

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Since its inception in 1970, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust has grown every year in membership numbers, in action and in influence. In recent years it has planned its future development with a series of five-year plans, highlighting where it wants to go and what its priorities are. This document builds on previous plans and achievements, setting out our aims until the end of 2004. Over the five-year period from 2000 to 2004 we expect that the pressures on wildlife and the natural environment will continue, with both development and agricultural changes being key issues locally, and global warming having possible impacts too. At the same time the Government's Sustainable Development agenda, coupled with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, should mean that both the environment and biodiversity gain in profile at a national level. Our challenge will be to translate these issues into actions locally, building on the clear public support for nature, wildlife and the environment.

From our Mission Statement we have derived eight main objectives, which we will develop over the next five years. These link to The Wildlife Trusts' national conservation plan, as well as focussing on our key activities locally. We protect wildlife and natural habitats throughout Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull by:

- 1 Promoting nature conservation in the wider countryside**
- 2 Owning and managing nature reserves**

We encourage greater awareness, appreciation and participation in all aspects of nature conservation and the environment by:

- 3 Encouraging and supporting community groups carrying out environmental activities**
- 4 Educating children and adults about the value of the natural environment**

In order to complete these actions successfully we also need support and influence, members and money. These we can achieve through:

- 5 Raising our profile**
- 6 Increasing our members and supporters**
- 7 Raising more money**

Finally we need to ensure our management systems are optimised by:

- 8 Managing ourselves effectively and efficiently**

In practice there will be times when these objectives will overlap, providing mutual support. There will also be times when our emphasis on each of the eight objectives will vary, depending on both external and internal factors. However, it is our intention that by 2004 Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull will have a greater biodiversity than at present, so playing our part in The Wildlife Trusts' national ambition to make a UK richer in wildlife.

The eight objectives above provide the framework for our five-year Development Plan from 2000 to 2004. Each objective area will be implemented and monitored by the appropriate Trust Committee, staff and volunteers, working together in partnership.

1

Promoting nature conservation in the countryside and in towns

The conservation of nature throughout Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull cannot be achieved by the Trust alone. We will work with others to maximise our impact, by developing a Biodiversity Action Plan,

by promoting Wildlife Sites, by working with the planning system and by promoting an integrated biological recording system.

1.1 Biodiversity Action Plans

- a. Prepare a Local Biodiversity Action Plan by the end of 2000, in partnership with others, detailing the current state of the county and priorities for action.
- b. Maintain the Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA) Partnership and the Phase I habitat database of sites.
- c. Use the HBA to identify key habitats and monitor changes to their extent and distribution - *initial analysis to be completed by June 2000.*
- d. Establish a Biodiversity Steering Group by the end of 2000 and maintain it with working groups reporting to it focusing on habitats and species within grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, farmland, post-industrial sites, historical and geological aspects.
- e. Contribute to the delivery of national Species Action Plans and Habitat Action Plans, including the Severn Trent Water and The Wildlife Trusts Otters and Rivers Project.
- f. Work with appropriate organisations to promote conservation on farms.
- g. Develop the use of Geographic Information Systems to inform the Trust's work - *in-house GIS by 2001.*

1.2 Wildlife Sites and Planning Liaison

- a. Complete the review of all Wildlife Sites - *by the end of 2001.*
- b. Instigate a programme of landowner liaison for all wildlife sites - *initial plans by 2000 and all Wildlife Site owners to have been contacted by the end of 2004.*
- c. Review all draft Structure, Unitary and Local Plans, as well as other strategy documents, and respond to maximise the protection of features of nature conservation importance and to encourage positive action to manage existing features and create new features.
- d. Monitor all planning proposals and respond where these impact on SSSIs, Wildlife Sites, RIGS and other features of nature conservation importance.
- e. Liaise with Local Authorities, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, farmers and other individual landowners/managers to influence the management of the countryside and urban greenspace.
- f. Encourage the declaration of further Local Nature Reserves by Local Authorities.

1.3 Biological Records

- a. Work with partners to develop the Local Biological Records Centre as part of the developing National Biodiversity Network.
- b. Improve biological recording for the county by implementing the new 'Recorder' package.
- c. Work with RINGS and the Museums to encourage recording and monitoring of species, and ensure Trust and Warwickshire BRC systems share a common database.

2

Owning and managing nature reserves

Ownership of key sites for nature conservation remains the best way of ensuring their long-term protection. We will continue to acquire nature reserves (by purchase, lease and agreement) and will strive to ensure that all our nature reserves are managed to the best standards, in a sustainable manner.

2.1 Managing existing nature reserves

- a. Ensure all nature reserves have agreed management plans, and that all plans are reviewed every five years – *a minimum of 12 plans to be reviewed per year.*
- b. Implement high priority management identified in all management plans – *review annually.*
- c. Implement all externally-funded programmes for nature reserve management, including:
 - the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Capital Programme *by 30 May 2003 with annual reviews.*
 - the English Nature funded RES programme – *review annually.*
 - the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and Countryside Stewardship programmes – *all non-SSSI woodlands and grasslands to be in WGS or Countryside Stewardship by the end of 2000.*

- d. Increase voluntary support for the management of our reserves.
- e. Recruit, support and train voluntary wardens for all nature reserves.
- f. Design and implement a programme of reserve monitoring to ensure that management objectives are being met and information is available for management plan reviews.
- g. Implement the Trust's Health and Safety Policy.
- h. Increase public awareness of our nature reserves and their management through signs, leaflets and events – *maintain Trust Nature Reserve signs at all main entrances to sites, erect signboards at 5 reserves/ year and prepare 2 new interpretation leaflets/year.*
- i. Develop plans to add value to reserve produce. Prepare plan for marketing woodland produce - *by end of 2000.* Consider organic registration for all grasslands - *by end of 2001.*
- j. Liaise with neighbouring landowners/managers to influence their management of adjacent land and in particular features of nature conservation value - *encourage at least 1 neighbour to enter adjacent land into Countryside Stewardship/WGS each year.*

2.2 Acquiring new nature reserves

- a. Review the Trust's acquisition policy every 3 years, and incorporate targets from the Local Biodiversity Action Plan – *in 2000 and 2003.*
- b. Review the list of priority sites for acquisition – annually.
- c. Secure new nature reserves over the plan period, number and extent depending on quality available.
- d. Give increased priority to sites in the following categories:
 - Land adjacent to existing reserves,
 - Grassland of existing high nature conservation value,
 - Large areas of land of high existing or potential nature conservation interest.
- e. Secure involvement of the Trust in the management of further Local Nature Reserves.

3

Encouraging and supporting community groups carrying out environmental activities

The conservation of nature is as much about the common and local as it is about the special and rare. We will offer support to local groups and individuals in order to protect and improve their local environment in cities, towns, villages and the countryside.

3.1 Support practical action for biodiversity in the community

- a. Provide support and assistance for local conservation projects – *6 new projects p.a.*
- b. Develop the 'Naturelink' concept and funding to support local action - *as funding allows.*
- c. Continue to deliver existing Patchwork project - *until 2001.*
- d. Develop new projects with Local Authorities - *1 per L.A.*

3.2 Support processes encouraging people to take action

- a. Promote the Local Agenda 21 process and other sustainable development initiatives.
- b. Support any successors to the Rural Action network, and other partnerships providing support to community-based conservation action.
- c. Liaise with local authorities and others to develop joint projects to support local action.

4

Educating children and adults about the value of the natural environment

For wildlife conservation to have a future in the next generation, both adults and young people today must be aware of the value of nature. We will provide a programme of activities for children and adults to learn about wildlife and the environment, and their importance to us all.

4.1 Schools

- a. Continue to provide an environmental education service to schools visiting Brandon Marsh – *6,000 children per year, with increasing emphasis on secondary schools.*
- b. Continue to provide an environmental education service to schools visiting other sites – *3,000 children per year, subject to specific agreements.*
- c. Develop new environmental education initiatives for school groups at other locations – *3 locations in all by 2004.*
- d. Continue to develop INSET training courses for teachers – *6 per year.*
- e. Seek volunteers to support educational activities – *target retired teachers.*
- f. Continue GLOBE Programme until 2001 and pursue funding for its continuation.
- g. Develop other projects and activities - *as opportunities allow.*

4.2 Children / Youth groups

- a. Develop programmes of out-of school activities for children at weekends, holidays, and after school hours - *800 people per year.*
- b. Enable young people (16-24 years) to become involved in environmental projects – *through the Springboard Project and other initiatives.*

4.3 Wildlife WATCH

- a. Seek support for a Wildlife WATCH Co-ordinator to develop local activities and members.
- b. Review Wildlife WATCH membership in relation to national review – *2000.*
- c. Implement review findings, including promotion of membership where appropriate.

4.4 Adults

- a. Develop courses for adults in a range of environmental areas – *rising to 20 in 2004.*
- b. Ensure a programme of guided walks is maintained and supported, in conjunction with reserve staff and volunteers – *50 walks p.a.*

5

Raising our profile

Before people join the Trust or donate time or money, they need to be aware of the Trust and its work. We will continue to raise our profile with key decision-makers and the general public, through the media, attendance at events, and by developing our own Centres.

5.1 Promotion

- a. Promote the Trust's work to all key local decision makers including MEPs, MPs, Local Councillors, Local Authority staff, business leaders and other individuals – *at least one mailing p.a. to each targeted individual, plus 10 face-to-face meetings.*
- b. Promote the Trust's work regionally and nationally as part of the Wildlife Trusts partnership, working together on regional and national activities *as required.*

5.2 Media

- a. Continue with weekly programme of news releases – *at least 2 releases per week.*
- b. Monitor coverage in the press through volunteer media monitors – *aim for 6 regular monitors by 2000 and 3,000 column-inches of coverage p.a.*
- c. Develop radio and television publicity wherever possible.
- d. Develop and improve the Trust's Internet web site.

5.3 Materials

- a. Co-ordinate our profile and branding with national Wildlife Trust guidelines – *adopt new identity by 2000.*
- b. Ensure all materials and publications are produced to the highest standard and comply with corporate guidelines.
- c. Ensure all Area Group and nature reserve activities have appropriate signage.
- d. Ensure all Trust vehicles have appropriate signage.

5.4 Visitor and Education Centres

- a. Promote Brandon as the major Environmental Centre to visit – *50,000 visitors p.a. by 2001 continuing to 2004.*
- b. Develop additional Centres throughout our area, targeting main population centres of Solihull, Stratford on Avon and Leamington Spa – *3 new centres by 2004.*

6

Increasing our members and supporters

The most dependable long-term source of income and voluntary support for the Trust is its membership and supporters. We will invest in recruiting more members (both individual and Corporate) and gaining more supporters, and will provide practical support to sustain them.

6.1 Individual, household, family and benefactor members

- a. Increase membership - *10,000 members by 2004.*
- b. Promote membership at Brandon Visitor Centre – *300 new members p.a.*
- c. Develop door-to-door membership recruitment – *1,000 new members p.a.*
- d. Promote upgrading of membership to Benefactor – *20% of all members.*
- e. Monitor membership retention – *aim for 90% retention p.a.*
- f. Improve membership retention by encouraging direct debits – *75% by 2004.*
- g. Produce Warwickshire Wildlife magazine and continue to raise quality whilst pursuing advertising and sponsorship to reduce costs – *£1,000 cost per issue in 2000.*

6.2 Corporate members

- a. Increase number of Corporate Members to 200 by 2004 – *target all employers with over 100 staff.*
- b. Promote corporate events and activities to aid membership retention – *2 events p.a.*
- c. Provide activities to involve corporate staff in conservation and education work – *where appropriate.*

6.3 Area Groups

- a. Support Area Groups as a focal point for members and local action, linking to local Centres where appropriate – *at least 7 active groups.*
- b. Encourage new Area Groups and new volunteering in existing groups - *where necessary.*
- c. Provide training and support in the areas of fundraising, membership recruitment and marketing.

6.4 Supporters

- a. Set up and maintain a database of Trust supporters, including all non-members who help as volunteers and all visitors to Brandon – *by 2000.*
- b. Use the supporters database for one or more promotional mailings per year.

7

Raising more money

With more funds the Trust can achieve more for conservation and for environmental education. We will invest in developing more income from individuals, companies and organisations through a planned programme of focussed fund-raising activities.

7.1 Strategy

- a. Produce and implement a structured fundraising strategy *by 2000.*

7.2 Individuals

- a. Improve donations from members, supporters and the general public - *£20,000 p.a.*
- b. Promote at least one major appeal per year – *£10,000 p.a.*
- c. Improve legacy income – *£20,000 p.a.*

- d. Increase visitor numbers to Brandon Marsh Nature Centre – *50,000 visitors and £50,000 turnover by 2004.*
- e. Improve sales at shop, tea-room and barn at Brandon - *£5,000 surplus p.a.*
- f. Improve sales at events and by Area Groups – *£10,000 p.a. turnover.*

7.3 Corporate / Charitable Trusts

- a. Develop sponsorship packages for corporate support – *£20,000 in 2000 rising to £50,000 in 2004.*
- b. Develop landfill tax funded projects – *£100,000 p.a.*
- c. Develop Charitable Trust funding – *£20,000 in 2000 rising to £50,000 in 2004.*

8

Managing ourselves effectively and efficiently

To maximise its impact, the Trust must ensure that staff, volunteers and financial systems are all well managed. We will continue to develop and improve systems of management for people, finance and communication, to ensure that we are as effective and efficient as possible.

8.1 Management systems

- a. Ensure Trust Quality Management System is fully implemented and developed – *external review in 2001, continuous improvement to 2004.*
- b. Ensure personnel management is carried out to optimum standards – *achieve Investor in People status by 2000 and continue to improve to 2004.*
- c. Ensure Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and other key policies are implemented and monitored.
- d. Develop a volunteer induction and support programme, including Trustees, office and field-based volunteers – *starting in 2000.*
- e. Produce an annual training plan and ensure its implementation.
- f. Support the Wildlife Trusts partnership locally, regionally and nationally.

8.2 Financial management

- a. Maintain production of monthly financial management reports, linked to projections and cash-flows – *within 7 working days of month-end.*
- b. Ensure all cash is collected as promptly as possible – *chase all outstanding invoices after 30 days.*
- c. Continue financial reporting systems for Trustees – *quarterly reports.*
- d. Develop a cash reserve for operational activities – *3 month's operating costs by 2001, continuing to 2004.*
- e. Develop the Trust's Endowment fund – *to £100,000 from 2001 onwards.*

8.3 Communication

Ensure adequate communication with all the following groups:

- a. With members and volunteers - *through the Trust Magazine and targeted Newsletters for specific groups.*
- b. With key partners and stakeholders – *through direct mailing and invitations to special events.*
- c. With other Wildlife Trusts – *by participating in regional and national Wildlife Trusts structures and meetings.*
- f. With Trustees – *by Council meetings and structured meetings with staff.*
- d. With Trust Committees – *by continuing prompt circulation of all committee papers.*
- e. With staff – *by regular staff meetings, reporting forms and annual away-days.*

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd, *the Trust's wholly-owned subsidiary trading company, exists to raise funds and profile for the Trust by carrying out professional environmental activities in the commercial arena. We will continue to develop Middlemarch's consultancy and landscaping services, providing a sustainable income to the Trust. Middlemarch's activities support most of the Trust's objectives:*

- 1 Promoting nature conservation in the wider countryside
 - a. Produce reports of ecological surveys, management plans, biodiversity action plans and impact assessments.
 - b. Carry out practical land management, including habitat creation works, to enhance biodiversity.
2. Owning and managing nature reserves
 - a. Provide ecological surveys and management plans.
 - b. Carry out practical land management on Trust nature reserves.
3. Encouraging and supporting community group carrying out environmental activities
 - a. Provide support and practical assistance for community-based projects.
4. Educating children and adults about the value of the natural environment
 - a. Provide courses on environmental topics.
 - b. Carry out practical environmental improvements in school grounds.
5. Raising our profile
 - a. Ensure Middlemarch Environmental earns a reputation for quality of its products, in all aspects of its work.
 - b. Develop Middlemarch Environmental to raise its profile – and the Trust's - within the commercial, local government and professional sectors.
 - c. Produce and distribute publicity and marketing materials of a high standard.
6. Increasing our members and supporters
 - a. Promote links to the Trust wherever appropriate.
7. Raising more money
 - a. Develop Middlemarch Environmental to bring in a sustainable income to the Trust – annual transfer to the Trust of at least £10,000 in 2000, rising by 10% p.a.
 - b. Explore and develop other commercial activities that may become available.
8. Managing ourselves effectively and efficiently
 - a. Ensure all management systems equal or exceed those used by the Trust.
 - b. Develop a cash reserve for operational activities – 3 month's operating costs by 2001, continuing to 2004.
 - c. Explore and develop other commercial activities that may become available, including links to other Wildlife Trusts and their consultancies.
 - d. Acquire a permanent headquarters including offices and landscape yard.