



Registered Charity No. 1197155

Wildlife Friendly Otley

Annual Report April

2022 - May 2023



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Foreword

Wildlife Friendly Otley is a small local charity, established in October 2018.

Public interest in nature is high, with the big charities such as RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts attracting 2 million members, but British wildlife has still declined by more than half in the last 40-50 years and is under continuous threat. Locally we can see this decline first hand, it was this disconnect we hoped to address forming Wildlife Friendly Otley (WFO) and declaring Otley as the first wildlife friendly town.

By declaring Otley as the first wildlife friendly town, we can set an example of how towns can be rich in nature and wildlife; reversing some of the loss of nature on our own doorsteps. Whilst making Otley an even more attractive place to live, work and visit.

Our charitable objects are:

- To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation of the wildlife and wildlife habitats and protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Otley and the surrounding area.
- To advance the education and appreciation of the public regarding the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment.

The charity is governed by the board of trustees, all of whom are equally responsible and have a single vote in decision making. In the case of a tie, the chair of the meeting will cast the deciding vote.

The work of our charity is divided into six subcommittees (see figure 1); Campaigns, Communications, Education, Events, Finance & Governance and Habitat Restoration. The work of each subcommittee for the past year will be described in the remainder of this report.



Figure 1 Structure of the charity.

Thank you to our membership, which has grown significantly and stands at 212 members in May 2023. A high number of members now also volunteer, a special thank you to our volunteers, whose support is vital for the work we do. In order to ensure WFO maintains excellent communication



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with a growing membership and volunteer group Helen Hey, Trustee has taken the role of Membership Secretary from May 2023 which River Six previously undertook.

Helen Hey has communicated this change to the members and provided information about WFO our continued compliance with GDPR legislation.

The Trustees

As of May 2023, we have 12 trustees:

Andrew McKeon	Catherine Burton	Claire Blindell
Helen Hey	Jane Smith	Neil Griffin
Nic Shipp	Richard Askew	River Six
Rob Tindall	Sarah Shipp	Steve Heaton

Our schedule of meeting as trustees is as follows;

January	General committee meeting
February	No meeting
March	General committee meeting
April	No meeting
May	Trustee meeting
June	AGM
July	No meeting
August	Trustee meeting
September	No meeting
October	General committee meeting
November	Trustee meeting
December	No meeting

The subcommittees also meet as individual working groups regularly.



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Campaigns

As we are a campaigning organisation, most of what we do is a campaign; i.e. activities designed to raise awareness about wildlife and encourage people and organisations to experience and enjoy it and consequently become more wildlife friendly. All the following subcommittee reports on our activities can be seen in that light. The task of this subcommittee is to manage and coordinate current campaigns, including collaborations with other groups. Such as Feed the Birds, Otley Hedgehogs, Pledge Campaign.

The Nature Recovery Plan

Currently one campaign stands out and that is highlighted by the recent decision by Otley Town Council (OTC) to declare a biodiversity emergency. This is a direct result of the work done by the Habitat Restoration subcommittee. A Nature Recovery Plan for Otley has been prepared by the subcommittee (view on our website) and has been adopted by OTC.

East of Otley Development Plan

After fierce opposition by ourselves and many others who supported the East of Otley Action Group, the development plan for 750 houses and an outer relief road was withdrawn at the end of 2021 and we are still waiting for the publication of a much delayed new plan.

Weston Woods

This year we have also been a part of forming a big collaborative group the Friends of Weston Woods with our partners Menston Area Nature Trust, Otley 2030, Wharfedale Naturalists Society, Climate Action Menston, Climate Action Ilkley, Addingham Environment Group and Yorkshire Rewilding Network — in order to instigate a community buyout campaign to protect Weston Woods.

Pledge Campaign

Efforts to encourage people to pledge to be more wildlife friendly continue. Recently we started to approach local businesses including the new Otley Garden Centre. We also gave presentation to Otley Chamber of Trade.



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Communications

This subcommittee includes the management of press releases, social media and the website.

Press releases

We have maintained an active presence in the traditional media, as well as social media. There have been many press releases issued by the charity and published both in the local Wharfedale Observer and on social media.

Publicity for the 2022 Wildlife Arts Festival was extensive in local and regional press.

Reports of the success of the Arts Festival and the launch of the Nature Recovery Plan with Otley Nature Network were well covered in the December issue of Otley Matters, which covers our activities in each quarterly issue.

The launch of our Nature Recovery Plan got excellent coverage in the Wharfedale Observer and Yorkshire Post.

We made it to BBC Look North this year, with our involvement in the Save Weston Woods campaign.

Social media

This year has seen a large amount of positive comments about the wildflower beds around town and in particular the four in Wharfemeadows Park. These positive reactions were reported back to both Otley Council and Leeds CC Parks departments.

Our social media figures are as follows



961



538



908



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Education

The purpose of the Education subcommittee is to establish and maintain working relationships with the Otley group of schools, promote onsite habitat management and organise adult education opportunities.

All Saints Primary School

Last summer (2022) our “Wonderful Wildlife Day,” was very positively received, with the entire school doing wildlife-related activities all day, starting with an assembly presented by our education officer, Neil Griffin. We arranged for other visitors to be a part of the day, including the Yorkshire Dales River Trust and Prickly Pigs Hedgehog Rescue.

Pool Primary School

This year the Education committee expanded down the road to Pool, as well as tree planting, we are planning a clean up and repair of their pond in the autumn this year..

Prince Henry’s Grammar School

The students have been making bird boxes and we visited to advise where to best situate them, to maximise the chances of them being occupied. Their Eco-mittee also attended and presented at the launch event of our Nature Recovery Plan on the 1 November 2022, alongside famous and renowned broadcaster and entomologist George McGavin.

We received funding from the Co-Op for the nest cams to be set up on the school grounds.

Westgate Primary School

The students also benefitted from a book-reading visit from children’s author Jeanne Willis as part of the wildlife arts festival.

Whartons Primary School

A discussion and plan around creating a wetland like Addingham Primary’s in the school grounds has begun.



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Events

The purpose of this subcommittee is to manage our calendar of events that we organise and participate in. In 2022 we had stalls at the Otley Show, Otley Carnival, the Chevin Discovery Day and provided 4 wildlife walks for the Walking Festival; all of which we are repeating in 2023, except the Otley Show.

Chevin Discovery Day 2022

There was a lot of positive feedback from visitors, the art and music elements were successful additions this year. We were aided by the Duke of Edinburgh award students from Prince Henry's. Just under 200 people attended, mostly families with primary-aged kids — it was also more racially diverse this year — although not many older or disabled visitors.

Our own plants and cake sale was very popular, the feedback from our volunteers including providing a seat/drink/cake next year.

The success of last year has allowed us to plan big and better events this year, on Sunday 25th June.

Wildlife Arts Festival 2022

The festival was bigger and better last year, featuring presentations by 3 nationally-known authors, one nationally-known film-maker, 6 local creative groups, a further 15 artists and 8 photographers, 4 musicians, a well-being practitioner, and 3 workshops for people to get involved in.

With Leeds Inspired awarding us £1300 and the Wharfedale Naturalist Society awarding us £580, we were able to recruit: Simon Barnes, who opened the festival on Friday evening, Jeanne Willis who ran a workshop with the students at Westgate school, (£580 grant from WNS), and Ian McCarthy returning with his new presentation "Howling With Wolves". A "music inspired by nature" workshop (using natural sound samples) was also run by Richard Sabey at Woolpack.

Otley Town Council also awarded the festival £400 from its community development fund.

Finance and Governance

This year has seen a big change in the board of trustees, we lost two associated with the Finance and Governance subcommittee. Danny Hudson, long time treasurer and founding member stepped back as a trustee, we would all like to give her a special thanks for all the hard work she has put in (voluntarily!) over the years. A big thank you also to Chris Huby, who also stepped down, for his contribution.

Sarah Shipp took over as treasurer, supported by Nic Shipp.

The financial report is as follows;

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

For the period from 16/12/2021 to 31/03/2023

		Restricted	Unrestricted
Carried forward from 15/12/2021	£1990.4	£325.68	£1664.72
Receipts (Section A1)	£9020.46		
Receipts (Section A2)	£6043.02		
Net	£4967.84		
Bank (Section B1)	£4917.84		
Petty cash (Section B2)	£50.00		
	£4967.84		

Section A1

Receipts made up of:	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Donations from individuals	£1300.00	£383.33	£1683.33
Donations from businesses	£250.00	£150.00	£400.00
Wildlife Arts Festival 2022			
OTC/LCC (Leeds Inspired Grant)	£1570.00		£1570.00
Wharfedale Naturalists:			
wildflower seeds grant	£400.00		£400.00
Tesco; children's gardening tools	£1000.00		£1000.00
Co-Op Funeralcare	£2129.86		£2129.86
Events takings	£1506.87	£330.40	£1837.27
Total	£8156.73	£863.73	£9020.46

Section A2

Payments made up of	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Website		£408.58	£408.58
Bank charges		£10.40	£10.40
Events expenses	£1729.10	£900.09	£2629.19
Lush: Hedgehog highway; face plates for holes	£103.18	-13.18	£90.00
Barn owl boxes (Wharfedale Barn Owls)	£50.00	£140.00	£190.00
Wildlife for schools	£27.93		£27.93
Tesco; children's gardening tools	£1000.00	-0.37	£999.63
Stationary and printing	£45.00	£66.00	£111.00
Insurance		£157.00	£157.00
Habitat restoration	£1069.29	£350.00	£1419.29
Totals	£4024.50	£2018.52	£6043.02
Surplus in year ending 31/03/2023	£4132.23	-1154.79	£2977.44
Carried forward at 31/03/2023	£4457.91	£509.93	£4967.84

Section B1

Bank Account

Opening balance at 16/12/2021	£1956.40
Receipts	£9004.46
Payments	-6043.02
	£4917.84

Section B2

Petty Cash

Opening balance at 16/12/2021	£34.00
Receipts	£16.00
Payments	0.00
	50.00



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Habitat Restoration

The purpose of this subcommittee is simple habitat restoration. By working to create wildlife corridors throughout the town in order to enhance and restore our wildflower, insect and wider wildlife populations, whilst also improving connectivity between habitats. We have successfully liaised with a number of businesses and institutions in Otley, including the hospital, churches and others, to relax mowing on their land and allow the wildlife corridors to flourish. This subcommittee also include the work we do to encourage wildlife friendly gardens, which themselves can become part of a meaningful wildlife corridor.

This year, after 4 years of difficult lobbying, Leeds City Council (LCC) is starting to bring about some changes in its management of Otley's green spaces, including the flower seeding in Manor Garth Park.

Together with Otley2030 and Otley in Bloom, we saved the flower beds in Wharfemeadows Park from being grassed over, and have planted them with pollinator-friendly plants, which has proved very popular with the public. This is another important step in persuading LCC to re-evaluate their management of our green spaces.

Following a successful campaign of evidence and public support, Otley Town Council declared a biodiversity emergency, akin to their climate emergency.

This is an important step for our local council, as it implies that action must follow.

We published our Nature Recovery Plan for Otley, which OTC have adopted. This dynamic document highlights actions to be taken in conjunction with OTC to restore biodiversity, including lobbying LCC to ban the use of herbicides, further habitat restoration, reduction in light pollution and other wildlife corridor initiatives such as our wildlife in gardens scheme.

Progress is slow, but in the right direction, and support for biodiversity restoration is swelling amongst the public and OTC.

We continuing to pursue the implementation of our Nature Recovery Plan with OTC. We have prepared a number of documents, including a management plan focussing on the creation of community orchards, to persuade LCC. Two community orchards were planted this year, with a further four planned for the coming autumn.



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A programme of seeding various sites around town took place over the autumn, thanks to a generous donation from the Wharfedale Naturalist Society. We also received a very generous

donation of £1300 from the charity, Cash Bash Trash, which operates in Bermuda, removing trash from the ocean for which they are sponsored. The contact came via a WFO supporter, whose land we had previously seeded.

WILDLIFE FRIENDLY OTLEY**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS**

For the period from 16/12/2021 to 31/03/2023



Carried forward from 15/12/2021	1990.40
Receipts (Section A1)	9020.46
Payments (Section A2)	6043.02
Net	4967.84

Bank (Section B1)	4917.84
Petty cash (Section B2)	50.00
	4967.84

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Brought forward from year ended 15/12/2021	325.68	1664.72	1990.40
Section A1: Receipts made up of:			
Donations from individuals	1300.00	383.33	1683.33
Donations from businesses	250.00	150.00	400.00
Wildlife Arts Festival 2022 OTC/LCC (Leeds Inspired grant)	1570.00		1570.00
Wharfedale Naturalists: wildflower seeds grant	400.00		400.00
Tesco: gardening equipment for children	1000.00		1000.00
Co-op Funeralcare	2129.86		2129.86
Events takings	1506.87	330.40	1837.27
			0.00
			0.00
	8156.73	863.73	9020.46
Section A2: Payments made up of:			
Website		408.58	408.58
Bank charges		10.40	10.40
Events expenses	1729.10	900.09	2629.19
Lush: Hedgehog highway - face plates for hedgehog holes	103.18	-13.18	90.00
Wildlife - direct support (barn owl boxes)	50.00	140.00	190.00
Wildlife for schools	27.93		27.93
Tesco: Blue token grant - children's gardening tools & equipment	1000.00	-0.37	999.63
Stationery & printing	45.00	66.00	111.00
Insurance		157.00	157.00
Habitat restoration	1069.29	350.00	1419.29
	4024.50	2018.52	6043.02
Surplus/(Deficit) in year ending 31/03/2023	4132.23	-1154.79	2977.44
Carried forward at 31/03/2023	4457.91	509.93	4967.84

Made up of:**Section B1: Bank account:**

Opening balance at 16/12/2021	1956.40
Receipts	9004.46
Payments	-6043.02
	4917.84

Section B2: Petty cash:

Opening balance at 16/12/2021	34.00
Receipts	16.00
Payments	0.00
	50.00

Section B3: Notes to the accounts:

Signature:

Sarah Shipp
Treasurer, Wildlife Friendly Otley

Date: 03/05/2023