



Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire

OUR FIVE-YEAR VISION

Better for wildlife by 2020

Our vision

- People close to nature, in a land rich in wildlife

Our mission is to

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

Our values: *We believe*

- That we must focus on all wildlife and whole ecosystems to safeguard the natural environment
- That everyone has a role to play in restoring nature
- That we should value, respect and listen to our staff, volunteers, members and supporters so they can contribute fully to achieving our vision
- That working in partnership brings more benefits than working alone
- That conservation depends on local knowledge and good science
- That we achieve more for wildlife by operating in an efficient and business-like manner
- That we should operate in an environmentally sustainable way
- That working to restore nature should be rewarding for everyone involved

About us

We manage more than **120** nature reserves covering almost **10,000** acres (4,000) hectares

95% of our local population live within five miles of one of our reserves

We have **36,000** members working together to protect local wildlife

We have **13** active volunteers for each paid member of staff

We engage with **20,000** children and adults every year through our events and activity programme

Foreword



Image by Phil Mynott

Our aim is that Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire will be better for wildlife by 2020 and that the people living here will understand and appreciate that nature matters.

I believe that we are witnessing the start of nature's recovery, after decades, centuries of loss. For the first time in 4,000 years, we may be creating more wildlife habitats than we are destroying.

The Wildlife Trust will help to make this happen by working with others to create Living Landscapes by restoring, recreating and reconnecting places rich in wildlife. We have achieved a great deal in the last five years; in the next, we aim to do even more.

To do better for wildlife, we must focus more on people too: staff and volunteers working closely together to achieve far more than either can do alone. We will monitor our progress against rigorous and stretching measures of success, and use these to guide and refine our work.

It is always difficult to know what the future will hold, but as a lean and efficient local charity we are flexible and adaptable. We can grasp opportunities as they arise. Our biggest long-term challenge is climate change. We will manage our nature reserves to help wildlife to be resilient and adaptable to change. We will work with other landowners to connect habitats and allow wildlife to move freely in response to a changing climate. We will help to control, pests, diseases and invasive species. With your help we can ensure our three counties have a future even richer in wildlife.

Brian Eversham, Chief Executive

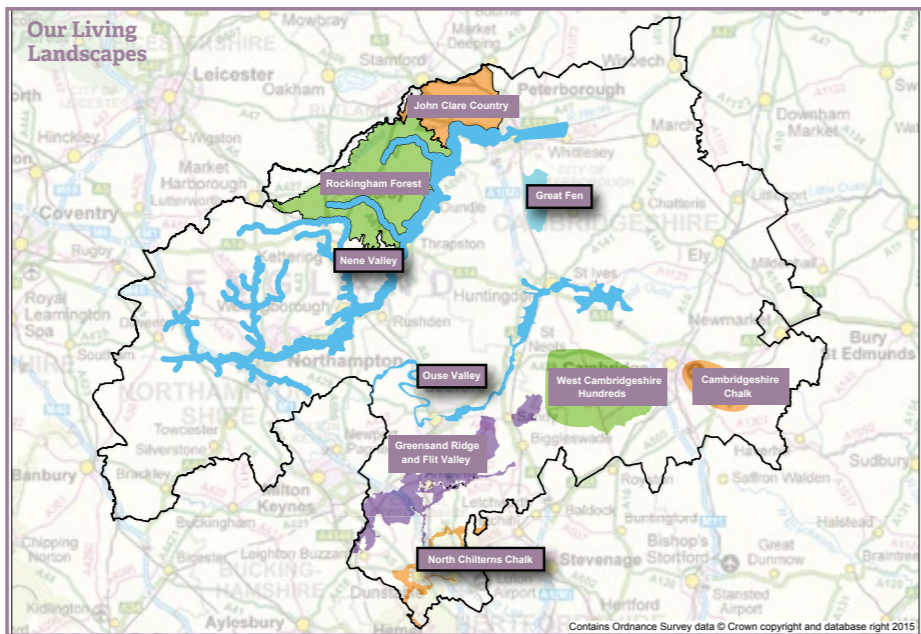


Living Landscapes

A Living Landscape creates space for animals to live and feed, for wildflower seeds to settle and grow, birds to hunt and butterflies to find nectar.

Living Landscapes are good for people too. A healthy environment aids food production and it gives us clean air and water. It gives us places to explore and enjoy and it enhances our mental and physical health.

Since 2000, we have concentrated our work on nine Living Landscapes and have made huge progress in improving these areas for wildlife and for people.



Growing: where we will significantly increase our conservation, education and community activity and increase the land area under conservation management

Maintaining: where we will maintain our current level of conservation, education and community activity and focus on improving the land currently under conservation management

Responsive: where we will respond to opportunities for action and respond to potential threats and build partnerships

- Great Fen
- Nene Valley
- Ouse Valley
- North Chilterns Chalk

- Greensand Ridge and Flit Valley
- John Clare Country
- West Cambridgeshire Hundreds

- Cambridgeshire Chalk
- Rockingham Forest

1: Delivery

We will create a Living Landscape at the heart of local communities

Over the next five years we will continue to think big – we must work at a landscape-scale to secure a better future for wildlife.

We will enhance our nature reserves to make them even better for wildlife and for people.

We will work with others, including other landowners and developers, to protect wildlife beyond our nature reserves.

Our work will be evidence-led and based on sound research and monitoring.



Water vole at the Great Fen by Kevin Robson

Our achievements

Nature turns a corner

The number of legally protected sites in our three counties has increased over the last five years, with the creation of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) amongst other gains. In 2012 the Nene Valley was chosen as one of the Government's 12 three-year Nature Improvement Area pilots.

We have three staff dedicated to surveying and supporting the network of 1,500, mostly privately owned, Wildlife Sites that form the backbone of nature conservation in our area. They are the most important spaces for wildlife outside of legally protected sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNR).

Wildlife sites come in a range of shapes and sizes and include wildflower meadows, ancient woodlands, wetlands, churchyards, old quarries and roadside verges. A wealth of wildlife depends on these sites, including many rare plants, insects and mammals. These species and habitats flourish because of past and current management.

Between 2010 and 2014 the percentage of sites in positive conservation management has increased.

	2010	2014
Bedfordshire	53%	59%
Cambridgeshire	40%	64%
Peterborough	60%	78%
Northamptonshire	32%	40%

Image by Rupert Paul

Nene Wetlands

We are working with the developers of a new retail complex at Rushden Lakes in Northamptonshire. At the centre of a globally important area for overwintering birds, the shopping centre is expected to attract around three million visitors a year and has been designed to be sympathetic to this important wildlife area. A large part of the development site has been set aside as a major new nature reserve that will be managed by the Wildlife Trust and will link together four of our existing nature reserves at Irthlingborough, Ditchford, Higham Ferrers Pits and Wilson's Pits. These precious fragments will then form one large area for nature totalling 667 acres (270 ha) and bring benefits to people and wildlife along this sensitive part of the Nene Valley.

We are also in negotiations to run our first visitor centre within the retail development at Rushden Lakes, which we hope will become a gateway for people to access and enjoy the wonderful wildlife of the Nene Valley.

Nature reserve at Rushden Lakes. Artist impression courtesy of LXB Properties

Save Godmanchester nature reserve

In summer 2014 Cambridgeshire County Council carried out consultation on its Long-term Transport Strategy.

Included in the strategy was a proposal for a link road from Hartford to the A14 junction at Godmanchester to improve access to and from a possible future development at RAF Wyton. The indicative route shown for this road was through either the Wildlife Trust's Godmanchester nature reserve at Cow Lane or through a Site of Special Scientific Interest – Godmanchester Eastside Common.

We strongly opposed this road plan as – whichever route was chosen – the impact on local wildlife and environment would be unacceptable. We launched a media, community and online campaign against the road proposal including a petition which was signed by nearly 1,400 people and was officially lodged with the council. In November 2014, the County Council announced that the road proposal was removed from the Long-term Transport Strategy. The Wildlife Trust-led campaign was explicitly mentioned in the withdrawal.



Godmanchester Nature Reserve by Lynne Farrell

2: Reaching out

We will engage with people to enhance the recognition and reputation of the Trust

We will be the conservation charity of choice – the 'go to' authoritative voice on nature conservation for media and other influencers.

We will focus on raising our profile and promoting the Trust's reputation, using a small number of key messages that convey our honesty and integrity, and we will be open and responsive to new opportunities.

We will inspire people about the natural world and provide opportunities for them to learn about and take action for wildlife.

Flying geese by Zsuzsanna Bird



Great Fen

Our vision for the Great Fen is truly ambitious. We are creating a vast new wetland (3,700 hectares – 14 square miles) between Huntingdon and Peterborough, enfolding and linking two precious remnants of fenland ecology, Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Holme Fen NNR. This will be a thriving Living Landscape for wildlife and people. Since 2001 we have brought more than half of our target area under conservation management, and wildlife is moving into the restored areas such as Ryme's Reedbed and Kester's Docking.

At the heart of this wildlife success is strong and resilient partnership working. We work with the Environment Agency, Huntingdonshire District Council, the Middle Level Commissioners, and Natural England within the Great Fen Project Partnership to turn the vision into reality, each partner bringing skills and experience.

In total we have secured more than £9million in Heritage Lottery funding – their £7.2million grant to us in 2008 was the largest event grant for a nature conservation project.



Rymes Reedbed before



Rymes Reedbed after

3: Partners

We will build strong and effective partnerships that benefit wildlife, the Trust and others

We will be a partner of choice through honest, reliable and trustworthy behaviour. We will choose partnerships that achieve the greatest mutual benefits for us, our partners and local wildlife.

Working with partners will grow our influence, expand the scope of our work, challenge thinking and bring fresh ideas. Most of our partnerships are very effective; those that are not, we will end amicably.



Kingfishers by Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography

4: Finance

We will ensure that the Trust is a financially viable and sustainable organisation

We will grow our unrestricted income and diversify our income streams to mitigate risk. We will hold adequate cash reserves and assets to secure the long-term sustainability of the Trust.

Companies dig deep for wildlife

We are grateful to the many businesses who have given us their support over the years. We have more than 70 corporate members, and companies support us in many other ways, providing funding, gifts in kind and sponsorship for a variety of our activities and projects. We have instigated national deals to produce Wildlife Trust branded goods including binoculars by Luton-based Opticron.

For five years, Peterborough-based insurance giant BGL Group has sponsored our education and community work at the Ramsey Heights Countryside Centre in the Great Fen.

Peter Winslow, Chief Executive of the BGL Group, said, "This project gives us the opportunity to support two elements that are very important to the BGL Group - our local environment and the education of children. The work that the centre does is invaluable in teaching children about respecting nature and the importance of conservation.

"We are proud to be involved and look forward to seeing how our support helps to develop the Great Fen for the future."

Bearded tit by Amy Lewis



5: Working together

Our shared values will help us to work better; to be efficient and effective and to share best practice

We will work effectively and improve our internal communications, systems and working practices. We will encourage secondments and clear leadership at all levels.

Tree bumblebee on bluebell by Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography



Learning from Cambourne

Nine miles from Cambridge lies a village that's unique. Cambourne is a new development, on former farmland, that has been designed for wildlife as well as people. We've been involved from the beginning, ensuring that large areas of new habitat were created, giving residents a wonderful space to enjoy being outdoors, and providing a home for wildlife of all types. We now manage 80 hectares (198 acres) of land, and moved our central office to Cambourne Manor House in 2004.

Jenny Mackay, Cambourne's Reserves Officer, said, "There are more wildlife species here now than when the area had huge arable fields, because there are more different types of habitat. New lakes are part of the drainage system at Cambourne and they are fantastic for wildlife."

We are using all we have learned at Cambourne to benefit other, similar projects. In 2015 we plan to open a new nature reserve at the heart of the 1200-home Trumpington Meadows development in Cambridge, and we are working with developers at Houghton Regis in Bedfordshire and Rushden Lakes in Northamptonshire, ensuring that development across our three counties benefits wildlife.

6: People

Our staff and volunteers will excel in their roles

We will recognise the invaluable contribution our volunteers make and better integrate them into our work.

We will enable skill sharing and career progression through coaching, mentoring, effective inductions and secondments.

We will plan our work better to allow time for knowledge sharing and innovation.



Zeena Thompson, **Wildlife Watch Leader,** **Cambourne Local Group**

Zeena first became involved with the Wildlife Trust when she signed up as a Wildlife Trust member in early 2014. A year later she saw the Cambourne Wildlife Watch Group she founded crowned as the Best New Group of 2014! She also volunteers with our Ecology Groups – both helping in the office and conducting field work.

Eleven children aged 8 – 11 attend the group once a month to explore the great outdoors and discover wildlife on nature walks. They have learned about food chains and the fascinating life cycle of the dragonfly.

She said: “It is a privilege to be able to work for such an amazing charity and get to share and nurture passion for wildlife in our Watch Group. Wildlife Watch Groups highlight just how important – and fun – conservation is, especially for future generations.”

Wildlife Watch – the UK’s leading wildlife club for young people – is the junior branch of the Wildlife Trusts and helps young people discover nature.

Emma Fellows by Matthew Roberts

7: Culture

We will become the conservation organisation that people want to support and to work for

Our internal values

- Value, respect and listen to staff, volunteers, members and supporters
- Work as one organisation
- Endorse and embrace partnerships, teamwork and cross-team working
- Operate in an efficient and business-like manner
- Operate in an environmentally sustainable way
- Create a working environment that is flexible and adaptable to change
- Encourage staff and volunteers to be bold, ask questions and develop new ideas
- Be clear and passionate about the Trust’s vision
- Develop and recognise the expertise of staff and volunteers
- Have clear and consistent policies and messages
- Maintain a friendly and approachable atmosphere
- Learn and share across the organisation, from other Wildlife Trusts and the wider charitable sector

Little owl by Jon Hawkins Surrey Hills Photography





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