

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

## A summary for members

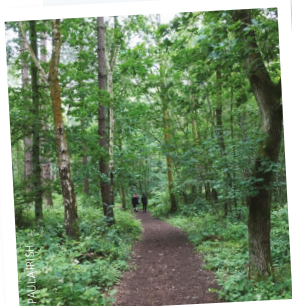
**W**arwickshire Wildlife Trust exists to achieve an environment rich in wildlife for everyone in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. We aim to protect local natural heritage and encourage people to engage with their natural environment. Our mission is to bring about Living Landscapes and a society where Nature Matters.



### Expanding Brandon Marsh to encompass Brandon Reach

Brandon Reach is a rich and wild addition to Brandon Marsh that supports a wider variety of activities and increases the potential for habitat creation as part of our largest reserve. This increases our local footprint to 165 ha - part of a land holding that stretches from Ryton to the A46 Coventry ring road. Added to the adjoining Brandon

Wood, this forms a very large continuous woodland and grassland site under active management for wildlife.



### Woodland Estate Management

In 2018 the nature reserves team was restructured to better equip it for a whole estate approach to the care of the Trust's woodlands (480 ha over 18 sites). A Brandon Marsh & Dunsmore Woodland Officer was employed, and management plans for our woodland estate were written with stakeholders and submitted to the Forestry Commission for approval - expected in early 2019. Our woodland estate management plan will then be based on elements approved by the Forestry Commission, in consultation with the reserves working group. Then we will start work on the new estate management plan, which will span decades and fulfil the strategic objective of a whole estate approach to woodland management.

### Habitat Creation

The Living Landscape team has focused on plans for an Urban Living Landscape scheme in Coventry and working with farmers on two rural Living Landscape schemes. Active delivery on habitat creation is scheduled from mid-2020 - the Trust's 50th anniversary year. Ideas around a fundraising campaign for a 'Habitat Creation Fund' linked to this landmark are being developed. Preparatory work positioning the Trust for the opportunity to create habitat at Newbold Comyn and Coventry Gateway South has taken place, whilst Wolston Fields provides the opportunity and obligation for the creation of new habitats within the expanded Brandon Marsh.

### Urban Living Landscape Scheme



Over the past three years, the Trust has lead multiple partners in developing a shared vision for the Sherbourne Valley that returns the river to the heart of Coventry. Utilising the river's built, cultural and natural heritage will re-establish a sense of place - encouraging local communities to reconnect with the city. A high quality bid to the last application round for National Lottery Heritage Fund was unfortunately unsuccessful, but is being revised for resubmission in 2019. Complementary work on Natural Flood Management in the Upper Sherbourne catchment is being delivered thanks to funding from the Environment Agency.

### Rural Living Landscape Scheme

Agricultural land covers 70% of Warwickshire. To realise our vision we must collaborate with farmers to support nature's recovery. Influencing government policy will put environmental principles at the heart of decision making and may turn farmers into our allies. New approaches to landscape scale conservation were needed to increase our impact on agricultural land, improving land management for wildlife and show farmers what is achievable. Our partnership with Severn Trent Water (STW) is part of our regional work with Worcestershire and Shropshire Wildlife Trusts. Project officers funded by STW focus on reducing the use of metaldehyde (the active ingredient in slug pellets), which impacts water quality. They also work on the take-up of capital grants to support improved land management practices, reducing the impact of farming on rivers. The Arden Farm Wildlife Network is a three year project funded by Natural England's Facilitation Fund. Our network of farmers share best practice on environmental management and we support training requested by the farmers. We have formed relationships within the farming community, and our network of 21 members covers over 9,000 ha of Warwickshire. This approach is creating a bigger, better, more joined up area in the farmed landscape at relatively low cost.

### Community Engagement Through A Species Campaign

Funding for Help for Hedgehogs was extended to October 2019, when it is expected to cease. So, in 2018 efforts were made to widen the theme of our species-led work from hedgehogs into wildlife gardening, through a partnership with Garden Organic and using the HS2 Community & Environment Fund. An expression of interest for a three year, £650,000 project was accepted and the full project will be worked up for submission before July 2019. If successful, this commenced in January 2020 with approximately £300,000 coming to us to mitigate the effect of construction of HS2 by a series of activities in local green spaces.



### Health & Well-Being

Our partnership with MIND ran throughout 2018 and legacy arrangements are being made for the end of funding in 2020. Your Wild Life delivered volunteering sessions in Solihull, with well-attended sessions at the Parkridge Centre and a roaming reserves team volunteering at our reserves. We secured a Reaching Communities grant (Big Lottery Fund), and a small grant from Public Health (Warwickshire) to enable similar work in Leamington until 2021. Our reputation for work in this area is solid, and partners' confidence in our ability to deliver is growing.



### Environmental Angling Centre

Based on discussions over previous years, a vision for an Environmental Angling Centre at Lea Marston was agreed between the Trust, the Angling Trust and the Environmental Agency (the landowner). This practical, learning experience will be delivered through an exemplary building and well-managed natural site - building a love of angling and wildlife. The joint venture between three organisations will create a place to experience nature and learn new skills, as well as generating income to support revenue and maintenance costs. The site will contribute to landscape-scale nature conservation in the Tame Valley and will epitomise the 25 Year Environment Plan. We aim to fundraise for a new building, underwater fish observatory, and habitat creation as part of the site's management plan and the Warwickshire Biodiversity Action Plan.



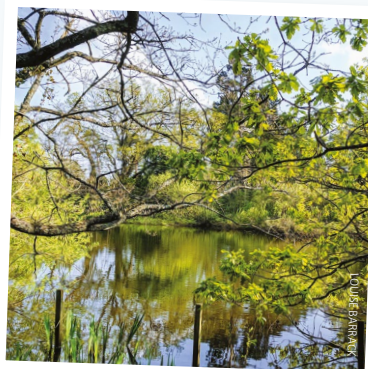
### Membership

Our recruitment company Wildlife Fundraising Central Ltd, which the Trust co-owns with six other Wildlife Trusts, performed well at the start of 2018 but the departure of key staff led to declining performance in Warwickshire. At the end of 2018, membership was 22,674 (a decrease of 1.6% from 23,049 in 2017) from 10,055 subscriptions (a decrease of 1.2% from 10,179 in 2017). The retention rate in 2018 was 88.1% (meaning a lapse rate of 11.9%). Membership subscriptions constitute our financial foundations and we rely on past and present support to continue the work of the Trust. Despite a small fall in membership, membership income rose by just over 7%. We are grateful to those who remembered local wildlife by giving a lasting gift in their wills, which contributed to £141,640 of total legacies received. Special thanks to: Ken Bond, John Brightley, Glenda Catling, Betty Davies Will Trust, Philip Geoffrey Ruben Hayes, The Hayes Family Living Trust, Philip Pain, Maureen Parkes, Anthony William Pratley, Michael J Senior.



### Visitor Centres

In January the tea room at Parkridge came in-house and we added the staff to our payroll. Therefore, 2018 was the first full year in which the Trust managed the entire visitor experience. There have been challenges but visitors are becoming increasingly aware of the Trust's work. Strategies for both Parkridge and Brandon Marsh were developed with an external consultant, and led to a restructure of staff and an influx of new skills and experience into two new roles. Each Centre now has specific messaging and retail and membership recruitment objectives. Therefore, they are now set to fully support the Trust's wider work.



### Training and Youth Work

In March 2018, our Wilder Career Choice project ended after seven years of support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a regional programme of high quality training to equip people with the skills to pursue careers in heritage.

The Trust managed this programme with the Wildlife Trusts in Birmingham and the Black Country, Leicestershire and Rutland, Shropshire and Staffordshire and the Wyre Community Land Trust as placement partners. The year-long work-based programmes taught trainees about the ecology, behaviour and identification of species and practical conservation heritage skills.

Additional training focused on volunteer management, communication, project management and interpersonal skills. In the past four years

**31** trainees completed the 1 year placement

**2** trainees completed additional 6 month placements

**16** placements went to women, 17 to men

**26** trainees left with a Certificate in Work Based Conservation

**7** trainees gained Diploma in Work Based Conservation

**4** trainees gained Forest Schools qualification

**18** trainees gained chainsaw licence

**29** trainees found employment in the sector since completing their placement

## Keeping Up The Good Work

Our management of nature reserves means we looked after wildlife where our supporters live, work and play. Through the Habitat Biodiversity Audit we surveyed habitats on other people's land, building our knowledge of local wildlife and its condition and ecological functionality. We welcomed tens of thousands of local children to our environmental education programme, and similar numbers to our visitor centres, plus thousands to our vibrant and varied events. In providing a voice for nature, we commented on everything from Environmental Statements submitted by HS2 to major housing development. Projects and collaborations we have entered into have delivered, including those within the Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership and the Dunsmore Living Landscape.



## The Most Of Who We Are

The review that informed the 2017-2022 strategic plan encouraged us to recognise some simple truths about the Trust. In recent years, the Trust has turned over approximately £7M and employed 150 staff. By these key measures it is one of the largest Wildlife Trusts, and the largest single county Trust. Our trading subsidiary, Middlemarch, means we are also the only Wildlife Trust to operate across the whole of the UK. Therefore, in 2018 we resourced the Trust more adequately by administering the Finance and Human Resources departments with new posts and new systems. We are now assessing the medium to long-term needs of the charity and trading subsidiary, with plans to investigate the benefits and disadvantages of colocation. The charity has also made greater use of Middlemarch's expertise within Warwickshire.

## Volunteering

A full-time coordinator was appointed in May 2018. With new GDPR regulations coming into force in May 2018, the Trust reviewed and overhauled its volunteering policy, whilst going over volunteering forms, records and figures. Our newly improved figures show that we have 608 active volunteers. These amazing people donated over 23,000 hours to help the Trust carry out its work in 2018. This is only what we managed to record and there is still a huge amount of unrecorded hours. Even so, our volunteers carry out the equivalent workload of 15 full-time staff. Our aim is to boost the sustainability of reserves-based work parties and build volunteer support in key, under-resourced areas of our operations such as the visitor centres. Initial work is underway to identify and resolve barriers to volunteering. This year we also nominated the Brandon Marsh Voluntary Conservation Team for two awards, including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the highest award for local volunteer groups).



# Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2018

Income and endowments from	Unrestricted Funds (£) Undesignated	Unrestricted Funds (£) Designated	Restricted Funds (£)	Endowment Funds (£)	Total 2018 (£)	Total 2017 (£)
Donations and legacies	866,135	-	847	-	866,982	765,559
Charitable activities	244,379	-	1,580,016	-	1,824,395	1,733,051
Other trading activities	4,716,564	-	-	-	4,716,564	4,530,826
Investment income	15,074	-	-	-	15,074	8,416
<b>Total income</b>	<b>5,842,152</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,580,863</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,423,015</b>	<b>7,037,852</b>
Raising funds	4,498,712	28,808	369	-	4,527,889	4,463,594
Charitable activities	352,542	400,777	1,503,614	21,810	2,278,743	2,296,854
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>4,851,254</b>	<b>429,585</b>	<b>1,503,983</b>	<b>21,810</b>	<b>6,806,632</b>	<b>6,760,448</b>
Transfers between funds	(1,180,586)	1,180,586	-	-	-	-
<b>Net income/ (expenditure)</b>	<b>990,898</b>	<b>(429,585)</b>	<b>76,880</b>	<b>(21,810)</b>	<b>616,383</b>	<b>277,404</b>
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2018	1,974,859	2,029,648	560,966	1,744,078	6,309,551	6,032,147
<b>Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2018</b>	<b>1,785,171</b>	<b>2,780,649</b>	<b>637,846</b>	<b>1,722,268</b>	<b>6,925,934</b>	<b>6,309,551</b>

The financial summary shown above is intended as a précis of selected key points, and does not contain all the information necessary for a full understanding of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's financial affairs. For further information, please see the full annual report and financial statements on our website.

[www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/reports](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/reports)



Warwickshire Wildlife Trust is a registered charity, (no. 209200) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England, (no. 005852470).