



Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire



ANNUAL REVIEW 2013-14

Foreword by Derek Langslow CBE



I had the honour to be elected as Chairman of the Wildlife Trust at the AGM in October 2013 following Charles Chadwyck-Healey's five years at the helm. The past year has been full of celebrations and achievements, thanks to the hard work

of all the staff supported by the Council. These included the 50th anniversary of the Wildlife Trust in Northamptonshire and the start of the most ambitious phase yet for habitat restoration in the Great Fen in Huntingdonshire. You can read more about both of these successes on pages 10 and 11 and about a selection of other highlights on pages 6 and 7 and 8.

The Council are preparing a new five-year plan that will state our priorities for local wildlife, will set out ambitions for further success in the three counties and aims to strengthen and streamline our work across all staff teams.

Whilst we continue to oppose developments that may damage important wildlife sites, we will continue to work with developers both before and after planning permission is granted to ensure that wildlife is protected and enhanced. Our pioneering approach can be seen in action at Cambourne and Trumpington in Cambridgeshire and

Houghton Regis in Bedfordshire where a better environment for people is being created alongside wildlife gains.

And in Northamptonshire a new partnership with the developers of a retail park at Rushden Lakes will allow us to manage an area of internationally important wildlife habitat in the Nene Valley which will also link together our reserves at Ditchford, Wilson's Pits, Higham Ferrers and Irthingborough to create a huge, new nature reserve. This example of our approach to nature conservation - Living Landscapes - demonstrates our commitment to creating bigger, better and more joined up spaces for nature that we can all enjoy.

Derek Langslow



▲ Derek Langslow with Charles Chadwyck-Healey and Brian Eversham



Image: Houghton Regis by Sarah Lambert

Images by Phil Mynott

The Trust's mission is to:



Image: Dormouse by Terry Longley

- ✓ **Conserve local wildlife, by caring for land ourselves and with others;**
- ✓ **Inspire others to take action for wildlife; and**
- ✓ **Inform people, by offering advice and sharing knowledge**

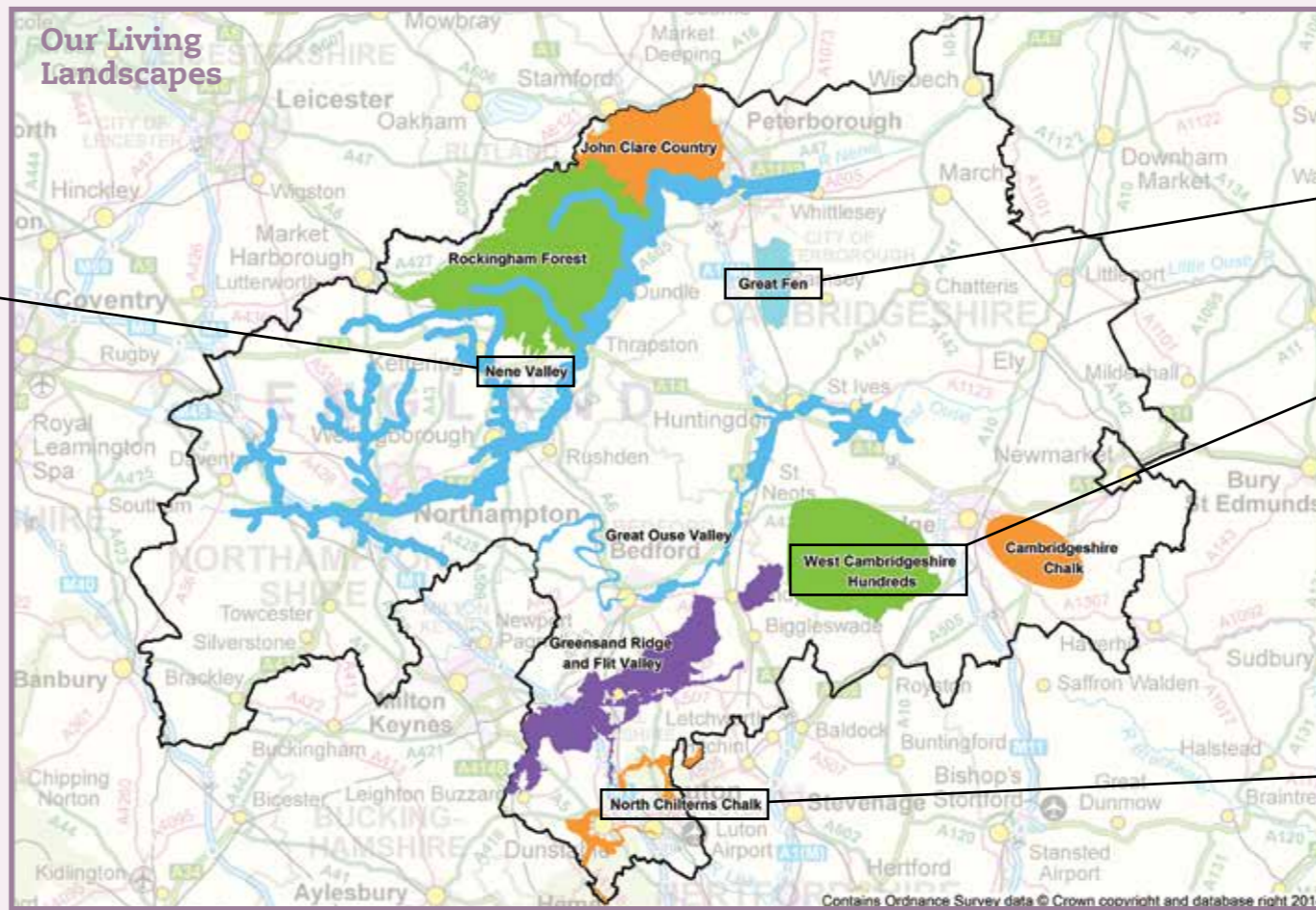
◀ **This year was the 20th anniversary of dormouse reintroduction at Brampton Wood**

Living Landscapes

The Wildlife Trust continues to focus on nine Living Landscapes. Four of these are our priority schemes where we see the best opportunities for wildlife and focus most of our effort. These Living Landscapes cover 140,287 hectares (approx. 346,657 acres) and include some of the most important habitats across our three counties. In these areas we deliver nature conservation on a more ambitious scale to ensure that areas of habitat are bigger, better and more joined-up and therefore better for nature and wildlife. Each Living Landscape contains a network of Trust reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, farmland and built-up areas.

In the **Nene Valley** we worked with partners in the Nature Improvement Area commenting on 120 planning applications, surveying 72 miles of riverbank and ensuring 1,500 hectares (3,700 acres) of farmland came into conservation restoration.

Scheme name	County
Great Fen (Priority)	Cambridgeshire
Nene Valley (Priority)	Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire
North Chilterns Chalk (Priority)	Bedfordshire
West Cambridgeshire Hundreds (Priority)	Cambridgeshire
Cambridgeshire Chalk	Cambridgeshire
Greensand Ridge and Flit Valley	Bedfordshire
John Clare Country	Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire
Great Ouse Valley	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire
Rockingham Forest	Northamptonshire



The **Great Fen** was awarded a further £1.89 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable us to restore a further 182 hectares (450 acres) at Engine Farm to reedbed and grassland.

In the **West Cambridgeshire Hundreds** we have developed a suite of Masters research projects with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, looking at pollinators (bees) and farmland and woodland birds.

Our priorities in the **North Chilterns Chalk** included working with local people to reduce antisocial behaviour at Totternhoe, Blow's Downs and Houghton Regis, grazing and scrub clearance to improve the management of large areas of these three nature reserves and monitoring butterflies and orchids.

Highlights

Nature reserves

The Wildlife Trust manages 126 nature reserves covering 3,945 hectares (9,748 acres).

- **The opening of an extension to Blow's Downs Nature Reserve (Bedfordshire) as ecological compensation for the Luton to Dunstable busway.**
- **Tree planting at Brownes' Piece, next to Waresley and Gransden Woods (Cambridgeshire) with more than 100 volunteers.**
- **Dartmoor ponies helped to graze the paddocks at Blow's Downs.**
- **Mapping rare species at Totternhoe (Bedfordshire), including musk and man orchids. Oil beetle and stag beetle were discovered – the only recent sighting of these species in the county.**
- **Creating new shallow pools at Titchmarsh (Northamptonshire) with large numbers of water birds already using the new habitat.**
- **Work on the invasive aquatic plant, water-soldier, at Felmersham Gravel Pits (Bedfordshire) moved on from survey and investigation to removal, funded by Natural England.**

- **Woodland visitor surveys were conducted at reserves in the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds Living Landscape.**
- **Conservation grazing plays a key role in the Trust's management of its nature reserves with more than 50 nature reserves grazed this year. The Trust owned up to 400 sheep and 11 cattle.**

▼ Stag beetle found in Totternhoe



Image: by Peter Bishop

Wildlife

- **Nine species of bat were found at Grafham (Cambridgeshire) – common, soprano and Nathusius's pipistrelle, noctule, Natterer's, Daubenton's, whiskered, brown long-eared and barbastelle.**
- **More than 6,000 chalkhill blue butterflies were recorded during summer 2013 at Houghton Regis Chalk Pit (Bedfordshire) along with good numbers of small blue, green hairstreak, dingy skipper and clouded yellow.**
- **Houghton Regis Chalk Pit (Bedfordshire) was hailed by the national press as one of the best sites in the country to see wild orchids. Thousands of Chiltern gentians carpeted the reserve in late summer making it perhaps the best site in the UK for this nationally scarce wildflower.**
- **More than sixty silver-washed fritillary butterflies in Gamlingay Wood (Cambridgeshire) plus purple emperor there and at Brampton Wood and Woodwalton Fen.**

Image: by Kevin Loader



▲ Purple emperor butterfly

- **The large velvet ant found at Rymes Reedbed, the only known population in central England; rare ground-beetles new to Huntingdonshire at Darlow's Farm; and at least two great grey shrikes wintering near Trundle Mere Lookout in the Great Fen.**
- **The 20th anniversary of the first dormouse reintroduction in the country at Brampton Wood nature reserve. Monitoring has confirmed continued dormouse breeding on the site.**

Wider countryside

We believe that everyone has a role to play in restoring nature. Without the active support and involvement of others managing their own land for wildlife or enabling others to do so, we will not achieve our vision for a Living Landscape.

- **The Trust supported Coronation Meadows launched by HRH Prince Charles to establish a new wildflower meadow in every county to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. Wildflower seed from Chettisham Meadow (Cambridgeshire), Upwood Meadow (Huntingdonshire), Boddington Meadow (Northamptonshire) and Fancott Meadow (Bedfordshire) will restore a number of recipient sites across the three counties.**

- **We lobbied the Department for Transport over inadequate mitigation for the proposed high speed rail link, HS2.**
- **The 1,676 Local Wildlife Sites (also known as County Wildlife Sites) form a crucial part of our ecological network. We survey these sites, engage with owners and help to get sites into positive management. At the end of last year 51.01% of sites were judged to be in positive management (48.80% in 2012-13) with more than 100 sites surveyed across the three counties.**



Sites under positive management are increasing

▼ Water-soldier removal



Image: by Nancy Reed

Highlights

Education and community

We engage with local communities in a variety of ways to grow support for nature conservation and get people actively involved in wildlife.

- **Our Education and Community team engaged with 19,822 (22,727 in 2012-13) children and adults during the year across all of its activities. This reduction in numbers reflects a refocusing of our effort on our Living Landscapes and a greater emphasis on the quality of engagement**
- **We have amongst the largest Wildlife Watch networks with 24 Watch groups and 113 registered leaders. The first Little Bugs Club for children under five launched at Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows and Maulden Wood and Eye Wildlife Watch groups re-opened.**
- **Our Ouse Valley Education and Community Officer is promoting our new Godmanchester nature reserve.**
- **Our education and community work in Northamptonshire focused on our new nature reserve at Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows. The Living Nene project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is reaching a wide range of community organisations and local people.**

- **In the North Chilterns Living Landscape we formed a new Watch group and local group and our youth rangers carried out practical conservation tasks.**
- **We closed our education centre at Randall's Farm, mainly due to financial constraints. Randall's Farm had performed very well for many years, and has been part of the childhood of a high proportion of Bedfordshire schoolchildren.**



Image by Caroline Fitton

However, its location outside the Trust's Living Landscapes, together with deteriorating facilities which would have been costly to replace, made closure unavoidable.

- **We delivered 40 Wildlife Training Workshops with 598 training places taken up.**

▼ **Tree planting next to Waresley and Gransden Wood.**

At the end of the year the Trust employed 89 staff (full-time equivalents) 51 of whom worked in conservation, on our nature reserves and in the wider countryside; 13 education and community staff; and three promoting wildlife through our magazine, our website and in the media.



Image: Debbie McKenzie at Paxton Pits by Matthew Roberts

An exciting year for the Great Fen

Image by Wildlife Trust



In 2013-14 we have seen the most ambitious phase of habitat restoration so far at the Great Fen, with work at Rymes Reedbed and a further £1.89million awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable us to restore Engine Farm - increasing the area for wildlife by almost one-fifth. This will connect habitats restored in the north and south of the Great Fen, and will provide part of the backdrop to the future Visitor Centre.

An innovative raised hide, Trundle Mere Lookout, provides a wonderful panoramic vantage point over Rymes Reedbed so people can watch it develop into a wildlife haven from an area that has been intensively used for agriculture over the past 150 years.

Although the reedbed is expected to take 10 years to reach full maturity, plenty of wildlife has already visited including two

great grey shrikes and seven short-eared owls. As the reedbed continues to develop naturally many new species, and existing species from the adjacent Holme Fen, will move in and flourish.

Before the area was drained in the 1850s, it was the site of Trundle Mere, a lake which was connected to its larger neighbour, Whittlesey Mere, and a reedbed after which this part of the Great Fen area has been named.

The area now known as Kester's Docking lies east of Rymes Reedbed and was previously 12 fields. It is named after a landing area on the western edge of Whittlesey Mere. In the coming years it will be restored to a mixture of reedbed, open water, and wet and dry grassland expanding the habitat for important wildlife species such as bittern and water vole. And at Engine Farm we will be creating rich grasslands, meadows and wetland habitats to halt the decline of birds such as corn bunting, linnet, skylark and snipe.

Rymes Reedbed and Kester's Docking are funded by WREN Waste Recycling Environmental Limited, a not for profit business that awards grants to community projects from funds donated by FCC Environmental to the Landfill Communities Fund.

The Great Fen is supported both financially and in-kind by the Heritage Lottery Fund and by the project partners Huntingdonshire District Council, Environment Agency, Natural England and the Middle Level Commissioners. We would also like to thank Anglia Regional Co-operative for their support for our Engine Farm fundraising appeal which included an innovative till point donation scheme at their nearby stores.

▼ Great grey shrike



Image by Kevin Loader

Fifty years of wildlife conservation in Northamptonshire

On 11 May 1963, a group of passionate and concerned Northamptonshire naturalists, came together to establish the Naturalists' Trust for Northamptonshire. From humble beginnings, what was to become the Wildlife Trust for Northamptonshire grew, merging with the then Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust in 1994 to form the present organisation.

The Trust's individual membership in Northamptonshire has grown from 96 in October 1963 to 8,737 in 2013.



In its 50th year the Trust now manages 40 nature reserves encompassing some of the most important habitats in the county from fragile floodplain meadows, to flower-rich grasslands and remnants of ancient woodland, which collectively cover more than 1,060 hectares.

One of the first reserves to be established in the county was at Pitsford Reservoir, which the Trust still manages in a partnership with Anglian Water.

Pitsford now stands as the best recorded and monitored reserve in the county providing us with invaluable details of how

a changing climate is impacting our native wildlife.

On Saturday 8 June 2013 we proudly celebrated these 50 years of nature conservation with some of our longest standing supporters - a group of naturalists, volunteers and members - who collectively have transformed nature conservation in Northamptonshire.

Held at Cranford Hall, the beautiful family home of Sir John Robinson, who is a Trustee of the Wildlife Trust, the celebrations included a presentation from Ioan Thomas, a founder member of the Trust, who conjured up memories of the wonderfully varied events and activities of the last 50 years that have helped protect the wildlife of the county. Gill Gent, Northamptonshire County Plant Recorder since 1965, had the important role of cutting the celebration cake.

▼ Embroidery by Mary Clugston celebrating the flora of Boddington Meadow



What the natural environment of Northamptonshire will look like in another 50 years is hard to tell, but with new reserves established; longstanding reserves being extended and better managed; strong links with land owners and local authorities; and the delivery of our vision for a Living Landscape, the Trust is working hard to ensure that the future for Northamptonshire's wildlife is bright.

▼ Great white egret at Pitsford Reservoir



Image by Neil McMahon

Financial review

The Trust's finances are divided into restricted funds, where monies raised must be spent on specific purposes, and unrestricted funds, which can be applied to general charitable activities.

Of the total income in 2014, less than half (£2.86 million) was unrestricted, with £4.1 million being restricted. In the last year approximately two thirds of the restricted total related to the Great Fen. The income relating to the Great Fen included a Heritage Lottery grant of £1.89 million to fund the buy-out of the tenancy of Engine Farm and restoration of the land.

The Trust achieved an unrestricted surplus of £199,173 (2013 £102,817) with a restricted surplus of £1,800,555 (2013 £290,543) resulting in total net assets of £20.1 million (£17.2 million attributable to restricted activities).

Within the restricted funds, the land holdings in the Great Fen and certain other reserves are included, together with substantial cash balances held by us against future liabilities for managing specific nature reserves over long periods.

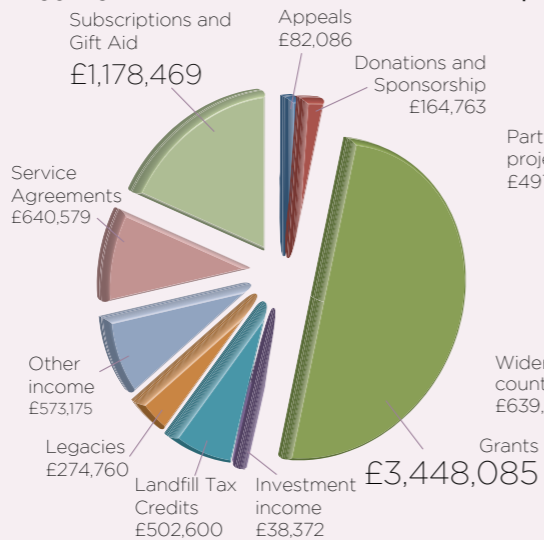
The unrestricted surplus represents funds received but not yet spent, and is carried forward in accordance with our financial reserves policy to provide stability and enable planning for efficient use of our scarce resources.

As some of our sources are vulnerable, and unpredictable in terms of amount and timing, the Trustees have agreed a policy of maintaining a financial reserve that would cover at least three months' expenditure on running costs but aiming for six months' cover. At the year end, the unrestricted current assets provided 3.6 months cover. The management and staff of the Trust control costs and save resources wherever possible,

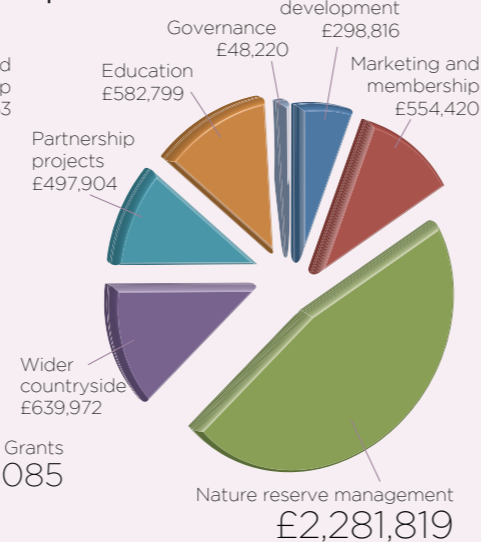
but if we are to continue to realise our ambitions for local wildlife and its related communities, we need to boost significantly the unrestricted income of the Trust on a sustainable basis so we can optimise our efficiency and extend our work to achieve a positive impact for local wildlife. This requirement is currently being considered as part of our five year planning process.

Karen Silcock
Treasurer

Income



Expenditure



Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2014

	2014 £	2013 £
INCOME		
Subscriptions and Gift Aid	1,178,469	1,179,434
Donations and sponsorships	164,763	209,820
Grants	3,448,085	1,851,238
Legacies	274,760	293,167
Appeals	82,086	63,298
Landfill tax credits	502,600	356,941
Service agreements	640,579	577,457
Investment income	38,372	44,031
Other income	573,175	526,797
TOTAL INCOME	6,902,889	5,102,183
EXPENDITURE		
Fundraising donor development	298,816	357,152
Marketing membership services	554,420	431,924
Nature reserve management	2,281,819	1,955,196
Wider countryside	639,972	734,869
Partnership projects	497,904	541,339
Education	582,799	640,794
Governance costs	48,220	47,549
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,903,950	4,708,823
Gain/(loss) on investments	0	(177)
Gain/(loss) on fixed assets	789	(1,862)
Net income (after expenses)	1,999,728	391,321
Funds at start of year	18,120,437	17,729,116
Funds at end of year	20,120,165	18,120,437

Summary of Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2014

	2014 £	2013 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Freehold land & buildings	1,331,831	1,362,777
Land in Tenure	4,794,565	3,449,410
Heritage assets	10,450,964	10,023,906
Other tangible assets	1,010,219	1,083,879
Intangible assets	83,560	71,940
TOTAL	17,671,139	15,991,912
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	42,997	37,584
Debtors	936,276	1,162,855
Loan to associated organisation	35,000	35,000
Cash at bank and in hand	3,075,713	2,683,039
TOTAL	4,089,986	3,918,478
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(786,849)	(810,963)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	3,303,137	3,107,515
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(820,101)	(932,636)
Provision for liabilities and charges	(34,010)	(46,354)
NET ASSETS	20,120,165	18,120,437
FUNDS		
Restricted	17,222,721	15,422,166
Unrestricted	2,897,444	2,698,271
TOTAL	20,120,165	18,120,437

Contributors and supporters

Image: Cooper's Hill by Keith Balmer



Enduring and improving relationships are essential to our success. Without the support and co-operation of a huge number of people, we would have achieved little during the year. The financial and time contributions of our supporters are the lifeblood of the Trust and it is largely their generosity that has enabled us to undertake much of the Trust's essential conservation work. At the end of March 2014 there were 35,745 members (35,032 for year end 2013) which represented a 2.0% net increase. This provided £899,778 income and £224,358 Gift Aid. We also recognise the enormous contribution of our volunteers who number in excess of 1,100. We would also like to thank all of our Wildlife Guardians.

We would especially like to record the contribution of Jon Smith, our energetic and hugely talented Great

Fen Restoration Officer, who died in November 2013 at the age of 33. Jon was an inspirational colleague, loved by volunteers and staff, who made a lasting contribution to the Great Fen. His widow, Sarah, is our Head of Education and Community.

In 2013/14 our corporate supporters helped us through membership subscriptions and with substantial additional fundraising and support. Strong partnerships with key local businesses include businesses include Caterpillar's support for our work in Peterborough and BGL Group who support education work in the Great Fen. As part of a national relationship with Center Parcs we worked with the new Center Parcs village at Woburn and heather seed was gathered at Cooper's Hill, near Ampthill to be used to create new heathland at the site. As at March 2014 our corporate members were:

Gold members:

Greenwillows Associates Ltd; Hewitsons; Moulton College; O & H Properties; Prologis UK Ltd; UK Power Networks

Silver members:

Anglian Water Ltd; Arqiva Ltd; AT Cross Ltd; Central England Co-operative; NFU Mutual Cambridge; Scudamore's Punting Company; Taylor Walton LLP; Unilever Research Colworth

Bronze members:

Alpro Soya; Building Services Design; Cambridge Steiner School; Cambridge University Press; Colpac Ltd; Granta Park; Kier Homes; Lafarge Tarmac; Method Creative

Standard members:

Acorn House Veterinary Surgery; An Norvys; Athene Communications; Barnwell Trailers; British Racing Drivers' Club; Cambridge Belfry Hotel; Cambridge Cheese Company; Cambridge Econometrics Ltd; Cambridge Regional College; Cambridge Water Company; Canoe2; Cemex; Centrica (Peterborough Power Station); Cranfield University; Creative Tops; Downing College; Fulbourn Hospital; Gardenworks Tree Surgery; GreenAir Cars; Hellidon Lakes Golf & Spa Hotel; Hutchings & Harding; JB Shropshire and Sons; The Jordans & Ryvita Company Ltd; Lockhart Garrett Ltd; The Marshall Group of Companies; Mott McDonald Ltd; Perkins Group Ltd; Rapid Employment; Richard Buxton Environmental Law; RPS Group; RWE npower (Little Barford Power Station); Spendlove Contracting; Vine House Farm; Weetabix; The Wellcome Trust; Whittlebury Park LLP

Business supporters:

Ark House Veterinary Surgery; Carter Jonas; Emmanuel College; Greens of Soham; Mackays; Trinity College; University of Northampton.

Financial support has come from many quarters, but we are particularly grateful for the monies received from in-memoriam giving at funerals and the legacies bequeathed by Andreas Spall; Dr Evans; Brian George Green; Allan Howard Parsons; Gillian Toynbee-Clarke and Hastings Elwin Watson.

We would also like to thank the following who have supported the Trust financially and with help in kind:

Aggregate Industries
Alan Evans Memorial Trust
Ampthill Town Council
Aurelius Charitable Trust
Banister Charitable Trust
Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation's London Luton Airport Operations Fund
Berry Brothers
Biffa Award
Butterfly Conservation
Cambridge City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Canal and River Trust
Central Bedfordshire Council
Chilterns Conservation Board
Clark Bradbury Charitable Trust
Corby Borough Council
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Douglas Compton James Charitable Trust
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Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Eye Open Space Group
Fenland District Council
Forestry Commission
Four Winds Trust
Greensand Trust
Harpur Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund
Huntingdonshire District Council
Jack Patston Charitable Trust
Linley Shaw Foundation
Luton Borough Council
Major Simon Whitbread Charitable Trust
Middle Level Commissioners
Miss E M Sage Charitable Trust
National Trust
Natural England
NBN Trust Ltd
Northampton Borough Council
Northamptonshire County Council
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit

Pauline Meredith Charitable Trust
Peterborough City Council
Peter Smith Charitable Trust
Red Tile Wind Farm Trust
River Restoration Centre
River Nene Regional Park
Rockingham Forest Trust
Robert Kiln Charitable Trust
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts
Rural Payments Agency
Sandy Town Council
SITA Trust
South Cambs District Council
Spear Charitable Trust
Springfield Lower School
Sudborough Foundation
Tasso Leventis Conservation Foundation
Thriplow Charitable Trust
Thriplow Farms Ltd
Urban and Civic Limited
Veolia Environmental Trust
Wadlow Energy Ltd
Wakefield Trust
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
Western Power Distribution
Wixamtree Trust
WREN

Trust information

Image: Green winged orchids by Matt Hamilton



Registered and principal office

The Manor House
Broad Street
Great Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6DH

Auditors

Saffery Champness
Unex House
Bourges Boulevard
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
PE1 1NG

Principal bankers

Barclays Bank plc
Bene't Street Business Centre
P O Box 2
Cambridge
CB2 3PZ

Solicitors

Hewitsons
Shakespeare House
42 Newmarket Road
Cambridge
CB5 8EP

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Cllr Bill Parker
Sir John Robinson Bt.
Mr Paul Solon
(appointed 12 October 2013)

Chief Executive

Mr Brian Eversham

Company number

2534145

Registered Charity number

1000412

Cover Image: Chalkhill blue by Jim Higham