

# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate use

## Funding boost for wildlife havens

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) has won the support of the Colin Reid Countryside Trust in helping to protect wildlife havens in East Hertfordshire that are in need of urgent restoration work.

Otters, water voles and dragonflies will be amongst the animals helped at King's Meads Nature Reserve in Ware and Rye Meads Nature Reserve near Hoddesdon.

Criss-crossed by rivers and ditches, these two sites are made up of ancient flood meadows, over 95% of which have been lost from the county in the last 70 years. With several ditches at both sites completely closed up, these valuable waterways are now in desperate need of restoration.

Fortunately, funding from the Colin Reid Countryside Trust will allow HMWT to restore and enhance several of these ditches, increasing the water flow and allowing a diverse range of wildlife to flourish.

HMWT's Chief Executive Judy Adams said "King's Meads and Rye Meads Nature Reserves are both wonderful places to view wildlife. With support from Colin Reid Countryside Trust we can continue to protect the wildlife here for people to see for many years to come. We are extremely grateful for their support."

**Ends/**

### Notes to Editors

#### **Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust**

We are the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire and neighbouring areas. With 43 nature reserves spanning 1,900 acres, from beautiful woodlands and wetlands to rare patches of heath and orchard, we take practical action every day to help wildlife to flourish. The Wildlife Trusts are unique in being the only organisations that work to protect the full range of UK habitats and species, at a local level. <http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/>

#### **Wildlife at King's Meads Nature Reserve, Ware**

Eighteen of the 19 species of dragonfly that breed in Hertfordshire are present at King's Meads including the scarce hairy dragonfly. As a result, King's Mead is the best dragonfly site, with public access, in the county. A survey found 265 different species of wildflower here too. <http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/NatureReserves/Flagship/kingsmeads>



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Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust Limited is registered in England No 816710 at the above address and is registered as a charity under Registration No 239863. VAT No 366 9276 06

President - SA Bowes-Lyon, PCA

**Rye Meads Nature Reserve, Hoddesdon**

Rye Meads is part of a larger Site of Special Scientific Interest and has recently been designated a Special Protection Area for Birds. There is a visitor centre, signposted trails and excellent hide facilities. The reserve specialises in environmental education and has very good facilities for schools.

<http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/NatureReserves/Flagship/ryemeads>

**Water voles**

Water voles are the fastest declining mammals in the UK: 90% of the population has disappeared in the last 50 years as a result of habitat loss and the introduction of the North American mink. In Hertfordshire, water voles were once common but are now restricted to just a few wetlands in the Lee, Mimram, Beane and Chess Valleys and at Purwell Ninesprings.

**Otters**

Otters became extinct in Hertfordshire in the late 1970s, with the River Mimram reputed to have supported the last breeding female otter at Tewinbury Nature Reserve in 1978. The cause of this national decline was direct persecution, loss of habitat and the contamination of wetland systems with pesticides. In 1991, two groups of captive bred otters were released into Hertfordshire by The Otter Trust. It was hoped that they would eventually re-colonise other rivers in Hertfordshire.

**Contact for further information and high res images:**

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