

Annual Report 2013

Summary for Members



Warwickshire



Draycote Meadows SSSI Coronation Meadow © 2014 Steve Cheshire (WWT)

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust aims to protect and enhance wildlife, natural habitats and geology throughout Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, and to encourage a greater awareness, appreciation and participation in all aspects of nature conservation and the environment.

Introduction

Nature is in trouble – that was the conclusion of the State of Nature report launched in May 2013. As Sir David Attenborough concluded: ‘as a species we humans are very good at destroying things’.

Warwickshire clearly reflects this disturbing national picture.

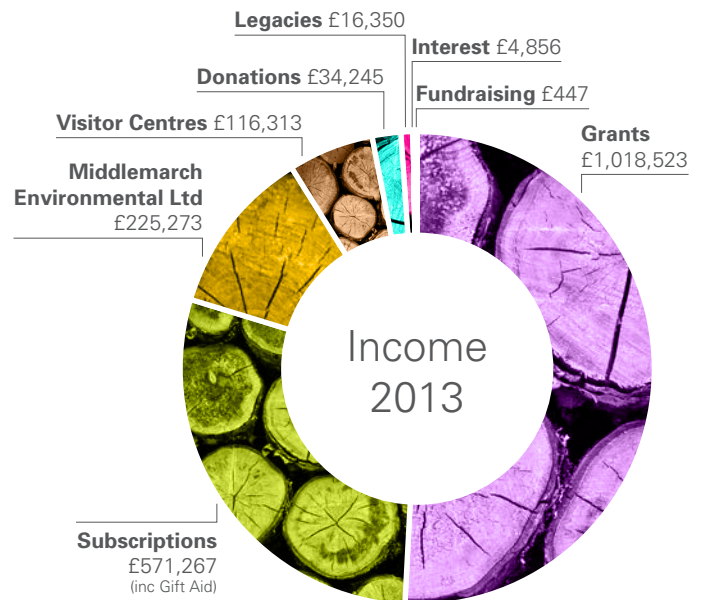
- 75 flowering plants have gone extinct at a rate of one plant every three years.
- At least 43 species of moth have disappeared.
- Five species of bumblebee have disappeared.
- 72% of butterfly species have declined
- Only 35 hectares of unimproved wild flower grassland is left .
- Hedgehogs are declining at the same rate as tigers.
- The turtle dove is on the verge of extinction.

Meanwhile threats are increasing. HS2 puts at risk 103 local wildlife sites and countless valuable wildlife features. The plethora of new housing - around 45,000 new homes are planned - and industrial developments, together with the Coventry Gateway project, will affect up to ten wildlife sites.

If this was not enough an even more pernicious threat has also emerged in recent decades – the increasing disconnection of children from their natural world. Four in five children do not have regular contact with nature and the roaming distance of children around their homes has shrunk from several miles to around 300 metres today. If children do not experience the wonder of wildlife at first hand, will they understand and care about it in later life?

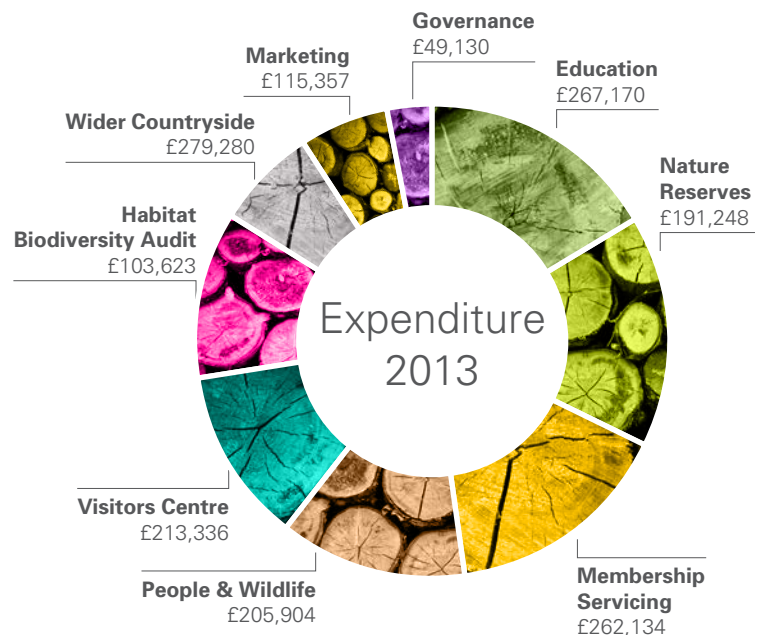
Amidst all this we must remember that without the Trust’s hard work the situation would be far worse and, more importantly, that we offer an alternative to society. This brief summary pulls together what we did with your support in 2013.

Thank you!



Charity only income per accounts £1,745,616
 MEL Gift aid received £225,273
 Endowment income (excluded from accounts) £16,385

Total = £1,987,274



Total = £1,687,182

Charity only exp per accounts £1,674,447
 Endowment exp (excluded from accounts) £12,735

Wildlife Champions

Planning and Development

Our planning alert system scrutinised applications for their impact and followed up 217 applications in detail, leading to 11 active planning cases. We are also engaged in pre-application discussions with four major schemes that are preparing to submit a planning application in 2014. The Trust responded in detail to nine spatial planning consultations and has undertaken detailed work, advocacy and consultations responses for HS2. The Trust is not opposed to high speed rail in principle but we do object strongly to the chosen route which we believe has a significant impact on wildlife and environmental assets, a cost which does not appear to be justified by the proposed benefits.

Nature Improvement Areas

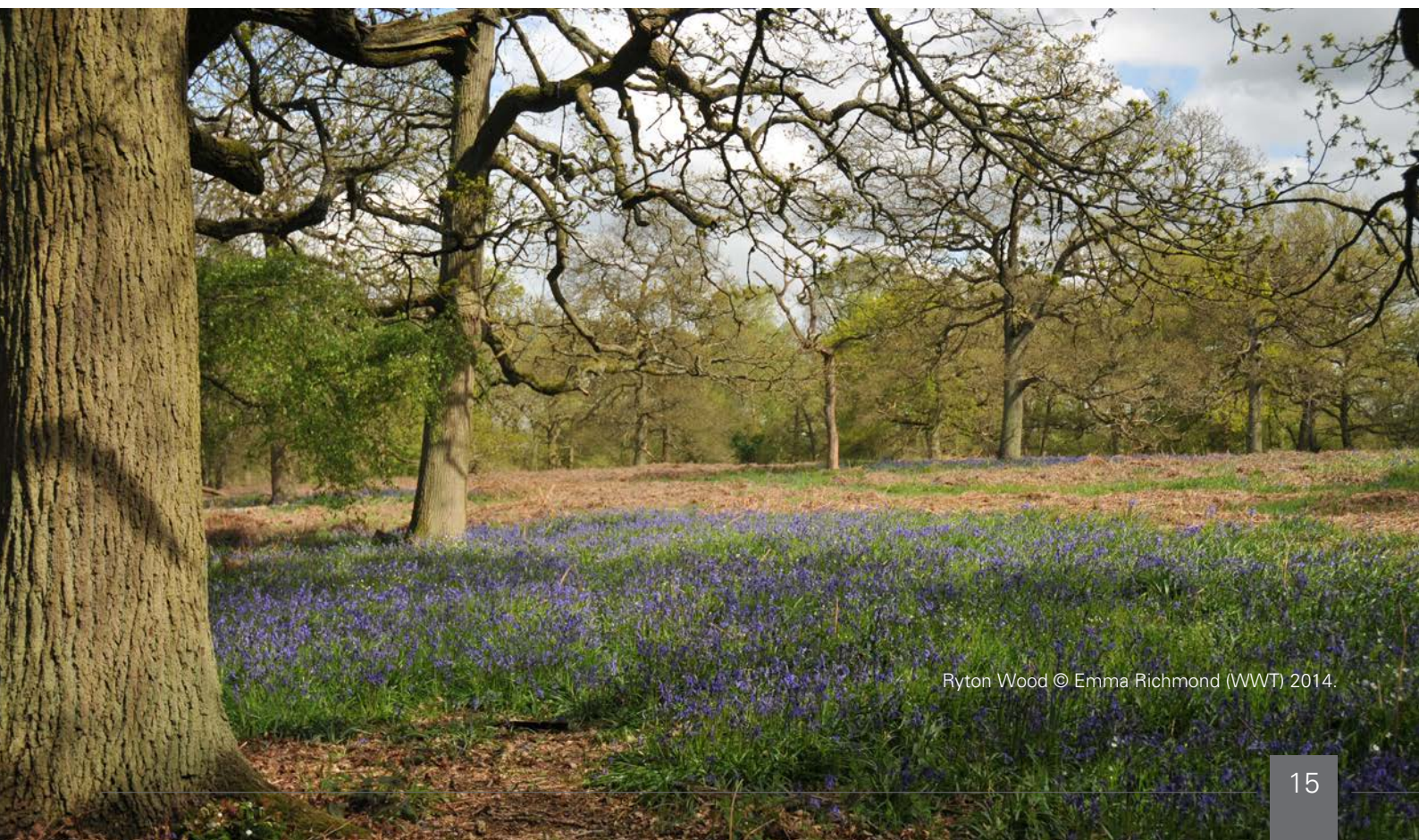
With our partners in the Local Biodiversity Action Partnership, we continued to improve ecological connectivity and landscape scale conservation work across the Princethorpe Woodlands and in Coventry.

Local Nature Partnership

The Trust was instrumental in creating this new partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, through a Government initiative aimed at bringing new partners together to lead local action for wildlife and the environment, with the power to designate nature improvement areas and comment on the environmental aspects of local plans.

Habitat Biodiversity Audit Team

The team completed surveys across more than 20% of the land surface of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, meeting our target of resurveying the county every five years. In addition 38 local wildlife sites were surveyed, and 29 new sites designated for their biological diversity and conservation interest, as well as a significant section of the River Anker, the Solihull section of the Grand Union, and the Coventry Canal. A report - the State of Warwickshire's Habitats – based on surveys between 2001 and June 2012 was produced.



Ryton Wood © Emma Richmond (WWT) 2014.



Kingsbury Church in the Tame Valley © Sophie Leszczynska 2014.

Tame Valley

The development phase of the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme was completed with the help of many partners, and the £1.7m bid submitted for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Using European (LEADER) funding distributed by North Warwickshire Borough Council a new boardwalk, interactive way markers and interpretation panels were installed at Whitacre Heath.

New scrapes for birds, some river reprofiling and wetland enhancement was also carried out at Whitacre Heath using Water Framework Directive grants from Defra. BMW, which has a factory nearby at Hams Hall, sponsored five new benches, a number of barn owl boxes and a new entrance sign for the reserve.

Princethorpe Woodlands

Excellent progress was made on the management of Ryton, Wappenbury and Old Nun Woods, funded by the SITA Trust, with rides restored and scalloping of edges to create sheltered bays. Teams of volunteers surveyed hedgerows, covering 16% of the area, and sites for restoration and woodland planting were identified.

Warwickshire Avon and Leam Catchment

A new plan for the catchment has been developed as a pilot with a range of partners including the Severn Rivers Trust, Severn Trent Water, Environment Agency and local farmers. A steering group identified priorities which have now been translated into action plans for habitat improvements that benefit both wildlife and water quality.

Coronation Meadows Project

Draycote Meadows were selected and designated as a Coronation Meadow to



CORONATION
MEADOWS

commemorate the 60th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953. Some 60 meadows, each from a different county, were given this special recognition.



Draycote Meadows selected as a Coronation Meadow in 2013 © Steven Cheshire (WWT) 2014.

North Warwickshire LNR project

Major enhancements have been made at four sites in North Warwickshire and four new local nature reserves created in the Borough.

Survey Force

Survey Force continued into its second year with outstanding monitoring by volunteers of the habitats and species on our reserves informing their management.

Otter Task Force

2013 was a good year for Warwickshire's otters with excellent media coverage. There was a significant drop in the number of road kills and an increase in daytime sightings. Mink activity decreased and hopefully water voles will benefit from this trend: we recorded a significant increase in water vole numbers and occupied territories in north Warwickshire where only a few years ago the outlook was very bleak.



The BBC Midlands Today team filming on location in Rugby.
© Steven Cheshire (WWT) 2014.

Dormouse conservation

The Warwickshire Dormouse Conservation Group installed over 150 nest tubes during March and April with our help to survey for dormice activity in Ryton Wood, Wappenbury Wood and Shrubs Wood. The work was funded with a grant from the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

Badger Vaccination

The second year of our vaccination programme was completed on four sites. We have now vaccinated the badger populations across more than 150 ha. Work has also progressed to make links with other land owners and farmers in the south of the county.



Badger Vaccination.
© Karl Curtis (WWT) 2014.

People & Wildlife

Sowe Valley Project

We were delighted to receive additional funding from Natural England to provide further support to strengthen the Sowe Valley volunteers and Friends of Sowe Valley and encourage more young people to join in with the project.

Midlands Urban Rivers Community Initiative

The Trust was asked by the Environment Agency to survey and assess waterways in and around Coventry as part of a wider programme to clean up the city's streams and rivers. A ten point plan has been developed and was used to engage the wider community in looking after their rivers, including education activities, links with colleges undertaking plumber training and wider community engagement events.

Outer Space Project

In 2013 the Trust was asked to help with this project at the University Hospital Coventry to develop their Jubilee Nature Reserve and engage the public, staff, patients and children with wildlife.



Outer Space Project at the Jubilee Nature Reserve
© Matt Cox (WWT) 2014.

Youth Projects

The Living Roots Open Spaces project worked with 96 young people from North Solihull who contributed over 800 hours towards the improvement of their local green spaces and learning about wildlife. This has enabled the Trust to develop new relationships with youth groups in the county and to develop funding bids to support this type of work in the future.

Environmental Education

The year was extremely busy with 14,300 children taking part in all activities. The team provided additional programmes to new audiences including some newly themed birthday parties! Work started on renovating the education garden. A number of corporate sponsors, including Keller Ltd and Barclays, helped us to get the project off the ground.

Skills for the Future

This Heritage Lottery funded programme is coordinated across the West Midlands by the Trust and provides training and work experience for people trying to develop a career in conservation. We were delighted with the confirmation of an additional four years' funding and welcomed the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and the Wyre Community Land Trust who have now joined the scheme.

Gardens Go Wild

The LEADER project was completed at the end of March. This project was hugely successful and more than doubled the amount of beneficiaries anticipated at the start two years ago. The project concluded a celebration of the project's achievements.

Volunteers

The Trust would not be able to achieve such amazing things for the wildlife and natural environment of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull without our superb army of volunteers. Fundamentally we are a voluntary organisation and volunteers bring their skills, talents and enthusiasm to all areas of the Trust's activities from reserve management and surveying to administrative work and magazine delivery or leading school activities. In total, we now have 730 registered volunteers undertaking a magnificent 39,858 hours of work – that is equivalent to 70% of our employees' time!



Volunteers are a vital part of the Trust's work
© Steven Cheshire (WWT) 2014.

Wildlife Havens

The Trust was able to acquire one of the best remaining unprotected grassland sites in Warwickshire in memory of our former Chief Executive, Dr Andy Tasker, now named Tasker's Meadow in his honour.

In 2013 the Trust took on the management of Oakley Wood, a Plantation on Ancient Woodland site. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Trust to work with the local Friends of Oakley Wood group and Warwick District Council to gradually restore the wood to a native broadleaved woodland, a place for peaceful reflection and for future generations to enjoy.



Oakley Wood © Steven Cheshire (WWT) 2014.

Help for Hedgehogs Campaign

Following our decision in 2012 that action must be taken to help hedgehogs in our region we launched the Help for Hedgehogs campaign in spring 2013. The aim is simple, to deliver a lively and engaging campaign that would inspire local people to both celebrate and make lasting changes for the benefit of both this iconic species and the other wonderful wildlife found on their doorstep. Several fundraising initiatives have followed, and members have generously supported this campaign.



Courtesy of Happy Hogs Hedeghog Rescue, Solihull
© 2013 Steven Cheshire (WWT)

Business Members

Birmingham International Airport
Britannic Fire & Security
Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
Coventry Golf Club
Ellisons
Hanson Building Products
Harris and Sheldon Group
Jaguar Landrover
Lafarge
Listers Volkswagen Coventry
McColm Cardew
Midrepro
Rugby Borough Council
Stratford Manor Hotel
Tarmac Aggregates
Tompkins Construction
Woodside Conference Centre
Xoserve Limited

Grants

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust wish to acknowledge the following organisations for providing grants for projects:

BIG Lottery Fund
Community First
Co-operative
Defra
Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
Environment Agency
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund
NHS
North Warwickshire LEADER
Ratcliff Foundation
Rowlands Trust
Rugby Borough Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
The 29th May Charitable Trust
The Saintbury Trust
WF Southall Trust

Support

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust wish to acknowledge the support of the following organisations:

AO.com
Aspire
Barclays
Belgrade Theatre
BMW Hams Hall
Carrick Travel
Coventry Blaze
Coventry City Football Club
Coventry Cycle Centre
Dobbies Garden Centre
Exmedia
Focus Optics
Keller Ltd
Lockwoods
Malt Kiln Farm Shop
Marks and Spencer
National Grid
Rewards4
Stratford Butterfly Farm
The Establishment Bar and Grill
The MAD Museum
Tunnel Brewery
Vine House Farm
Welcombe Hotel
Wellesbourne and District Lions Club

...and the many businesses that have a pin badge box or collecting tin.

Legacies and *in memorium* gifts

The Trust is very grateful to the following people who remembered local wildlife and gave a lasting gift in their wills this year: £500 Barbara Mary Hancock, £5283, Jean Florence Stewart, £7276, Hilda Mary Hunt, £1000, Christine Hilda Davies, £1000, Marion Lucy Read, £1,290, Mary Tomlinson-Jones, £500, Florence Ann Renshaw, £500.

Thank You!



Warwickshire

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A full version of Warwickshire Wildlife Trusts 2013 Annual Report is available on our website www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk or call 024 7630 2912.