

Annual Review 2025/26

THIS YEAR SHOWS what's possible thanks to the support of our members. Because of you, our staff, volunteers and partners have been able to drive species recovery, restore and create habitats, and deepen our work with local communities.

Together, we're creating spaces where nature can thrive across our reserves and the wider countryside, bringing some wonderful wildlife sightings and experiences along the way.

Standing up for Nature

"Nature needs a voice - and this year our supporters helped make it louder than ever. From standing up for chalk rivers and protected wildlife sites to helping shape Hertfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, together we've shown that people care deeply about the future of nature. Every petition signed, every message sent and every action taken helps create a stronger future for wildlife."

Fiona Mahon,
Director of Nature Recovery



5 WATER WINS

- 11.5km of rivers restored**, on the River Ash, River Lea, River Stort, River Quin and River Hiz, reinstating 'wiggles', reconnecting floodplains and restoring habitat through re-gravelling, weir removal and adding woody habitat.
- 23,000+ native plants introduced** by staff, volunteers and contractors to boost wetlands, riverbanks and ponds.
- Riverfly numbers (mayflies, stoneflies, dragonflies) increased by **30-177%** on the River Ash just one year after restoration.
- 100 Water Voles returned to the River Lea** near Wheathampstead, with breeding territories confirmed after their first winter.
- Our rivers-based Citizen Science Programme completed its second year, with **over 3,000 volunteer hours** dedicated to understanding and protecting our rivers.



WATER VOLE © PAUL THRUSH, TUBULAR WATER DROPWORT © DAN TOWNSEND, COMMON SNIPE © TIM HILL, WATER BUFFALO SETTLING IN THORLEY WASH © ROBERT PHILLIPS, TIM HILL © JOSH KUBALE

SUPER SPECIES SPOTS

Rare and exciting wildlife sightings on our nature reserves and in the wider countryside included:

- Nationally scarce money spider *Trematocephalus cristatus* recorded at Danemead.
- Leafhopper *Eupteryx filicum* discovered at Astonbury Wood.
- Nationally notable weevil *Drupenatus nasturtii* found at Frogmore Meadows.
- Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris* spotted at Hexton Chalk Pit.
- 130 Tubular Water Dropwort plants *Oenanthe fistulosa* recorded at Rye Meads.
- Barbel spotted once again on the River Lea at Bayfordbury following restoration work.
- Teal, Snipe and Woodcock now regularly recorded along the River Lea near Hertford, using newly created wetlands and re-wetted floodplain.



CONSERVATION ON THE HOOF!

- Water Buffalo have been grazing at Thorley Wash Nature Reserve, helping to manage vegetation and create rich wetland habitats through their natural wallowing.
- Sheep have also returned to Alpine Meadow, grazing dominant plants and opening up space for more delicate and rarer species to thrive.



Farming

"As part of the Wildlife Trusts' partnerships with Jordans Cereals, we surveyed five farms who have committed to managing at least 10% of their land to benefit nature with as much as 23% on one of the farms. Brown Hares and butterflies are already benefiting, along with farmland birds including Corn Bunting, Linnet, and Yellowhammer."
Tim Hill, Conservation Manager



EVERY RECORD COUNTS

- Our evidence and monitoring work keeps growing stronger.
- Nine Local Wildlife Sites resurveyed in the Mimram catchment.
 - That's 42 hectares assessed to guide future habitat management.
 - Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) surpassed an incredible 4 MILLION wildlife records.

Engagement

"Through our Wilder Communities work across Hertfordshire and Middlesex, including a growing programme in Watford, we've supported local people to take practical action for nature - launching initiatives such as Pledge a Pond and bringing communities together through the first Herts Rivers Week to celebrate and protect our chalk streams. We've also loved welcoming people to over 80 events and talks throughout the year."
Lea Ellis, Engagement Manager



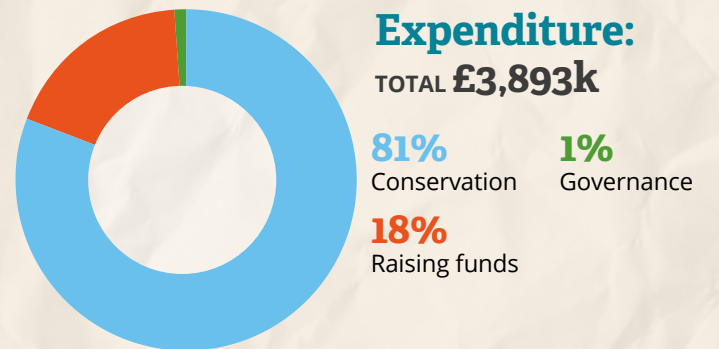
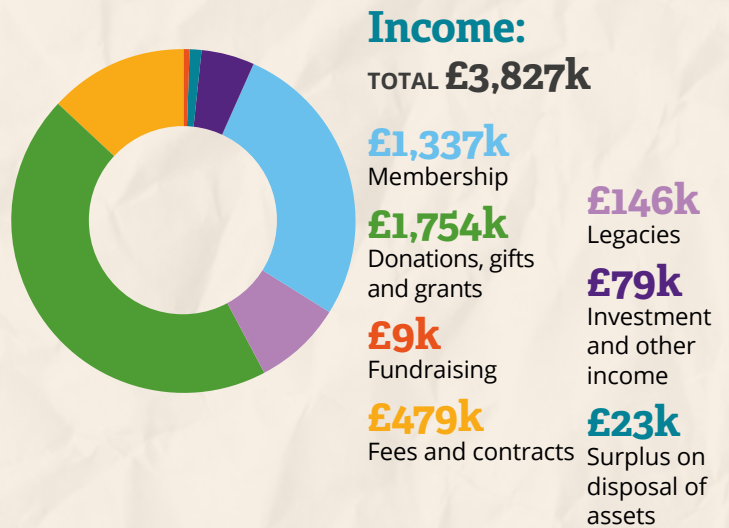
Volunteering

Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers, who between them clocked up 15,626 hours supporting the work of the Trust and local wildlife. We simply couldn't achieve what we do without you.

Financial summary

Our Strategy sets out the need to create more space for nature and to inspire more people to take action for habitat and species recovery. This action is urgently needed. We secured around £1.8 mil unrestricted income in the last year, thanks in most part to our members, and ended with a surplus. However, as the scale of the nature crisis continues to grow, so do our costs for delivery. Throughout the 2026/2027 financial year, we will continue to ask our supporters to help us raise vital funds to support our local wildlife and wild spaces.

The Year in Numbers



We are very grateful to all our members, donors, grant funders and other supporters over the year.

The financial information above has been taken from the draft accounts for the year.

Find more Full details of the Trust's finances will be available from 21 September at bit.ly/43JWrTt

