks and major events to raise awareness and understanding of wildlife, and its conservation, with a record number of over 5,300 people enjoying these.

Looking forward

The Trust has produced a 50 Year Vision for wildlife in Herts and Middlesex and a new 5 year plan which encourages everyone to act now. The next 5 years will see a focus on the most important habitats including woodlands and heaths, and flagship species featuring water vole, hedgehog, song thrush, little ringed plover, small blue butterfly, white admiral butterfly and barbastelle bat.

Whether as an individual volunteer or member of the Trust, land manager, business or the voluntary and government sector, you all have a vital role to play. Everyone can make a difference, so we invite you to get involved now in creating a **better future for wildlife**.

A huge thank you to our members, volunteers, donors, grant-awarding bodies, partners and staff who have supported the Trust over the last year. Our local habitats are a better place with your support where wildlife is protected and can thrive.

Thank you,

Mike Master
Chairman

Lesley Davies
Chief Executive

Great achievements

Our work has gone from strength to strength with our team of staff and volunteers leading improvements and work parties to maintain and develop vital wildlife habitats on both our reserves and in the wider countryside

Some of the key successes on our nature reserves this year include:

The creation of the new Chalk Stream and Heath route at Waterford Heath

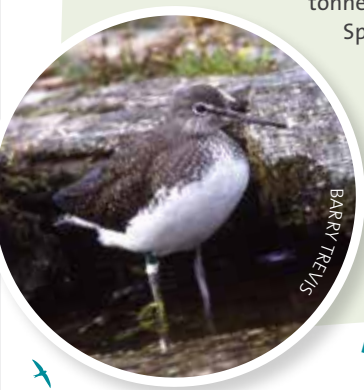
The Mayor of Hertford officially opened the circular walk that takes in the best of the reserve including a stretch of the River Beane, Waterford Marsh and Great Mole Wood. The circular walk was completed in March as part of a large project of improvements funded by CEMEX Community Fund.



grizzled skipper

Re-gravelling of the cress beds at Lemsford Springs

Thanks to help from our team of volunteers, 85 tonnes of gravel was distributed at Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve to improve the specialised habitat of the cress beds. Cress beds, much like chalk streams, are very shallow, maintaining a more or less constant temperature and very clear waters. This work has improved the habitat for green sandpipers, just one of the special birds that visit the reserve.



green sandpiper

Fantastic results on our reserves following grazing by our 'living lawnmowers'

Grazing animals can help us to manage grassland habitats in the most effective way for conservation. They eat selectively and often choose the more dominant plant species, which allows less competitive plants to become established and increases species diversity. As they graze across the landscape, the animals decide for themselves where to concentrate their efforts and create a mosaic of different lengths of grass and micro habitats. The timing and duration of grazing is carefully managed by our Reserves Team. Grazing creates a rich habitat for wildlife by maintaining and improving the diversity of plants and flowers. This is of particular benefit to butterflies who need specific foodplants to survive.



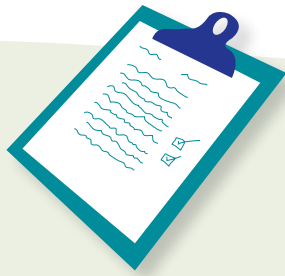
highland cattle

The enhancements of bat habitats

Thanks to generous donations of over £12,500 to our bat appeal we have been able to improve the habitats that our local bats depend on. The funds have helped us to create ponds for water sources and hedgerow management to provide shelter and feeding areas. We have also been able to monitor and protect roosts and local populations.

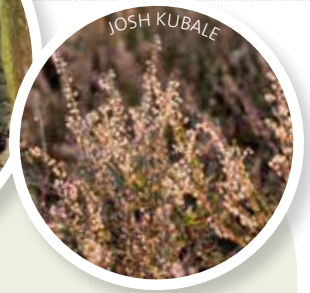


pipistrelle bat



Local Wildlife Sites

Our Local Wildlife Sites Officer and Wildlife Sites Volunteer Surveyors surveyed 60 Local Wildlife Sites which are some of the most important areas of wildlife across Hertfordshire and Middlesex. Our botanical surveyors were also given training in the practical application of National Vegetation Classification analysis of woodland and grassland. This will give them new skills and improve the comparison value of reports into the future. Local Wildlife Sites are special places for wildlife and are vital to the future survival of our native species. They do not have legal protection like Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Nature Reserves but they complement these protected sites and provide vital linkages between habitats.



heather

Land Management Advice

This year the Trust provided land management advice to 80 landowners, many of them through our river catchment partnerships, consultancy and Local Wildlife Sites work. These included Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden Town Council, Welwyn Hatfield Council, Stevenage Borough Council, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, and the Colne Valley Regional Park.

Our work with local Golf Clubs is increasing, with Mid-Herts Golf Club featuring on BBC's Countryfile in January and events running at both Mid-Herts and Aldwickbury Golf Club to showcase their living landscapes.

Living Rivers

Living Rivers' highlights this year include feasibility studies and river restoration work on the rivers Mimram, Stort, Ash and Lea. In addition, information was gathered to identify the conservation status of the River Mimram. Alongside this we now have over 100 trained volunteer Riverfly Monitors helping to keep a check on the quality of our rivers. A 'Riverfly Day' held at Lemsford Springs Nature Reserve attracted over 50 participants. Many thanks go to the Environment Agency, Natural England and Affinity Water for their ongoing support.

The Water Vole Project has had another successful year. At Thorley Wash a major reintroduction programme, organised in partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust and funded by Thames Water, resulted in 180 water voles being released and they are now flourishing in its rich mix of wetland habitats.

Other highlights include the habitat improvements at Frays River, Denham, working in partnership with London Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. We began working with the Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative to extend water vole surveying and mink control throughout the lower Colne Valley.

mayfly



JON HAWKINS, SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY



watervole

Herts Environmental Records Centre

The Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC), hosted by the Trust, has now reached over two million records. HERC manages information on habitats, species and sites across the county.

Experts, professionals and members of the public provide the data that HERC holds and this is made available to a wide range of individuals and organisations for use in nature conservation, development planning and research.



Planning process for wildlife

We have worked with local planning authorities across the area, commenting on local plans and individual planning applications. Analysis of the results of our work shows that 90% of our comments are being taken into account in revisions to applications. We are also very pleased to see planning authorities starting to use the Biodiversity Impact Calculator which enables better evaluation of ecological impacts and mitigation.

90% 
of our comments are being taken into account



High Speed Two

The specific impacts of High Speed Two are focussed on Broadwater Lake Nature Reserves, SSI designated for its importance for wildfowl, in particular pochard. We have campaigned for full and proper mitigation of the impacts on both wildlife and visitors to the reserve. This includes participation in the Colne Valley Ecological Panel and a petition to the House of Commons.



Walks, talks and events

Over 5,300 people attended our walks, talks and major events organised centrally and by our local groups



MATTHEW ROBERTS

Our wide range of events covered everything from insects, birds and flowers, to bats, trees and specific habitats. Our annual Tewin Apple Day was the biggest yet with visitors enjoying the opportunity to take a guided tour around Tewin



TIM HILL

hobby

Orchard. Through our Community Talks programme, volunteers have delivered 44 talks to over 1,300 people and raised £2,200 in donations. We have been delighted to welcome new members to special events and including river dipping at Lemsford Springs and to meet the konik ponies at Amwell.

Panshanger update

We have continued to participate in the development of Panshanger Park with Tarmac to ensure that wildlife is protected, habitats enhanced and that managed public access is created. The People & Wildlife Officer and the Forest School Officer have played an important role in encouraging visitors to the Park. The activities run by the People and Wildlife Officer have gone from strength to strength, with over 2,300 people attending guided walks and fun days and 32 active volunteers supporting the new 'Panshanger Volunteers' group.

The inaugural Panshanger Park Biodiversity Conference was held

in February with over 50 people attending to hear about the wide variety of habitats and wildlife at the site. The Forest School, in partnership with Tarmac, has proved equally popular and a celebration of its first anniversary was held in February 2016 with Sir Oliver Heald MP attending. In the first year 24 schools and over 500 children have taken part and feedback has been very positive. We have appointed a new trainee after our previous volunteer was able to use her training to secure a formal teaching role.



PAUL HOPE



PAUL HOPE

Thank you

The Trust is extremely thankful for the continued vital support from our members, donors and other supporters.

We are very grateful for the generous legacies we received from Christina Rosemary Carter, Ann Coates, Margaret Elizabeth North and Anthony James Taylor. during the course of the year.

Volunteers

We are extremely appreciative for the support of the hundreds of volunteers who enable the Trust to carry out its work. Volunteers are not named individually in this report as there are so many people involved; our thanks goes to each and every volunteer for their varied and ongoing support, without whom the Trust could not function.

Special thanks goes to our Local Groups (Harrow, Mid Herts and North Herts) who make a significant contribution to engaging members and the general public through their activities. Special congratulations go to Mick Hart, our Volunteer of the Year, and runners up Mike Brazier, Andrew Harris, Ed Hutchins, Brian Parkhouse and Bernard Spatz.



grass snake

Grants and individual donations

External income from grants and individual donations have been particularly important in enabling improvement works on our nature reserves, along with other projects. HMWT are very grateful for the generosity of all our funders which include:

- Affinity Water
- Alan Evans Memorial Trust
- Bedford Memorial Trust
- Biffa Award
- Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All
- Brian Leslie Racher 2004 Charitable Trust
- CAGE – Waterford Heath
- Carillion Natural Habitats Fund
- CEMEX Community Fund
- Chapman Charitable Trust
- Chilterns Conservation Board
- Christopher Laing Foundation
- Dacorum Borough Council
- East Herts District Council
- Environment Agency
- Friends of Tewin
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council Locality Budget Scheme (Cllr Crofton, Cllr Gordon, Cllr Reay, Cllr Walkington)
- Hillingdon Borough Council
- John Davis
- John Spedan Lewis Foundation
- Johnson Matthey
- Kate Aylett
- Ken Moody
- Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
- Miss S M G Ross Trust
- Natural England
- North Herts District Council
- Robert Kiln Trust
- Rotary Club of Hertford
- Rural Payments Agency
- Spear Charitable Trust
- St. Albans City & District Council
- Tarmac
- Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund
- The Richard Cowley Trust
- Tring Rural Parish Council
- Vandervell Foundation
- Vaughan Williams
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Corporate support

We were pleased to receive the following ongoing support from our **corporate members**:

Platinum

- Bourne Leisure Group
- UK Power Networks (Operations) Ltd

Gold

- Johnson Matthey
- Thames Water Utilities
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Islandbridge Properties Limited

Silver

- Affinity Water
- Cemex UK
- Tarmac

Bronze

- The Institute of the Motor Industry

We have received further support from our corporate partners through participation in our Working for Wildlife Days, including Affinity Water, Amgen UK, Carillion, GlaxoSmithKline, Mace, Nestle Waters, UK Power Networks and Vinci. In addition to this we received support via the national agreement with Vine House Farm for bird food sold, from Wildlife Travel Ltd for wildlife holidays booked by individuals living in Herts and Middlesex, and support for our annual Apple Day event at Tewin Orchard from Sainsburys.

Financial review

Membership



Volunteers



based on HLF standard day rates for skilled and non-skilled volunteers

Events



Income 2015-16

Membership subscriptions	£984k
Grants (restricted)	£381k
Fees and contracts	£198k
Donations, gifts and grants (unrestricted)	£97k
Legacies	£51k
Fundraising activities	£48k
Investments and other income	£27k



Expenditure – where does every £1 go?

RAISING FUNDS 31p



GOVERNANCE 4p

CONSERVATION AND NATURE RESERVES 65p

These diagrams are an illustration of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's income and expenditure of the year ending 31 March 2016. For a copy of the full audited accounts which contain the detailed information required by law, visit hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/annualreview