



**Birmingham &  
Black Country**  
Wildlife Trust



# Annual Report

For the year ended 31 March 2024





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# Welcome to our Annual Report for 2023-24

2023-24 was the first full year of implementing our new strategy for a Wilder Birmingham and Black Country, and this report reflects a period of both change and continuity as we have invested in some of the key building blocks to support its delivery. Despite the unprecedented challenges faced globally, and against the backdrop of the ongoing cost of living crisis, we are pleased to say that the Trust has continued to make good progress across its remit to tackle the nature and climate crises and connect more people with local wild spaces across our region.

Building on previous investment to strengthen our core operations, in 2023 we invested in further new roles designed to support the Trust's development. In August, we welcomed Daniel Brown in the role of Director of Fundraising and Engagement, and in November, Dr Norman Dandy in the role of Director of Nature Recovery. Both bring significant skills and experience to the Trust which will benefit us in the coming years. Other staff changes have included the appointment of a new Conservation Manager, Jacob Williams, previously Senior Reserves Officer at the Trust.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to senior team members that moved on in 2023 after many years of work that has benefited the Trust tremendously.

In the following pages you will read of our progress in key work areas including managing our reserves and community engagement. This year we have continued to deliver significant projects which enable habitat restoration and improvements across key priority landscapes. We are particularly proud of our work along the River Stour, funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, as well as on the important heathlands of Walsall through the partnership project Purple Horizons. The positive impact of effective partnership working cannot be understated. Partnerships with all kind of different organisations: from local groups, local authorities, other environmental NGOs to national bodies are critical for enabling us to meet the huge challenges presented by the climate and ecological crises and form the bed-rock of our way of working.

Our goal of inspiring one in four people to take action by 2030 remains at the heart of our mission to get more people on nature's side. You will read that our engagement work has helped us connect more people to the natural world on their doorstep, and in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them. Mobilising local communities to take action for nature is vital if we are to achieve our goal of 30% of Birmingham and the Black Country's landscape managed for the benefit of wildlife by 2030.

As a membership-based organisation our members continue to provide the foundations of our success, and expanding their numbers and support for our work and campaigns remains a high priority. We are committed to growing our membership and making it more inclusive of all communities.

None of our achievements would be possible without the support of our fantastic members and volunteers who are so committed and generous with their time and resources. A special thank you to all those members who have increased their membership donations this year to help us weather the ongoing cost of living challenge.

Our efforts are augmented by the generosity of our members, volunteers, partners, donors, and grant funders, as well as by the commitment of our Council of Trustees and staff. However you chose to support the Trust in 2023-24, thank you!

Council has pleasure in presenting its report together with the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024. Council has adopted the provisions of the Charities SORP (FRS102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to Charities preparing their Accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (effective 1 January 2019) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

**Lisa Pinney MBE**  
Chair of Trustees

**Dr Delia Garrat**  
Chief Executive





# 1.1 Objectives and Aims

The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country Limited is required by charity and company law to act within the objects of its Memorandum of Association, which are as follows:

## THE WILDLIFE TRUST FOR BIRMINGHAM AND THE BLACK COUNTRY'S OBJECTIVES ARE:

### 1. For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation maintenance study and protection of:

- i. wildlife and its habitats;
- ii. places of natural beauty;
- iii. places of zoological, botanical, geographical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- iv. features of landscape with geological, physiographical, or amenity value; in particular, but not exclusively, in ways that further biodiversity.

### 2. To advance the education of the public in:

- v. the principles and practice of sustainable development;
- vi. the principles and practice of biodiversity conservation; in particular, but not exclusively, in urban areas.

## OUR VISION, PURPOSE & APPROACH

In June 2022, we launched our new eight-year strategy for 2022 - 2030, a Wilder Birmingham and Black Country

### Our Vision

A Wilder Birmingham and the Black Country with more green and wild spaces where nature thrives, and everyone has access to nature in their daily lives.

### Our Purpose

Lead Nature's Recovery in Birmingham and the Black Country, empower and support people to take positive local action for the benefit of wildlife and nature, and ensure natural habitats play a key role in addressing the ecological and climate emergencies.

### Our Approach

We work for nature's recovery; protecting, restoring and creating wildlife-rich, accessible spaces that benefit people and wildlife.

We are ambitious in our desire not just to slow, but to reverse the decline of wildlife.

We lead by example, using evidence based approaches to demonstrate how nature's recovery can be achieved in urban areas.

We demonstrate what is possible, and inspire, empower and enable people from all backgrounds, cultures, identities and abilities to bring about our vision with us, embracing the diversity of our society to change the natural world for the better.

We look to establish common cause and work in partnership with others, to develop new, innovative ways to do what's right for nature and deliver impact in support of our vision.

We speak with a bold and confident voice, to tell the truth about the state of nature and what needs to be done to put it into recovery.

## OUR VISION IS UNDERPINNED BY THREE BOLD GOALS

### 1. Nature is in recovery with abundant, diverse wildlife across Birmingham and the Black Country

By 2030 we want to see 30% of Birmingham and the Black Country's landscape managed for the benefit of wildlife.

### 2. People are taking action for nature and the climate across Birmingham and the Black Country

By 2030 we want to see at least 1 in 4 people across Birmingham and the Black Country taking action for nature.

### 3. Nature is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems

By 2030 we aim for 500 hectares of land to be improved to provide nature-based solutions to the ecological and climate crises.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country exists to promote the care and protection of the environment and therefore provides a clear public benefit. The Trust's philosophy is based on the belief that the natural world deserves conserving for its own sake and, since this is widely perceived to be a worthy aim of public policy, it may fairly be regarded as a benefit to the public at large. However, the public benefits provided by The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country go much further.

Firstly, our nature reserves are used by the public. At most sites information and interpretation is provided to visitors.

Secondly, our education programmes are aimed at schools, colleges, adult groups and the wider public.

Thirdly, our information gathering and provision of expert advice and opinion to local authorities and others helps to ensure that planning decisions are made on a rational basis taking full account of the public benefit of wildlife.

Fourthly, the involvement of many volunteers in our work provides an outlet for altruistic endeavor, which is of special benefit to those involved as well as delivering benefits to the wider public.

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity' (PB2).



# 1.2 Summary of the Year

Each year the Trust produces a detailed Business Plan which determines the activities to be carried out during the year. Results are monitored throughout the year with regular reports being produced for Trust Council. The main headlines for 2023-24 are as follows:

## GOAL 1: SPACE FOR NATURE IS PROTECTED, RESTORED, CREATED AND VALUED NATURE

### Landscape scale conservation

Our Wilder Birmingham and Black Country strategy commits us to significantly increasing our delivery of landscape-scale projects. This reflects our ambition to not only hang on to the nature we have, but 'scale-up' and deliver extensive habitat restoration and creation that re-connects our wild species and habitats, and re-establishes fundamental ecological processes. This year we have focused our efforts on delivering change across two landscapes: the catchment of the River Stour in the southern part of the Black Country, and the heathland landscape of Walsall and northern Birmingham.

The Love Your River Stour project, which came to a close at the end of the year, enabled our staff to work with volunteers to enhance habitats along this important wildlife corridor. We created species diverse grassland, improved woodland, by thinning out plantations and planting of native trees, shrubs and ground flora and restored ponds through de-silting them, removing invasive species, and planting them with native species. Work was also carried out on pathways to improve access across sites along the river. An extensive programme of engagement included 24 public events reaching 281 people (including 17 guided walks), two tool-use courses for 16-24 year olds, and workshops with local schools. In these, 150 students learnt about their local river, including how they can help keep it clean through the 4P's and 'sewage soup' activities.

A major project for us on the Stour is our work installing a fish bypass channel at Stourton Castle, just west of Stourbridge. This is being delivered in collaboration with the Environment Agency and our neighbours at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, and demonstrates our commitment to working in partnership to achieve nature's recovery. The project will contribute significantly to the re-naturalisation of the river by restoring the opportunity for fish to move up and down this stretch, which has been

prevented for many years by a weir. Additionally, we will create a species-rich woodland shelterbelt at the site, and improve the grassland through over-seeding with native species such as yellow-rattle, oxeye daisy, field scabious, and red clover, amongst others. This year has involved considerable scoping, planning, and design works, along with engaging JPR Environmental, a specialist wetland contractor who will deliver the in-channel works next year.



Heathland is a globally rare habitat that is created by a combination of ecological conditions and human activities, particularly tree removal followed by livestock grazing, over long periods of time. The lowland heath landscape running from south-east from Cannock Chase, through Walsall to Sutton Park also saw significant work by the Trust this year. Within the Purple Horizons initiative in this area, we have not only undertaken restoration works focused on recovering pollinator populations, but have also been engaging with the local land-management community to advise and support them with conservation works. Staff have visited numerous sites across the project area to discuss habitat improvements and to plan management options, and we have now established good working relationships with 7 farmers and 4 golf courses. Our aim is to build on this strong foundation to achieve habitat improvement and creation across the landscape, not only for heathland, but also to improve woodlands and river corridors. Also, within this initiative, our colleagues at EcoRecord have been developing and applying methods to

understand where in the landscape there is greatest potential to create heathland. This 'opportunity mapping' has brought together a large number of sources of information and data to identify the locations that are most suitable for habitat work to be undertaken.

These landscape-scale projects have enabled the Trust to take a more holistic approach to its conservation work, improving the resilience of our ecosystems and beginning to reconnect their most valuable core elements.

### Nature Reserves

After the success of the previous year at Moseley Bog & Joy's Wood, installing new site infrastructure to enable better access, this year's focus was on the habitats within the reserve. Work has continued re-wetting the fen area, removing remaining willow and alder. This has had a dramatic but positive affect on the habitat with it now retaining water. This has two significant impacts: the first, is the recovery of species from the fen vegetative community, such as the regionally

uncommon wood horsetail; the second, is the cool micro-climate this creates in the site throughout the year, which is important in an urban area.

Diversification of the understory and field layer of areas of Joy's Wood continues. Use of native plants propagated and grown-on through our Growing Local Flora project is leading to the woodland areas becoming more natural, providing an even better habitat for wildlife.

At Portway Hill, we have been working closely with the UNESCO Black Country Geopark, including hosting UNESCO representatives who travelled from Uruguay and Spain. They visited a number of Geo sites, including Portway Hill, and they were hugely impressed with the sense of community pride around them. Portway Hill was also selected as a case study site, as part of a Natural England initiative, exploring the connection between geology and biodiversity, specifically around sites which are managed for both.

This year has seen a number of challenges at Deer's Leap with regular vandalism of fences and infrastructure



around the site. Conservation Officers have continued to repair these and, on a more positive note, have had really good participation in walking events hosted on the site by the community. Volunteers from corporate groups have also been making a positive impact on the site's condition by reducing the amount of invasive Himalayan Balsam along the water course.

At Turner's Wood, new interpretation has been installed to provide details about the habitat as well as communicating the history of the site. The connected St Michael's Primary School continues to make use of the site for Forest School sessions, connecting their pupils to nature from an early age. The site hosted a couple of open days including our annual bluebell day that sees over one hundred visitors to the woods.

We completed a People's Postcode Lottery funded grant for the Friends of Hill Hook, which saw a new site management plan created, moving the site towards best management practice. The funding also enabled us to install a new meadow interpretation panel and produce leaflets for the Friends of Group, which is available on our Hill Hook web page.

**GOAL 2: PEOPLE ARE TAKING ACTION FOR NATURE AND THE CLIMATE ACROSS BIRMINGHAM AND THE BLACK COUNTRY**

We have been developing our approach to community engagement through the Wildlife Trust's collective Team Wilder ethos, and we have made a significant contribution to the progression of this ethos. The underlying principle of Team Wilder is to describe "how we connect with, listen, and collaborate with a wide range of people, building reciprocal trusted relationships at a local level. We will support and facilitate individuals, communities, and stakeholders, to make meaningful changes for nature's recovery. This leads to more people influencing each other to take sustained collective action for nature and climate to achieve 30 by 30 nationally".

**Youth Action for Nature**

Putting the Team Wilder ethos into practice, our Youth Action for Nature Manager has continued to make connections and deliver sessions with groups around the city, building partnerships with communities. In doing so, our aim has been to give agency back to the communities we are working with and help facilitate them to develop their own meaningful relationships with wildlife. This means we are working widely throughout the region with partners whose values connect to our own. Examples have included:

- Working with community arts agency CraftSpace, holding a climate café with LGBT+ young people.
- Engaging with Sustainably Muslim to work with communities in Hodge Hill and Bromford, delivering events like a cyanotype printing workshop and wildlife walk.
- Helping set up a youth entomology group.
- Supporting St Margaret's Community Trust, helping young people set up a bird feeding station, making birdfeeders and taking part in birdwatching.
- Hosting a Lunar Campfire at our Centre of the Earth site, in partnership with *We Don't Settle*, a youth-led arts organisation that works with minoritised young people.

**Education and Engagement**

The Trust continues to operate the majority of our education and engagement activities out of Centre of the Earth in Winson Green and EcoPark in Small Heath. This has been the first full year of operation at EcoPark since our redevelopment project there, which saw a new building installed on site, and it has hosted an incredibly busy programme of activity over 2023 to 2024.

Both sites have offered a really wide range of events, including activities such as Bat Walks, Apple Days, Family Friendly Activity Days and Nature Tots (for pre-school age children). We have also facilitated special events with community partners, such as a growing local food project at EcoPark in partnership with the Heritage Seed Library, and a woodland dinner at Centre of the Earth in partnership with Civic Square.

Demand for schools' sessions at our two main sites has been incredibly strong. Most days of the week will see almost all available school sessions across both sites booked up, and across the year we hosted around 5,200 children for onsite visits. It is clear that the relaunch of EcoPark after our redevelopment work there has been a massive success and the provision is deeply appreciated by local schools. Feedback from our school partners is extremely positive and we are particularly delighted that the majority of schools using our education facilities are within walking distance of the site concerned, showing that we are making excellent progress at building strong and lasting partnerships with the local schools that form our priority target.

**Training**

The Trust successfully updated our administrative processes and policies to ensure ongoing compliance with AIM Accreditation procedures. A variety of Level 1 Training courses have been successfully delivered both at EcoPark and Centre of the Earth, but also at other sites in partnership with local organisations, such as at Birmingham Settlement's Red Shed. A new woodworking shop has been installed at EcoPark, enabling the Trust to re-introduce green woodworking sessions, but also giving us the ability to do some woodwork (such as creating fence posts from timber felled on our sites) ourselves.

**Health and Well-being**

We have successfully delivered a year long programme, targeting patients from local GP surgeries, in partnership with the Active Wellbeing Society. This project has been very well received and discussions have opened up about a more significant, longer term plan for developing our health and wellbeing offer.

**Communications**

2023 to 2024 has seen steady and positive progress in both the reach, and impact of our communications activity, with the Trust talking confidently about the importance of nature's recovery to people's lives.

We pushed up our distribution figures. Our social media channels made 2,355,502 impressions, our e-newsletter





audience increased to a quarterly distribution of 46,444 people (12.6% growth on last year), and our main website recorded 189,900 total unique visits, with the most popular page being our guide to urban foxes.

Just as important as the size of our reach, is what we are sharing with people. We have had success with before and after images, showing the changes following our habitat improvement and conservation works. For example, an image of our staff creating a meadow at Manor Farm Park in 2022, combined with a photograph showing the meadow in glorious flower in 2023, really resonated with people and the post was shared around the globe. The post has been seen by more than half a million people. It has been shared across America, Czech Republic, Sweden, Serbia, Nepal, Italy and many more countries, and the response has been absolutely fantastic, with scores of comments complimenting us and thanking us for our work.

2024 is of course an important year politically with both the West Midlands Combined Authority Mayoral Election and a general election in year, and we have been strongly advocating for nature's recovery to politicians of all parties. We've been collaborating closely

with local partner organisations such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, RSPB and Friends of the Earth to ensure our voices our speaking together strongly.

Following the sad passing of Benjamin Zephaniah in December, we uploaded to our website a series of podcasts about his own connection to nature, which he recorded at Moseley Bog & Joy's Wood in 2013.

These have not been publicly available before and remain online at [www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/Moseley-Bog-Podcasts](http://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/Moseley-Bog-Podcasts)

Finally, as well as communicating through our own channels, we have made a number of appearances on live radio and TV. Items include a piece on urban foxes on BBC Radio, another BBC Radio interview to encourage people to head out to witness startling murmurations, an ITV Central News feature on EcoPark, an interview at Centre of Earth to promote participation in the City of Nature challenge, and much more.

Membership

Over the course of the year we saw a slight reduction in the number of active members of the Trust. Overall numbers for the year 2023 to 2024 are 413 gained, 472 lost, for a total movement of minus 59 members. (This compares to 2022 to 2023 figures of 530 gained, 512 lost, for a movement of plus 18 members). Our total membership now stands at 3442 memberships consisting of 6929 individual members (when joint and family memberships are included).

Though this slight reduction in members is disappointing, especially considering we had hoped to grow our membership in year, conversation with other Wildlife Trusts in the region has shown that this has been a difficult period across the movement and we are not alone in having trouble sustaining current membership levels.

To this end, we trialled a number of initiatives to test our membership recruitment models, for example testing online recruitment through a Digital Hub programme led by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, and placing more points of contact into our membership renewal process.

Despite the reduction in number of members, income actually increased slightly, with membership income of £249,150 as against £246,131 the previous year. This is in part due to an upgrade campaign the Trust launched to see if existing members were willing to commit more funds to us. 90 members were kind enough to support our work by increasing their monthly donation to the Trust.

With a new Director of Fundraising and Engagement in post, the Trust will continue to review options for membership growth, as our generous and committed members remain the lifeblood of the organisation.

Volunteers

We would like to thank the volunteers who have once again made such a difference for our wild spaces across the region. Volunteers have committed time and energy to support our work across all of our nature reserves and environmental centres, community projects and our head office.

Our corporate volunteering programme continued to be successful enabling local businesses to make a difference for wildlife.







### GOAL 3: NATURE IS PLAYING A CENTRAL AND VALUED ROLE IN HELPING TO ADDRESS LOCAL AND GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Throughout the year, the Trust has worked hard to deliver projects that support nature's recovery in ways that help people meet local challenges.

The evidence that nature can help communities cope with issues such as extreme weather, pollution, and flooding is overwhelming, and this is increasingly being referred to as 'nature-based solutions'. It can involve establishing natural drainage systems, such as reed beds, that 'slow the flow' of rainwater, helping to reduce flooding and associated pollution. Alternatively, it may include planting trees in public spaces to provide shade, thus reducing heat stress. 'Nature-based solutions' therefore means creating, protecting,

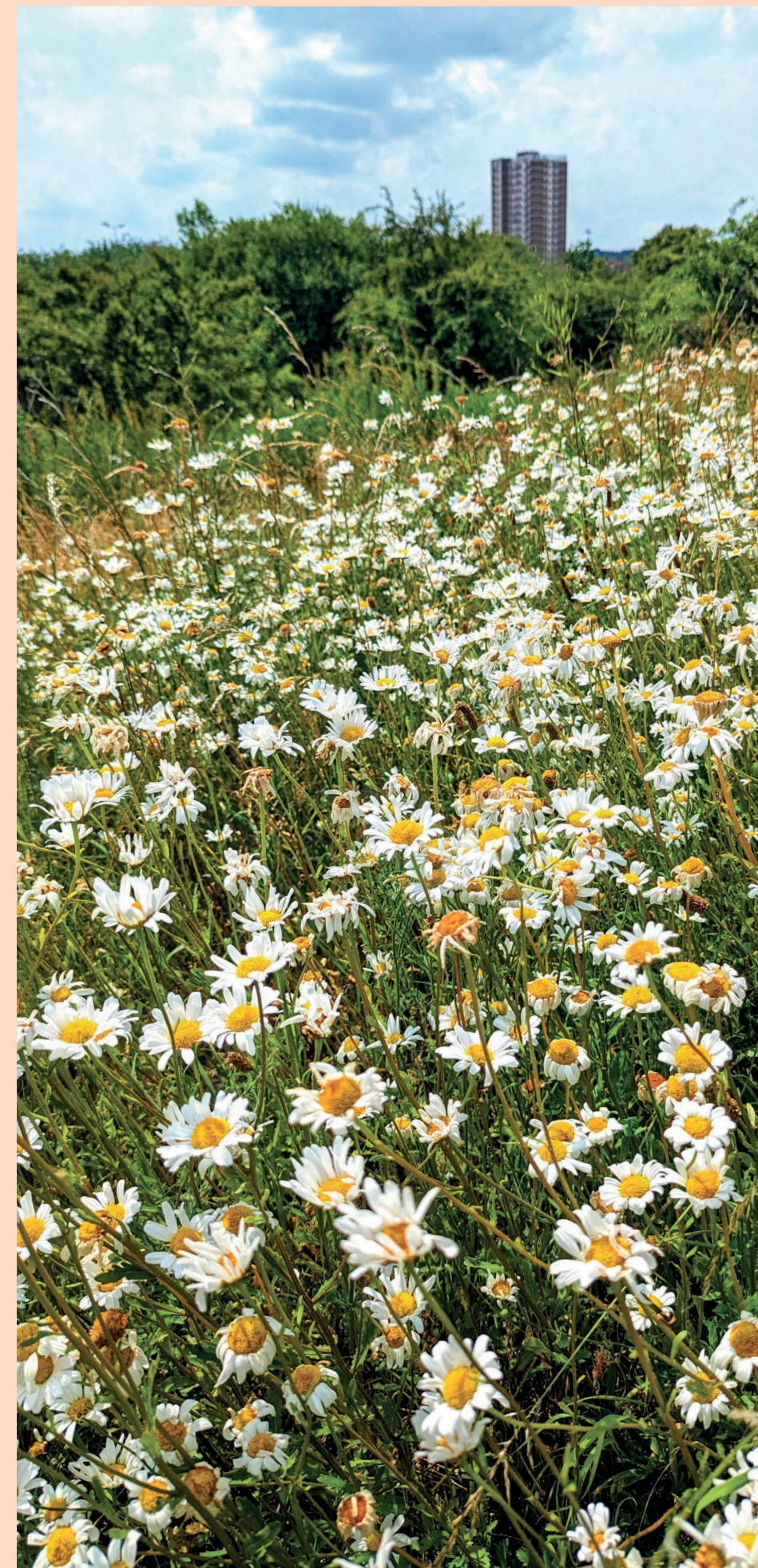
restoring, or improving urban green spaces, sometimes just small areas, that can be accessed by many people. For example, this year the Trust created two high density wildflower swards on West Bromwich High Street. Working with our partners at Multistory, the seeding and planting was done as a community day with staff from the retail park, local councillors, local colleges, nurseries, and other members of the community. This project will continue with training courses and three engagement walks.

We have also continued to support Birmingham City Council to deliver the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) programme. This national initiative is designed to protect urban nature and ensure quality green space is accessible for everyone, now and into the future. This year we helped the city council prepare for the introduction of biodiversity net gain (BNG), by carrying out assessments of 35 of the city's parks and public open spaces. BNG legislation requires developers to increase biodiversity by 10% in relation to their building projects, and is set to become an important source of funding for nature conservation.

Our work is helping the Council develop their 'habitat bank', a catalogue of publicly accessible green spaces that can receive BNG investment for nature restoration and improvement. Further to this, we have advised Walsall Council in their efforts to draft guidance on the 'strategic significance' of local habitats and species an important element of BNG assessment. The Trust's prior work developing the interim local nature recovery strategy is being used as the basis to inform this important new work.

Planning processes continue to provide important opportunities to protect and recover nature in urban areas, and during the year the Trust responded to 58 applications across the five planning authorities we work with. Whilst the outcomes of planning processes are not always what the Trust advocates for, we play an important role in placing nature's needs in clear view of the decision-makers and ensuring the system gives all due consideration to nature.

Two of our authorities published local plans this year and the Trust submitted responses to both. In addition, the Trust considered two further masterplans under public consultation, in particular, the Sandwell Valley 10 Year Master Plan. The Trust's response strengthened the case for recognising the importance of Sandwell Valley as a critical, hugely valuable part of the Birmingham and Black Country's nature recovery network. We advocated that any development plan should not just put the protection of biodiversity at its core, but actually enhance the site's value for nature. Allied to these planning related activities, our team also provided nature recovery advice to 79 land managers, including farmers, educational establishments, sports clubs, and others.





# 1.3 Financial Review

## Financial Position

During the financial year 2024, the Trust generated a deficit of £211,943 (2023 surplus: £29,334). Income of £1,287,208 was generated (2023: £1,650,655). Actual expenditure for 2024 was £1,512,838, excluding gains on investment (2023: £1,628,889).

Trust income is split between unrestricted and restricted funds. Unrestricted income represents money raised or given to support the Trust's achievement of core charitable aims. Membership, donations, general fundraising, and some charitable trust donations were given as unrestricted income.

Restricted income is given for a specific purpose with clear outputs to be achieved. Restricted income for this period includes Natural Prospects Traineeships and Love Your River Stour funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, other funding from Natural England, West Midlands Combined Authority, the Environment Agency and others. Restricted income accounts for 48% of our total income for the year.

The Trust has invested in membership, as an essential income stream that enables us to deliver core charitable aims that are not always possible to fund through restricted income, such as our work to protect nature through the planning system. Membership accounts for 19% (2023: 15%) of the Trust's income and the Business Plan sets out how this will grow in coming years. Unrestricted income (including membership) is 52% (2023: 69%) of total income.

## Principal Funding Sources

### Income

The Trust has a range of funding sources. The key sources are outlined as follows:

#### 1. Membership, donations, legacies:

Includes income from our members, donations given at events and through our presence in the community and legacies.

#### 2. Charitable activities:

Projects and services delivered in Birmingham & Black Country in line with the Trust's aims and objectives.

#### 3. Trading & other income:

includes royalties received, interest income, hire income and rental income.

### Expenditure

The Trust's expenditure decreased to £1,512,838 (2023: £1,628,889). Staff costs were reduced as part of the changes in the Senior Management Team and other savings were delivered with reduced income levels. Major headings are explained below:

#### 1. Charitable Activity:

This covers our staffing costs and direct project costs to deliver projects and services so as to meet our charitable aims and objectives.

#### 2. Fundraising Costs:

We are now responsible for our own membership recruitment although we also operate in an informal partnership with other local Trusts to maximise our use of digital membership recruitment. Our costs include recruitment through the Join Anywhere scheme via other Wildlife Trusts, online membership recruitment as well as production of membership magazines throughout the year.

#### 3. Overheads:

These are the running costs to maintain our sites and headquarters covering areas such as rent, rates, gas, electric, telephones and insurance.

#### 4. Pensions:

Royal London manage all pension funds on behalf of the staff members. The Trust contributes 7% in addition to staff contributions.

Every penny we receive is spent on achieving our charitable aims. Overheads include rents for our sites, running our office and insurance to ensure we are a responsible and sustainable organisation.

## Reserves policy

Trustees keep the reserves of the Trust under regular review. Having regard to the increasing scale of the Trust's operations and COVID uncertainties, in 2020 the Trustees set a reserves policy to aim at reserves equivalent to nine months' core operating costs, equating to approximately £425,000. Such reserves would be held in case of any sudden decline in income or unexpected cost or risk exposure, and to ensure that the

commitments to meet contractual obligations to staff, premises and funding partners could be met.

After designated funds of £Nil (2023: £223,542) and the revaluation reserve of £59,239 (2023: £59,239), the Trustees have met this aim with current unrestricted reserves standing at £1,341,652 (2023: £1,274,557).

As this is significantly above the reserves policy the Trustees and management team are looking into where investments can be made during the following financial year to support the charitable objectives of the Trust.

## Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of a Risk Register and Risk Management Policy, reviewed quarterly by Trustees via delegation to the Finance and Risk Committee. Procedures are also in place to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation, policies and procedures including frequent audit of health and safety protocol.

We take every effort to minimise our environmental impacts and intend to work towards full environmental impact assessments and audits.

External risks are analysed, and attempts made to mitigate or plan for them where possible. Currently identified external risks include (in no particular order): the impact of public sector funding cuts, recent negative fundraising media stories, climate change and globalisation, and the increasing pressures and competing demands for land use for housing, transportation and economic regeneration purposes.

The Trustees have examined the principal areas of the charity's operations and considered the major risks which may arise in each of these areas. In the opinion of the Trustees, the charity has established resources and review systems which, under normal conditions, should allow the risks identified by them to be mitigated to an acceptable level in its day to day operations.

# 1.4 Looking Ahead

## GOAL 1: NATURE IS IN RECOVERY WITH ABUNDANT, DIVERSE WILDLIFE ACROSS BIRMINGHAM AND THE BLACK COUNTRY

The coming year will see our work across Walsall's landscape continue through the Purple Horizons initiative and we hope to secure further funds to significantly strengthen and expand that work. Whilst heathland will continue to be a priority for us in that area, we aim to broaden our conservation work to encompass woodland, grassland, and river corridor restoration across the borough. If we can secure adequate funds, we plan to co-deliver that alongside a substantial programme of community engagement.

Our focus will also expand significantly in Dudley following a funding award of £99,605 from our partners at the West Midlands Combined Authority. This will enable us to deliver the Dudley's Paths to Nature's Recovery project, which will see a wide range of activities in the town including conservation works, community engagement, community science, and nature partnership building. These will be brought together through development of a new 'green' walking route through green spaces along Dudley's landscape of limestone hills.

Our restoration work will centre on improving habitat for priority species locally, including the green hairstreak butterfly, and the lesser horseshoe bats that are found in the town's limestone caverns. This project will also support the establishment of a new Birmingham and Black Country Invertebrate Group (BIG) to grow enthusiasm and participation in invertebrate biological recording across the area.

Our river corridor conservation activities next year will centre on the landscape of the upper catchment of the river Rea, in south Birmingham. The second phase of the Natural Rivers Green Corridors project, is a long term project funded by the Environment Agency. It will see the removal of man-made barriers from the channels of the main river and its tributaries, such as the Bourn Brook, along with the



reconnection of these channels to their natural floodplains and restoration of riverside habitats. The project will also include further community engagement activities including working with local 'Friends of' groups along with citizen science monitoring. In addition to this project, the Trust will also be working in partnership to deliver further river and wetland conservation. We will be playing active roles in both the The Midlands Crayfish Partnership, convened by Buglife, and a project to Explore, Enhance, Protect and Promote Smestow Valley Local Nature Reserve, being led by City of Wolverhampton Council.

The Trust will also be actively engaging with development of the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy being led by the West Midlands Combined Authority. This significant, strategic, initiative aims to agree and set out priorities for nature's recovery across the West Midlands. We will be contributing substantively to the process of mapping the most valuable existing areas for nature, as well as developing measures and specific proposals for creating, improving, or restoring habitats for nature and providing wider environmental, including climate-related, benefits.

Through these and other projects, the Trust is aiming to stimulate nature's recovery across our urban landscapes through creating, restoring, and improving heaths, woods, grasslands and river corridors for wildlife throughout Birmingham and the Black Country.

## GOAL 2: PEOPLE ARE TAKING ACTION FOR NATURE AND THE CLIMATE ACROSS BIRMINGHAM AND THE BLACK COUNTRY

The Trust will continue to make significant contributions to the development and delivery of the Team Wilder ethos. This will be done both practically, through a variety of interesting and engaging events delivered to a wide and diverse audience, but also theoretically, as we will advocate for the importance of democratic dialogue with communities throughout Birmingham and the Black Country, giving everyone in the region the opportunity to forge their own meaningful connection to nature.

The Trust's two primary sites for community engagement and education activity will continue to support local people. At EcoPark we will explore new ways for the site to reach the community whilst ensuring that we remain committed to the hugely enthusiastic take-up of our provision for local schools. At Centre of the Earth, we will seek to secure the long term future of the site through lease or site ownership that will allow further investment into the site and upgrading of the building. We will look to grow community based partnerships local



to our sites such as with Birmingham Settlement and the Dolphin Centre.

We will campaign effectively throughout the general election and beyond to ensure that the Wildlife Trust's priorities for nature's recovery are communicated clearly, and that politicians from all parties hear our message and make a serious effort to ensure that work for nature's recovery becomes a priority for Government, both local and central.

The Trust retains its long term ambition to substantially grow our membership base. After a period where membership has remained fairly static, our focus for the next year is on testing different models of engagement with current members, and reaching out to potential new members, particularly attempting to leverage the best possible return from digital communication channels.

We serve a significant population in Birmingham and the Black Country and we aim to communicate the value of our work, and the benefits that come from supporting us, with more and more people regionally.

**GOAL 3: NATURE IS PLAYING A CENTRAL AND VALUED ROLE IN HELPING TO ADDRESS LOCAL AND GLOBAL PROBLEMS**

Developing our delivery of 'nature-based solutions' across Birmingham and the Black Country will be a priority for the Trust next year. We will be working with our partners to further our understanding of these sometimes novel forms of nature recovery, and what benefits they can deliver, and to match these to the varied needs of our diverse communities. This will enable us to prioritise which nature-based solutions to invest in to support people's attempts to cope with challenges such as: worsening mental health, air pollution, and the extreme weather caused by climate change.

Aligned with this, we will also continue working to identify the most appropriate locations for different 'nature-based solutions' and other conservation works. This not only needs to take in to account the needs of our communities and the different levels of access to nature they have, but

also the ecological constraints and opportunities generated by our land. To this end, EcoRecord will be working with the National Trust to carry out woodland creation opportunity mapping across the south of our region, specifically across large parts of Dudley and south Birmingham. This work will inform future woodland creation efforts and urban tree planting campaigns.

The emerging arena of 'green finance' is another important frontier for the Trust this coming year. Numerous forms of private finance, not least of which, biodiversity net gain, are being discussed as holding potential to support nature's recovery. This presents both risks and opportunities for our organisation as we seek to harness these new resources and direct them towards achieving genuine positive change for our local wild species, habitats, and landscapes. We will be paying particular attention to our role within biodiversity net gain processes. This will include developing how we support our partners within local council planning departments with its delivery, and ensuring that we hold all stakeholders to the very highest standards, pushing them to go above and beyond the basic levels now mandated by law.



# 1.5 Structure, Governance and Management

## Governing Document

The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country is one of 46 independent charities, which form a national partnership, The Wildlife Trusts, through the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. The Trust's family membership is also part of the national environment club, Wildlife Watch, which provides projects for members and affiliated schools, involving them directly with environmental Issues.

The Trust is a registered charity (No. 513615) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 01650938).

The Trust was established in 1980 to protect our local natural heritage and encourage people to engage, enjoy and get involved with the natural environment. We are a membership organisation, governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Work is carried out by a team of 27 at year end, equating to 23.8 full time equivalent posts. The Trust could not achieve the impacts we do without the commitment and hard work of a large number of volunteers.

In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

## Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

A Council of voluntary Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the Trust. The Trust's Council is elected from the membership, in accordance with its governing documents, at the Annual General Meeting: Trustees are either co-opted during the year or elected at the Annual General Meeting. Co-opted Trustees must stand for election at the Annual General Meeting immediately following their appointment. Council may co-opt additional members from time to time as it sees fit. Trustees are also Directors of the Company limited by guarantee.

## Organisational structure

The overall responsibility for the charity lies with the Trustee Directors who have delegated the day to day management of the charity to the Chief Executive. The Trustee Directors meet regularly to agree strategy, review progress, review financial information, and discuss policy issues. To facilitate effective operation, the Chief Executive has delegated authority within a scheme of delegation approved by the Trustees for some operational matters, including finance.

The Wildlife Trust is governed by an elected Council and is therefore directly accountable to the members of the charity.

### The Articles of Association gives Council the powers to:

- i Administer the affairs of the Charity
- ii Exercise all the powers of the Charity
- iii Determine the policy of the Charity

The Council formally delegates certain functions and responsibilities to two committees which deal with specific policy and organisational issues.

The day to day management of the Charity's affairs is the responsibility of the Chief Executive who is accountable exclusively to the Council for achieving, via the Business Plan, the Wildlife Trust's aims and for complying with Council policies. A team of professionally trained staff report to the Chief Executive.

## Induction and training of new trustees

The Trustee is provided with copies of the charity's key documents, including its memorandum and Articles of Association, Governance Handbook, latest Annual Report and Accounts, minutes of recent Council meetings, policy documents and further information on the role and responsibilities of charity trustees.

New Trustees are required to confirm that they have studied these documents and raised any queries or obtained

further information which they may need.

Following election or co-option of a Trustee, the Chair will introduce a new Trustee at their first meeting of Council. They will also participate in a formal induction process to familiarise them with the extent and nature of the Trust's operations. After election at the Annual General Meeting Trustees serve for a period of 3 years and may be elected for a further period of 3 years.

Developments in Charity Law and Practice are monitored and important developments are brought to the notice of Trustees by the Executive.

The relationship between staff and Trustees is crucial to the Trust's continuing success. Trustees bring a range of skills and experience to the responsibilities of the role which requires them to have an understanding of all aspects of the Trust's work. Trustees meet four times a year where they review strategy and operational performance, ratify policies and agree budgets.

## Key management remuneration

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or benefit for their work with the group and charity. Any connection between Trustees and any company the Trust works with is disclosed to the board. Financial details of which are disclosed in note 9 to the accounts.

Related parties and the wider network The Trust is affiliated to The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), a registered charity that acts as an umbrella group for county Wildlife trusts and provides assistance and co-ordination of activities and campaigning at a UK Level.

## Risk management

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.



Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of a Risk Register and Risk Management Policy, reviewed annually by Trustees. Procedures are also in place to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation, policies and procedures including frequent audit of health and safety protocol. We take every effort to minimise our environmental impacts and intend to work towards full environmental impact assessments and audits.

External risks are analysed and attempts made to mitigate or plan for them where possible. Currently identified external risks include (in no particular order) the impact of public sector funding cuts, recent negative fundraising media stories, climate change and globalisation, and the increasing pressures and competing demands for land use for housing, transportation and economic regeneration purposes.

The Trustees have examined the principal areas of the charity's operations and considered the major risks which may arise in each of these areas. In the opinion of the Trustees the charity has established resources and review systems which under normal conditions, should allow the risks identified by them to be mitigated to an acceptable level in its day to day operations.



Reference and administrative details

Registered Company No. 01650938  
(England and Wales)

Registered Charity No. 513615

Registered Office Centre Of The Earth,  
42 Norman Street, Winson Green,  
Birmingham, West Midlands B18 7EP

Trustees

- P W Beardmore
- A Bright
- L C Pinney MBE
- J D Larner
- D H Mclellan
- E F Mooney
- A Wayro
- D P Green
- L Besenyi (term ended 16.1.24)
- J Daniel
- S P Khan
- J M Moran
- A L Nicholson-Evans
- M W Saleem

Company Secretary E F Mooney

Auditors

Luckmans Duckett Parker Limited  
1110 Elliott Court,  
Coventry Business Park,  
Herald Avenue, Coventry  
West Midlands CV5 6UB

Bankers

Nat West Plc  
Chamber of Commerce House  
36 Highfield Road, Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 3BJ

Key management personnel

Chief Executive  
Dr Delia Garratt

Head of Conservation  
Simon Atkinson (Left 14/07/2023)

Head of Education and Engagement  
Gareth Morgan (Left 11/08/2023)

Head of Fundraising and Communications  
Emma Thompson (Left 02/06/2023)

Interim Head of Finance and Resources  
Ian Holmes (Left 03/11/2023)

Director of Fundraising and Engagement  
Daniel Brown (From 14/08/2023)

Director of Nature Recovery  
Norman Dandy (From 13/11/2023)

Director of Finance  
Hana Chatwin (From 06/11/2023)

1.6 Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the directors of The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and The Black Country for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business;

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

So far as the Trustees are aware, there is no relevant information (as defined by Section 418 of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and each Trustee has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make them aware of any audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Luckmans Duckett Parker Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Report of the Trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 16th July 2024 and signed on the board's behalf by:

  
J D Larner - Trustee





# 2 Independent Auditors Report

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and The Black Country (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

### Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Enquiring of management and employees, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the charity's policies and procedures relating to:-

- Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance.
- Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they were aware of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud and,
- The internal controls established to mitigate risk relating to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.

We identified areas of law and regulation that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements from our general commercial and sector experience, discussions with management (as required by auditing standards) and discussed with management the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations.

All identified laws and regulations were communicated throughout the audit team, and they remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.

The most significant considerations for the charitable company were as follows:-

- The Charity is subject to laws and regulations that affect the financial statements which include

financial reporting legislation (namely The Companies Act 2006), taxation legislation and the Charities Act. We assessed the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures concerning items recorded in the financial statements.

- The charity is also subject to other operational laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have material effect on the amounts or disclosures in the financial statements through imposing fines or withdrawal of funding contracts. Areas where this would have an effect include health and safety, Bribery Act 2010, employment law, data protections and child protection legislation (DBS checks for staff and volunteers).

Auditing standards limit the audit procedures to identifying non-compliance of these laws and regulations to enquiry of management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if there is any. Therefore, if a breach of operational regulations is not disclosed to us or evident from relevant correspondence, and audit will not detect the breach.

To identify risk of material misstatement due to fraud, we carried out discussions amongst the audit team to assess areas where and how fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators. The following areas were identified:-

- Management override of controls through the posting of inappropriate accounting entries or journals
- We do not believe there is a fraud risk relating the revenue recognition as the revenue is straightforward, with limited opportunity for manipulation.

We did not identify any additional fraud risks.

We tested the appropriateness of accounting journals and other adjustments made in the accounts preparation based on a risk criteria.

Owing to the inherent limitation of the audit , there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulation is from the events and transaction reflected

in the financial statement, the less likely in the inherently limited procedure required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of fraud, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. Our audit procedures are designed to detect material misstatement. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance or fraud and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### Mark Spafford FCCA ACA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of  
Luckmans Duckett Parker Limited  
1110 Elliott Court  
Coventry Business Park  
Herald Avenue  
Coventry  
West Midlands  
CV5 6UB

Date: 16th July 2024



### 3 Statement of Financial Activities

(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total funds	2023 Total funds
	Notes	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	312,543	5,000	317,543	338,585
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Conservation, Engagement and Influence	3	311,746	617,016	928,762	1,271,226
Other income		40,903	-	40,903	40,844
<b>Total</b>		665,192	622,016	1,287,208	1,650,655
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>					
Raising funds	4	28,049	-	28,049	32,653
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Conservation, Engagement and Influence	5	807,277	677,512	1,484,789	1,596,236
<b>Total</b>		835,326	677,512	1,512,838	1,628,889
Net gains on investment		13,687	-	13,687	7,568
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure)</b>		(156,447)	(55,496)	(211,943)	29,334
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		1,557,338	336,739	1,894,077	1,864,743
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		1,400,891	281,243	1,682,134	1,894,077

### 4 Balance Sheet March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	11	525,999	507,441
Heritage assets	12	79,762	79,762
		605,761	587,203
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	13	85,106	566,115
Investments	14	58,697	45,010
Cash at bank and in hand		1,300,384	876,685
		1,444,187	1,487,810
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	15	(367,814)	(180,936)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		1,076,373	1,306,874
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
		1,682,134	1,894,077
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		1,682,134	1,894,077
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted funds	18	1,400,891	1,557,338
Restricted funds		281,243	336,739
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		1,682,134	1,894,077

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 16th July 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:



J D Larner – Trustee



## 5 Cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Cash generated from operations	1	468,587	362,259
Net cash provided by operating activities		468,587	362,259
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(44,888)	(32,864)
Donation of investment portfolio		-	(37,442)
Net cash used in investing activities		(44,888)	(70,306)
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>			
		423,699	291,953
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period</b>			
		876,685	584,732
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>			
		1,300,384	876,685

## 6 Notes to the cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

### 1. Reconciliation of net (expenditure)/ income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)</b>	(211,943)	29,334
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation charges	26,330	42,647
Gain on investments	(13,687)	(7,568)
Decrease in debtors	481,009	419,963
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	186,878	(122,117)
<b>Net cash provided by operations</b>	468,587	362,259

### 2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.24 £
<b>Net cash</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand	876,685	423,699	1,300,384
	876,685	423,699	1,300,384
<b>Liquid resources</b>			
Deposits included in cash	-	-	-
Current asset investments	45,010	13,687	58,697
	45,010	13,687	58,697
<b>Total</b>	921,695	437,386	1,359,081



# 7 Notes to the Financial Statements

## 7.1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain assets.

### Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income is generally recognised on a receivable basis, being when the charity is entitled to receive the money and is reported gross of related expenditure, where the amount is reasonably certain and when there is adequate certainty of receipt of monies. The specific bases used are as follows:

- Voluntary income includes members subscriptions, donations (including related gift aid tax) legacies and grants of a general nature.
- Income from trading activities includes income earned from fundraising events and trading activities to raise funds for the charity.
- Contractual income is recorded when receivable.
- Grants received during the year which relate to the following financial year are carried forward in creditors.

### Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis, meaning that the cost is identified as a liability awaiting payment, based on the date of the event, rather than the point that cash is paid. The expenditure is allocated to the appropriate cost heading in the financial statements.

- Costs of generating funds relate to expenditure incurred in raising voluntary income and fundraising trading costs.
- Charitable activities' expenditure relates to expenditure on meeting the charitable objects. This includes materials and bought in services, staff costs, information systems, communications, rented accommodation and general management directly chargeable to projects, thereby covering both internal costs and external charges for such costs. Such costs incurred internally are apportioned to projects based on direct staffing levels.
- Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charitable company and relate to the professional costs of running the charity.

- Support costs including staff costs, information systems, communications, office accommodation and general management, are fully apportioned to other cost categories, and are primarily based on direct staffing levels.
- Membership recruitment costs, where an agency charges the trust a fee based on the first years membership income for recruitment of new members, are charged to the accounts over a period of 10 months. Surplus new income is therefore only recognised in the accounts after this period has ended and this policy is viewed as being prudent.

### Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Short leasehold property – 4% on cost

Fixtures and fittings – 25% straight line

Expenditure on fixtures, fittings and general office equipment purchased by the charity for projects is currently written off in the year in which the expenditure is incurred, expenditure incurred for administration purposes is capitalised and depreciated as stated above.

### Heritage assets

Land, classified as heritage assets, had previously been included in the accounts at cost. The trustees value the assets every 5 years (a change from the previous annual approach) as this provides more relevant information on the activities and assets held by the charity.

Where information on the cost or valuation of heritage assets is not available or the cost of providing such information significantly outweighs any benefit to the users of the accounts then heritage assets are not recognised on the balance sheet.

Acquisitions only arise when donated to the charity or if it is believed that they will further the charity's objectives.

Full details of original cost can be found in note 12 to the accounts.

### Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

The charity is partially exempt for VAT. VAT that is irrecoverable due to the partial exemption are allocated to the appropriate cost categories and funds.

### Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes or as suggested in a letter of wishes.

The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

### Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Payments under an arrangement which is in substance of a rental nature (operating leases) are charged in the financial statements as incurred.

### Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The trust makes payments of employers contributions into independently administered money purchase pension policies for qualifying employees. Pension costs are charged in the financial statements on an accruals basis.

### Basic financial instruments

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Investments are another form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. All gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities as they arise. Realised gains and losses on investments are calculated as the difference between sales proceeds and their opening carrying value or their purchase value if acquired subsequent to the first day of the financial year. Unrealised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between the fair value at the year-end and their carrying value. Realised and unrealised investment gains and losses are combined in the Statement of Financial Activities.



7.2 DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations	317,365	337,885
Legacies	178	700
	<u>317,543</u>	<u>338,585</u>

7.3 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	Activity, Conservation, Engagement and Influence	Total activities
	£	£
Conservation & Wildlife	928,762	1,271,226

7.4 RAISING FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>		
Raising voluntary income costs	28,049	32,653

7.5 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs	Support costs (see note 6)	Totals
	£	£	£
Conservation, Engagement and Influence	1,322,637	162,152	1,484,789

7.6 SUPPORT COSTS

	Management	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Conservation, Engagement and Influence	115,945	46,207	162,152

7.7 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2024	2023
	£	£
Auditing remuneration	7,242	6,778
Depreciation - owned assets	26,330	42,647
Other operating leases	3,505	3,285

7.8 Trustees' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no Trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees' expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

7.9 STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	709,300	771,589
Social security costs	51,435	51,906
Other pension costs	45,907	43,513
	<u>806,642</u>	<u>867,008</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Direct charitable work	25	33
Administrative	2	2
	<u>27</u>	<u>35</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2024	2023
£60,001 - £70,000	1	1

The key management personnel, the senior management team, received total employee benefits in the year of £166,632 (2023 - £209,107). The key management personnel comprise the Chief Executive Officer, Head of Finance & Resources, Head of Education & Engagement, Head of Conservation, Head of Fundraising & Communications, Director of Nature Recovery and Director of Fundraising and Engagement.



7.10 COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<strong>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</strong>			
Donations and legacies	338,585	-	338,585
<strong>Charitable activities</strong>			
Conservation, Engagement and Influence	802,627	468,599	1,271,226
Other income	40,844	-	40,844
<strong>Total</strong>	1,182,056	468,599	1,650,655
<strong>EXPENDITURE ON</strong>			
Raising funds	32,653	-	32,653
<strong>Charitable activities</strong>			
Conservation, Engagement and Influence	940,038	656,198	1,596,236
<strong>Total</strong>	972,691	656,198	1,628,889
Net gains on investments	7,568	-	7,568
<strong>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</strong>	216,933	(187,599)	29,334
<strong>Transfers between funds</strong>	(87,903)	87,903	-
<strong>Net between funds</strong>	129,030	(99,696)	29,334
<strong>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</strong>			
<strong>Total funds brought forward</strong>	1,428,308	436,435	1,864,743
<strong>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</strong>	1,557,338	336,739	1,894,077

7.11 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Short leasehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Totals £
<strong>COST</strong>			
At 1 April 2023	708,816	99,402	808,218
Additions	40,127	4,761	44,888
At 31 March 2024	748,943	104,163	853,106
<strong>DEPRECIATION</strong>			
At 1 April 2023	215,041	85,736	300,777
Charge for year	21,997	4,333	26,330
At 31 March 2024	237,038	90,069	327,107
<strong>NET BOOK VALUE</strong>			
At 31 March 2024	511,905	14,094	525,999
At 31 March 2023	493,775	13,666	507,441

7.12 HERITAGE ASSETS

	Total £
<strong>MARKET VALUE</strong>	
At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	79,762
<strong>NET BOOK VALUE</strong>	
At 31 March 2024	79,762
At 31 March 2023	79,762

If the Land had not been revalued it would have been included in the accounts at the following historical cost totally £20,523. This is broken down to £10,523 being the amount paid for land and £10,000 being the value of land donated. There has been no change to these values in the last five years.

Heritage assets consist of land at Portway Hill, Pelsall Common Spinney (Turner's Wood) and Deer's Leap Wood.

Such land that has been acquired or donated to the charity is managed and preserved in accordance with the charity's objectives for wildlife and their habitat. Access to such land is available to the general public.

Other heritage assets may be purchased by, or donated to the charity, as and when circumstances permit. The number of acquisitions in the last 5 years is nil.

The Trustees have obtained a desktop valuation by an independent valuer in an attempt to understand the open market value of the heritage assets. Based on the work done, the trustees do not believe the valuation of the Heritage assets at £79,762 is materially different from the open market value of these assets. The Trustees feel no adjustment to the revaluation is required.



7.13 DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	14,333	225,178
VAT	12,438	40,387
Prepayments	14,953	21,393
Accrued income	43,382	279,157
	<u>85,106</u>	<u>566,115</u>

7.14 CURRENT ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Listed investments	58,697	45,010

7.15 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	326,654	107,793
Social security and other taxes	16,063	7,901
Other creditors	6,268	17,474
Accrued expenses	18,829	47,768
	<u>367,814</u>	<u>180,936</u>
	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>Deferred income</b>		
Deferred income at 1st April 2023	-	6,000
Released from previous years	-	(6,000)
Income deferred in the year	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Deferred income at 31st March 2024	-	-

7.16. LEASING AGREEMENTS

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Within one year	11,212	2,600
Between one and five years	17,160	10,840
In more than five years	6,450	16,500
	<u>34,822</u>	<u>29,940</u>

7.17 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total funds	2023 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	605,761	-	605,761	587,203
Current assets	1,162,944	281,243	1,444,187	1,487,810
Current liabilities	(367,814)	-	(367,814)	(180,936)
	<u>1,400,891</u>	<u>281,243</u>	<u>1,682,134</u>	<u>1,894,077</u>

7.18 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.23	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31.3.24
	£	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	1,274,558	(96,355)	163,449	1,178,203
Designated Fund	223,541	(60,092)	(163,449)	-
Revaluation Reserve	59,239	-	-	59,239
	1,557,338	(156,447)	-	1,400,891
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Other awards	-	327	-	327
South Staffordshire Water	9,227	-	-	9,227
Network for Nature M5 Clean Rivers	37,840	(37,840)	-	-
Stourton Castle Bypass	240,109	(70,134)	-	169,975
Purple Horizons	-	3,449	-	3,449
Moseley Bog Fundraiser	2,565	(2,565)	-	-
WMCA LYRS	24,998	(24,998)	-	-
Natural Rivers and Green Corridors Phase 2	22,000	71,265	-	93,265
Seth Somers Donation	-	5,000	-	5,000
	336,739	(55,496)	-	281,243
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,894,077</u>	<u>(211,943)</u>	<u>(211,943)</u>	<u>1,682,134</u>



7.18 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
<strong>Unrestricted funds</strong>				
General fund	615,852	(725,894)	13,687	(96,355)
Designated Fund	49,340	(109,432)	-	(60,092)
	<u>665,192</u>	<u>(835,326)</u>	<u>13,687</u>	<u>(156,447)</u>
<strong>Restricted funds</strong>				
Natural Rivers & Green Corridors	10,572	(10,572)	-	-
Other awards	45,357	(45,030)	-	327
Reaching Communities	37,573	(37,573)	-	-
Green Recovery Challenge Fund	13,500	(13,500)	-	-
Network for Nature M5 Clean Rivers	56,532	(94,372)	-	(37,840)
Stourton Castle Bypass	220,000	(290,134)	-	(70,134)
Purple Horizons	37,000	(33,551)	-	3,449
Team Wilder	21,519	(21,519)	-	-
Moseley Bog Fundraiser	-	(2,565)	-	(2,565)
WMCA LYRS	74,993	(99,991)	-	(24,998)
Natural Rivers and Green Corridors Phase 2	99,970	(28,705)	-	71,265
Seth Somers Donation	5,000	-	-	5,000
	<u>622,016</u>	<u>(677,512)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(55,496)</u>
<strong>TOTAL FUNDS</strong>	<u><u>1,287,208</u></u>	<u><u>(1,512,838)</u></u>	<u><u>13,687</u></u>	<u><u>(211,943)</u></u>

7.18 MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.23 £
<strong>Unrestricted funds</strong>				
General fund	1,161,912	206,518	(93,873)	1,274,557
Designated Fund	207,157	10,415	5,970	223,542
Revaluation Reserve	59,239	-	-	59,239
	<u>1,428,308</u>	<u>216,933</u>	<u>(87,903)</u>	<u>1,557,338</u>
<strong>Restricted funds</strong>				
Natural Rivers & Green Corridors	(492)	492	-	-
Other awards	-	(11,998)	11,998	-
Sedgley Beacon Enforcement Undertaking	30,000	(30,000)	-	-
South Staffordshire Water	13,594	(30,717)	26,350	9,227
Reaching Communities	31,671	(31,671)	-	-
Salmon in the Stour (19-20 - Dunelm Weir)	12,900	(12,900)	-	-
Severn Trent Resilience Funding	18,319	(18,319)	-	-
Nature Friendly Schools	6,300	-	(6,300)	-
Green Recovery Challenge Fund	42,652	(42,652)	-	-
Innovation Fund	2,968	(2,968)	-	-
Network for Nature M5 Clean Rivers	-	(11,191)	49,031	37,840
Smestow Catchment (Environment Agency)	14,789	(14,789)	-	-
Stourton Castle Bypass	248,080	(7,971)	-	240,109
Stourton Castle Design (Environment Agency)	15,654	(15,654)	-	-
Moseley Bog Fundraiser	-	(4,259)	6,824	2,565
WMCA LYRS	-	24,998	-	24,998
Natural Rivers and Green Corridors Phase 2	-	22,000	-	22,000
	<u>436,435</u>	<u>(187,599)</u>	<u>87,903</u>	<u>336,739</u>
<strong>TOTAL FUNDS</strong>	<u><u>1,864,743</u></u>	<u><u>29,334</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>1,894,077</u></u>



7.18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	772,415	(573,465)	7,568	206,518
Designated Fund	409,641	(399,226)	-	10,415
	1,182,056	(972,691)	7,568	216,933
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
Natural Rivers & Green Corridors	42,054	(41,562)	-	492
Natural Prospects HLF	140,824	(140,824)	-	-
Other awards	9,968	(21,966)	-	(11,998)
Sedgley Beacon Enforcement Undertaking	-	(30,000)	-	(30,000)
South Staffordshire Water	(26,350)	(4,367)	-	(30,717)
Reaching Communities	50,997	(82,668)	-	(31,671)
Salmon in the Stour (19-20 - Dunelm Weir)	-	(12,900)	-	(12,900)
Severn Trent Resilience Funding	-	(18,319)	-	(18,319)
Green Recovery Challenge Fund	111,350	(154,002)	-	(42,652)
Innovation Fund	-	(2,968)	-	(2,968)
Network for Nature M5 Clean Rivers	-	(11,191)	-	(11,191)
Smestow Catchment (Environment Agency)	-	(14,789)	-	(14,789)
Stourton Castle Bypass	-	(7,971)	-	(7,971)
Purple Horizons	39,524	(39,524)	-	-
Stourton Castle Design (Environment Agency)	-	(15,654)	-	(15,654)
Team Wilder	18,534	(18,534)	-	-
Moseley Bog Fundraiser	13,200	(17,459)	-	(4,259)
Purple Horizons 2022	18,500	(18,500)	-	-
WMCA LYRS	24,998	-	-	24,998
Natural Rivers and Green Corridors Phase 2	25,000	(3,000)	-	22,000
	468,599	(656,198)	-	(187,599)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,650,655</u>	<u>(1,628,889)</u>	<u>7,568</u>	<u>29,334</u>

Transfers are made between Restricted and Unrestricted Funds at the time the specific restrictions have been fulfilled.

The designated fund of £Nil (2023: £223,542) relates to the balance of funds received in the accounts for the year to 31 March 2024 remaining unspent designated by the Trustees for use on our commitments post year end. This sum relates to the Project Completion Fund.

General reserves represent free unrestricted funds that are available to spend at the discretion of the trustees. Within the general reserve are funds relating to fixed assets held which are not readily disposable and are intended to be held for the long term, hence not liquid funds that can be spent straightaway. This amount is equivalent to the net book value of the land and buildings as these assets have been secured for use within the charity for the long term.

The Trustees confirm that all restricted fund balances at the year end have subsequently been spent or will be spent in the forthcoming financial year.

More detailed disclosure on description nature and purpose of the funds, reasons for restrictions etc are listed below:-

Conservation

Various areas of funded work including:

- Collaborative partnership to create a thriving nature recovery network that is resilient to climate change between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park.
- Collaborative agreement to deliver a programme of blue and green infrastructure improvement projects in the Upper Rea Catchment.
- Grant to assist with conservation and restoration activity on the river Stour.
- Small grants to support the management of our Nature Reserves.

Education and Engagement

Various areas of funded work including:

- Funding coordinated by RSWT for all Wildlife Trusts to develop a community organising approach to our work, where the Trust has focused on a youth audience.
- Partnership programme to develop a green space adjacent to Edgbaston Reservoir, where we provide training, engagement activity, health and wellbeing courses and supported volunteering.
- Programme of community engagement to complement the site developments at EcoPark.
- Interventions in Bordesley and Highgate parks as part of City of Nature Alliance programme to improve environmental justice in deprived wards.

7.19 RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The Trust is affiliated to The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), a registered charity that acts as an umbrella group for county wildlife trusts, and provides assistance and co-ordination of activities and campaigning at a UK level. An annual contribution is payable to RSWT amounting to £11,700 (2023: £10,990).

The Trust also purchased publications and other sundries from RSWT amounting to £12,175 (2023 - £16,165), with £139 (2023 - £3,468) owed to RSWT at the year end. Sales made to RSWT were £2,215 (2023: £1,771) and amounts owed by RSWT were £nil at the year end (2023: £nil).





# 8 Thank you

## We couldn't have done it without you!

Our work for nature's recovery is possible thanks to our wonderful members, donors, volunteers, funders and businesses partners – Thank you for all your support – you are all **wildlife heroes!**

### Funders and Supporters

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### Project Partners

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Botanical Society  
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Birmingham City Council  
Birmingham City of Nature Alliance  
Birmingham Museums Trust  
Birmingham Settlement  
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**Birmingham &  
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