



# Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

## Our vision Your wildlife 2017-2020







Staffordshire Wildlife Trust,  
The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge,  
Stafford, ST17 0WT

Tel: 01889 880100. Fax: 01889 880101  
Email: [info@staffs-wildlife.org](mailto:info@staffs-wildlife.org)

[www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk](http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk)

Chairman: Richard Higgs  
Chief Executive: Julian Woolford

Registered charity No. 259558  
Limited Company No. 959609  
uk



@Staffswt



@StaffsWildlife



@StaffsWildlife





## Wildlife at the heart of everything we do

Welcome to this new three-year strategy for Staffordshire Wildlife Trust which sets out our plans until 2020.

It has been developed by the Board of Trustees and Wildlife Trust staff, and with our members and key partners.

We believe we should revisit our strategy on a regular basis to ensure that the Trust is fit for purpose and successful in the challenging and ever-changing environment in which we operate. Accordingly, we have reviewed many of the fundamental principles which have guided our activities in past years to ensure that everything we do is for the maximum benefit of wildlife in the county.

Within a financial context of limited resources, this new strategy sets out the priority areas where we will focus our work, whilst also ensuring that all parts of the county benefit from our activities:

- We will seek to ensure that our 27 reserves are models of best practice in terms of conservation management and that they contribute much more directly to the wider 'Living Landscapes' in which they sit.
- We will establish the scientific research and evidence base by which we will be able to demonstrate just how we are helping particular species and ecosystems.
- We will deliver our suite of people engagement activities in ways which bring people and wildlife together in a long-term sustainable relationship, recognising that involvement with nature can have huge benefits for both.
- And we will pursue innovative ways to generate the resources necessary to fund our ambitious plans for wildlife. We intend to extend the scope and nature of our trading activities to provide us with the additional wherewithal to enable us to deliver the strategy set out in this document.

Richard Higgs  
Chair







## About us

**We manage 27 nature reserves around the county totalling almost 3,500 acres**

**We have 15,000 members supporting us financially**

**We worked with more than 12,000 children in 2016**

**700 dedicated volunteers give up their free time to support the Trust**



# Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's vision and mission

## Our 50-year vision is for:

- A thriving county with wildlife at its heart, which everyone enjoys, values and wants to play their part in protecting and improving.

## Our mission is to ensure that:

- We protect and enhance the wildlife and wild places of Staffordshire and promote understanding, enjoyment and involvement in the natural world.

## We are:

- Resourceful: making best use of what we have, and always alive to opportunities to do things better and more efficiently.
- Passionate: making the case for valuing and protecting wildlife.
- Pioneering: using new and innovative ways to achieve our vision, helping us to lead by example.
- Welcoming and customer focussed: giving our members, our supporters and the wider public the best service possible.
- Professional: striving to be the best we can be in all that we do, seeking continuous improvement and benchmarking our performance.
- Collaborative: working in partnerships between staff, volunteers, members, communities, landowners, businesses and many others to achieve our vision.
- Evidence-based: making our case on scientific fact and interpretation.





Staffordshire is one of the most beautiful counties in England. From the wild and windswept landscapes of the Staffordshire Moorlands, to the ancient woodlands and streams of the Churnet Valley, the marshes and meadows of the Staffordshire plains, the Trent Valley Washlands and down to the heathland of Cannock Chase and beyond, it is a truly stunning county.

Sitting on top of The Roaches, watching peregrines glide above, listening to the plaintive call of the curlew, catching a glimpse of a wood warbler in the Churnet Valley, the slip of an otter's back beside the Trent, glorying in the beauty of a greater butterfly orchid, or the 'churring' of a nightjar at our Highgate Common reserve, one might be forgiven for thinking that all is well with the world.

And yet Staffordshire is a microcosm of the country as a whole. For, although there are success stories, our most precious habitats and species are under threat. Staffordshire has suffered huge losses in habitats and species over the last 100 years through the increasing pressures of agricultural intensification and urban development. This will continue. Further threats such as climate change and still more real to many, HS2, bring the challenge into sharp relief.

This is of particular concern because Staffordshire is rich in biodiversity, and supports a wide range of both nationally and internationally protected species. Due to our location as a county within England, Staffordshire contains many species at the southern edge (e.g. globe flower, bilberry bumblebee and Welsh clearwing moth) or the northern edge (e.g. lesser horseshoe bat and bloody-nosed beetle), of their distributions making them especially sensitive to environmental change.

There are other challenges too: the drive for austerity has seen budget cuts to organisations like local authorities, Natural England and the Environment Agency, the government's advisor on wildlife and landscape, and the agency responsible for clean air, water and flood prevention respectively. This puts extra pressure on organisations like the Wildlife Trusts as budgets are cut for managing important habitats or funding local environmental record centres, to name two examples. While money is still available via Natural England, for green farming schemes, so crucial for the maintenance of our most special habitats

and species across the country, it's been reduced and the future is uncertain, particularly following the decision to exit the European Union.

Meanwhile, the economic agenda remains centre stage to the exclusion of everything else. Yet we can't de-couple economic growth from environmental health. The natural world provides us with clean air and water, food, helps mitigate climate change, alleviate flooding, and provides space to relax and enjoy ourselves to name just a few benefits. Who in the end wants to live in a world where the skies are without bird song, the streams and rivers polluted, the woods cut down and the heaths and hay meadows ploughed up? We must recognise and invest in our 'natural capital'.

Even the charitable sector has come under close scrutiny for the way in which it raises money – not a bad thing in itself some would argue, although the claims of inappropriate fundraising techniques are exaggerated by the media – but all simply adding to the pressures of doing the best for wildlife in the county – our job at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

And counter-intuitively, while the numbers of visitors to the outdoors continues to increase, and nature, wildlife and adventure programmes pack the TV schedules to bursting, increasingly we are all becoming disconnected from the natural world. Those with some grey hair remember roaming miles from home as kids, unsupervised, wild, intent on having an adventure. These days parents' fears of traffic or 'stranger danger' mean they want to keep kids at home, who then default to computer consoles, tablets and laptops. No wonder it seems as if everyone is giving up on nature...

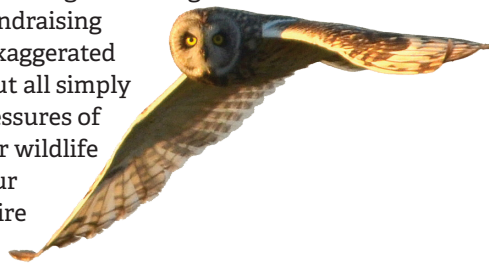
However, the picture isn't all bleak. Take just a few examples...

In 1990, it was estimated that just under 90 per cent of heathland in Staffordshire had been lost since 1775. But, by working with partners, we have started to reverse that trend. We are restoring our heaths through better management techniques, clearing scrub, re-instating grazing regimes and re-seeding heather. We encourage local people not to disturb ground nesting birds. We campaign against inappropriate development which might damage these fragile habitats. This work is vital if our rare heathland wildlife is to survive.

Similarly, despite their overall decline for many years, the Trust has been working with landowners to manage and enhance rare grassland habitat throughout the county. An abundance of wildlife depends on wild grasses and flowers, from butterflies to barn owls. The results are clear, with the Trust's own Rod Wood nature reserve, near Cheddleton, declared a Coronation Meadow as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

We have all seen the devastation flooding has caused across large swathes of the UK in the past few years. The Trust is working with the Environment Agency and other partners on a number of projects to tackle flooding in the county.

Through innovative natural flood management techniques, such as providing space for watercourses by maintaining a wide corridor of vegetation or woodland along their lengths, planting in appropriate locations in the uplands, creating new wetland areas and natural river 'log jams', we have been able to increase the storage capacity of land upriver and upstream from towns and cities vulnerable





to flooding. And just as importantly these natural flood management schemes also create valuable new habitats for wildlife.

Our multi-partner Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership (CVLLP) funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has helped local communities and organisations conserve and restore the unique wildlife and heritage of the valley. We have completed a multitude of projects there: from the first engineered 'log jam' of its type in the UK at Tittesworth Reservoir, to ground-breaking grassland restoration projects. CVLLP has been working to reverse the rate of habitat decline across the area and increase habitat connectivity.

In another partnership, the Central Rivers Initiative, again led by the Trust, we are working to shape and guide the progressive restoration and revitalisation of the river valley between Burton and Tamworth. Our success in doing this was recognised at an international level when we were awarded a runner-up prize in the IRF European Riverprize for an ecological restoration project, which

helped reconnect the River Trent to its floodplain between the Trust's Croxall Lakes nature reserve in Alrewas and the nearby Catton Estate. Landscaping work was carried out to restore the river to a more natural state, creating gently sloping river banks and introducing features such as river islands. The new features provide shelter, breeding and feeding areas for wetland wildlife.

We are aiming to make history too, by creating a large expanse of reed beds to encourage bitterns to breed for the first time in the county for more than 100 years. The Trust, in partnership with Aggregate Industries, is restoring the northern lake at Tucklesholme Quarry, a site on the banks of the River Trent near Barton-under-Needwood, which the Trust purchased at the end of 2013. Bitterns have not bred in Staffordshire for more than a century, but the Trust believes it has the perfect site in Tucklesholme to reverse that trend and is working to create a suitable habitat for this rare water bird.

Our education programmes continue to go from strength to strength. In 2015, we engaged with more than 6,000 children

through our formal education programmes, an increase on previous years. Our education programmes play a vital role in ensuring more people in Staffordshire enjoy wildlife and wild places, understand how the natural environment contributes to well-being, and what needs to be done to help protect and restore it.

So there are serious challenges ahead, but our passion and commitment is strong. We want to realise our vision of a 'living landscape' in Staffordshire that can adapt to climate change, provide healthy, varied, and extensive habitats for our wildlife, and enjoyment for people.

This strategy for the Wildlife Trust, covering the period from 2017 – 2020, provides a blueprint for what we hope to achieve, how we'll do it, and who we will work with.

With your help we can shape a bright future for the wildlife and people of the county.

Julian Woolford  
Chief Executive

**River re-profiling in the Churnet Valley**

Nick Mott





# Protecting and restoring wildlife and habitats

We will help protect and conserve Staffordshire's most important wildlife and wild places.

Our approach to the delivery of our conservation objectives is underpinned by the principles embodied within Professor Sir John Lawton's 'Making Space for Nature' report.

In Staffordshire and with partners in the surrounding counties, we need to work at a landscape-scale to protect and restore valuable habitats, by creating more, bigger, better managed wildlife sites, and by improving the wildlife habitat 'corridors' – or connectivity – between them, including our own nature reserves and local wildlife sites.

But we can't do everything everywhere immediately. So over the course of this three-year strategy, we have prioritised where we will focus our resources and efforts to achieve measurable gains for wildlife. Recognising the limited resources of our partners too, we have also sought to match our priorities with theirs wherever practicable. Our priorities for the next three years are:

- **The Churnet Valley**

The Churnet Valley is one of the most biodiverse areas in Staffordshire. A rich and varied habitat of semi-ancient woodland, meadows, springs, streams and the River Churnet itself, it's home to rare flora, such as the greater butterfly orchid, invertebrates such as the logjammer hoverfly, mammals such as the otter, and birds such as the wood warbler, dipper and pied flycatcher.

Over the course of the last five years Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has led a successful partnership programme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), to conserve and enhance the valley's unique landscape, wildlife and heritage.

As HLF funding comes to an end in 2016, one of our priorities is to build on recent work by leading and investing in the partnership and particularly in further wildlife and habitat conservation projects, including in our nature reserves in the valley, to help secure the legacy of the partnership over the coming three years.

We will prioritise stream and river restoration projects, working in partnership with the Environment Agency, to improve flood management, water quality and habitat for wildlife.

- **The Staffordshire Moorlands**

The Staffordshire Moorlands are home to important breeding populations of wheatear, curlew, snipe and lapwing, and birds of prey such as merlin and peregrine. Our largest nature reserves, the Roaches and Black Brook, also lie at the heart of this landscape.

Over the coming three years, we will focus our efforts on increasing the numbers of breeding waders in the moorlands as well as restoring important upland habitats as part of our commitment to the HLF-funded South West Peak landscape partnership programme, led by the Peak District National Park Authority.

And we will lead a conservation project to conserve the native white-clawed crayfish. As with the Churnet Valley, we will prioritise stream and river restoration projects to improve flood management, water quality and habitat for wildlife.





- **The Trent Valley Washlands**

In the east of the county, we plan to re-double our efforts to create a nationally-important network of wetland habitats in the floodplain of the Trent, the Trent Valley Washlands. By creating new wetland habitat, such as marshes, reed beds, and water meadows, and by using conservation approaches which allow rivers to flow more naturally, we hope to see a major increase in the number of spined loach and eel, otter, lapwing and bittern.

Natural river restoration also has the added benefit of helping alleviate the worst impacts of flooding more cost-effectively than traditional methods.

The area is also home to some of the last populations in Staffordshire of tree sparrow and corn bunting, as well as home to over-wintering whooper and Bewick's swans and golden plover. We also aspire to see breeding populations of osprey there in the future. Through the Central Rivers Initiative (CRI), a broad-based partnership representing key interests in the area, we will work to shape and guide the progressive restoration and revitalisation of the river valley between Burton and Tamworth. By working closely with minerals companies in particular, the opportunities for wildlife and habitat restoration are significant.

- **Hidden gems: our Local Wildlife Sites and other important habitats**

There are 1,383 Local Wildlife Sites scattered across Staffordshire, many of them hidden sanctuaries for wildlife. They form a particularly important ecological network in the county, and we will work with partners and private landowners to ensure they are protected. We will also work with partners and land owners to support the management of other important habitats for wildlife, particularly where they are of national importance. Changes to funding through green farming schemes mean that the challenges in influencing third party landowners remain considerable, but our ambition is to achieve no net overall loss of Local Wildlife Site habitat.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are wildlife-rich sites selected for their local nature conservation value. They vary in shape and size and can contain important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species. In many parts of the UK, they are the principal wildlife resource but their designation is non-statutory and their only protection comes via the planning system. They are not protected by law like Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature reserves. Whilst SSSIs are a representative sample that meet national criteria, LWS include all sites that meet local selection criteria. Many are owned by private individuals.

- **HS2**

While we have campaigned against a new high speed rail link from London to the Midlands and the North and would rather it was not being developed, we have to be pragmatic and we want to ensure that we do everything we can to secure optimal outcomes for wildlife and habitats in the face of the impending infrastructure development. HS2 is learning from Phase 1 and through further collaboration with them we aim to secure protection for our most important habitats and wildlife along the route of Phase 2a which stretches some 54 kilometres across the heart of Staffordshire, and in the buffer zone beside it which may extend to several kilometres.

- **Stoke-on-Trent and urban Newcastle-under-Lyme**

While the majority of our work focuses on rural areas across Staffordshire, the network of green spaces and river corridors in Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme are ideal locations for us to draw people closer to nature and crucially to explore new ways of restoring and reconnecting habitats to make the most of the unique brownfield sites at the heart of these areas. With partners, we will develop a new vision for the natural environment in these areas and develop funding proposals to implement conservation and restoration work over the coming three years.





# Protecting and restoring wildlife and habitats - a summary

What we need to do	How we will do it	Who we will need to work with
<p>Protect, manage and enhance the ancient woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers of the Churnet Valley and the wildlife that lives there.</p>	<p>Lead, develop and fund biodiversity conservation and restoration projects in the Churnet Valley to help secure the legacy of the four-year HLF landscape partnership scheme. This will include catchment-based water quality, habitat and wildlife projects with the Environment Agency on the Leek Brook and in the River Churnet itself.</p>	<p>Farmers Landowners Natural England Environment Agency Forestry Commission RSPB The National Trust The National Forest Peak District National Park Local Nature Partnership The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Staffordshire County Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Staffordshire Moorlands District Council East Staffordshire Borough Council Tamworth Borough Council Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme HS2</p>
<p>Protect and improve the wildlife and habitats of the Staffordshire Moorlands.</p>	<p>Support and deliver wildlife and habitat conservation projects in the South West Peak HLF landscape partnership project led by the Peak District National Park. This will include a project to conserve curlew, lapwing and snipe with the RSPB.</p>	
<p>Create a new, nationally-important network of wetland habitats for wildlife in the Trent Valley Washlands.</p>	<p>Lead, develop and help fund a conservation and restoration programme for wildlife and habitats in the Trent Valley Washlands.</p>	
<p>Identify, protect and restore Staffordshire's network of Local Wildlife Sites increasing the area they cover and improving their connectivity to ensure no net loss of habitat. We will also protect nationally important wildlife sites and species on third party land.</p>	<p>Work with landowners and local authorities, including planners, and through Neighbourhood Plans, to identify, protect and restore Local Wildlife Sites, and other important sites for wildlife, particularly where they are of national importance, across the county to ensure no net loss of habitats.</p>	
<p>Secure optimal outcomes for wildlife and habitats along the route and extended 'buffer' zone strips of the planned HS2 route.</p>	<p>Collaborate with partners, landowners and HS2 to develop and implement an effective strategy to ensure optimal outcomes for wildlife and habitats along the route of HS2 Phase 1 and 2a.</p>	
<p>Improve the natural environment in Stoke-on-Trent and urban Newcastle-under-Lyme for the wildlife and people that live there.</p>	<p>Work with partners to develop and implement a vision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment in Stoke-on-Trent and urban Newcastle-under-Lyme.</p>	





## • Nature reserves

Our 27 nature reserves, covering some 3,500 acres of some of our most important habitats, play a pivotal role in our conservation work across the county. We will manage our reserves as exemplar sites for wildlife and habitat conservation and enhancement. We will develop and implement management plans, including access, signage and interpretation, for all our nature reserves and, working with landowners, we will seek to improve habitats for wildlife in the countryside that surrounds them where opportunities allow. Many of our sites are nationally recognised through their designation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). We will contribute to Natural England's Biodiversity 2020 strategy and work towards ensuring all our 16 SSSIs are in recovering or favourable condition.


What we need to do	How we will do it	Who we will need to work with
Our 27 nature reserves are at the heart of our wildlife conservation and restoration work. We will protect and restore the wildlife and habitats in our reserves and the 'buffer' zones around them.	<p>We will manage our reserves as exemplar sites for wildlife and habitat conservation, in particular in flagship reserves such as The Roaches and Highgate Common.</p> <p>We will develop and implement ten-year conservation management plans for all our nature reserves and seek to improve habitats for wildlife in the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>We will monitor the effectiveness of our management plans for our nature reserves and surrounding countryside on an annual basis and adapt and improve them as necessary.</p> <p>We will work towards ensuring all SSSIs we manage are in recovering or favourable condition.</p> <p>We will identify potential nature reserve and land management acquisition opportunities which will help us build better, bigger and more joined up landscapes within our priority living landscape areas. Specifically we will work with Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to explore opportunities for improvements in the management of their land for wildlife, including Cannock Chase.</p>	<p>Farmers Landowners Local Nature Partnership Staffordshire County Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Stafford Borough Council Natural England Environment Agency Forestry Commission The National Forest</p> 



- **Developing a sound evidence base and monitoring progress**

Evidence must underpin our conservation work. We need it to continually improve what we do and to support partners in their conservation management work. So we will develop a sound evidence base to ensure we can learn from and demonstrate the effectiveness of our work to protect and conserve wildlife and habitats in our nature reserves and across our priority living landscapes.

As a first step, we will develop and deliver a new and robust evidence and monitoring strategy to ensure the effectiveness of our conservation work on nature reserves and in the wider landscape. We will also use and promote to partners our 'State of Staffordshire's Nature' report (launched 2016) to help inform the development of conservation strategies including refreshing biodiversity action plans. And we will continue to host and promote the benefits of Staffordshire Ecological Record (SER) and develop the data held to expand on the knowledge of the county's natural environment. We will conduct our own research to help improve our conservation work in Staffordshire when external funding is available.

What we need to do	How we will do it	Who we will need to work with
<p>We will develop a sound evidence base to ensure we can learn from and demonstrate the effectiveness of our work to protect and conserve wildlife and habitats in our nature reserves and across our priority living landscapes.</p>	<p>We will develop and deliver a new and robust evidence and monitoring strategy to ensure the effectiveness of our conservation work on nature reserves and in the wider landscape.</p> <p>We will use and promote to partners our 'State of Staffordshire's Nature' report (launched 2016) to help inform the development of conservation strategies.</p> <p>We will continue to host and promote the Staffordshire Ecological Record (SER) and improve the data held to expand on the knowledge of the county's natural environment.</p> <p>We will conduct our own research to help improve our conservation work in Staffordshire when external funding is available.</p> <p>We will work with the Local Nature Partnership to review Staffordshire's Biodiversity Action Plans and update them where appropriate.</p>	<p>SER Steering Group Local Nature Partnership Natural England Environment Agency Natural Environment Research Council Stafford Borough Council Local authority partners</p> 





Common Blue by Peter Draper



## Getting people involved

For wildlife and wild places to thrive in Staffordshire, we need to ensure that people value them in their own right and for the benefits they provide: a healthy society, a sustainable economy, and fulfilling lifestyles. If people value the natural environment, then they will protect it. Sadly, studies show that people's connection with nature continues to decline.

Yet there is hope. Research shows that if a child has an early connection with nature and wildlife – in whatever form – it can lead to a positive attitude and behaviour towards nature as an adult. So, for the course of this strategy, we have chosen to prioritise our efforts and resources on inspiring children and families to take action to protect wildlife.

We want every child in Staffordshire to experience nature, to cherish it and to grow up wanting to protect it and ensure it's still there for their own children.

We want children and their families to deepen their connection with nature, and with the Wildlife Trust. From their first encounter with the Wildlife Trust, we want to take them on a journey so that they becoming active supporters and wildlife champions.

We will run innovative and inspiring programmes to encourage children and their families to discover the fun and excitement in the natural environment. We will use not only tried and tested methods, such as pond dipping, bug hunting and bush craft activities, but also invent new and innovative ways to spark engagement with the natural world.

We will have activities for all ages, including Nature Tots groups, Wildlife Watch family events and Wildplay sessions. We will provide opportunities for older children and adults to get practically involved in conservation through, for example, volunteering programmes.

Our nature reserves not only protect wildlife and habitats but also provide opportunities for people to connect with nature and help to promote the work of the Trust. So we will invest in our flagship nature reserves such as The Roaches, Black Brook and Highgate Common to ensure that we offer the best possible wildlife experience for our members and other visitors.

We will challenge ourselves to develop a clear evidence base to show the link between inspiring people and the benefits for wildlife.

We cannot do this alone. In a time of stretched finances and austerity across the sector, we need to work in partnership to make the best use of our resources, our ability to generate income and source funding to reach as many people as possible.



**“To build awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment so that people are inspired to value and protect it.”**



## What we need to do

Ensure that more people in Staffordshire enjoy wildlife and wild places, understand how the natural environment contributes to their well-being, and want to help protect and restore it.

Encourage more people to enjoy and learn about our flagship nature reserves, such as The Roaches and Highgate Common.

Build an evidence base that shows how our education work helps deliver benefits for wildlife.

## How we will do it

Design, develop and run exciting and innovative programmes that take people on a journey from disengaged with the natural environment to being inspired to take action for wildlife and to support the Wildlife Trust and its work.

Programmes over the next three years will include:

- Nature Tots: for 0-5 year olds
- Wildplay: for 8-13 year olds
- Wildlife Watch events: for families with younger children (4-7 years olds)
- Youth Engagement events: 14 year olds +
- Adult volunteering opportunities

We will deliver inspirational visitor experiences at our flagship sites, including a programme of events and training that will encourage people to support the Wildlife Trust and to take action for nature.

We will develop and deliver other education and engagement programmes which help inspire people to take action for wildlife and which help support our wildlife conservation work financially.

Programmes over the next three years will include:

- Formal education
- Forest Schools
- Wildlife-themed birthday parties
- Adult training opportunities
- Guided walks

We will monitor our programmes to ensure a link between our work and the benefits they bring to wildlife, so that we can always improve what we offer.

## Who we will need to work with

Education establishments  
Visitors to our nature reserves and visitor centres  
Families with children  
Local authorities  
Young people's services  
Peak District National Park Authority  
Natural England  
The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership  
Central Rivers Initiative  
Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership  
Children's centres



# Membership and fundraising

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is lucky enough to be supported by a strong membership base and a diversity of funding streams. These income sources, without over-reliance on a small number of funders, has enabled the Trust to maintain its independence and continue delivering its mission even in tough economic times when other charities have struggled. But it has not been easy.

Our membership has declined from a high of more than 16,000 members to around 15,000 members in 2016. This is partly following the economic boom of the early to mid-2000s and the following recession. We're holding our own, but we need to diversify sources of unrestricted income if we are to deliver our goal of doing even more for wildlife. Over the course of this strategy, we need to increase our membership base to more than 16,000 through proactive recruitment while also retaining our existing members by engaging them in our work.

Legacy income has underpinned several of the Trust's biggest achievements, including the building of The Wolseley Centre. By increasing income from legacies so that it's more in line with other charities, we'll be able to do even more for wildlife.

Our projects can be exciting and attractive to funders, including corporate sponsors. Wherever possible we will access external funding to enhance the impact of our work.

What we need to do	How we will do it	Who we will need to work with
Retain our existing members and attract new members.	Engage and involve our existing members more fully in our work so they value the work of the Trust and can clearly see the impact of their membership subscription.	Members Visitors to our visitor centres and sites Grant giving trusts Local Authorities Businesses Public sector agencies Charity Retail Association
Increase our income from legacies.	Develop further our in-house membership recruitment team so we have the capacity and capability to reach out to more people to talk about the work of the Trust and encourage more people to support us.	
Secure funding from grant-giving bodies to deliver our projects.	Demonstrate further the positive impact of legacies on our work and make sure the process of leaving a legacy to the Trust is simple.	
Increase support from corporate partners.	Identify new projects that are suitable for external funding and seek out and bid for resources through grant applications, tenders and commissions.	
	Develop a new corporate sponsorship offer for our work and engage with businesses to substantially increase our funding from the private sector.	







Nick Mott



Scott Petrek



Nick Mott



Scott Petrek



# Marketing Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Research suggests that nature conservation is not regarded as a high priority by the general public; yet when prompted the vast majority of people agree strongly that we need to conserve the natural environment. Moreover, the profile of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, and the Wildlife Trust movement nationally is lower than other charities, even those in the environmental sector, including the National Trust and RSPB. Not enough people know who we are or what we do.

Our challenge is to move the natural environment – and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – up the agenda so that the state of the natural environment is seen to be as important as the state of the economy and health. At the heart of this is explaining the value of the natural environment, so called ecosystem services, in accessible, appealing ways which link them inextricably with the robustness of the economy and people's health and well-being.

We need to raise the profile of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust so that we are seen as an organisation that can deliver solutions to environmental challenges.

Equally, we must not neglect those who are already our members and those who visit our sites but aren't yet members, communicating regularly and effectively with them so that they understand what we do, what we have achieved and how they can further support us.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is supported by a strong membership base and a diversity of funding streams, but further growth in income will also come by developing our trading activities so that they are complimentary to our work and will bring even more people into contact with the Trust.

We will develop our Wolseley Visitor Centre as a first class wildlife visitor centre, and review the role of our Westport Lake Visitor Centre and the way in which it contributes to the Trust's objectives.

We will open three Staffordshire Wildlife Trust charity shops across the county.

We will invest in and develop our flagship nature reserves, in particular The Roaches and Highgate Common, as exemplar nature reserves nationally for wildlife and visitor experience.





## What we need to do

Build awareness and understanding of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, so people know who we are, understand our work and want to support us.

Develop the capacity and capability of the Trust's trading operations to increase net profit so as to benefit wildlife.

Increase the number of visitors at our visitor centres, flagship nature reserves and at events and ensure that these visitors are inspired by what they experience, gain an understanding of the Trust's work and want to support us either through membership, donations or by spending money at our sites.

## How we will do it

Clarify how the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust brand is perceived, what it stands for and develop a new marketing strategy to engage with different audiences. This will include:

- Carrying out market research to better segment and understand our core audiences.
- Improving all branding, signage and related interpretation and marketing materials at all our visitor centres, flagship nature reserves and at all of our events.
- Running campaigns and projects to engage and involve people in our work and show people how they can incorporate wildlife into their lives.
- Identifying the people and organisations that influence our agenda and forging meaningful relationships with them through tailored communications (e.g. MPs).
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Local Groups.

Improve the profitability of our current activities and replicate our profitable activities at new locations and with new audiences.

Explore new trading opportunities to further support our charitable objectives. We will focus in particular on:

- Developing The Wolseley Centre as a first class wildlife visitor centre with catering and retail facilities.
- Reviewing the Westport Lake Visitor Centre so as to be clear on how it can best contribute to the Trust's objectives.
- Expanding our charity shop model to other towns in Staffordshire.
- Exploring and developing the opportunities at our flagship nature reserves, in particular The Roaches and Highgate Common.

## Who we will need to work with

Members

Visitors to our visitor centres and sites

The wider public

Charity Retail Association



# Running a successful organisation

As it becomes harder to attract new members, and to raise funds, it is imperative that we account for every pound we spend. This is particularly important in a climate in which charities are coming under ever closer scrutiny.

We must be able to show that we operate according to good practice and our charitable objectives. In particular we must run our finances smartly. We will develop a balanced budget every November to ensure the viable and sustainable running of the charity in the year ahead, and ensure we have sufficient financial reserves to run the Trust sustainably in the future.

We will ensure value for money procurement and smart management of contracts. In particular we will manage our estate costs, particularly at our visitor centres, our IT, and our vehicle fleet to ensure value for money.

However, notwithstanding funding challenges, it is equally important that we attract, reward, support and retain people with the right skills and commitment to meet the Trust's charitable objectives. So, having saved money, we must invest prudently in ensuring we do this. This includes developing a skilled and enthusiastic volunteer workforce, and putting them at the heart of our organisation.

And while we can't eliminate all health and safety risk, given the nature of our business, we will seek to develop a culture which recognises the importance of health and safety, identifying and managing risk sensibly, and learning from our mistakes as and when they do occur.





## What we need to do

Ensure that our finances are sound by investing wisely and running balanced annual budgets.

Manage our estate and facilities so that we achieve value for money.

Ensure all our people are supported, trained and rewarded appropriately, and have the right equipment and technology to carry out their roles effectively.

Develop a pool of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers to help us deliver our core priorities.

Ensure that all of our people, volunteers, members and visitors are able to work and enjoy our facilities and estate with minimal risk to their health and safety.

## How we will do it

Review our finance systems and associated processes to establish a new streamlined and effective budget and management information system to provide timely financial information to support decision making.

Review all our contracts and support functions and seek to reduce expenditure by 5% pa.

Develop and implement a new IT strategy.

Develop a new vehicle fleet management strategy to help us manage the Trust's fleet of vehicles and their replacement cost effectively.

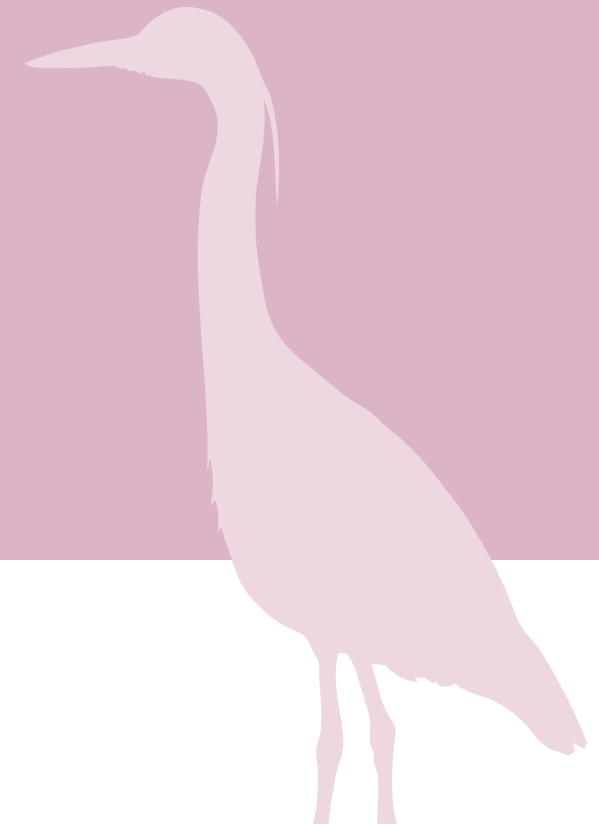
Develop a new people strategy to ensure staff are properly trained and rewarded.

Develop a volunteer strategy, to put our dedicated volunteers at the heart of the Trust's activities, ensuring they – like staff – have the opportunity to develop their skills and contribute more widely to the running of the Trust.

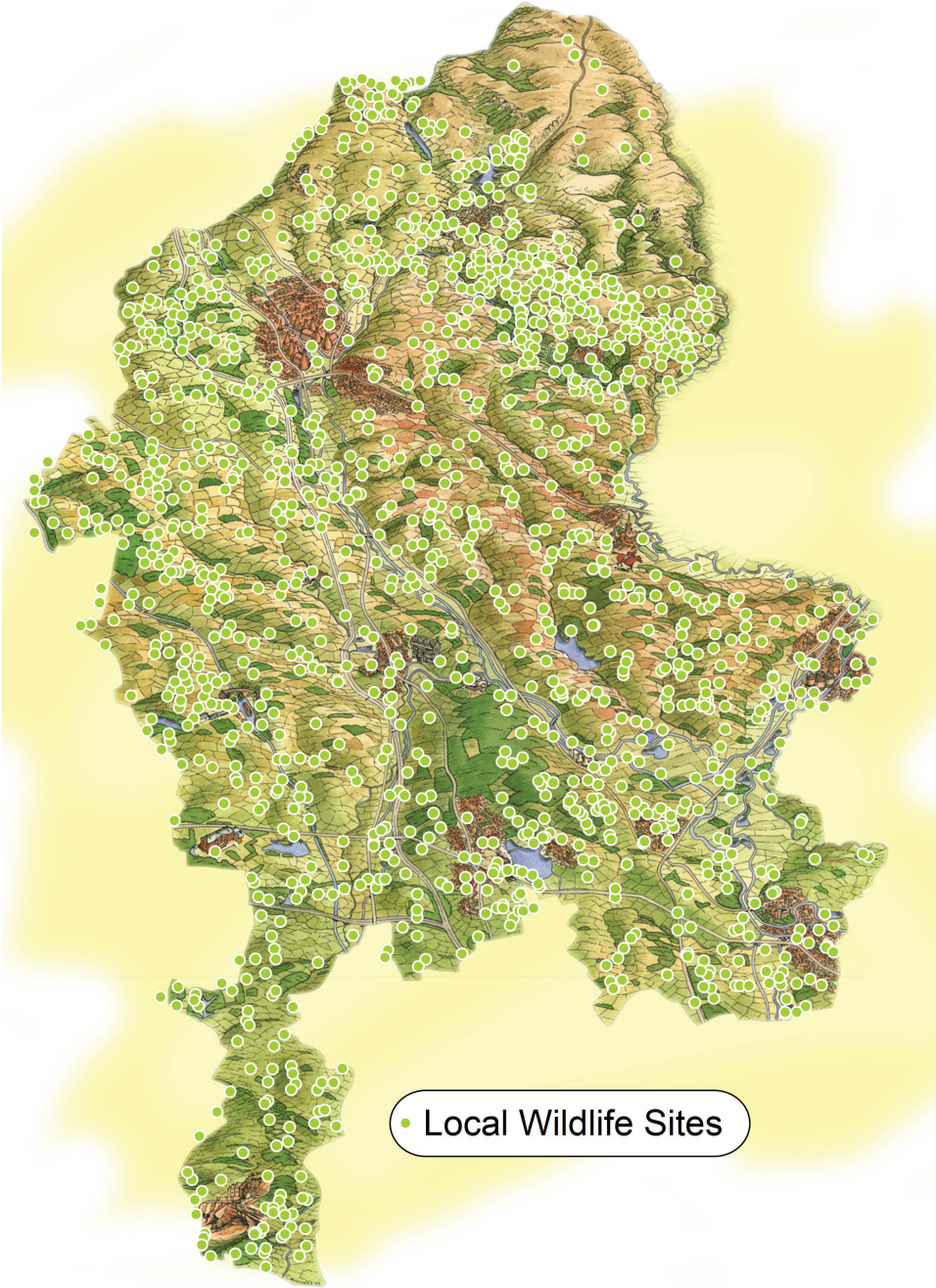
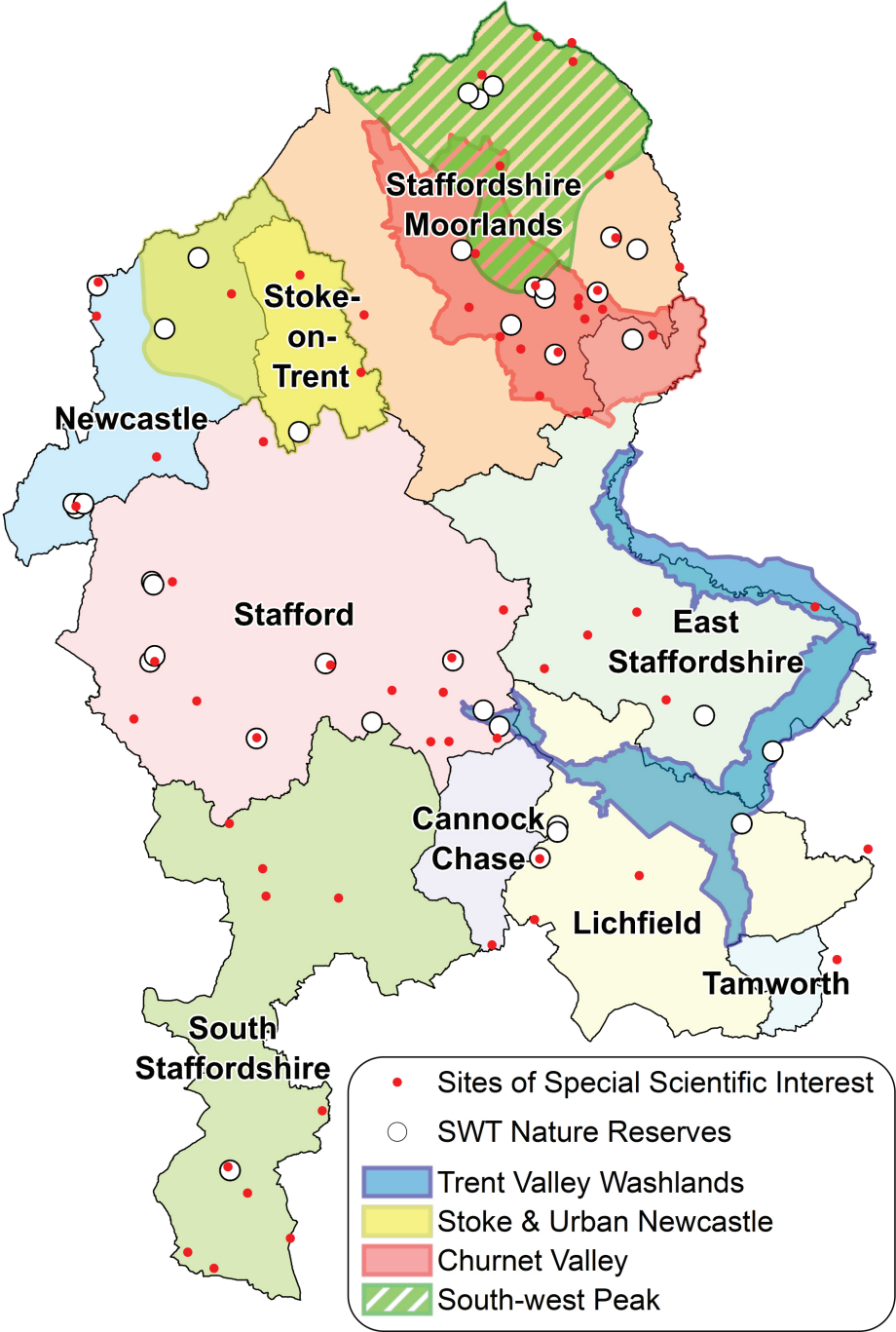
Review, act on and report on all matters of health and safety, and safeguarding, to a Health and Safety Committee, and to the Board, on a monthly basis.

## Who we will need to work with

Staff  
Volunteers  
Trustees  
Other Wildlife Trusts  
Other Third Sector Organisations



# Our wildlife rich county





# Where we want to be by 2020



**Net surplus from our trading activities will exceed £150,000**

Susan Freeman



**Our membership will grow to 16,000**

Matthew Roberts

**90% of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) we manage will be in recovery or in a favourable condition**



Adrian Clarke

**The area of wildlife habitat in appropriate conservation management as a result of our actions will increase to 10,000 hectares (4.5% of the county).**

\*as laid down within Local Area Agreement "appropriate conservation management" is defined as either an in date management plan or has an appropriate scheme or advice received, documented and acted up



**50,000 children will take part in our educational activities**

Matthew Roberts



# Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity in 1969. We acquired our first reserve, Loynton Moss, in 1970. We now own, lease or manage 27 sites covering almost 3,500 acres, including sites of International, European and National importance.

We are a voluntary organisation run by an elected Board of Trustees and currently employ around 60 staff plus another 30-40 on sessional contracts, and incorporate Staffordshire Wildlife Trading Limited.

We are a partner in The Wildlife Trusts - the largest organisation in Britain concerned with the conservation of all forms of wildlife. It is a partnership of 47 Wildlife Trusts and Wildlife Watch, the junior branch.

Nationwide The Wildlife Trusts have more than 800,000 members and more than 2,000 nature reserves. The Wildlife Trusts' Patron is HRH The Prince of Wales and the President is Professor Tony Juniper.

Our mission is to protect and enhance the wildlife and wild places of Staffordshire and to promote understanding, enjoyment and involvement in the natural world.

Our headquarters are at Wolseley Bridge, near Rugeley, ST17 0WT. You can call us on 01889 880100, or email us at [info@staffs-wildlife.org.uk](mailto:info@staffs-wildlife.org.uk)

[www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk](http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk)

