

# Help for Hedgehogs:

## A one year on reflective summary



**July 2014**

*"It seems that barely a week goes by without us hearing news of another aspect of British wildlife and countryside diminishing or being in danger. It is particularly upsetting when the "victim" is an animal known and loved by many generations, featured in lore literature, and welcomed by most of us as part of the family of creatures that 'belong' in British gardens. Hedgehogs are a National Treasure. They must be valued and protected. Let Warwickshire lead the way, and let other counties follow." – Bill Oddie OBE*

## 1 Report aim:

The aim of this short report is to provide a reflective summary of the performance of the Help for Hedgehogs campaign over the last year in order to update and inform a broad range of interested parties. The report will specifically reflect around each of the campaign aims and associated targets.

## 2 Campaign rationale and background

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust aims to protect and enhance wildlife throughout Warwickshire, and to encourage greater awareness and appreciation in all aspects of nature conservation and the environment. In late 2012 the Trust became particularly concerned about the increasing body of evidence indicating that hedgehogs, one of the nation's most loved species, was declining at an alarming rate across the UK. In early 2013 the Trust investigated all of the locally available data on the species; it indicated that hedgehog numbers have also significantly declined in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull since the 1960s. The Trust swiftly decided that action must be taken to help hedgehogs in our region and launched the Help for Hedgehogs campaign in spring 2013. The aim was 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.

## 3 Campaign aims and objectives:

At the beginning of the campaign the following aims and objectives were established:

- **To raise awareness in the community** - Work with local people and landowners to raise awareness of the range of issues facing hedgehogs.
- **To provide education in schools** - Work with local schools to improve their school grounds for hedgehogs and to raise awareness of the issues facing the species.
- **To survey and monitor hedgehog populations** - Create maps of hedgehog populations across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.
- **To raise funds** - To raise £250,000 to help conserve hedgehogs throughout Warwickshire.
- **To work in partnership with local organisations** - Work with local businesses to raise awareness and to improve their grounds for hedgehogs and other wildlife.
- **To work specifically with local planners and developers** - Work with local planners and developers to ensure that new developments are designed with hedgehogs and other wildlife in mind.



*Help for Hedgehogs Campaign launch 2013*

## 4 Community Engagement

### Targets

- To engage with the broadest possible section of the community through frequent events, talks and media appearances.

### Quantitative reflections

- Over 4000 people engaged with in the community.
- 5 appearances on local radio and newspapers.
- Attendance at an estimated 25 community events throughout the year.
- Hosted 2 positive sponsored walks at our nature reserves.
- Hosted a large-scale hedgehog weekend event aimed at families with over 1000 people in attendance.

### Qualitative reflections

Recently hedgehogs were voted as the nation's most favourite species and this has been particularly apparent when engaging with the public over the last year. On the whole people are genuinely shocked and concerned about the situation hedgehogs are facing and actively listen when discussing the ways that we can help them in our region. The lively nature of the campaign has encouraged a wide range of households and community groups to take positive steps for the species on their land through habitat improvements and participating on our sightings survey.

### Future actions

- To continue to frequently engage with households and community groups throughout the county and specifically target communities through the new Hedgehog Improvement Area (HIA) initiative.
- To continue to put hedgehog conservation issues firmly on the agenda in local communities.
- To provide expert advice on how to improve habitats for hedgehogs.
- To promote community action for hedgehogs through a range of attractive fundraising and voluntary activities.



*Local community participating in a sponsored walk in Coventry*



## 5 Education

### Targets

- To work with a minimum of 100 schools.

### Quantitative reflections

- 4000 children engaged with at schools.
- Worked with 66 schools.

To date the education team have been contacted by 38 schools about the campaign and delivered assemblies to 28 schools. £1560 has been raised so far by schools through fundraising and selling pin badges. We have now installed 4 hedgehog homes and delivered 5 hedgehog days in schools across Warwickshire.

### Qualitative reflections

Children have been very engaged by the hedgehog campaign. They have loved the pin badges and when I have returned to school to conduct their hedgehog days they have remembered lots of facts about hedgehogs, especially point from the 10 point plan. We have also had lots of interest in our new hedgehog themed birthday parties.

### Future actions

- To work with as many schools as possible in the future.
- To work with all the schools in each of the HIA's.



*Children taking part in educational sessions at Brandon Marsh Nature Centre*

## 6 Hedgehogs Survey

### Targets

- To create hedgehog population distribution and abundance maps.

### Quantitative reflections

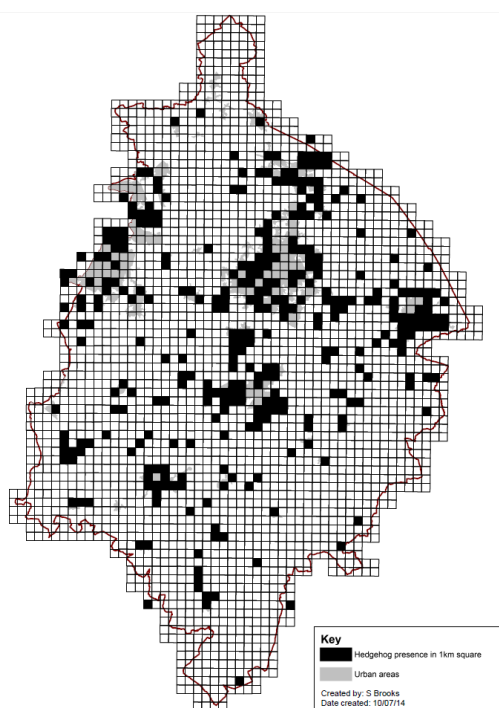
800 records taken and digitised for 2013 which have been put on GIS and mapped accordingly. The maps show abundance of hedgehog records across the county, can demonstrate presence in 1km grid squares and show dead/alive records. We have had at least an additional 160 records from 2014 so far and more are still coming in, although these are yet to be digitised and mapped.

### Qualitative reflections

The maps are extremely informative and are good at relaying ecological information to the public in a manner which they can relate to. The maps have been used in various talks, magazine articles and posters throughout the year.

### Future actions

The option to use this data in more detailed analysis will improve as time goes by. I.e. we can compare records between years to see how hedgehog populations are changing throughout Warwickshire. It can be used to identify areas to target for HIAs and raising public awareness or identifying schools to engage with. It was also discussed about using some of the funding to design a website/webpage which automatically maps sightings as they come in to encourage more people to submit records. Another key objective for next year is to survey for hedgehogs in each HIA area using mammal footprint tunnels and torchlight searching to sufficiently understand distribution and abundance in each area, along with repeat surveys to monitor change as the initiative develops. There will be huge scope for community-driven citizen science surveys in each HIA.



**Map showing hedgehog sightings up to July 2014 and a mammal footprint tunnel being used in Coventry**

## 7 Fundraising

### Targets

- To raise £250,000 to help conserve hedgehogs throughout Warwickshire

### Quantitative reflections

- £30,500 raised in total so far from a range of fundraising activities.
- £13,000 raised from an appeal to our members.
- £6,000 raised from pin badge boxes and collection tins.
- £3,000 donated from Exmedia Ltd.
- £1,300 raised from the “Road Hogs” running team.



The first year of the campaign has made a promising start and raised a considerable amount of money. The funds raised have exceeded funds that have been raised from previous campaigns run by the Trust.

### Qualitative reflections

- Help for Hedgehogs has enabled the Trust to broaden the scope of its fundraising by introducing and trialling fundraising activities and that have not been implemented by us before. Pin badges, sponsored walks, raffles and tombolas are all new ventures for us.
- The pin badges have proved to be particularly successful.
- The “Walk for Wildlife” consisted of two sponsored walks, one in Coventry and one in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Feedback from both the walks was positive with all the walkers commenting on how much they had enjoyed the event.
- The Road Hogs team who took part in the Shakespeare Half Marathon consisted of seven staff with most other members of staff and many relatives and friends sponsoring the team for running 13 miles in aid of Help for Hedgehogs.
- Through our various fundraising activities so far we have engaged with a huge variety of people across the county and raised awareness not only of the plight of hedgehogs but also of the Trust and its work. The iconic and much loved hedgehog is easy for the public to associate with and is a strong hook for encouraging people to donate or fundraise to save the UK’s favourite mammal from decline which is evidenced by our current fundraising total of over £30,000.

### Future actions

- Future fundraising actions will build on our current activities and will also involve new initiatives. Our Help for Hedgehogs pin badges will remain a core part of fundraising. We will also continue to apply to charitable trusts, hold raffles and encourage people to donate to the campaign or fundraise in aid of the campaign by organising their own events.
- In the new “Adopt a Hedgehog” initiative we will be working in collaboration with the local hedgehog rescuers who have provided us with real stories about the hedgehogs that have come into their care.
- Challenge events such as marathons and cycle rides are becoming a very popular means of fundraising for charities and we acknowledge that there is potential for these to be part of our future fundraising efforts for the campaign.
- The above activities highlight that there are some exciting developments and possibilities for Help for Hedgehogs fundraising which will help us to progress towards meeting our target to save hedgehogs from decline.

## 8 Partnerships

### Targets

- Work with a minimum of 20 local businesses and landowners.

### Quantitative reflections

- Developed partnerships with 10 diverse local businesses ranging in employee size and annual turnover.
- Offered practical conservation advice to 25 landowners including schools.
- Created a hedgehog carer network for local hedgehog rescue groups, with 8 groups signed up in total.
- Developed partnerships with national organisations including the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS), the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and Reading University.

### Qualitative reflections

The campaign has had a big impact throughout the county. This has allowed us to bring the majority of hedgehog carers together to create an informal partnership that meets every 6 months to discuss how we can all work together to help the species. The interest from local businesses has also been strong, with generous donations given over the last year.

Outside of Warwickshire, the campaign has been recognised and praised nationally as playing a leading role in the facilitation of grassroots conservation for the species at a local/regional level.

### Future actions

- Develop and facilitate ecological studies that add to the scientific understanding of hedgehogs and their conservation in partnership with Reading University, PTES and BHPS.
- Take existing partnerships with local carers forward to help with the new HIA initiative.
- To seek further support from local businesses in terms of donations and volunteer hours.
- Work with as many businesses as possible in each of the HIA areas.



*Warwickshire hedgehog carer meeting 2013 and Hedgehog Car sponsored by Listers VW Coventry*



## 9 Marketing and Social Media

### Targets

- To increase engagement in hedgehog conservation issues.
- To encourage people to take action in their own gardens.
- To drive sales of Adopt a Hedgehog packs through social media.

### Quantitative reflections

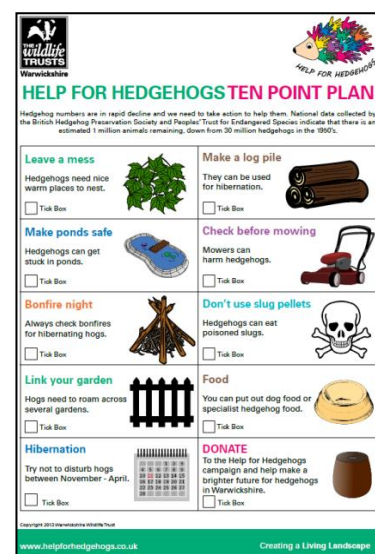
- Twitter followers: 980
- Facebook likes: 192

### Qualitative reflections

The Marketing Team has been instrumental in producing the materials for the campaign: designing the Help For Hedgehogs Handprint logo; designing the schools' packs; sourcing the artwork for the Adopt a Species packs and designing the finished product; conducting photo shoots; creating and maintaining the campaign pages on the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust website. Moreover, the social media presence has allowed the campaign to have an independent identity and has increased awareness of hedgehog conservation issues and of the fundraising work done by the campaign. Social media has allowed Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to build links with local businesses interested in getting involved in hedgehog conservation and to share results of hedgehog surveys and hedgehog sightings with the public.

### Future actions

- To promote Adopt a Hedgehog packs through social media/ Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Visitor Centres/ other marketing means.
- To share direct conservation work done through the Hedgehog Improvement Area project with the public.
- To continue to design and supply campaign materials.
- To increase awareness of hedgehog decline and conservation



*Examples of campaign marketing materials including our 10 Point Plan*



## 10 Local authorities and planners

### Targets

- Work with all local planning authorities and at least 50% of large developers.

### Quantitative reflections

- Have started dialogue with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council about how we can work together in the new HIA area there.
- Have drafted a series of letters that will be used to engage with developers with an invitation to sign-up as a partner to the hedgehog campaign.

### Qualitative reflections

Since the start of the campaign, working with both local authorities and developers has been a target which we have been working steadily working towards. After a year of groundwork across the region we are now in a position to achieve this aim during 2015.

### Future actions

- To organise and deliver a “Hedgehog Conservation for Practitioners” training course in the county during early 2015 for local authorities, planners and ecologists to attend.
- To organise a specific event for local authorities and planners to launch a “Make Warwickshire Hedgehog Friendly” initiative, where each individual council signs up to a series of pledges and management regimes for the benefit of the species.

## 11 The future

The Help for Hedgehogs campaign has made excellent progress in achieving its aims over the last year and has captured the imagination of thousands of people by celebrating this enigmatic species. There is still significant public interest and momentum to continue running the campaign into the future and a huge amount of opportunity to make lasting changes for the benefit of hedgehogs and people in Warwickshire.

In 2015 we are aiming to launch our Hedgehog Improvement Area initiative alongside the Help for Hedgehogs campaign. Hedgehog Improvement Areas are designated hedgehog conservation action areas that have been prioritised for their suitability and potential for making a measurable difference for local hedgehog populations.

Principally, the HIA’s will bridge the gap between the successful awareness raising, fundraising and partnership working elements of the Help for Hedgehogs campaign to date, with the need for practical grassroots conservation improvements for hedgehogs in particular areas. Fundamentally HIA’s will aim to strengthen local hedgehog populations and encourage longer-term habitat connectivity on a landscape scale.

The HIA approach will comprise of three main elements: habitat improvements, survey work and community engagement. We are currently actively seeking £30,000 of funding to roll-out the first HIA in Solihull during 2015. (See Warwickshire Hedgehog Improvement Areas - Project Brief document for more details).