SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 238372

Details

Other names	THE SOMERSET TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	00818162
Registered	1964-12-03
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Somerset Wildlife Trust 34 Wellington Road Taunton TA1 5AW
Phone	01823652400
Email	enquiries@somersetwildlife.org
Website	www.somersetwildlife.org

Activities

Objects: (1) FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC, TO ADVANCE, PROMOTE AND FURTHER THE CONSERVATION, MAINTENANCE, PROTECTION AND ENJOYMENT OF: (I) WILDLIFE AND ITS HABITATS; (II) PLACES OF ZOOLOGICAL, BOTANICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR SCIENTIFIC INTEREST; (III) FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE WITH GEOLOGICAL OR PHYSIOGRAPHICAL VALUE; (IV) PLACES OF NATURAL BEAUTY IN PARTICULAR, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, BY PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY.(2) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN: (I) THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; (II) THE PRINCIPLES OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION. (3) TO PROMOTE RESEARCH IN ALL BRANCHES OF NATURE STUDY, IN ECOLOGY AND GEOLOGY.

Activities: Managing nature reserves, protecting rare and threatened species, monitoring plans and developments, standing up for wildlife conservation, working with landowners, local business and government for the benefit of wildlife and promoting sustainable living.

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/238372

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED. IN PRACTICE SOMERSET
- Somerset

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£5,348,000	£5,773,000	£10,269,000	93
2024-03-31	£4,905,000	£4,701,000	£10,736,000	87
2023-03-31	£5,436,163	£4,611,928	£10,513,760	84
2022-03-31	£6,071,111	£3,350,532	£9,782,304	69
2021-03-31	£3,822,619	£2,544,822	£7,027,381	59

Trustees

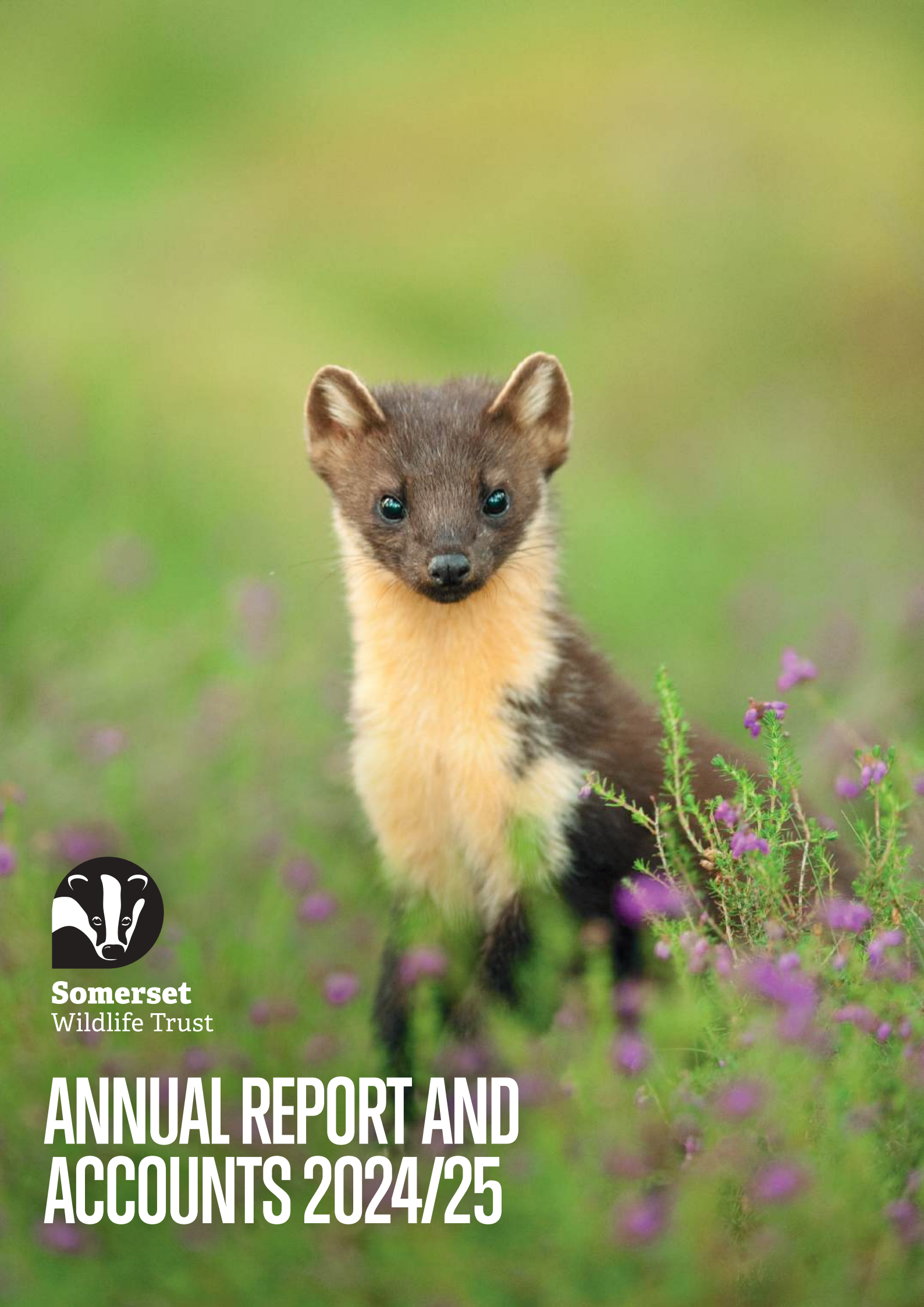
Name	Role	Appointed
Rupert Taylor	Chair	2023-11-18
Amy Rebecca Coulthard		2022-11-22
Barnaby Briggs		2025-11-15
Charles Fattorini		2025-11-15
Dr Daniel James Christopher Skinner		2022-11-22
Dr Mark Steer		2019-06-10
Holly Purdey		2021-01-19
Matthew James Bell		2017-02-22
Richard David Scarlett		2022-11-22
Stephen Rogers		2023-08-01
Stuart McBride		2021-01-19

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/238372

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 238372

Accounts



Somerset
Wildlife Trust

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2024/25

THANK YOU

There's no doubt that this year has been another challenging one; for the Trust, for nature, wildlife and for us as individuals as we see the growing human impact on some of the country's most precious sites for nature, and legislative policy that seems set on contributing to accelerating the pace.

However we have taken solace in the fact that the force of nature is strong, as is the indomitable power and passion of the over 23,000 members and thousands of other supporters across the county that have joined forces with us this year as we fight to stand up for nature in all the ways we can; from volunteering, fundraising, monitoring species and campaigning to being advocates in our amazing, vibrant communities, from the Mendips Hills to the Somerset Levels and Moors, to our brilliant coast and the urban streets of Taunton.

Thank you for being with us and on nature's side.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity.
Charity number 238372.
Company number 818162.
Registered office:
34 Wellington Road, Taunton,
Somerset TA1 5AW

Created by **Kirby Everett**
Kirby.Everett@somersetwildlife.org

Designed by **Tina Hobson**
tinahobson.com

CONTENTS

Part 1 | Introduction 4
Introduction from our Chair 6
Message from our CEO 8

Part 2 | Our strategy 10
Our approach and shared values 12
Wilder Somerset 2030 13
Transformations we are making 14
Impacts we are committed to achieve 16

Part 3 | Strategic report 18
How we raised and spent our money 20
Goal 1 More space for nature 22
Goal 2 A movement for nature 30
Goal 3 Telling Somerset's story 38

Our people and organisation 46
Developing Somerset Wildlife Trust 48
Volunteers 52
Fundraising 54
Financial review 60
Objectives and activities 63
Structure, governance and management 66
Statement of trustees' responsibilities 73

Part 4 | Independent auditor's report 74

Part 5 | Financial Statements 80
Consolidated statement of financial activities 82
Consolidated and trust balance sheets 83
Consolidated statement of cash flows 84
Notes forming part of the financial statements 86

Gifts and donations 102
Key people and advisors 104

PART 1:

Introduction

- Introduction from our Chair
- Message from our CEO

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHAIR

“Looking to the future”

Using the word ‘rewilding’ or ‘wilding’ in any conversation sparks strong emotions and varied perspectives. For some, it conjures an idealised past, while for others, it suggests a pristine wilderness untouched by humans. But for me rewilding, or wilding, whichever word you use, is about creating resilient, functioning ecosystems fit for the future. Ecosystems that will sustain both wildlife and people in equal measure, and in harmony with each other’s needs. Nature needs us and we need nature. We are part of nature – we simply mustn’t forget that.

Take our river systems, for example. When healthy, they adapt naturally to seasonal floods and droughts, provide connected habitats, and foster thriving populations of fish, insects, amphibians, and aquatic plants. While addressing pollution is crucial, many of our rivers still lack a vital component—a keystone species that plays a transformative role in maintaining ecological balance.

That missing ‘ecosystem engineer’ is the beaver. These remarkable animals improve water quality by trapping sediments and pollutants, regulate water flow to prevent floods and droughts, create wetlands that support a diversity of wildlife, and boost fish populations by offering shelter for juveniles and deeper, cooler waters for species like salmon and trout.

I’m so excited that beavers are now returning to Somerset and key rivers across the county, and that we now have legislation to ensure they can continue to thrive and can be supported in the right way in our communities. Already, we’re seeing the benefits as they shape and restore the natural balance of the habitats in which they can be found.

And in a similar way, we now have pine marten present in the south west, with the hope that we can put back the balance in our precious woodlands. Of course, challenges will arise, as they do with any species reintroduced into the landscape—but the solutions exist, and the ecological rewards far outweigh any obstacles.

It’s not all about the new. Across the county we need to manage and enhance our habitats to function better with the species already present. Climate change is reshaping our world. We cannot go back, we must learn from our past to prepare for the future.

Somerset Wildlife Trust’s vision is to ensure healthy, connected ecosystems across our county—from the Mendips and Tone Vale to the Somerset Levels and coast. To do this, we must think not just in terms of 5–10 years, but 50–100 years, taking a long-term, strategic view of how we support the land and the species within it.

At Somerset Wildlife Trust we have an exceptional team—ecologists, land advisers, reserves managers, reintroduction specialists, and communications experts—all working to engage communities and deliver real change. Our priority isn’t just our own reserves; it’s empowering farmers, landowners, and local groups to adopt sustainable practices that benefit the broader landscape.

None of this would be possible without our members, donors, and volunteers. Their passion for wildlife fuels everything we do. We understand the daunting scale of challenges facing nature—from land-use change and development to the escalating pressures of climate change. But if the return of species like the beaver has shown us anything, it’s that positive change is possible and I believe should give us all real hope for the future.

Rupert Taylor

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

“Over the last year we have prioritised our own work to ensure we are as impactful as we can be”

While thinking about the last year and what we’ve achieved, I’m reminded of the Serenity Prayer “grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”. At Somerset Wildlife Trust we’ve been putting our energy into the things we can change over the last year, accepting there is so much happening right now that we must absorb: changes politically, economically, and socially both in the UK and globally that are frustratingly beyond our control.

With the other 45 Wildlife Trusts and other environmental organisations we continue to challenge and try to improve national policy to reduce the negative impacts for nature. Our main focus is on things we can influence in Somerset. Over the last year we have prioritised our own work to ensure we are as impactful as we can be. To help us do that, we made some changes to our organisational structure, taking on new Directors, who have made great strides in securing new opportunities and strategic partnerships that will help us scale up our ambitions and put pace behind our landscape-scale approach - including kickstarting a strategic approach to our work in the Tone Vale.

Our power is our people. It’s important to us that we invest in them. We’ve been able to take meaningful steps towards the Trust becoming a more inclusive organisation for staff, volunteers and visitors and will continue this work next year.

Our focus on supporting individuals, communities, businesses and landowners to take action for nature is really beginning to show results as we better understand the most meaningful, impactful actions that support nature’s recovery. We’ve been busy delivering huge amounts of work for nature’s recovery in Somerset too.

On our nature reserves and wilding sites, I’m proud of the achievements our teams have made, with the support of hundreds of volunteers; from peat restoration work on the Somerset Levels and Moors to dealing with the impacts of ash die back and encouraging woodland recovery on the Mendip Hills. We’re seeing real changes at Honeygar, our wilding site, with many more species recorded by the vast number of volunteers and researchers monitoring the changes. What we are doing on this site is pioneering – from the way we are monitoring hydrology and measuring peat carbon stores to using cutting edge bio-acoustic technology and AI to track bird species across the site.

We’ve relaunched our consultancy to focus more on delivery of our strategic goals as well as generating much needed income for the charity.

We can’t deliver nature’s recovery without people and all of the Trust’s teams have been working hard to engage and support communities across the whole county, from community-designed Climate Adaptation Plans, to large numbers of people getting involved in our Big Count citizen science project, from a wide consultation on beaver guidance, to our relaunched Private and Community Nature Reserves network. I’m delighted we’ve been able to support Somerset’s young people through our Youth Forum – they have been incredibly active this year, attending a mass rally for nature in London, writing to MPs, working with our staff teams to bring their passion and perspective to all that we do. We are working with communities across Somerset from Bridgwater to Glastonbury and from Frome to Taunton, finding ways to inspire, support and enable people to protect and improve their local nature.

We’ve engaged with outgoing and incoming MPs to make sure they have a full understanding of how policies impact nature in Somerset and continue to advocate for change where this is needed. Working with a range of partners we are advocating strongly for estuary ecosystem and species protection as Hinkley C comes into operation.

Our continued leadership of the Local Nature Partnership, which I currently Chair, has allowed us to agree shared goals for Somerset, including in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Together with environmental organisations, businesses, the council, statutory agencies and academics, we have identified areas to focus on to increase our collective impact for nature and reach shared goals of 30% of land and sea managed for nature by 2030. There’s a lot to do to achieve this, but we are on our way.

Some of the more worrying global and national trends may be beyond the sphere of our direct influence, but there is a huge amount we can do to turn the tide for nature’s recovery here in Somerset with you on our side.

Together, we are not just protecting wildlife now — we are ensuring future generations get to experience a healthy and abundant natural world.

Georgia Dent

PART 2:

Our strategy

- Our approach
- Our shared values
- Wilder Somerset 2030
- Organisational transformations
- Impact measures

OUR APPROACH

Launched in 2021, and co-designed by trustees, staff, members and supporters, our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy remains the lodestar for all that we do. This Annual Report sees us nearly at the halfway point of that strategy. While the general trend is negative for nature globally and in the UK, and the pressures on it remain and accelerate in pace, over this time we have also seen some really positive progress, and learned a great deal about where best to focus our efforts. We know that if we work together with our supporters, partners and wider nature stakeholders in the county, we can bring nature back. **Nature can't wait**.

OUR VISION

A Somerset-wide nature recovery network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

OUR MISSION

Working for the changes needed for nature and people to thrive together.

OUR SHARED VALUES

Somerset Wildlife Trust share the following fundamental values, which underpin all of our work and support our journey to a Wilder Somerset 2030.

1 We believe **everyone can make a contribution** to nature's recovery

2 **We love Somerset** - it's amazing wildlife and its communities

3 We are **confident and brave** in order to achieve the greatest impacts for nature

4 We encourage **innovative thinking and action** for nature's recovery

5 We are **passionate about nature**

WILDER SOMERSET 2030

GOAL 1 MORE SPACE FOR NATURE

▶ Nature is improving everywhere with restored natural processes, connected and protected through a Nature Recovery Network, with at least 30% of land and sea managed positively for nature (30 by 30).

▶ Currently only 10% of the county can be classified in good natural or semi-natural condition with species-rich natural habitats supporting abundant and diverse wildlife.

▶ Tripling the land managed for nature is a challenge but we will buffer and connect our nature reserves to the wider landscape and work in partnership with our peers, partners, communities, farmers, landowners, and individuals to influence how land is managed across the county, ensuring it is with nature in mind.

GOAL 2 A MOVEMENT FOR NATURE

▶ Everyone has the opportunity to experience nature, with at least 1 in 4 people taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.

▶ Awareness of the environment is higher now than it has been for several generations, but our collective behaviours do not yet match our concern or the scale of the challenge.

▶ We will inspire more people to turn awareness into nature-positive behaviours and action - a critical mass that can tip the balance for nature's recovery. Value for nature comes from experiencing it, so connecting people to it and enabling them to share their experience with others is vital.

GOAL 3 TELLING SOMERSET'S STORY

▶ The story of nature's recovery in Somerset is told through our interactive State of Nature tool that monitors progress and informs action.

▶ We need a clear understanding of what is happening to wildlife over time in terms of biodiversity and abundance so we can make clear decisions for nature's recovery, based on scientific data and evidence.

▶ We will monitor trends, fill the gaps in our species knowledge, and increase the number of records held by teaming innovative and meaningful data recording methodologies, with a strong programme of public citizen science opportunities and training. Nature needs more eyes on the ground.

TRANSFORMATIONS WE ARE MAKING

We have identified four key transformations that we believe will enable us to realise our strategic goals and achieve our strategy. These transformations form a continuous dynamic process that underpins our collective ability to achieve our vision of a thriving natural world.

INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE, LEARNING CULTURE

Staff and volunteers
EDI and values
Learning and development

We invest in our people, staff and volunteers, ensuring we have the skills and experience needed to achieve our goals and create opportunities for people to develop their careers and achieve their goals. We are relevant to and inclusive of all communities, we listen and learn from them and understand their needs and aim to speak with an authentic, credible voice.

INCOME STEP CHANGE

Financial model
Commercial income
Green finance

We will engage with more supporters who share our values and goals, from corporates to individuals, and diversify our income streams, including through innovation such as green finance, to ensure our core delivery model is funded through our unrestricted income. We will use project funding for time limited or innovative work. We will expand our commercial activities, identifying new opportunities and always setting high standards for environmental integrity and due diligence.

BEING A BOLD, AUTHENTIC VOICE

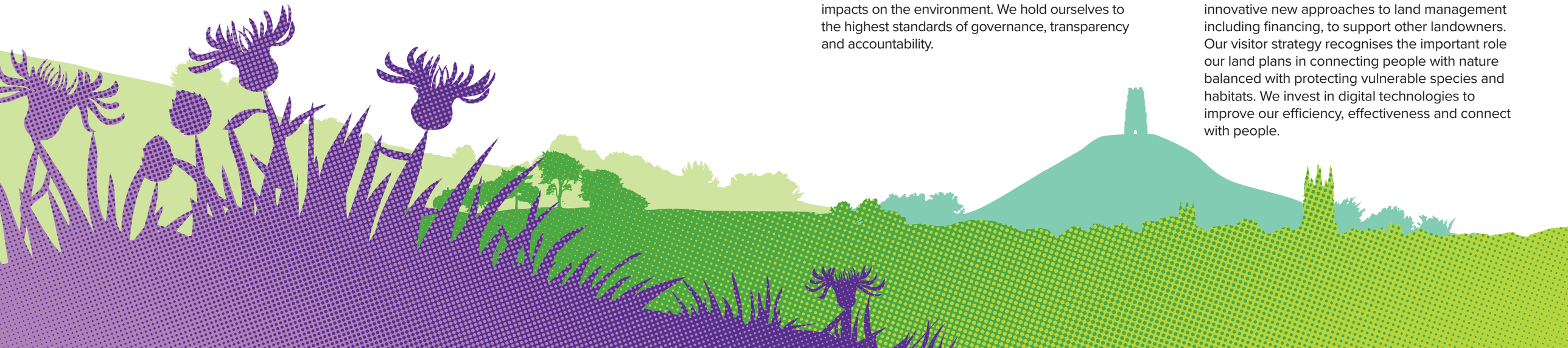
Embedding Team Wilder ethos
Communications and brand
Data, monitoring and reporting
Governance, policy and process

We are bold and confident speaking out for nature, backed by our members and supporters, with a strong brand and clear communications approach. We are not afraid to say we are part of nature and what nature needs to thrive. We invest in science, monitoring and research to be evidence-led in our delivery, advocacy and policy. We hold ourselves and others to account through the Somerset State of Nature. We use our knowledge, expertise and evidence to inform decision making in Somerset that impacts on the environment. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of governance, transparency and accountability.

LEADING AND INFLUENCING CHANGE

Maximise our main land assets
Acquisition and influence
Environmental impact
Digital transformation

Our direct contribution is only part of the solution to tackling the ecological and climate emergencies. To truly be effective we must support, influence and inspire others to take positive action and lead by example in our delivery including our own environmental impact. We manage existing and acquire new land to protect the precious and vulnerable species until the wider landscape improves and demonstrate how nature can recover sharing our learning with others. We test and trial innovative new approaches to land management including financing, to support other landowners. Our visitor strategy recognises the important role our land plans in connecting people with nature balanced with protecting vulnerable species and habitats. We invest in digital technologies to improve our efficiency, effectiveness and connect with people.



IMPACTS WE ARE COMMITTED TO ACHIEVE

Our three strategic goals guide all our work. To support our achievement of them we have defined the 8 primary impacts we want to have. We consider these to be the critical areas where we can - and must - make change happen. These will be a key focus during our mid term strategic review and delivery plan refresh (planned for 2025/6); they will also shape our future reporting to our Members and wider stakeholders.

We are committed to share clear and reliable reporting on the impact we are making. We know explaining and showing our progress on this is vital for engaging people and thus our ability to succeed across all our strategic goals.

Nature Improving Everywhere

Somerset Wildlife Trust advises and influences others on policy, planning and decision making to restore natural processes, connect habitats, and protect nature through a nature recovery network

Land Owned & Managed

Somerset Wildlife Trust's contribution, through land we own and influence, to the national and international target of 30% of land protected and positively managed for nature for at least 20 years

Marine & Coasts

Somerset Wildlife Trust's contribution to the national and international target of 30% of sea protected and positively managed for nature for at least 20 years

Actions for Nature

Somerset Wildlife Trust is enabling people to take visible, meaningful action for nature in order to reach a social tipping point, a movement of people in Somerset driving positive change

Access to Nature

Somerset Wildlife Trust creates accessible opportunities for a range of diverse audiences and supports partners to help more people engage with and value nature across Somerse

Building Support

Somerset Wildlife Trust is working with others to build support for nature's recovery across Somerset through advocacy and influencing change across sectors

Income

Somerset Wildlife Trust is growing its financial capacity to achieve a Wilder Somerset through a model that sustains core operations and enables strategic growth

State of Nature

Somerset Wildlife Trust gathers, collates, analyses, and reports data to understand nature's changes and guide recovery efforts and monitor our collective progress

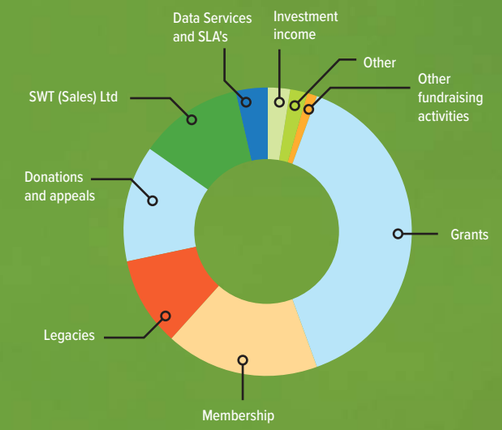
PART 3:

Strategic report

- How we raised and spent our money
- More space for nature
- A movement for nature
- Telling Somerset's story
- Our people and organisation
- Financial review

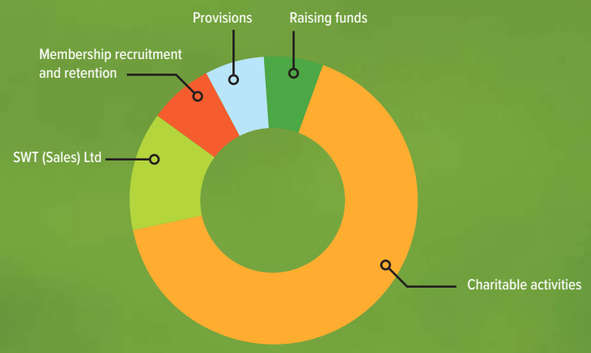
HOW WE RAISED AND SPENT OUR MONEY

INCOME BY SOURCE



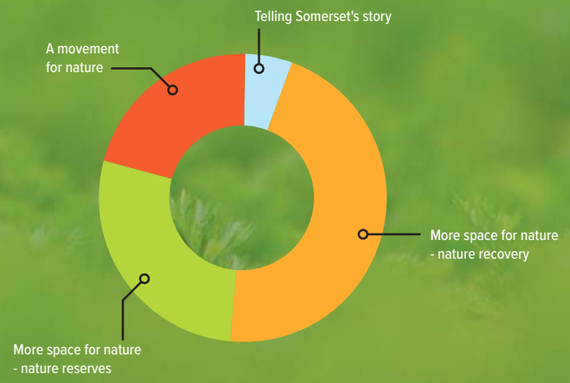
	2024-25 £'000	2023-24 £'000	Change %
Grants	2,085	1,652	26%
Membership	919	890	3%
Legacies	538	310	74%
Donations and appeals	702	875	-20%
SWT (Sales) Ltd	623	553	13%
Data Services and SLA's	195	198	-2%
Investment income	126	132	-5%
Other	106	214	-50%
Other fundraising activities	54	81	-33%
Total	5,348	4,905	9%

EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITY



	2024-25 £'000	2023-24 £'000	Change %
Charitable activities	3,826	3,421	12%
SWT (Sales) Ltd	764	650	18%
Membership recruitment and retention	425	296	44%
Raising funds	382	334	14%
Provisions	376	-	100%
Total	5,773	4,701	23%

EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES



	2024-25 £'000	2023-24 £'000	Change %
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,756	1,297	35%
More space for nature - nature reserves	1,064	993	7%
A movement for nature	811	888	-9%
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmental Records Centre	195	243	-20%
Total	3,826	3,421	12%

GOAL 1

More space for nature

FACTS AND STATS

An estimated **11 million** tonnes of carbon is stored in the county's peat, equivalent to 10 years' worth of the county's emissions. Peat is still being extracted in Somerset.

Under **15%** of rivers in Somerset are in 'Good' ecological condition

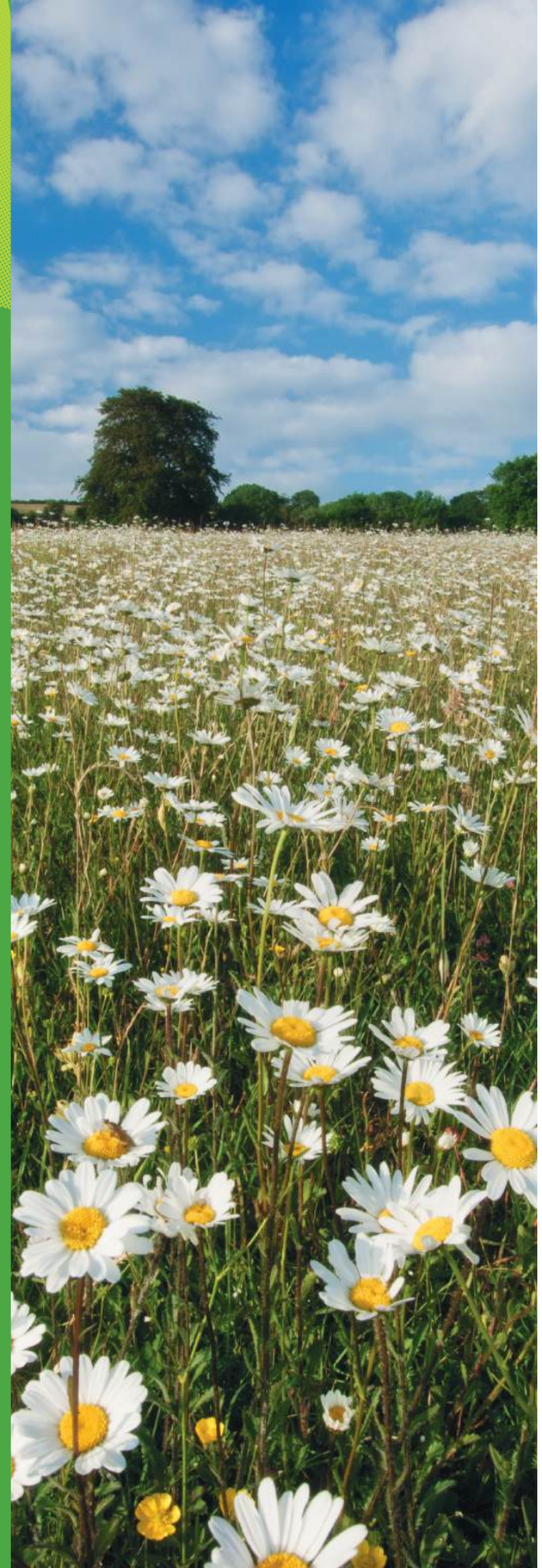
5.74% reduction of grasslands in Somerset over the last 25 years.

Out of the 128 SSSI sites in Somerset, only **46** are in 100% favourable condition

Somerset's **73km** coastline is facing significant pressure

Over the last **30 years**, presence of invasive species in Somerset has increased by 260%.

(Source: Somerset State of Nature Report 2023)



The challenge

The primary threat to nature right now is the reduction in quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat (as identified by the Lawton Review 2010, IPBES 2019) due to a range of issues including development, agricultural policies, pollution, competing land use and invasive species.

Climate change is making this worse, and people in Somerset are already experiencing the impacts.

The government and Somerset Council have committed to restoring nature, with legally binding targets for nature and species recovery yet there is a huge funding gap, with changes in agri-environment schemes impacting all landowners, including the Trust.

Our approach

We are focusing our efforts where we believe we can achieve the greatest impact for nature's recovery in the face of a changing climate. Our reserves continue to represent the species-rich core of the county's nature network and can demonstrate to all what well managed habitat looks like. We are now refocussed on four priority landscapes and, working with other landowners, are working to identify how we can best connect them and form a more robust network across the county. We are working with and supporting communities to take positive action for nature that contributes to increasing connected space for wildlife.

What we aimed for

Working with and **supporting landowners** to manage their land for nature is crucial. Key to that has been continuing to develop the **land management and advice** we offer and providing effective consulting services to provide landowners with the information and support they need, whether through the charity or our consultancy. As well as supporting others, we know that strategic **land acquisition** needs to be a key part of our strategy; to buffer our reserves, connect high quality sites and fill gaps in the county's nature recovery network and ensure permanence for the species and habitats on these sites under our management. Doing both in conjunction with a strong **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** will enable us to make great gains for nature on a county level, so our continued work with Somerset Council this year was of critical importance.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

We have engaged with over 119 landowners covering 9450 hectares of Somerset.

67 acres of land purchased and ready to improve for wildlife

20+ Strategic landscape partners and organisations locally and nationally, involving 3 protected landscapes, 2 super National Nature Reserves

This year our Mendip Farm Cluster has grown to 44 members covering an area of 6,600 hectares. This equates to around 22% of Mendip Hills National Character Area

WHAT WE DID:

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE...ON THE MENDIP HILLS

Alongside our really successful Farm Facilitation work on the Mendip Hills, this year we have also been able to deliver a range of other land advisory work, creating strong and meaningful relationships with a variety of different landowners. We have been supporting them with advice and information on how they can manage their land and operations in a more wildlife-friendly way. We have been busy delivering site surveys and visits on an area of land that covers approximately 170 hectares, a positive sign that there are many who want to adapt but need specialist support to do so.

Much more was delivered in this priority landscape including; inputting into and reviewing the 5-year Biodiversity Management Plan for the landholding surrounding Holcim's Torr Works quarry; research undertaken to determine options for best practice habitat restoration/ grassland creation without the use of glyphosate for our Farm Cluster members; facilitating the allocation of free trees to a number of Mendip landowners; and providing advice on funding including via agri-environment schemes, Biodiversity Net Gain, Woodland Trust, Farming in Protected Landscapes, Somerset Council and Forest of Avon Trust funding.

To improve the support we offer to landowners we have invested in training for our advisors. This includes specialist training in professional Sustainable Land Management qualifications to help ensure that we are up to date in terms of land management advisory skills and our delivery teams have been attending key events such as LandAlive and HedgeFest to learn from others and bring back that learning into the Trust.

LINKING UP A LIVING LANDSCAPE

This year saw us completing the development phase of a pilot project on the Somerset Levels and Moors funded by DEFRA, part of the redesigned agri-environment schemes aiming to pay land managers to deliver nature recovery at a landscape-scale. The Environmental Land Management Scheme Adapting the Levels project is located within part of the Brue catchment between Highbridge and Glastonbury, where we have been working really closely with 15 landowners over 1,000 hectares of land on a whole range of activities including; connecting up the landscape to restore natural processes to benefit habitats and species; protecting peat soils, improving water quality and hydrological connectivity; supporting landowners to adapt their land management to climate change and, in turn, supporting communities to become more climate resilient; and identifying long-term investment and funding to support landowners and nature recovery at scale.

It's been an enormous project to undertake, but we think the plans submitted at the end of the development phase will more than demonstrate the power of this approach. We hope to agree with DEFRA that we can enter the delivery phase in January 2026 - a 20-year project whereby landowners will be paid to deliver land management through a mix of 'green finance' e.g. Nutrient neutrality and BNG, and a Defra ELMS LR payment.

VOLUNTEER VA VA VOOM

We couldn't achieve any where near the amount we do without the support of hundreds of volunteers. We delivered a range of habitat management and ecological monitoring activities across Somerset Wildlife Trust sites within the Avalon Marshes, as part of the Bogs and Bitterns project. Bioacoustic sensors were deployed at Catcott, Westhay Heath, Westhay Moor (inc. Westhay South), and Honeygar, with monitoring carried out by trained volunteers. These volunteers participated in sessions covering survey techniques for bitterns and great white egrets, orchard management, and the use of bioacoustic equipment. Capital works included the installation of culverts at Catcott and Westhay Moor South, and of an eel pass

CLAIRE HOLLINGSWORTH,
Assistant Reserve Manager

Describe your job: I undertake a range of practical land management tasks across the Mendip nature reserves, helping to establish and maintain good quality habitats capable of supporting abundant biodiverse wildlife, and keeping our reserves safe and accessible for visitors.

What energises you in your job?: I feel lucky to have a job where I am outdoors surrounded by nature and wildlife, being reminded everyday of why we do what we do, what we have achieved, and the future possibilities, learning a little every day, and working with our amazingly dedicated volunteers.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: The reaction I get from people I meet - they have so much appreciation for what we do and think that we are doing a great job. I'm proud to be part of a multi-talented organisation that is making an impact in so many different ways.

at Westhay Moor to aid species recovery. Habitat maintenance works comprised reedbed cutting at Westhay Moor and Westhay Heath and topping of the lows at Catcott. To support wetland restoration, hydrological assessments were commissioned for Westhay Moor South and Beckery, a nearby site in Glastonbury managed in partnership with Friends of Brides Mound and the South West Heritage Trust. Volunteer-led activities at Beckery included meadow creation, bramble clearance, and orchard restoration, aimed at enhancing biodiversity and reducing habitat fragmentation. This objective also informed the panel assessment of seven Local Wildlife Sites, where the Project Ecologist engaged directly with landowners.

A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE FILLED WITH SHARPHAM

In 2024 we purchased just over 28 hectares of land at Sharpham Park. This land was previously organically farmed and mostly produced spelt wheat. We have purchased the land to improve it for wildlife and bring this area of relatively high ground into the wider mosaic of habitats within the Somerset Levels and Moors landscape, and to create a corridor for wildlife to other land owned by other nature-friendly landowners. We have worked through our ecology team and Somerset Council to understand, develop and market the improvements we are making to this land for wildlife through Biodiversity Net Gain (a way of funding this work long-term). Through this process we will not only understand the Biodiversity Net Gain process, but we are contributing to raising standards by establishing a scheme that really delivers for nature. It is also a way of demonstrating to others how it's possible to finance nature friendly land management.

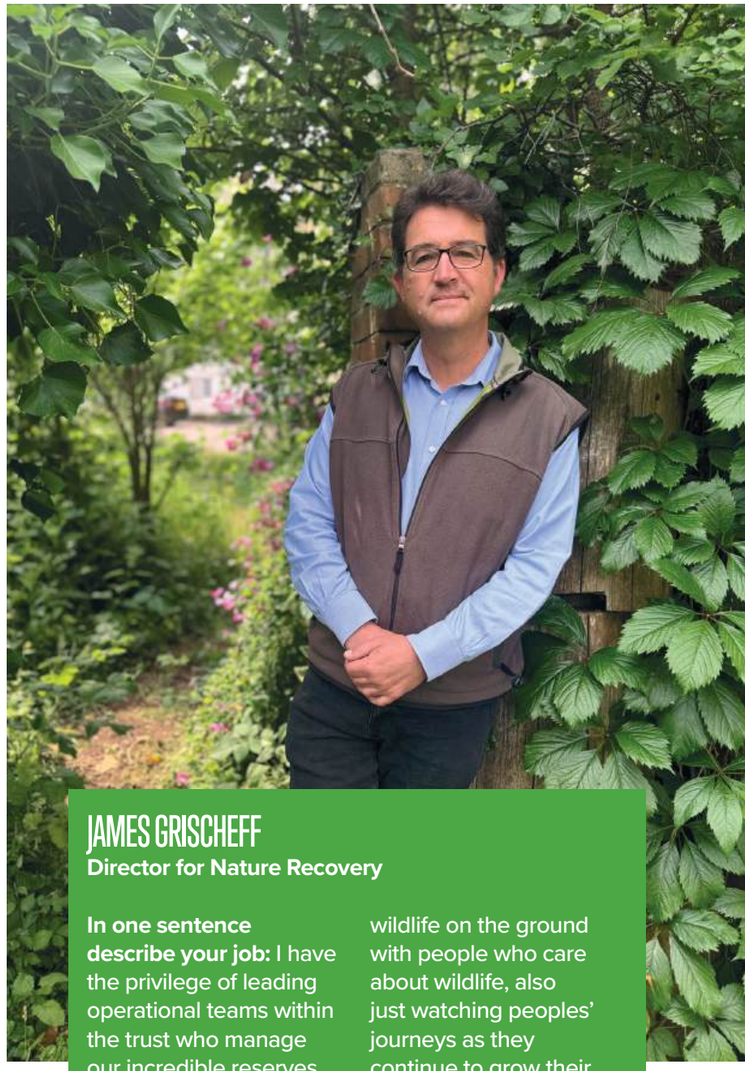
NOTHING DOES BUSY LIKE A BEAVER

Somerset Wildlife Trust was commissioned by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW) with funding from Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) to produce a Beaver Management Guide for Somerset – an extensive and rigorous piece of desk-based research involving engagement and input from professional, private and public stakeholders. Over a 10-week period, by the end of autumn 2024, we had organised and run three community events, held one online information webinar, given four in-person presentation/Q&A sessions, and had 321 responses to the online survey we designed to gather thoughts, views and opinions on the return of this very special keystone species. We were also able to involve our amazing Youth Forum, with an event designed purely for their feedback. Our Human-Wildlife Co-existence Officer was able to use of of this to generate the final document - Somerset Beaver Management: Guide and Recommendations. The document, which is available on our website, is a comprehensive overview of the issues and, in addition to suggesting target actions, it provides information on the national frameworks and guidelines that must be followed and the organisations to contact for extra advice and support. We are very grateful to everyone who provided feedback and hope you find the Guide useful.

MARTENS ON THE MOVE

2024 was an exciting year for the Pine Martens Bounce Back project. In spring, the partnership, including Somerset Wildlife Trust and led by Devon Wildlife Trust, was approved for funding by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project then recruited a Youth Pathways Officer, and two Field Officers and two Engagement Officers (one for each of Dartmoor and Exmoor). Somerset Wildlife Trust hosts the Exmoor Engagement Officer who has been doing amazing work helping local people prepare for pine martens' return including hosting drop-in events, attending community events, working with schools and supporting artists to tell the pine martens' stories. In autumn, 15 martens were successfully translocated to Dartmoor. Supporting local communities, the first Partnership Forum was held in January, bringing together representatives from special interest groups, eNGOs, local businesses and land owners for a project update and to hold respectful discussion about strategies to support co-existence going forwards – an exciting step on our journey, with licence applications submitted for possible translocation to Exmoor in autumn 2025.

15 pine martens were successfully translocated to Dartmoor in 2024



JAMES GRISCHEFF

Director for Nature Recovery

In one sentence describe your job: I have the privilege of leading operational teams within the trust who manage our incredible reserves, influence land and wildlife management outside reserves and undertake research and manage vast amounts of wildlife data and evidence. I also work with a committed, smart and diverse bunch of trustees and executives who set the strategic direction of the trust.

What energises you in your job?: I love seeing real things happen for wildlife on the ground with people who care about wildlife, also just watching peoples' journeys as they continue to grow their action and expectations for wildlife.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: I work with a truly fantastic bunch of dedicated individuals (be they staff or volunteers) who make great stuff happen for wildlife. They understand this stuff is hard and not always fast but they keep being creative and pushing ahead.

NATALIE BARNETT
Climate Adaptation Officer

Describe your job: I coordinate climate adaptation planning with Somerset communities, helping them develop practical, locally tailored strategies to adapt to climate change.

What energises you in your job?: Witnessing communities take ownership of their climate adaptation journey, transforming initial anxiety into collective action for nature and climate.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: That Somerset Wildlife Trust is being realistic and proactive at tackling climate change, supporting local communities and working with nature as we adapt to inevitable impacts.

SPOTLIGHT
Adapting to Climate Change Across Somerset

This year we've been working with communities across Somerset through our Act to Adapt project, funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority, to develop locally-led responses to our changing climate.

Our three-stage process brings communities together to Talk about climate risks, Shape their adaptation priorities, and Act on their plans. We've collaborated on Climate Adaptation Plans for eight communities, including Glastonbury, the Polden Hills, Minehead, Wells, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge, and the Under Hamdon Parishes. These aim to be more than documents on a shelf but living guides that communities are using to plan climate action.

Each community receives £1,000 funding to help kickstart their adaptation actions. Communities are now planning diverse projects reflecting their local priorities and challenges. Glastonbury is planning semi-permeable pathways to reduce surface water runoff and workshops at Bridie's Farm to teach residents skills like creating rain gardens and green roofs. In the Poldens, Shapwick Parish Council is planning to plant trees and wildflowers, whilst Catcott Primary School aims to create a climate-resilient garden that will help educate young people. Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge are developing comprehensive tree strategies and sustainable planting initiatives to increase urban canopy cover.

We've engaged 1,107 people across all communities through workshops, consultations, and launch events. With more communities are reaching out all the time, there is a real growing interest in local climate action. This grassroots approach is helping communities across Somerset build resilience and prepare for the challenges ahead.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2025/26:

SMARTER DELIVERY AT A LANDSCAPE-SCALE
Scaling up our efforts to meet 2030 targets set out in our strategy is key, and this year will see our teams working with others in a far more collaborative way across four distinct priority landscapes – Mendip Hills, Somerset Levels & Moors, Tone Vale and Somerset's Coast. We will create unique Action Plans for each distinct area, focussing on where we can have most impact. We will reach out to and work in collaborative partnership with landowners, farmers, businesses and communities - whether that is in creating and connecting green corridors for wildlife or mobilising communities to deliver the collective impact we need and restore the quality of the ecosystems upon which we all depend.

SHARING OUR SKILLS AND EXPERTISE WITH OTHERS
Somerset Wildlife Trust is over 60 years old. We have accrued an intimate understanding of the unique habitats and wildlife within our amazing county. We are so proud of that, and our people – and now is the time we must be so much more proactive in sharing our skills, knowledge and experiences with others. This year will see us further develop our land advice offer, so others can come to us for support in taking forwards their ambitions to manage land with nature in mind. From private landowners, farmers, businesses, parish councils to community groups, we will offer strong support and guidance for projects of any size and scale and of any kind, from securing funding, exploring green finance to habitat and wildlife surveys and green space management.

GIVING OUR COAST A BRIGHTER FUTURE
The Somerset marine environment and its delicate ecosystems are vital for a huge range of species - as nursery habitats for endangered fish such as twaite shad and a critical step in the incredible journey of the European eel. It is one of the most protected areas in the UK, with national and international designations and, more critically, is one of the county's front line defences against the impacts of climate change. Despite this, it is coming under continued pressure.

Working with our incredible Shore Search and Sea Watch volunteer groups and others, including academic institutions and regulatory bodies, this year will see us doing much more to understand the range of impacts on the estuary from developments and recreation on the overall condition of the marine life and habitats. This important data will inform our work, enabling us to pinpoint the projects that will have meaningful and direct impact.

BIGGER, BETTER, MORE JOINED UP
In order to deliver the 30x30 target for Somerset, we need to bring more land into permanent management for nature to recover. We have a minimum target of an additional 500 hectares by 2030, which is a 30% increase to our own land holdings. We hope this year to continue to acquire new sites when land with potential becomes available in the right place, to buffer or expand existing nature reserves, restore ecosystem function and support the county's nature recovery network – or to engage and connect people and communities with nature so they can play their role in nature's recovery too. Owning land also gives us opportunity to trial, demonstrate and showcase how land can be managed to achieve the best outcomes for nature while also generating income or delivering other outcomes.

GOAL 2

A movement for nature

FACTS AND STATS

70% of UK adults surveyed agreed that being close to nature improves their mood.

57% said they experience the benefits of nature while they go about their daily lives

70% of adults state that they can walk to their nearest local green space within 15 minutes.

25% of adults walk more than 15 minutes to their nearest local green space.

4% of adults never walk to their nearest local green space

(Source: Mental Health Foundation – 'Nature: How connecting with nature benefits our mental health' 2021)

The challenge

Jane Goodall once said "You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." Awareness of the environment and the issues it's facing is at its highest level, but our collective behaviours still do not match our concern or the scale of the challenge. We need both individual action and collective action to hold local and national decision makers accountable for their actions, and to act to create an environment that is full of nature, and accessible for all.

Our approach

To see the real shift in behaviour that's required to tackle the challenge we need as many people as possible, from every area of society making a positive contribution to nature's recovery by doing what they can. Our Team Wilder ethos (a way of working that enables us to work with communities and to build momentum that ultimately results in action for nature) uses the principles of psychology and the individual, social and physical influences that encourage us to act. This way of working pulls in the science, knowledge and practical application of behaviour change, community organising, movement building and nature connection to build a team of people taking action for nature across the county that they love.

What we aimed for

This year we wanted to **build on our learning and successes** from the previous year and create an engagement framework and delivery plan that was more tightly focussed on delivering the activities that will help us to **scale up** and **speed up** action for nature across the county and, in turn, have a greater impact. Key to this, was launching a **Volunteer Action Plan**, setting out our commitment to enhance the volunteer experience across the Trust – we can't do what we do without them. Our aim was also to develop a robust methodology for **measuring the impact** of our work, **collecting the stories and statistics** which will tell us more about the successes and lessons learnt from our way of working.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

3,702 people took part in nature experiences facilitated by Somerset Wildlife Trust

OVER 100 people are now part of the Private and Community Nature Reserves Network

1,107 people engaged with Act to Adapt climate adaptation plans

443 active volunteers supporting work across all Somerset Wildlife Trust teams

WHAT WE DID:

WRAPPING UP A WILDER COAST

This year saw our Wilder Coast project come to a close. The ambition of this fabulous three year project was to empower coastal communities to play their part in creating a more resilient Nature Recovery Network for this often undervalued part of our county, and to increase people's involvement in coastal citizen science recording and monitoring to inform Somerset's State of Nature.

As well as putting the spotlight on all that is so special about this wonderful piece of coastline and why it is so vital we protect it, important too was raising awareness of the connection between Somerset's coast and the county's river catchments and inland habitats. Encouraging local communities to see how the health of their own local habitats and the quality of their rivers and streams that eventually enter the Severn Estuary impacts on Somerset's coast is vital if we are to bring about positive decisions for this undervalued asset.

An incredible number of communities, groups and individuals got involved in the project through a whole range of activities and events designed for people all all ages, with art and theatre inspiring new audiences – a special pop-up recycling shop was even created by a youth group, Stacked Wonky, to highlight the impact of litter on marine habitats.

We were able to develop and grow two dedicated volunteer teams, one surveying our rocky and muddy intertidal habitats (Shoresearch) and one monitoring local sea mammal populations (Sea Watch). The work of these fantastic volunteers has been invaluable in data collection and supporting these groups to become independent will be a key element of our ongoing coastal delivery work.

A newly created Somerset School Coastal Champions Award saw us working with schools and young people to involve them in exploring the amazing habitats on our coast, and we were able to deliver outreach visits to youth groups too. There was so much to celebrate at the end of project event, which was attended by project participants, groups and partners and showcased some of the amazing achievement. The whole project has demonstrated the real passion and commitment in our coastal communities for standing up for Somerset's brilliant coast.

Although the Wilder Coast project has come to an end our work across the coast will not stop. We are developing our plans for the next phase, whilst our wider Engagement Team continue to make sure the coastal citizen science survey teams, community groups, schools and youth clubs we have been working with are supported by us or our partners to take action for nature.

The Wilder Coast project was funded by the Hinkley Point C Community Fund (via the Somerset Community Foundation) and National Lottery Climate Action Fund grants.

NATURE RECOVERY TEAM RECRUITS TREE-TOP ACROBATS

Not quite true, but this year did see us joining Pine Martens Bounce Back: The Two Moors Pine Marten Project as partners. This brilliant project aims to restore the natural balance of our much-loved woodlands by bringing back pine martens to the landscapes where they once thrived - there's no doubt they are a fantastically charismatic species and a wonderful sight to see in the wild. Returning such species to Somerset, where this can be done sustainably and with community support, enriches our world – a message that our new Pine Martens Engagement Officer (Exmoor) has been busy getting out across Exmoor communities. We have held a number of really positive community collaboration events and drop in consultations for local communities about the project and their reintroduction to inspire and support people of all ages and walks of life to become Pine Marten Pioneers, growing their conservation skills, capacity and leadership confidence in the process. The people attending the

BECKY FISHER

Head of Engagement

Describe your job: I'm Head of Engagement; I lead the team who inspire and support people to take action for nature.

What energises you in your job?: The stories people have to tell. Everyone has a story to tell about nature and what it means to them; I love hearing those stories and how inspiring they are.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: The people I work with. Working for an organisation where everyone cares about their work and wants to make a difference for the wildlife and people of Somerset is really special.

drop-in sessions have been really engaged, attending with specific questions or looking for certain information and resources. Some feedback has included:
"Good to see a properly planned, well thought through reintroduction"
"I feel really inspired now"
"Nice to see Somerset Wildlife Trust having a presence in Exmoor"

TAKING A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE WITH A NEW ROLE

Building on our previous three year Nature Connections partnership project and as part of our Wilder Wellbeing project, funded by The Ninesquare Trust, we were excited this year to welcome a new Wilder Wellbeing Officer to the engagement team. A completely new role for the Trust, it will be focussed on driving, embedding and promoting the benefits of a connection with nature, and working with a whole range of teams, groups, communities, organisations and individuals across Somerset to experience the benefit of nature connection. Work will include supporting community groups to organise nature connection specific activities, enabling people to experience the wonders of nature and make life-long connections to the natural world to benefit physical and mental wellbeing - as well as supporting our volunteers to put nature connection into communities. We are really excited to have these skills on board to help drive what is a really critical part of our work.

IT'S ALL ABOUT BOGS AND BITTERNS

An unusual name for a project perhaps, but quite apt in fact for this wetland restoration focussed project. Funded by DEFRA's Species Survival Fund, the Bogs and Bittern project aims to restore the wetland character of four nature reserves and newly create three good quality 'stepping stone' sites for wildlife across an area of 50 hectares of the Somerset Levels and Moors – one of which will be the bittern – the iconic wetland bird of this landscape.

A key part of the project is delivering an activity programme to engage, inspire and upskill local people. We've been so pleased in particular to support local group, Friends of Bride's Mound to grow their volunteer group and ensure they secure a volunteer lead to continue efforts beyond the life of the project. Volunteers, including young members from the YMCA, have been involved in multiple events at Beckery, including a bramble clearing session, orchard management training, and willow cutting to create a dead fence. To connect with the wider volunteering opportunities in Glastonbury, we are supporting the Friends group to create a community celebration event to get more people involved. We've been developing plans for year two of the project, with climate adaptation events, a bioblitz and a youth event already on the cards.

Supporting people to get a better understanding of how species abundance is increasing on the reserves and these stepping stone sites is crucial. Thanks to this project we have been able to go super high tech and deploy innovative new bioacoustic monitoring equipment to monitor bird species teamed with AI technology analysis, and increase the number of wildlife camera traps as well as carry out surveys to assess the condition of local wildlife sites.

SPOTLIGHT

Working with Somerset Libraries

This year the engagement team worked with Somerset Libraries to deliver a series of library exhibitions focusing on nature connection and supporting people to access nature in their local area, as well as training library staff to deliver a nature experience in a library setting.. These exhibitions included the showing of videos that were specially produced to promote Somerset's amazing natural places and the team running activity sessions. Providing opportunities for library staff to experience these events and learn from the team has given them the confidence to have conversations about nature and embed nature connection activities in their own work. Our Wilder Wellbeing Officer is now creating a toolkit for them to continue using throughout all library activities, and they have plans to run a nature themed summer reading challenge for children.

"I found Sal's Nature connection session at Yeovil Library today very inspiring and there were lots of good ideas shared."

ADAM MURRAY

Director of Action for Nature

Describe your job: Providing leadership and direction across our engagement, communications and fundraising work programmes. Ultimately enabling more people to take meaningful action for nature.

What energises you in your job?: Seeing our teams thrive and have impact, seeing positivity and enthusiasm in for our work. Making connections and problem solving in order to make things happen!

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Being able to see with my own eyes how we, our partners and communities are making a positive impact for wildlife and people in Somerset.

SPOTLIGHT

Practical skills and training

This year as part of our 30x30 Wilder Communities project, local ecologist Matt Collis delivered a series of practical skills training events designed for individuals to learn key skills in tree ID, pond restoration, hedge laying and coppicing. These practical and identification skills sessions equip communities to manage their own sites and monitor the wildlife living there. Attendees found these workshops positive, and many were planning to use their new skills straight away. Here's what people told us:

"It had a positive impact on my ability and confidence to get involved in nature and environmental projects. I was encouraged to think about volunteering with more conservation and wildlife projects."

"It has given me new knowledge about wildlife and the practical pond restoration skills but also highlighted how these things can be approached as team/sharing skills in the community."

"Yes, I did learn some new skills. Quite importantly how not to fall into a wildlife pond whilst reclaiming it! I have already built a wildlife pond, so I was interested in the different way Matt went about the construction and learnt some important maintenance and future care tips."

"The finer details of each tree, placement and shapes and sizes of buds, lenticels, very interesting to take time to really look closely. Excellent leader, good pace, not rushed, the time was well utilised, but it went by really quickly, even though it was 3 hours long!"

PIPPA RAYNER
Wilder Engagement Coordinator

Describe your job: I support people to take action for nature through increasing understanding of nature, how it 'works' and how they can have the most positive impact, as well as helping people to join up, join in or share what they are doing with others.

What energises you in your job?: When, through my advice or support I help communities, land managers or partners to either conserve existing valuable habitats, or take steps towards restoring or creating additional areas of habitat, helping to create the network of sites needed for nature to recover.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Our nature reserves, as a vital glimpse of the nature-rich habitats that were once everywhere - to the benefit of everyone - and that could return if we act swiftly; and my colleagues, as the people striving so hard to make this so.

SIÂN BENTLEY
Wilder Youth Officer

Describe your job: I work with 12 – 24 year olds and support them to get involved in wildlife conservation through our youth forum and youth-informed events programme.

What energises you in your job?: Many oat milk mochas! Just kidding. I feel so lucky to work alongside our youth forum. We help each other take action for nature and support each other's ideas – they energise me more than anything else.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: I'm proud to be surrounded by people who work to make nature accessible and are willing to be endlessly flexible and creative in order to engage communities.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2025/26:

BUILD NETWORKING AND SKILL SHARING
To continue our community work in 2025 we need to speed up and scale up. We will do this by embedding community engagement and action for nature across all the Trust's teams and across all of our priority landscapes. We also want to facilitate networking and convening opportunities across priority communities, providing community leadership and conservation leadership training, as well as demonstrations of best practice. This will include delivering our Wilder Together event in October, bringing communities across Somerset together to share and learn from each other.

DELIVER THE VOLUNTEER ACTION PLAN
In the next year we will start carrying out the commitments we outlined in our Volunteer Action Plan. These include biannual volunteer management training for staff, an annual volunteer celebration event and measuring the progress of the plan with creative methods that reflect the experiences of the volunteers of Somerset Wildlife Trust. We want to expand the way we celebrate and tell the stories of our volunteers, showing the breadth of the work they do, and celebrating their personal stories.

DEVELOP AN 'ACCESS FOR ALL' PROGRAMME
We want everyone to have the opportunity to experience nature on our nature reserves but also in the places they live. We plan to do this through training and working with others in the art, sport and health sectors and creating new and more experiences for people to feel connected to and included within nature that inspires action beyond that first experience.

We want to build on the successes of our Youth Forum and the youth element of our 30x30 Wilder Communities project to inspire and encourage the next generation of nature / environmental leaders across Somerset Wildlife Trust and the communities we work with. We'll continue to grow our engagement by supporting secondary and tertiary education providers within our communities, to embed action for nature in their curriculums. This is about more than supporting the next engagement or nature recovery team members, but also about finding and supporting those who want to work in the wider conservation sector as well as related sectors that can positively impact nature. It's essential that our future urban planners, teachers, policitians, architects, farmers, financiers, basically everyone, understands how important nature is for us all.

GOAL 3

Telling Somerset's story

FACTS AND STATS

3.4 milllion records currently held in Somerset Environmental Records Centre databases.

67 taxons with 1,711 different species recorded this year.

80% of these were insects, with the most commonly recorded being the meadow brown butterfly.

The challenge

The importance of evidence to underpin nature recovery has never been greater – as well as enabling us to prioritise our own work and measure the impact we are having. With a new government it is critical to demonstrate what has been achieved but, more importantly what is still left to do. Policy review is underway, including to try to unlock development in the county and nationally and Somerset Wildlife Trust is working locally and with the other 46 Wildlife Trusts to influence reforms to ensure that valuable gains are not lost. As innovative initiatives like the Local Nature Recovery Strategies and ELMS Landscape Recovery pilots are rolled out, our contributions to monitoring and impact measurement through SERC and Somerset Wildlife Trust will be core to successful implementation.

Our approach

We have continued to build the strength of data held in the Somerset Environment Records Centre by recruiting a large and excellent cohort of volunteers to process data to include in our database. As well as building our own evidence base, we recognise that we are only one part of a bigger system working for change. We are working with universities, businesses and researchers to identify evidence gaps and develop research projects that fill them in order to better understand what's needed for nature's recovery.

What we aimed for

One of our major aims this year was to **support the work of Somerset Council** as the responsible authority for the development of the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**. We brought together experts and organisations from across broad communities, through our coordination of the Local Nature Partnership, to develop the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** ensuring it is fully evidence based. We have continued to scale up our **research partnerships**, particularly around our pioneering wilding site at **Honeygar**, and have developed a new approach to **research collaboration** which will be launched in the coming year.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

17 **local wildlife sites surveyed and taken to the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) panel**

4 **new post graduate projects started based at our flagship site on Honeygar. One MSc and one PhD from the University of West of England (UWE) and two PhD students from the University of Bristol (UoB)**

5 **University and research institutions interested, including UWE, UoB, University of Plymouth, Wessex Water, Natural England and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, at Honeygar and across our wider reserve holdings**

75,071 **records supplied to SERC's database from over 35 organisations as well as individual recorders**

WHAT WE DID:

FOR PEAT'S SAKE

Coordinated by Somerset Wildlife Trust, in late 2024 the Somerset Peatland Partnership convened a Monitoring and Evidence Working Group to identify monitoring and research interests with a peatland focus across the lowland peatlands in the county. With partners like Avon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Natural England and FWAG South West participating, and support from the University of Bristol, a gap analysis of the current monitoring and research projects is being undertaken which in turn will help to identify key issues, barriers and challenges. Short term funding for projects and research have often led to a piecemeal approach across the peatland landscape. This group aims to provide a longer-term strategy, that will provide evidence to help landowners make informed decisions, support the development of a lowland peat research centre at Honeygar and raise awareness around peatland issues in Somerset - not only for local communities but also policy makers at a national level.

CREATING A HUBBUB AROUND HONEYGAR

This year saw us run our first data workshop bringing together a group of 28 stakeholders, partners, academic institutions and volunteers to talk about our work at Honeygar. We had an amazing range of specialists and experts from RSPB, NE, Wessex Water, Bristol Uni, Rigare, Wilder Sensing, Recorders of the Avalon Marshes (ROAM) and Honeygar Rangers all in one room discussing a huge range of topics from hydrological and green house gas monitoring to lowland peat restoration and bioacoustic monitoring. Driven by clear ambition to stabilise and protect peat soils at Honeygar through our wilding approach, the site has attracted interested researchers from a range of backgrounds, and we are keen that any research developed can be used to support other landowners on the Somerset Levels and Moors to protect the peatlands they manage. Brilliant new connections were formed with Wessex Water which led to, further conversations through site visits and the opportunity for Honeygar to be used as a study site for a new PhD formed in partnership between NE, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Plymouth University in 2025. The workshop also set the scene for an annual Somerset Wildlife Trust research partnership event focused on data and evidence, drawing insights from across the Trust to showcase all the important work that is going on within the Avalon Marshes Landscape and beyond.

WIRED FOR SOUND

Through funding provided by the Species Survival Fund (SSF) we were able to expand our innovative Wilder Sensing Network at Honeygar increasing the number of bioacoustic sensors from 4 to 8 on site, in addition to installing 3 sensors on Westhay Moor, Catcott and Westhay Heath. The sensors are set to record bird song on a continuous basis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year capturing millions of audio records which are analysed by Artificial Intelligence. This will allow us to monitor nature's recovery on a landscape-scale enabling comparisons between sites and have a more robust data set to tell Somerset's story. Six camera traps were installed across the site, enabling us to track changes in elusive species on site such as otter, water vole and other wildlife. As the site becomes wilder, we will be able to monitor changes in species using the Honeygar site to demonstrate how it is changing.

8 bioacoustic sensors are set to record bird song on a continuous basis at Honeygar in addition to installing 3 sensors on Westhay Moor, Catcott and Westhay Heath

JOE HAMPSON

Honeygar Wilding Officer

Describe your job: I facilitate our wilding approach at Honeygar, helping to guide land management practices that allow nature to take the lead, whilst stabilising and protecting our vital peat soils.

What energises you in your job?: Lowland peat is critically understudied. Through our approaches on site we are always learning new things that have the potential to guide a future of farming in the Avalon Marshes.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: I am proud of how hard everyone works to protect wildlife and our wild spaces within the county, whilst engaging communities and driving measurable change.

RAMPING UP THE RANGERS

The Honeygar Rangers continue to be a vital part of telling Somerset's story as we evidence how our wilding approach is stabilising and protecting our precious peat, whilst facilitating nature recovery on site.

Over the last year the Rangers have been hard at work continuing their monitoring of our dipwell network to show changes in hydrology, monitoring harvest mouse numbers on site, managing our wilder sensing network and surveying for birds, dragonflies, bumblebees, in addition to tracking changes in species through our camera trap project.

This surveying season, we continue to build capacity and skills within the Rangers, particularly to support the exciting developments around the buildings at Honeygar. Brushcutter training has enabled Rangers to help with routine maintenance tasks around the farm. The quadrat surveys they carry out help us create a baseline of the floristic diversity of the burtle, and orchard management training has built capacity for us to restore and manage our own orchard on site.

Thanks to our Rangers, Honeygar is fast becoming a key site for community engagement within the Avalon Marshes, enabling people to take positive action for nature, improve their wellbeing and learn new skills along the way. We really can't thank them enough for all they do!

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DETAIL

With the help of 13 volunteers, a new focus on data processing and a new admin officer, over the past 18 months, we've been able to enter an incredible 242,688 records, increasing our species records database holdings by 8%. We've increased our usage of data submitted from the public through the introduction of our Online Recording System (ORS,) which has seen records being added and immediately advising consultancies and developments through our data search processes. This data increase will make an important contribution to our ability to monitor trends in nature and biodiversity in the county.

13 volunteers, a new focus on data processing and a new admin officer have helped increase our species records database holdings by 8%

ADAM PREECE

Honeygar Project Manager

Describe your job: I lead the project to convert the redundant farm buildings at Honeygar into a centre for lowland peat research.

What energises you in your job?: I love the ambition of Honeygar and the drive to find the best, not always easiest, ways to achieve our vision.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Everyone that works here does so because they genuinely care about wildlife and the natural world.

CASE STUDY

Great white egret

A notable data and monitoring success story is the increase in numbers of the great white egret, previously considered to be a rare species, with as few as 150 pairs recorded across the whole of Europe in the 1970s. Habitat restoration on the Somerset levels has led to a record breaking year in 2024, with 97 pairs attempting nesting in 13 separate locations, 179 chicks hatched on 63 nests, with 100 eventually fledging from 54 of these nests (the first time in triple figures). A ringing programme using qualified ringers has allowed us to track the movements of local juveniles and the 2024 Somerset cohort of colour ringed juveniles has dispersed widely. The birds have been reported from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Dorset, Essex, Gloucestershire, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Powys, Somerset, Worcestershire and Yorkshire.

SOPHIE LAURIE

Head of Innovation and Evidence

In one sentence describe your job: I lead a team of specialists including in the Somerset Environmental Records Centre, who focus on making sure everything we do in Somerset Wildlife Trust is based on sound information and evidence.

What energises you in your job?: Looking for innovative opportunities to grow our evidence base and show the value of working in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust, bringing in new and exciting public and private sector projects to deliver our ambitions for nature recovery.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Being part of an organisation of passionate people wanting to really make an impact on halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity in Somerset and the wider UK.

PAUL TANSLEY

Job title in this space

Describe your job: As the new Science and Data Specialist, I'm focused on enhancing the evidence base the Trust uses, building partnerships with universities, and developing new tools to facilitate our work.

What energises you in your job?: What energises me most about my role is transforming complex ecological data into meaningful insights that drive real-world conservation impact, while collaborating with cutting-edge scientists and researchers to better understand the systems we all rely on.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: I'm proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust because I get to work with passionate people making a tangible difference, protecting nature, restoring habitats, and empowering communities to value and care for wildlife across the county.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2025/26:

REVIEW AND UPDATE THE SOMERSET STATE OF NATURE (SSON) REPORT

The first SSoN report launched in autumn 2023 was an important milestone in creating a county level understanding of the condition of the county's natural environment, and establishing a baseline for species and habitat for 2030 targets. Learning from this inaugural report and with a view to being aligned to the UK State of Nature report (released every 3 years), we have consulted with the members of Somerset's Local Nature Partnership and other relevant stakeholder and agreed to prepare a second report in autumn 2026. This will give us time to properly review the first report, its content, use and accessibility, and to work towards the most comprehensive and valuable document possible.

DELIVERING THE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

The Local Nature Partnership will also be a valuable resource when developing the process for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the LNRS. With a newly formed Science and Evidence sub group of the LNP we will be well placed to gather information from across the county, working closely with Somerset Council as the Responsible Authority to ensure outcomes are captured and lessons are learned.

RAMPING UP OUR RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a science and evidence led organisation. In order to make the best-informed decisions and have the best chance of success in achieving our goals we need to have the best data and evidence on which to base our action. The rapid advances that are being made in the research and technology landscape mean that we should at the same time embrace innovation and be open to new ways of working, recognising the importance of learning from others. This year has seen the development of an exciting new research prospectus offering to spotlight opportunities for collaborative projects within the academic sector, which support us achieving our strategic goals. We are excited to be launching this offer in the coming year, and inviting ideas and contributions from a range of stakeholders, including universities and business and individuals.

Our people and organisation

- Developing Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Volunteers
- Fundraising

DEVELOPING SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

At Somerset Wildlife Trust, our staff are united by a deep passion for nature and a shared commitment to our organisational vision and goals.

Together, we are driven to deliver Wilder Somerset landscapes and champion nature-based solutions that benefit both wildlife and communities across the county. We take great pride in the progress we have made in protecting Somerset's rich biodiversity and natural habitats.

Our ambition is to continue growing Somerset Wildlife Trust in a way that reflects our core values, ensuring that our resources are aligned with the delivery of our strategic aims. From an operational standpoint, we are focused on building a workforce that is productive, efficient, valued, and inclusive, supported by modern IT systems and facilities that promote collaboration, inclusion, and a healthy work/life balance.

We have made significant strides in strengthening our IT and digital infrastructure. These improvements are helping us enhance the customer experience, improve data sharing, and foster greater cross-team collaboration. In parallel, we have worked closely with staff to define and embed our organisational culture and values, laying the foundation for a resilient and forward-looking Somerset Wildlife Trust.

A key area of transformation this year has been our focus on people with the development of an inclusive and diverse learning culture. In response to the evolving needs of our larger, hybrid workforce, we have adapted and enhanced our systems and processes. Through the implementation of our workforce development plan, we are ensuring that the right people with the right skills are in place to meet emerging demands—particularly in areas such as research, evidence, and green finance.

HELUN JONES

Head of People, Culture & Resources

Describe your job: I am the Head of the People, Culture & Resources Team based at our Head office in Taunton.

What energises you in your job? Knowing that the operational support that my team gives across the organisation enables the Trust to achieve its goals in supporting wildlife and its habitats.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? I am proud to work for an organisation that cares about the positive impact its work has on the local environment and the communities that is serves.

Highlights from our work in 2024/25

Digital transformation: We have embraced digital technologies to boost our impact, efficiency, and productivity across all areas of work. SharePoint was adopted as our central platform for storing, organising, and sharing information, streamlining workflows and improving data access. We continue to enhance its use with KPI dashboards, navigation hubs, and trackable forms like our performance management form and land advice recording database.

To connect people with nature, we have continued our installation of wildlife cameras on our reserves, action from which can be viewed online by those perhaps who cannot get to our sites, alongside a complete virtual tour of the reserve. For those who do visit, instant information about the site, its wildlife and for orientation is accessible via QR codes accessed by mobile phones. We are a leader in the space across the Wildlife Trust movement, having launched an online resource to support other Trusts who want to do the same.

Additionally, we are reducing our carbon footprint by using smart digital tools that minimise email traffic and improve communication.

People At Somerset Wildlife Trust, our people are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to supporting, developing, and investing in our workforce to ensure Somerset Wildlife Trust is inclusive, representative, and accessible to all.

In response to our evolving organisational needs, we redefined our workforce structure through the implementation of a comprehensive Workforce Development Plan. This plan is designed to future-proof Somerset Wildlife Trust by aligning our people strategy with the demands of a growing, hybrid, and highly skilled workforce.

Continued growth saw the implementation of a new leadership structure involving the recruitment of three Directors to support our CEO which has led to a more strategic, impact-focussed approach to our work, expanding opportunities for nature recovery in the county.

Following staff consultation, we launched a redesigned Performance Development process in June 2024. This new digital platform enables staff to set and track their performance objectives, each with associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) directly linked to the delivery of our strategic goals. To support this transition, managers received training not only in the new system but also in essential leadership skills.

This work is closely aligned with our transformational commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning culture. We established a structured curriculum of learning opportunities, ensuring all staff have access to the resources they

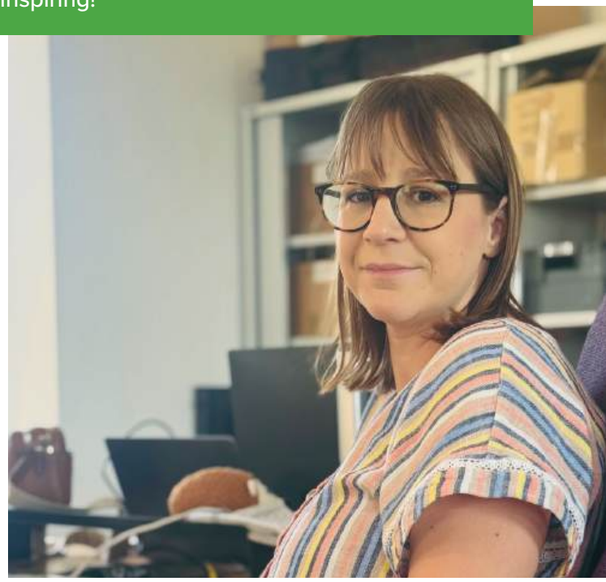
VICTORIA BROWN

People, Culture & Resources Office Manager

Describe your job: I manage the facilities for our offices and play a key role in ensuring health and safety across the organisation.

What energises you in your job? Ensuring that facilities and procedures are in place so that my colleagues can work effectively and safely gives me a real sense of motivation and satisfaction.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Knowing that we are making a difference for Somerset and the future generations that will live here. And I find everyone's passion for what they do truly inspiring!



need to grow their skills and knowledge.

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan has driven significant progress in cultivating an inclusive workplace culture. Notably, we achieved Disability Confident Level 2 status, reflecting our dedication to creating a supportive and accessible environment for all.

Facilities Management of our facilities enables the creation of a working environment that supports our people and enables us to deliver our strategy.

Rearrangement of office space within our Head office in Taunton enabled us to bring associated teams together in one space. And in Callow, painting and rearrangement of office space enabled the freeing up of meeting rooms and more effective use of the space. To progress the development of Honeygar, our flagship wilding project, a Project manager was employed who has extensive skills and knowledge within the building sector to oversee development of the buildings.

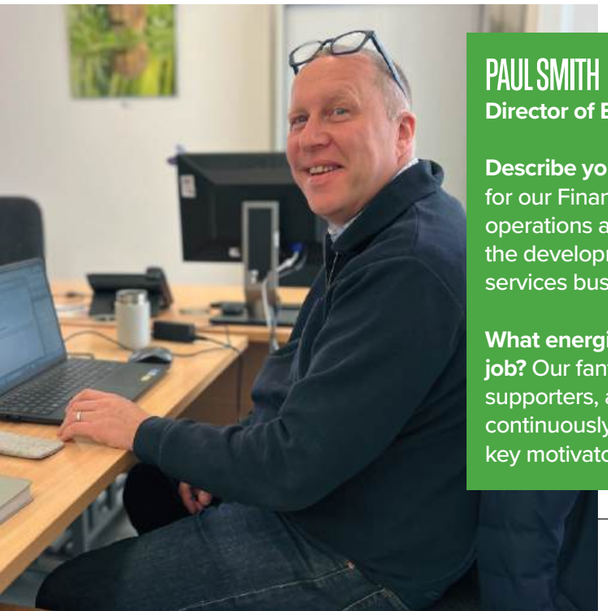
Environmental Strategy We continue to take forward our ambitious environmental strategy as we implement, monitor and report on progress of Somerset Wildlife Trust carbon reduction plan and capture data on our carbon impact on our environment for Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

Our Climate change group provided excellent training and consultation opportunities with staff throughout the year including external speakers on this key topic, all to increase environmental knowledge across the organisation. We continue to report on our impact on the environment providing key statistics to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts annual impact survey sharing knowledge and helping us further reduce our own carbon footprint.

Culture: Having a strong and positive culture is pivotal to our success. This year, we revisited our organisational values and behaviours through a series of inclusive staff workshops, inviting input from across the Trust to ensure our culture reflects the evolving workforce and strategic direction of Somerset Wildlife Trust.

From these sessions, several key themes emerged and we will be engaging further with our staff and volunteers to identify those that most resonate and help define our cultural identity. Values are more than just words—they will need to be a reflection of the pride, dedication, and passion our staff bring to their work every day.

In a rapidly changing world, it is essential that our cultural values evolve alongside our organisation. These refreshed values represent a significant step-change in how we operate, supporting our growth and enabling us to meet the challenges of delivering our strategic goals. They provide a strong foundation for a unified, forward-thinking Somerset Wildlife Trust—one that is equipped to lead with purpose and integrity. This work will continue to develop into 2025/26.



PAUL SMITH

Director of Business Planning and Development

Describe your job: I'm responsible for our Finance, People and Digital operations across the Trust and the development of our Ecology services business.

What energises you in your job? Our fantastic people and supporters, and the opportunity to continuously learn & develop are key motivators for me.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Knowing that we are securing and restoring nature and habitats for future generations and seeing this happening at first hand right across the County.

EMMA GOULD

HR Specialist

Describe your job: I support key human resource projects and oversee the workforce cycle, whilst ensuring the mitigation of organisational risk. By supporting and empowering our employees to excel in their roles, the People, Culture and Resources Team ensures that their growth directly contributes to the strategic objectives of the Trust.

What energises you in your job: I am privileged to work alongside and support remarkable colleagues who are experts in their fields. Their passion for nature has not only inspired me but has also enriched my own understanding and appreciation of nature and the environment.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? The amazing, tireless work of our teams and their commitment to making a difference in what can be a challenging and politically charged world.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2025/26:

CHAMPION A LEARNING CULTURE

In 2025/26, we are committed to embedding an inclusive and diverse learning culture across Somerset Wildlife Trust. This transformation is being integrated into our risk management framework, with clear links to our strategic objectives, risk actions, and key performance indicators (KPIs).

ON TRACK WITH TRAINING

To centralise and streamline access to learning resources, we will launch a dedicated Learning and Development Hub, providing all staff with a single point of access to training opportunities. This will be complemented by ongoing work to embed our refreshed values and behaviours throughout the organisation.

CREATE STRONG LEADERS

A continued focus on training and development will see the expansion of a broader, more diverse range of learning opportunities. This includes further upskilling of our management team to ensure they are equipped with the capabilities needed to lead effectively and support the delivery of our strategic goals and have the greatest impact. To support this, a skills gap analysis is planned to identify current capabilities and future needs across the organisation.

PROVIDE GREAT PLACES TO WORK

In support of our hybrid working model, we will also deliver a new Facilities Plan designed to enhance flexibility and inclusivity in our working environments.

ACTION FOR EDI

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) journey will continue, with a goal of achieving Disability Confident Leader status. In addition, our EDI efforts will extend externally through our Action for Nature programme, which aims to connect more people in our communities with nature.

LISTENING AND IMPROVING

We will continue to listen to our staff through our annual staff survey, using the insights gained to shape a programme of improvements. A dedicated staff working group will be established to support this work and ensure meaningful staff input into the development of solutions.

VOLUNTEERS

Our commitment to our volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Volunteers founded Somerset Wildlife Trust in 1964 and today remain fundamental to our work. They come from all walks of life, with a range of skills and experience, and we rely on their support to help create a Somerset rich in wildlife for everyone. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical habitat management and field surveys, to support for office activities and events, to running the Trust as members of Council, operating across the whole county from our brilliant coast all the way across our key landscapes and projects. This year we launched our volunteer action plan, our commitment to achieving an inclusive culture of volunteering. The plan was written with our volunteers, who gave their time, opinions and expertise to develop it alongside staff.

In 2024, 443 volunteers contributed 13,235 hours in support of our work, which is the equivalent value of £196,270 in paid time. We celebrated at our Annual Volunteer Awards which took place at our 2024 AGM, with 3 individuals and 1 group winning awards, recognising their achievements in practical reserves work, youth forum action, contribution to responding to planning applications and collection of marine wildlife data.

Our plans for 25/26

This year we're making a start on the commitments outlined in our volunteer action plan for 2025-2030. Each team has made individual commitments to develop and enhance the volunteer experience. Our Volunteering and Community Support Officer will be working with all teams across the Trust to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the plan.

"Being a Volunteer for Somerset Wildlife Trust is such a joy, having an organisation the aligns with your own beliefs and having support and training to deliver in my case, to young families who are nature nerds, love being out and discovering all sorts of beasties ,birds, flora and fauna in a fun and free way is so rewarding."

Helen- Wildlife Watch volunteer

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising continues to be a vital source of income for Somerset Wildlife Trust, helping the continued delivery of our 2030 strategy.

The fundraising climate in not only the environment sector, but across all sectors, continues to be challenging, so we are incredibly grateful to individuals, corporates and grant giving bodies across the county and beyond who support us. Uncertainty around the economy and the ongoing rise in the cost of living, remains of great concern to many people, and we recognise that some our previous supporters find themselves unable to help us as they did previously.

Despite this, the 2024/25 financial year saw our membership rise above 23,000 for the first time, hitting a key milestone we set when writing Wilder Somerset 2030 for 2025. Without those people who generously commit to giving regular gifts, we could not plan and manage our core work so effectively.

Our major donor programme has continued to grow, attracting some remarkable and passionate individuals who are helping support projects and activities that align with their interests. We saw several significant donations given to help fund both our core work and exciting projects such as Honeygar. These major gifts have had an enormous impact on our ability to delivery our strategy and we could not be more grateful.

We know that choosing to support a charity is a very personal decision and people do it in all sorts of ways. We have a wonderful group of people who have chosen to leave Somerset Wildlife Trust a gift in their will. Our legacy programme has developed considerably in recent years, and those that pledge a gift in this way demonstrate a commitment to Somerset's wildlife and wild spaces that is helping restore nature for future generations.

This year saw us take the first steps towards developing our corporate membership offering, the impact of which we hope to see in the next year and beyond, and we have honed our due diligence process in light of our ambition, to develop bespoke, broader corporate partnerships with Somerset's business community. We are already seeing companies across Somerset who are determined to demonstrate their commitment to a wilder Somerset, and we are excited to develop these relationships further.

The trust and grant fundraising landscape continues to be complicated and unpredictable, with the loss of a number of large grant giving bodies within the last twelve months. However, with a number of exciting projects on the horizon that we know will appeal to these organisations, we are confident that we will see an increase in this funding stream in the next few years.

The fundraising team continues to work, not only to bring in income, but also to develop relationships with our considerate supporters and help demonstrate the value of each and every donation.

We continue to be extraordinarily grateful to everyone who has given us a gift of time or money during the last year.

Membership

We are incredibly grateful to our 23,144 members whose regular and reliable support provided 18% of our income this year. This reliable and growing income stream (up 3% from the previous year) gives us the certainty to make plans for wildlife and deliver core work in our priority landscapes, confident in the knowledge that we will be able to see them through. With the cost of living still increasing for many, we've been humbled by the members who have chosen to increase their monthly contribution or boost their support by signing up for Gift Aid.

Trusts and grants

Grant funding is a central pillar supporting both our projects and core work. In the past year we received income from 31 individual trusts, foundations and other grant-givers. These generous and important contributions delivered tree planting in the Mendips, eDNA beaver surveys, equipment and training for volunteers, and new equipment for reserves staff to name a few projects. They have also provided much needed ongoing support for our work in the Somerset Levels, along the River Tone, in the Blackdown and Polden Hills and have also funded new initiatives designed to connect schools, young people and those with health issues, to nature. We really are exceptionally grateful to each grant-giver who has supported us in the last year.

THERESA JONES
Fundraising Development Manager

Describe your job: I'm responsible for our members and our fundraising appeals – enthusing the public about the work we do, so that they know contributing will make a difference to the big picture.

What energises you in your job?: I'm from a fundraising background rather than a conservation background, so learning about the things the organisation is doing to make Somerset better for wildlife is fascinating.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Everybody who works here is passionate about what they do, and the what the organisation is achieving will truly make a difference for wildlife.

Community fundraising

Our community Fundraisers have continued to support the Trust in new, and often slightly crazy ways! We've seen a wide range of people of all ages taking on various challenges for wildlife this year. This has included people who have run, walked and cycled their way around Somerset, to the daredevils who have taken a leap and done our sponsored abseil. Our Wilder Open Gardens scheme has seen green-fingered heroes helping us create pockets of diversity for wildlife in their own spaces while raising valuable funds, and our recycling and digital card schemes have been raising money too to help fund our core activities.

These passionate people who raise money on our behalf have devoted their time to make a real difference to Somerset's wildlife and we're continually grateful for their commitment.

Major gifts

Philanthropic gifts are a cornerstone of our work for wildlife in Somerset. This year, gifts have supported a wide range of projects and work on reserves; including helping inspire young people to engage with nature whilst learning practical skills and ensuring the ongoing critical work to tackle invasive species. We have also received gifts which have supported Honeygar, our pioneering wilding site on the Levels, as well as contributing to our core running costs and the ongoing care of our nature reserves. All of these are amazing gifts from some incredibly passionate individuals. We are very lucky to have them supporting our work in so many ways and are genuinely inspired by the relationships we have developed over time with these special supporters.

Patron scheme

With biodiversity declining in all but a few protected sites plus the effects of climate change, our work is even more relevant today, hence the introduction of our Patron Scheme. Donations from our 60 Patrons, help us to create a bigger, better, more joined up nature recovery network across Somerset, helping to manage and restore our nature reserves for a diverse range of wildlife, and acting as catalysts for local communities and organisations to work together and stand up for nature in local policy and planning decisions. Their passion and influence is an inspiration to us and this year has been no different.

Patrons enjoy a close and special relationship with Somerset Wildlife Trust, meeting the people involved in our conservation delivery plans and getting a behind the scenes glimpse at some of our most vital work. Through exclusive invitations to events around the county and beyond, they get to see our work in progress as well as the end results, and have the opportunity to hear from our Chief Executive Officer at the annual Patrons' lunch to learn about our future plans, and give their thoughts and feedback on our work, as well as receiving regular bespoke updates of our work across the year.

We would like to thank all our Patrons for their generous support which is helping nature to recover across Somerset including all those who wish to remain anonymous.

"We had supported Somerset Wildlife Trust as members for many years and were therefore aware of the great work that they do across our region. We felt as though we should and could go further and became patrons because we are in the fortunate position to be able to commit a little more. However, doing so has also brought us closer to the Trust, enabling us to learn much more about their activities and the complex decisions that they often have to make. The events that they run for the patrons provide not only great opportunities to learn more about the natural world and its conservation, but they have also allowed us to spend time with the staff, including the CEO, giving us a greater feeling of connectedness and a chance to feed in our views."
Neil and Sarah Williams, Joint Patrons

REBECCA WALFORD
Head of Fundraising

Describe your job: I head up the Fundraising team, planning the long term strategy for income generation and cultivating relationship.

What energises you in your job? There's a real connection between the efforts of the fundraising team and the work we do, which really helps connect with our successes. I also get to work with genuinely brilliant and passionate people

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Knowing that what we do is having a real impact on the work of the Trust, and seeing how the amazing donations we receive are helping support real changes for Somerset's wildlife and wild places.

Legacies

We are committed to making sure Somerset remains one of the most varied and wildlife-rich places to live, work and explore and will continue to protect wildlife, both now and in the future. We rely heavily on Gifts in Wills to make sure nature not only survives but thrives, and these donations, small or large, will help us create a greener and Wilder Somerset for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Amazingly, only 39% of people actually get round to writing a Will in their lifetime. This year, we were able to offer free will-writing services to our members and supporters, and provide a number of estate planning workshops to help people navigate the legal complexities involved.

In 2024/25 legacies contributed £538,000 funds which supported land restoration and species protection across Somerset, and we are extremely grateful to the 155 Wildlife Guardians who have made us aware they have pledged a gift in their Will to our future work.

"Having been members of Somerset Wildlife Trust for very many years and witnessed the brilliant conservation work they do, we feel the least we can do is to remember the Trust in our Wills. We hope that our gift will help the Trust continue their excellent work in safeguarding Somerset's wildlife for future generations to enjoy."

Mike and Angela Merrifield, Life Members and Wildlife Guardians.

"I wanted to contribute to a local cause close to my heart in my Will. I don't have children, but my sister does. I truly hope there will be a world for them full of wildlife when they and their children, grow up."

Rachel Underwood, Supporter and Wildlife Guardian.

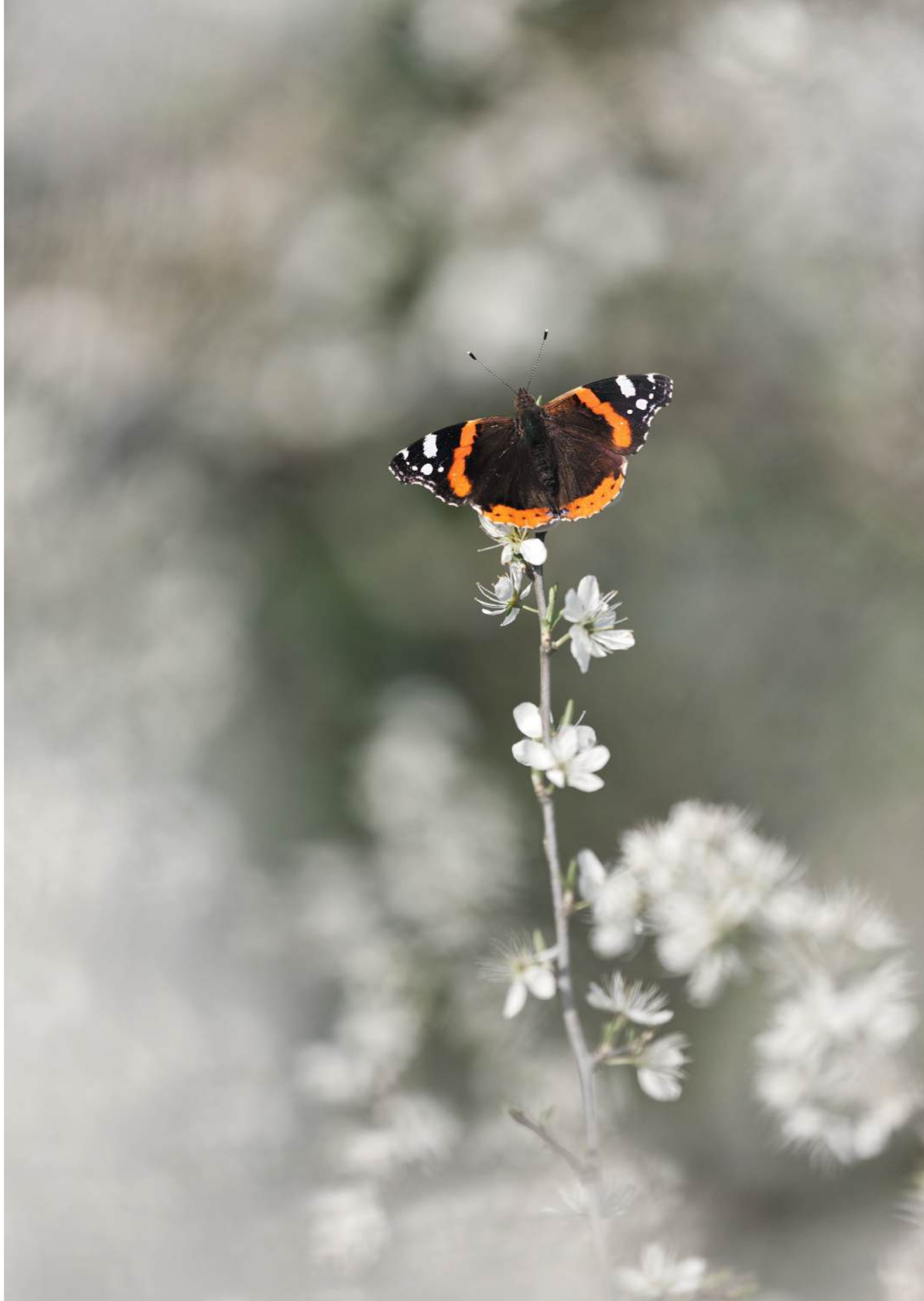
MICHAEL WOODMAN

Philanthropy Manager

Describe your job: Knowing that what we do is having a real impact on the work of the Trust, and seeing how the amazing donations we receive are helping support real changes for Somerset's wildlife and wild places.

What energises you in your job? Every time I step outdoors, I am reminded of the importance of nature and the importance of the work being done at the Trust. This gives me a renewed energy for the work every day.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? I am proud to work for an organisation that are so focussed and so committed to this wonderful part of the UK.



FINANCIAL REVIEW

It was a development year for the Trust with expenditure exceeding income by £467,000 (compared with a £222,000 surplus in 2023/24) as we invested in the delivery of the Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy. Whilst this meant total funds fell to £10.3 million from £10.7 million in 2023/24 the Trust maintains a positive and stable financial position with free financial reserves at the upper end of our target range.

Our total income grew by almost 10% to £5.3 million (£4.9 million: 2023/24). Conversely, expenditure increased by approximately 20% to £5.8 million (£4.7 million: 2023/24), importantly including £3.8 million (£3.4 million: 2023/24) spent specifically on our charitable activities. Notably, an exceptional provision of £376,000 has been recognised in the year representing the Trust's share of an additional liability due to a closure issue with the defined benefit section of the RSWT Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme; however, the Trustees had already designated a cautionary financial reserve for this eventuality.

As a result of expenditure exceeding income our unrestricted funds fell by £473,000 (£400,000 surplus: 2023/24). This was offset by a small increase in restricted funds of £6,000 (£178,000 reduction: 2023/24).

The Trust maintains a strong balance sheet with overall charity funds totalling £10.3 million (£10.7 million: 2023/24). This includes £7 million (£6.2 million: 2023/24) tangible and heritage fixed assets, £5.6 million (£4.8 million: 2023/24), of which are our nature reserves – the increase mainly relating to our strategic acquisition of 28 hectares of land at Sharpham Park, which will be restored for wildlife. The acquisition was made possible by a three-year interest free philanthropic loan. Net current assets remain stable at £3.7 million (£3.7 million: 2023/24).

We aim to hold between three and six months' core operating costs as free financial reserves which equates to between £0.9 million and £1.8 million. Despite the net cost recognised in the year free financial reserves are currently at the upper end of the target range and equate to just over 5 months' core operating costs. The financial reserves are reviewed regularly to ensure that the amount held remains adequate taking into consideration planned investment and future organisational growth.

Income

Income for the year grew to £5.3 million (£4.9 million: 2023/24) as a result of grant funding and the continued generosity of our members and supporters through membership, donations and gifts in wills.

Grant income totalled £2.1 million (£1.7 million: 2023/24) representing the largest source of income in the year and 39% of overall income. The most significant grants in the year included £226,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Species Survival Fund project, £389,000 from DEFRA for the ELMS Landscape Recovery project and £347,000 for the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme. A total of £484,000 (£452,000: 2023/24) grants were received through agri-environment schemes, which specifically support the management of our nature reserves and represent 23% of total grant income.

Membership income grew to £919,000 (£890,000: 2023/24) and continues to be a significant and vital source of unrestricted income for the Trust representing the second largest source of income in the year and 18% of total income. The number of members also grew to 23,144 (22,692: 2023/24).

Income from donations and appeals totalled £702,000 (£875,000: 2023/24) representing the third largest source of income in the year. This included £335,000 philanthropic donations supporting a wide range of projects. A total of £111,000 was raised from appeals supporting Honeygar, community initiatives and supporting vital work on nature reserves.

Income from other trading activities totalled £677,000 (£634,000: 2023/24); this includes a 12% increase in external income achieved by the Trust's wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited.

A total of £538,000 (£310,000: 2023/24) legacy income was recognised in the year from 34 generous bequests.

Investment income remained stable and totalled £126,000 (£132,000: 2023/24).

Expenditure

Overall expenditure increased to £5.8 million (£4.7 million: 2023/24) due to planned growth, with 66% spent on charitable activities.

Staff costs continue to be the majority of overall expenditure, representing 54% of the total expenditure at £3.1 million (£2.7 million: 2023/24). Our average staff numbers increased from 87 to 93 as a result of new grant funded projects and planned growth to deliver our ambitious strategy.

Nature recovery expenditure increased by 38% and totalled £1.8 million (£1.3 million: 2023/24), as a result of significant grant funded projects and further expenditure on Honeygar.

A total of £1 million (£993,000: 2023/24) was invested in management and improvement works on our land, including nature reserves, in the year.

Expenditure on developing our movement for nature, Team Wilder, totalled £811,000 (£888,000: 2023/24), a small reduction compared to the previous year due to the completion of certain grant funded projects in 2023/24.

Expenditure on raising funds increased by 28% and totalled £807,000 (£630,000: 2023/24) primarily as a result of the creation of new staff roles to support future unrestricted income growth and long-term financial stability.

Support costs increased by 18% to £899,000 (£764,000: 2023/24), as a result of planned investment in the infrastructure of the charity. Despite the increase in expenditure support costs continue to represent the same proportion of overall expenditure at 16% (16%: 2023/24).

SWT (Sales) Ltd

As a result of operational changes with a focus on improved efficiencies in our wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited, both income and expenditure increased; and, encouragingly, the company returned to profit, delivering a surplus of £87,000 (£8,000 loss: 2023/24) which has been Gift Aided to the Trust.

Investments

We have an ethical investment policy that ensures our investment portfolio consists of stocks consistent with the Trust's values. The Trust's ethical investment policy seeks to encourage investment in companies with strong sustainability policies and practices that respect and protect wildlife, communities and their wider environment. The value of the Trust's investment portfolio totalled £799,000 (£847,000: 2023/24), a reduction compared to 2023/24 due to global market turbulence, particularly in the first quarter of 2025. Investment income totalled £16,000 (£25,000: 2023/24). The Trust recognised a £42,000 loss (£18,000 gain: 2023/24) arising from revaluations in the year. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee regularly review the performance of the investment portfolio and are satisfied that the reduction in value is consistent with market conditions and current investment strategy. Investment outcomes will continue to be monitored regularly.

Financial reserves

The Trust's free financial reserves amount to £1,630,000 (£1,763,000: 2023/24) and represent just over 5 months' core operating costs.

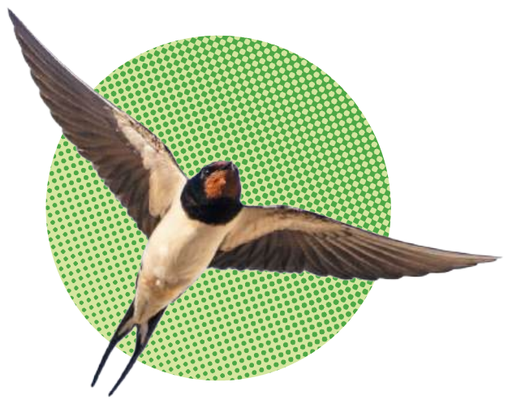
The Trust has a policy of holding reserves of funds to:

- Enable it to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to further the aims of the Trust when no other source of income is available.
- Provide adequate working capital to carry out projects for which funds have been granted by external bodies, but for which those funds are payable only after expenditure has been incurred.
- Provide a reserve to cover contractual obligations and short-term payment of essential costs, such as staff salaries, in the event of an unanticipated shortfall in funds and/or fluctuations in income.
- Meet any legal obligation on the Trust to meet any future costs.

Total reserves at the end of the year totalled £10.3 million (£10.7 million: 2023/24). A significant proportion of this total is represented by tangible and heritage (land) fixed assets, restricted funds and designated funds leaving free financial reserves of £1.63 million (£1.76 million: 2023/24).

Total reserves	£10,269,000
Less:	
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	(£6,990,000)
Restricted funds	(£1,520,000)
Designated funds	(£129,000)
Free financial reserves	**£1,630,000**
Target free financial reserves range	**£900,000 - £1,800,000**

In accordance with the financial reserves policy, the Trust aims to hold between three and six months' core operating costs as free financial reserves which equates to between £900,000 and £1,800,000. Free financial reserves held in the income fund are currently within with the target range and equate to just over 5 months' core operating costs.



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Charitable purpose

Somerset Wildlife Trust is set up to achieve three charitable objects:

1 For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance, protection and enjoyment of wildlife and its habitats, including places of botanical, geographical, zoological, archaeological or scientific interest and places of natural beauty;

2 To advance the education of the public in the principles of biodiversity conservation and of sustainable development;

3 To promote research in all branches of ecology and geology. The Trust delivers its charitable purposes through its strategic objectives as described in this report.

The Trust delivers its charitable purposes through its work to implement the strategic objectives as described in this report. The Trust, through the Executive and Council, monitor and review our work and progress through:

- Quarterly Council meetings and supporting Committee meetings which include performance against annual budget and progress in respect of key strategic initiatives and projects.
- Regular interaction with all members of the Executive Team and in particular the CEO as well as field visits to existing reserves and potential acquisitions.
- Participation by Trustees, Executive and staff in various RSWT Communities of Practice and Working Groups to learn and share best practice and resources. The Executive and SLT work in close association with the Wildlife Trusts within the SW Region.
- Engagement with third parties including partners, major donors and other Wildlife Trusts.
- Qualitative feedback from members, supporters, volunteers and staff including through an annual staff survey and annual volunteer engagement event.
- The quality of relationships with partner organisations, funders and neighbours.
- Hosting Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC), which collects and provides data on species and habitats across Somerset, including on Trust nature reserves, to external parties, the public and specialist groups
- Annual endorsement from Members of the report and accounts and future plans at the Annual General Meeting.
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints received.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The Trust's public benefit is enshrined in its charitable objectives and activities – providing multiple benefits for the public which are wide-ranging and longlasting.

Restoring nature at landscape-scale

The Trust's work aims to restore nature at scale across our landscapes including by restoring, creating and protecting habitats to achieve increased biodiversity and bioabundance. We have defined four priority landscapes where we will focus our primary efforts - Somerset Levels & Moors, Mendip Hills, Tone Vale and Somerset's Coast. We will continue to work across the County but consider focus is needed to be more effective in reducing habitat fragmentation within our landscapes.

There is continuing discussion on how we can engage in, and enable, development of 'ecosystem services' which offer public benefit in addition to nature restoration; for example: flood risk management, carbon storage, pollination, pollution control, improved health and wellbeing and aesthetic beauty. Legislation to drive adoption of new mechanisms has not progressed as fast as we hoped but remains under discussion in government.

Land management advice for nature

Through providing advice and assistance to farmers and landowners to manage their land for the benefit of wildlife, the Trust helps to support the rural economy, the countryside and landscapes that are enjoyed and valued by the wider public.

Nature reserves

The Trust's 66 nature reserves, located throughout Somerset, are used extensively by the public for quiet recreation; many have access on clearly marked paths along with information and interpretation for visitors and visiting helps to build connection with nature and supporting health and wellbeing. We have worked in improved accessibility this year (see pages xx)

Team Wilder – a movement for nature

Team Wilder is supporting people, communities and organisations across Somerset to take action for nature to help us restore, create and protect habitats and build their connection with nature. We are committed to being an inclusive organisation and are actively working to determine how we can be most effective through our engagement work.

Research

Evidence and advice is provided by the Trust to local authorities, landowners and communities with a view to improve decisions on policies such as land management, development, health and wellbeing take full account of the public benefit of wildlife and a healthy environment.

A Development Year

Council and Executive committed to make 2024/5 a "development year" . This meant we have invested in the organisation so we are able to step up our work to deliver our strategic goals going forward. Our recruitment of three new Executive Directors has allowed us to establish stronger, clearer working practices and under their lead, develop our "Theory of Change" model which cascades through to staff performance goals. This has all been done so we can be more efficient and focused on prioritising our work for best impact; and more nimble and adaptable to be able to take opportunities when they arise. This investment has been achieved alongside maintaining all our planned delivery work. We will continue to make operational improvements to enable us to be as effective as possible in pursuit of our goals.

Looking ahead

In 2025/6 we will, in line with other Wildlife Trusts, complete a mid way review of our strategic plan and refresh of our delivery plan. Much has changed since 2020 and we want to learn from what has worked well, and not so well. While we expect to adjust aspects of our priorities and approach, our commitment to our strategic goals: creating more space for nature, inspiring a movement for nature and telling Somerset's story, will remain.

Reporting our Impact

Our work to establish performance measures to explain our impact against our strategic goals has continued. We are introducing a number of key indicators for internal use. We aim to achieve a concise set of core Impact Measures to provide meaningful and reliable transparency to our Members and other stakeholders. We want to ensure the Measures we report provide the key insights and enable trend comparison over time. This is work in progress and will form part of our strategic refresh.

We continue to work as part of the national Wildlife Trusts working group benefitting from specialist input. The Defra/Natural England guidance on land which can be included as "managed positively for nature". It is consistent with the WCL (Wildlife and Countryside Link) which in turn had taken the spirit of the Kunming-Montreal Framework which we had followed. As the custodians of valuable data within Somerset Environmental Record Centre we want to be able to track trends of change, both positive and negative, for the quality, quantity, distribution, connectivity and resilience or our habitats within the wider nature recovery network, alongside the resilience of those habitats.

We want the State of Nature Report to be effective in influencing decision making, not just our own but also the decisions of other organisations and individuals across Somerset.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Articles of Association.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is one of 46 independent Wildlife Trusts working together as a federated movement known as The Wildlife Trusts, covering the UK and Crown Territories. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts' role, one of the 46, is defined by the Royal Charter to support The Wildlife Trusts.

Somerset Wildlife Trust has one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activities of SWT (Sales) Limited are that of overseeing the environmental consultancy, trading under the name Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, previously First Ecology.

It is based at the Trust's Callow Rock Offices. SWTC trades under SWT (Sales) Ltd and is a company limited by shares and registered in England No. 1317396.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) was established in 1986 and is a partnership hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust, funded in part through service level agreements (SLAs) with a number of organisations including Somerset Council, Wessex Water and the Environment Agency. The core work of SERC is to gather, manage, supply and analyse biological and geological data and hold the county list of sites recognised for their natural value. Data gathered by SERC is used to build up a comprehensive picture of the biodiversity and geodiversity of Somerset, and help to monitor the state of the natural environment. SERC is a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres and has close links to the National Biodiversity Network, and the National Federation of Biological Recorders.

South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL) is an Associate trading subsidiary (set up for mutual trading) and jointly owned by eight Wildlife Trusts, including Somerset Wildlife Trust, to help secure regular financial support through memberships recruited face to face. SWWFL provides membership recruitment services for Somerset, Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Wiltshire and Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts.

Governance

COUNCIL

Members elected to serve on Council have a dual role as a Trustee of the Charity and a Director of the company. There can be no fewer than eight and no more than 12 Trustees. All members of Council are volunteers, give freely of their time and have no beneficial interest in the charity. Trustees are elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting and serve for an initial three-year term. Each Trustee can serve for three consecutive terms of three years subject to re-election at the end of each three-year term. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are elected by Council following the AGM and are re-elected for one-year terms.

Each new Council member receives an induction into the work and administration of the charity. Council members receive regular updates on the work of the Trust and any training deemed necessary to enable members to carry out their responsibilities. The Council meets quarterly.

At the Trust AGM in November 2024, two Trustees ended their terms. Their replacements are being sought.

Council is assisted by Standing Committees which meet quarterly unless otherwise stated

COMMITTEES

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee: Monitor financial management including policies and controls, act as Audit Committee, make recommendations to Council on financial policy and capital investment decisions and monitor our risk framework.

People, Culture & Resources Committee: Oversight of policies and key controls relating to the recruitment, development and wellbeing of staff and volunteers and monitoring of our responsiveness to Members feedback. Monitors our safeguarding policies and response and delivery of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Health and Safety Committee: Oversight on all health and safety matters in the Trust and subsidiary reviews of risk assessments and control frameworks.

Remuneration Committee: Consider and make recommendations on the annual salary review for the Chief Executive Officer and Directors, remuneration policy and benchmarking and discretionary pay increases.

Governance Committee (biannual): Consists of the Chair of Council, the Chairs of each of the Standing Committees and the CEO; it considers overall governance for the Trust in the context of the Charitable and strategic objectives of the Trust and the risks and uncertainties therein; developments in the legal or regulatory framework, including the Charity Governance Code, and the effectiveness of Council. During this year to improve efficiency it has taken responsibility for Nominations. A Skills Audit of Trustees has been completed to enable improved identification of short and longer term skill needs.

Risk management

During the year, and with the help of one of Trustees, who is a risk management specialist, we have taken steps to improve and strengthen our risk management systems and processes.

Work to embed our risk management processes is ongoing but some key milestones have been met. We have:

- Upgraded the risk management framework and integration into business planning processes;
- Improved the definition and segregation of strategic and operational risks;
- Reviewed and refreshed our risk appetite in light of our strategic goals and external factors;
- Integrated risk into the planning of all major projects.

The Trust will continue to improve its capability to manage risks proportionately in its day-to-day operations, and further steps are planned to embed risk understanding and transparency across the organisation. Strengthening our risk management processes is key to enabling us to be take the right risks at the right time for the opportunities they create. Our risk tolerance is underpinned by ensuring our financial reserves are always above our policy threshold.

Some levels and types of risk are more acceptable than others. We are not prepared to take any level of undue risk in respect of governance, compliance, financial security, protecting our people and ensuring biodiversity success on our Reserves and wider land holdings. To make meaningful progress towards our strategic aims however we must be prepared to take some higher levels of risk to realise new opportunities; in particular to find new, expanded income streams and work in new ways across land and landscapes which are not within our ownership.

Principal risks and uncertainties

During 2024/25 we had particular focus towards:

- **External environment and conditions:** economic drivers, political shifts and market uncertainties necessitated heightened short-term focus to ensure sustained progress towards our strategic goals. Looking forward we will continue to adapt to changing external conditions in what we do and how we work. We are improving our adaptability and agility to find the most effective ways to progress, recognising this external uncertainty is likely to sustain for several years.
- **Funding diversification and step change:** we have built a strong financial position and are fortunate to have generous donors. However, new “green finance” opportunities have not developed nationally and within Somerset as fast as we hoped. Whilst we have access to government funding for reserves, looking ahead there is greater uncertainty over the level of government funding which will be accessible to us especially during 2025/26. We are instigating strategic planning to identify new substantive income opportunities for next year and beyond; this will be essential to enable meaningful progress towards our strategic goals.
- **Delivery at landscape scale:** new partnerships and delivery approaches are needed to achieve change at the pace and scale needed. We continue to find ways to buy strategically important land to protect for nature. We are exploring ways of working with others to achieve meaningful and sustained influence for nature over land that is not within our ownership.
- **Health, safety and wellbeing (including safeguarding):** a constant priority risk area, recognising our responsibilities to our people, members, and public. No significant incidents have occurred in the year.
- **Staff satisfaction and resilience:** we are embedding change following our growth in staff numbers and improving internal elements of how we work. Staff satisfaction and loyalty are at a positive level, but we recognise that we must continue to work hard on internal communications and transparency and ensure our people are happy, supported and effective.

Transactions involving Council members and related parties

During 2024/25 a total of £1,000 (2024: £1,000) was received from Trustees in respect of donations and membership.

Strategy and policy setting

Council is responsible for ensuring the work of SWT delivers against the objectives of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association. Council determines the strategic direction of the Trust through the 10-year Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy which was formally launched in May 2021. The strategy is available to download from the Trust’s website.

The focus of Council’s ongoing work is: supervising the strategic fit of key decisions including investments and plans for diversification of activities; monitoring delivery; and ensuring the income and expenditure of the Trust and its property and assets are managed appropriately. The Council always seeks to maintain a short term and longer term focus on the Trust’s need to achieve resilient business models that are capable of sustaining nature protection and enhancement.

Staffing and remuneration

Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer and supports the appointment process for senior staff. Trustees delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team through agreement of clear strategic objectives for the Trust which have demonstrable outcomes for wildlife in the county. Trustees monitor progress quarterly as well as ensuring that the Trust’s financial affairs are managed appropriately.

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Chair of Trustees. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day to day running of the Trust and has delegated powers of authority approved by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer delegates decision-making powers through the Executive and Senior Leadership Team.

During the year the Trust employed 79 full-time equivalent staff (2024: 75) 3 of which worked for SERC and 9 for SWT (Sales) Ltd. The Trust continues to adopt hybrid working, with many staff working primarily from their homes or elsewhere to deliver projects and manage nature reserves, balanced with attendance at the Trusts's offices and staff meetings as appropriate.

The Trust’s headquarters is in Taunton with other staff based at Ford Farm, the Avalon Marshes Centre and Callow Rock. The staff are organised into functional teams, such as reserves, and also work in cross-functional teams, such as for delivering major projects.

All job descriptions are graded by the Salary Grading Panel. The corresponding salary band which is benchmarked against similar roles in the external market and other Wildlife Trusts.

The pay arrangements for the Executive Directors are determined by the Chief Executive Officer and approved by the Remuneration Committee and Council using external and Wildlife Trusts’ benchmarking. The Chief Executive Officer’s salary is recommended to Council by the Remuneration Committee and approved by Council.

Key matters

Complaints

The Trust treats all complaints seriously. In the year 2024/25 the Trust received 3 complaints (2023/24: 3). 0 complaints were received in 2024/25 about our fundraising (2023/24: 0).

All complaints were responded to within seven days. Complaints are individually reviewed by the relevant Executive and monitored by the Chief Executive Officer. Formalised reporting to Council will commence in 2025/26.

How we fundraise

As a charity, fundraising is essential to Somerset Wildlife Trust's ability to meet our core purpose and deliver public benefit. We receive most of our financial support from grants and individuals, including our members.

We are committed to a transparent and ethical approach to all our fundraising activity. We make every effort to ensure that our fundraising activity never feels unreasonably intrusive, persistent or pressurised, but rather focuses on inspiring support and celebrating the impact of fundraised income.

Our members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do and our work is only possible thanks to their generosity and their commitment to take action locally for nature.

We do:

- recruit new members face to face at venues and events across Somerset, including Trust nature reserves, and via our website (including as part of national Wildlife Trust campaigns), telephone and occasional targeted door drops;
- send appeal letters and other fundraising communications to selected supporters who have opted-in to marketing by post and/or digitally;
- seek philanthropic support from major donors, patrons, trusts, foundations, companies and other grant givers;
- invite donations via our website, other giving platforms and collection boxes;
- promote the importance of supporting our work, including via gifts in wills and gifts in memory;
- organise online fundraising auctions and other fundraising events; and
- encourage our members, supporters and local businesses to fundraise in aid of our work (community fundraising) as part of taking action for nature -

We do not:

- sell or pass on supporter details to any other organisation or buy lists of other charities' donors.

Our members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted and can change these at any time, by contacting us.

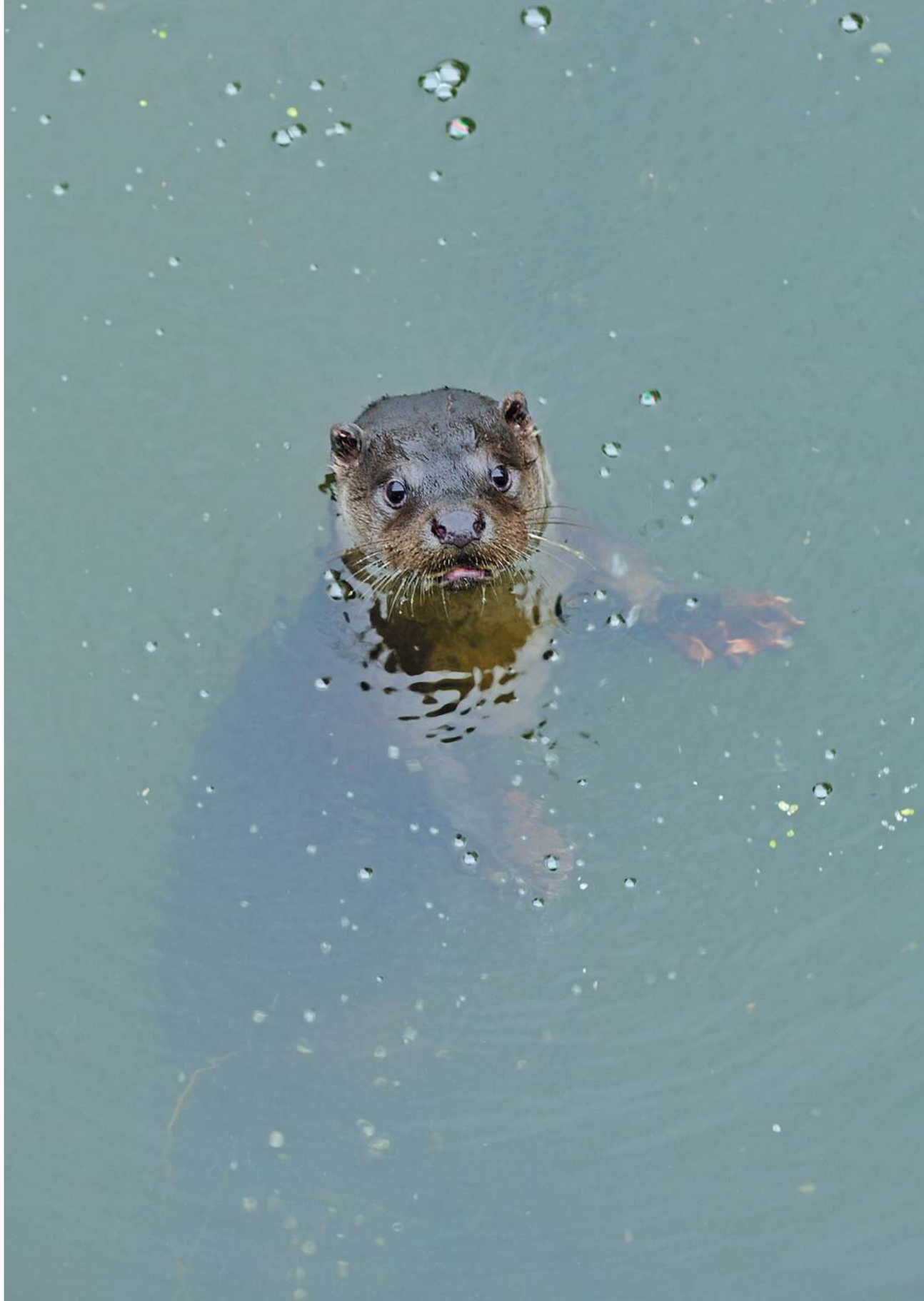
We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and committed to follow its Code of Practice, which sets out standards of behaviour of fundraisers.

We are signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out from receiving fundraising communications from us and received no requests from this service to opt out in the year.

We ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances are protected, including by continually updating our database to prevent communications being sent to any vulnerable people who have been identified.

Our fundraising is mainly carried out by Trust staff with support from a very limited number of carefully selected professional fundraisers which are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers which act as agents in raising funds on the charity's behalf.

Face to face fundraising at venues and events is conducted on our behalf by staff of South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL), an associate trading subsidiary jointly owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust and seven other Wildlife Trusts. SWWFL



is a corporate member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising which conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with SWWFL's face-to-face fundraisers to monitor quality.

We seek feedback from all new members. To save costs, we ceased to use a third-party service to do this and now collect this feedback through a new member email joining journey, which includes a questionnaire covering aspects of membership recruitment.

Health and safety

The Health and Safety Committee meets quarterly and presents reporting to Council. The health and safety of employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the general public are of paramount importance to the Trust. Accidents are recorded, there were 11 involving staff (2023/24: 3), 2 involving volunteers (2023/24: 4) and 0 contractor injury (2023/24: 1) causing lost time. We are disappointed that the number of accidents involving staff increased. The Health and Safety Committee will have revised terms in 2025/6 with increased focus to accident avoidance and prevention. Causes included machine use and working practices. Each accident is reviewed and steps taken to reduce risk of recurrence including, as applicable: altered procedures, equipment review and training.

Safeguarding

As an organisation that works with children and vulnerable adults, the Trust acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. Our safeguarding policy is published on our website at www.somersetwildlife/policies/safeguarding.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Trust is committed to being inclusive in all aspects of our work from staff to trustees, volunteers to participants at our events. By recognising, respecting and valuing differences, and adopting more diverse perspectives, our staff, trustees, volunteers and supporters can become more effective ambassadors for nature as they can reach wider audiences. As such, equality, diversity and inclusion are enshrined in our core values, our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, our policies and activities.

This year we progressed implementing our EDI action plan. The plan provides a framework for the delivery of EDI in support of the Trust's strategy. It places diversity and inclusion at the heart of our culture.

Carbon impact

The Trust has committed to be a Net-Zero Carbon organisation by 2030 and to do this will mitigate its climate impacts (such as buildings, staff transport, landholdings, purchasing and waste). Our landholdings are our major sources, including cattle grazing and we have researched this area in detail to understand the implications for us. Carbon release from dried out peat, as on Honeygar, is a key area of focus for us and we do detailed research into the impact of holding water on peat to lock in the carbon and avoid emissions. We are working with The Wildlife Trusts on annual carbon reporting which will be published in the future.

The Trust is using the Wilder Carbon process developed by Kent Wildlife Trust to ensure we can benchmark accurately with other Wildlife Trusts and measure our footprint and sequestration using the best available data and emission factors recommended by DEFRA/ Natural England.

A Climate and Nature Emergency Working Group of key staff monitors our progress towards net-zero and the Trust's carbon footprint is measured each year.

Environment Policy

Our Environment Policy considers the direct impacts of all our activities including our built properties, landholding and reserves management, purchasing and transport. The Policy is available on our website.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Trustees on 17 July 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Rupert Taylor
Chair

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Somerset Wildlife Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the income and expenditure of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Trustees on 17 July 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Rupert Taylor
Chair

PART 4:

Independent auditor's report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

to the Members of Somerset Wildlife Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Somerset Wildlife (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the consolidated and parent charitable company Balance Sheets, the consolidated Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

the information given in the Annual Report, which includes the Directors' Report and Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report and Strategic Report included within the Annual Report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company, including the Companies Act 2006, Charity Act 2011, and employment legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and considering legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

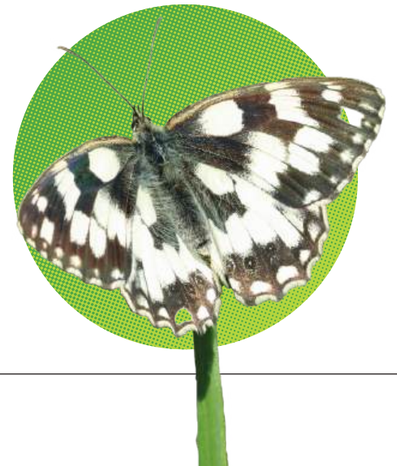
In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation, claims and breaches of relevant legislation; and
- reviewing correspondence with the Charity Commission and other relevant regulators.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponisbilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



Use of our report

This report is made solely to the group and parent charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the group and parent charitable company's members and trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the group and parent charitable company and the group and parent charitable company's members as a body and the parent charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

.....
Michelle Ferris BSC (Hons) FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Albert Goodman LLP, Statutory Auditor

Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

Date: 24 July 2025

PART 5:

Financial statements

- Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2025
- Consolidated and Trust balance sheets as at 31 March 2025
- Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2025
- Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(Including consolidated income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds General £'000	Unrestricted Funds Designated £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Endowment Funds £'000	Total Funds 2025 £'000	Total Funds 2024 £'000
Income from:							
Membership, donations and legacies	2	1,649	-	510	-	2,159	2,075
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature - nature recovery	3	88	-	1,276	-	1,364	965
More space for nature - nature reserves	3	463	-	51	-	514	585
A movement for nature – Team Wilder	3	-	-	283	-	283	293
Telling Somerset's story – Somerset Environmental Records Centre	3	195	-	30	-	225	221
Other trading activities (including SWT (Sales) Ltd)	4	677	-	-	-	677	634
Investments	5	126	-	-	-	126	132
Total		**3,198**	**-**	**2,150**	**-**	**5,348**	**4,905**
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds:							
Cost of raising funds	6	372	-	-	-	372	327
Membership recruitment and retention	6	425	-	-	-	425	296
Merchandising costs	6	2	-	-	-	2	2
Investment management fees	6	8	-	-	-	8	5
SWT (Sales) Ltd	6	764	-	-	-	764	650
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature - nature recovery	6	15	23	1,718	-	1,756	1,297
More space for nature - nature reserves	6	853	78	133	-	1,064	993
A movement for nature – Team Wilder	6	548	-	263	-	811	888
Telling Somerset's story – Somerset Environmental Records Centre	6	165	-	30	-	195	243
Provision for pension scheme liability	17	-	376	-		376	-
Total		**3,152**	**477**	**2,144**	**-**	**5,773**	**4,701**
Net (loss)/gain on investments		(42)	-	-	-	(42)	18
Net (expenditure)/income		**4**	**(477)**	**6**	**-**	**(467)**	**222**
Transfers between funds	21	(134)	134	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		**(130)**	**(343)**	**6**	**-**	**(467)**	**222**
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2024		2,217	3,932	1,514	3,073	10,736	10,514
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2025		**2,087**	**3,589**	**1,520**	**3,073**	**10,269**	**10,736**

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above. The notes on pages 86 to 101 form part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED AND TRUST BALANCE SHEETS

As at 31 March 2025

	Notes	Group 2025 £'000	Group 2024 £'000	Charity 2025 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11	1,393	1,413	1,373	1,391
Heritage assets	11	5,597	4,788	5,597	4,788
Investments	12	799	847	799	847
		7,789	**7,048**	**7,769**	**7,026**
Current assets					
Stock	13	1	1	1	1
Debtors	14	1,677	1,575	1,704	1,625
Deposit accounts		1,901	2,299	1,901	2,299
Cash at bank and in hand		482	290	464	259
		4,061	**4,165**	**4,070**	**4,184**
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	395	477	384	465
Net current assets		**3,666**	**3,688**	**3,686**	**3,719**
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16	810	-	810	-
Provisions for liabilities	17	376	-	376	-
Total net assets		**10,269**	**10,736**	**10,269**	**10,745**
The funds of the charity					
Endowment funds		3,073	3,073	3,073	3,073
Restricted funds		1,520	1,514	1,520	1,514
Designated funds		3,589	3,932	3,589	3,932
Unrestricted funds		2,087	2,217	2,087	2,226
Total charity funds	**20**	**10,269**	**10,736**	**10,269**	**10,745**

The notes on pages 86 to 101 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 82 to 101 were approved by the Trustees on 17 July 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Rupert Taylor
Chair

Stephen Rogers
Treasurer

Somerset Wildlife Trust
Registered company number 818162

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by operating activities	24	590	(11)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends, interest and rental income		126	132
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		10	16
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(937)	(403)
Proceeds from sale of investments		109	142
Purchase of investments		(131)	(116)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(823)**	**(229)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(233)**	**(240)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,625	2,865
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	**25**	**2,392**	**2,625**

The notes on pages 86 to 101 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Charitable company status

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. The liability of the guarantors, who are the members, is limited to £1 per guarantor. At 31 March 2025 the charity had 23,144 members. The Company is registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5AW. On behalf of the members, the Council controls the Company.

(b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention with the exception of listed investments which are included at their fair value.

The Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

(c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

(d) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the Charity and its wholly owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Limited on a line-by-line basis. A separate Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account for the Charity has not been presented because the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption afforded by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006. The deficit in the year for the Charity was £467,000 (2024: surplus £222,000). Note 23 gives full details of the results of the subsidiary undertaking for the year to 31 March 2025.

(e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds
Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity. Certain unrestricted funds have been designated by the Trustees for specific purposes.

Designated funds
Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Council for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds that are used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes.

Endowment funds
The nature reserves endowment fund represents amounts received specifically for, and expended on, the purchase of nature reserves.

(f) Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income for works that have been completed but has not yet been received is included as accrued income. The stage of completion is determined by comparing the services rendered to date to the accepted quotation or contract.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the Charity is aware that probate has been granted, notification has been made by the executor(s) to the Trust that a distribution will be made, and the amount of that distribution can be estimated with sufficient accuracy; or when a distribution is received from the estate.

Grants are included in the SOFA in the year they are receivable and when any performance conditions attached to the grant have been met.

Income from investments and from rental income is included in the SOFA in the year it is receivable.

The total income receivable in respect of membership subscriptions is included as income within note 2. Income from life membership is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

Gifts in kind are included in the SOFA at their estimated current value in the year in which they are receivable.

Trading income is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

(g) Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where an employee works in more than one department, their costs are allocated on the basis of time worked in each department. Certain overhead costs, such as relevant insurance premiums, are allocated on the basis of staff numbers, while others are allocated on an actual usage basis.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

(h) Tangible and heritage fixed assets and depreciation

Heritage assets are assets of scientific importance that are held to advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of the charity and through public access contribute to the nation's culture and education at either a national or local level. Freehold nature reserves are included in heritage fixed assets at their acquisition costs and they are not revalued or depreciated. The Charity aims to preserve and enhance its nature reserves, which are not held for their resale potential. The market value of the reserves is of no practical relevance to the Charity's activities. No depreciation is provided because the reserves have an indefinite life.

The costs of leasehold nature reserves are amortised over the period of the lease.

All other tangible fixed assets are held at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided on all other tangible fixed assets as follows:

Freehold property 2% on a straight line basis
Computers on a straight line basis over 3 years
Plant and equipment 15% on written down value
Motor vehicles 25% on written down value
Office equipment, furniture and fittings 15% on written down value

(i) Investments

Listed Investments are stated at fair value which equates to market value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes all net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. The investment in the subsidiary is stated at cost.

(j) Stock

Stock consists of publications for distribution to members and purchased goods for resale. Stock is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

(k) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

(l) Financial instruments

The Trust only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and liabilities of the Trust and their measurement are as follows:

Financial assets – trade debtors, amounts owed by subsidiary company, legacies receivable other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amotised cost. Investment porfolios are basic financial instruments measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank and deposit accounts are classified as a basic financial instrument and measured at face value.

Financial liabilities which includes trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments and are measured at amortised cost.

(m) Pension costs

The Trust operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Pension contributions in relation to the defined contribution scheme are recognised as an expense in the statement of financial activities as incurred. The Trust contributes 7% of gross annual salary for participating employees.

(n) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the SOFA as incurred.

(o) Volunteer support

The Trust receives support from a wide variety of volunteers. It is not practical to place a value on the time volunteered by all these persons, due to the variety of duties performed, the differences in time spent, and the sheer number of volunteers who kindly donated their time.

(p) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

Recognising income from legacies often entails estimating the time and final amount distributed by an estate to the Trust. The estimate of the amount and the judgement as to whether or not it should be recognised in the accounts could have a significant impact on the reported assets of the Trust.

The Trustees are of the opinion that, apart from legacies, there are no other estimates or assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

(q) Provisions

The Trust recognises a provision where it has a liability which is of uncertain timing or amount. Movements in provisions are recognised in the SOFA in the period in which they occur. Provisions are discounted where the time impact of money is material.

2. MEMBERSHIP, DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Membership	919	-	919	890	-	890
Donations and appeals	228	474	702	145	730	875
Legacies	502	36	538	310	-	310
	1,649	**510**	**2,159**	**1,345**	**730**	**2,075**

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2024 £'000
More space for nature - nature recovery						
DEFRA	-	409	409	-	172	172
Natural England	-	370	370	-	327	327
Statutory body grants	-	97	97	-	72	72
Other grants	-	400	400	-	200	200
Consultancy fees	88	-	88	194	-	194
	88	**1,276**	**1,364**	**194**	**771**	**965**
More space for nature - nature reserves						
DEFRA	445	22	467	418	26	444
Natural England	-	8	8	-	-	-
Statutory body grants	-	13	13	-	-	-
Other grants	-	8	8	-	121	121
Grazing licences and property lettings	17	-	17	19	-	19
Wood and firewood sales	1	-	1	1	-	1
	463	**51**	**514**	**438**	**147**	**585**
A movement for nature - Team Wilder						
DEFRA	-	8	8	-	3	3
Statutory body grants	-	-	-	-	17	17
Other grants	-	275	275	1	272	273
	-	**283**	**283**	**1**	**292**	**293**
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset's Environmental Records Centre						
Other grants	-	30	30	-	23	23
Service level agreements	105	-	105	92	-	92
Data services	90	-	90	96	-	96
Sales income	-	-	-	10	-	10
	195	**30**	**225**	**198**	**23**	**221**
	746	**1,640**	**2,386**	**831**	**1,233**	**2,064**

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Charity £'000	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 23) £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Charity £'000	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 23) £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Shop sales	2	-	2	2	-	2
Fundraising events	9	-	9	7	-	7
Other fundraising activities	43	-	43	72	-	72
SWT (Sales) Ltd	-	623	623	-	553	553
	54	**623**	**677**	**81**	**553**	**634**

5 INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Dividends receivable from equity shares	16	-	16	25	-	25
Interest receivable from bank and deposit accounts	110	-	110	107	-	107
	126	**-**	**126**	**132**	**-**	**132**

6. BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Activities undertaken directly £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Expenditure on raising funds						
Cost of raising funds	283	89	372	253	74	327
Membership recruitment and retention	366	59	425	257	39	296
Merchandising costs	2	-	2	2	-	2
Investment management fees	8	-	8	5	-	5
SWT (Sales) Ltd	608	156	764	525	125	650
	1,267	**304**	**1,571**	**1,042**	**238**	**1,280**
Charitable activities						
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,557	199	1,756	1,161	136	1,297
More space for nature - nature reserves	918	146	1,064	851	142	993
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	599	212	811	685	203	888
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmental Records Centre	157	38	195	198	45	243
	3,231	**595**	**3,826**	**2,895**	**526**	**3,421**
	4,498	**899**	**5,397**	**3,937**	**764**	**4,701**

SUPPORT COST BREAKDOWN BY ACTIVITY

	Costs of generatng voluntary income £'000	Membership recruitment and retention £'000	SWT (Sales) Ltd £'000	More space for nature - nature recovery £'000	More space for nature - nature reserves £'000	A movement for nature - Team Wilder £'000	Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environment Records Centre £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Finance	15	7	36	47	36	33	9	183	141
HR/Staff support	11	5	25	33	25	23	6	128	86
Office costs	9	4	21	28	21	19	5	107	103
Property and motor vehicles	8	3	17	23	17	16	4	88	81
Recoverable VAT	(7)	-	-	(4)	(23)	(4)	-	(38)	(26)
Marketing	30	30	2	2	16	75	-	155	149
Information technology	13	6	32	41	31	29	8	160	120
National and regional support	5	2	11	14	11	10	3	56	52
Insurance	1	-	2	2	2	2	-	9	10
Governance	4	2	10	13	10	9	3	51	48
	89	**59**	**156**	**199**	**146**	**212**	**38**	**899**	**764**

BASIS OF ALLOCATION

Finance	Headcount
HR/staff support	Headcount
Office costs	Headcount
Property and motor vehicles	Headcount
Recoverable VAT	Actual resources expended
Marketing	Actual resources expended
Information technology	Headcount
National support	Headcount
Insurance	Headcount
Governance	Headcount

7. OTHER COST DISCLOSURES

	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Depreciation	136	139
Auditors' remuneration:		
Audit fees	19	13
Other assurance services	4	-
Loss/(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	3	(2)

8. STAFF COSTS

	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Wages and salaries	2,696	2,362
Social security costs	263	219
Pension costs	180	153
	3,139	**2,734**

The number of employees whose renumeration exceeded £60,000 was as follows:

	Total 2025	Total 2024
£60,000 - £69,999	3	-
£70,000 - £79,999	-	1
£80,000 - £89,999	1	-
	4	**1**

Total remuneration of key management personnel in the period was £319,000. A different designation of key management personnel applied in the prior year (2024: £504,000).

The key management personnel of the group and the parent charity comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Nature Recovery, Director of Action for Nature and Director of Business Planning and Development.

The average number of employees during the year, analysed by function, was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Charitable activities	84	78
Raising funds	8	8
Governance	1	1
	93	**87**

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year totalled 79 (2024: 75).

9. TRUSTEE EMOLUMENTS

	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Donations received from Trustees	1	1

Trustees did not receive any remuneration or benefits in kind during either year. Trustees did not receive any reimbursement for travel expenses during the year (2024: one).

10. PENSION COSTS

Defined contribution scheme

The Trust contributes 7% of annual salary to employees' current pension schemes, all of which are now defined contribution in nature. The pension charge for the year in respect of these contributions amounted to £180,000 (2024: £153,000).

11. TANGIBLE AND HERITAGE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Nature reserves: Freehold (Heritage funds) £'000	Nature reserves: Leasehold £'000	Freehold and leasehold property £'000	Plant and equipment £'000	Vehicles £'000	Office equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost							
At 1 April 2024	4,788	104	1,133	713	200	329	7,267
Additions	809	-	-	87	17	24	937
Disposals	-	(1)	-	(66)	(13)	(97)	(177)
At 31 March 2025	**5,597**	**103**	**1,133**	**734**	**204**	**256**	**8,027**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2024	-	104	174	385	149	254	1,066
Charge for the year	-	-	23	55	15	43	136
Disposals	-	(1)	-	(55)	(13)	(96)	(165)
At 31 March 2025	**-**	**103**	**197**	**385**	**151**	**201**	**1,037**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2025	**5,597**	**-**	**936**	**349**	**53**	**55**	**6,990**
At 31 March 2024	**4,788**	**-**	**959**	**328**	**51**	**75**	**6,201**

Charity

	Nature reserves: Freehold (Heritage funds) £'000	Nature reserves: Leasehold £'000	Freehold and leasehold property £'000	Plant and equipment £'000	Vehicles £'000	Office equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost							
At 1 April 2024	4,788	104	1,133	671	200	270	7,166
Additions	809	-	-	81	17	21	928
Disposals	-	(1)	-	(57)	(13)	(80)	(151)
At 31 March 2025	**5,597**	**103**	**1,133**	**695**	**204**	**211**	**7,943**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2024	-	104	174	359	149	201	987
Charge for the year	-	-	23	52	15	38	128
Disposals	-	(1)	-	(49)	(13)	(79)	(142)
At 31 March 2025	**-**	**103**	**197**	**362**	**151**	**160**	**973**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2025	**5,597**	**-**	**936**	**333**	**53**	**51**	**6,970**
At 31 March 2024	**4,788**	**-**	**959**	**312**	**51**	**69**	**6,179**

Heritage fixed assets

Heritage assets are represented as freehold nature reserves above. A summary of transactions relating to heritage assets over the last five years is as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Cost of acquisitions	748	323	187	1,144	108
Value of donated assets	61	5	-	-	-
Carrying amount of disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds of disposals*	-	-	-	35	-
Value of impairment	-	-	-	-	-

*Proceeds of disposals in 2022 represents the sale of land that was donated to Trust.

12. INVESTMENTS

Group and Charity

	Listed Securities £'000	Cash holdings £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Cost				
At 1 April 2024	745	36	781	787
Additions	131	110	241	257
Disposals	(133)	(137)	(270)	(263)
At 31 March 2025	**743**	**9**	**752**	**781**
Revaluations				
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2024	66	-	66	49
Net (losses)/gains) arising on revaluations in the year	(42)	-	(42)	18
Disposals/reverse revaluations	23	-	23	(1)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2025	**47**	**-**	**47**	**66**
Fair value at 31 March 2025	**790**	**9**	**799**	**847**

At 31 March 2025 the charity had one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activity of SWT (Sales) Limited is that of environmental consultancy work (see note 23).

13. STOCKS

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Stocks	1	1	1	1
	1	**1**	**1**	**1**

14. DEBTORS

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trade debtors	367	711	281	581
Other debtors	88	76	88	76
Prepayments and accrued income	660	427	597	398
Legacies receivable	562	361	562	361
Amounts owed by subsidiary company	-	-	176	209
	1,677	**1,575**	**1,704**	**1,625**

Other debtors includes £30,000 (2024: £nil) due after more than one year.

Legacies are only recognised in the accounts when probate has been granted and the amount of the distribution from the estate to the Trust can be estimated with sufficient accuracy. The Trust has been notified of 1 legacy with an approximate value of £300,000 (2024: 0 legacies, approximate value £Nil) which has not been recognised as income due to uncertainty over the value of the gift.

15. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Trade creditors	239	263	236	258
Other creditors and accruals	156	214	148	207
	395	**477**	**384**	**465**

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE IN MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Other loan	810	-	810	-
	810	**-**	**810**	**-**

A philanthropic loan enabled the purchase of 31.57 hectares at Sharpham in June 2024.
The loan is repayable over a 3 year term ending 2027. No interest is payable in respect of the loan.

17. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Provisions				
Balance at 1 April 2024	-	-	-	-
Provisions recognised in the year	376	-	376	-
Provisions utilised in the year	-	-	-	-
Balance at 31 March 2025	**376**	**-**	**376**	**-**

The Trust participated in the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme, a hybrid, multi-employer pension scheme which provides benefits to members on a defined benefit or a defined contribution basis.

During the year ended 31 March 2022, the Trustees were made aware of a potential issue relating to the date of closure of the defined benefit section of this Scheme. Whilst there was uncertainty as to whether this could result in an additional liability, the Trustees designated a financial reserve of £500,000 in 2023/24 as a precautionary measure to cover this matter.

After extensive investigation by RSWT and their legal advisors it has been established that there is an additional financial liability to employers who participated in the defined benefit section of the Scheme. In addition, the breach of the Section 75 clause and subsequent exit from the Scheme by Somerset Wildlife Trust, has proven invalid. Accordingly the Trust is responsible for a share of the total financial liability.

In order to address the additional Scheme liability the pension trustee, working with RSWT and the Scheme's actuaries, has developed a Recovery Plan that aims to eliminate the total deficit over a six-year period.

Information regarding the financial position (as at 1 April 2024 the date of the latest actuarial valuation) of the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme (as a whole) is as follows:
The total Scheme deficit was £4.52m on a Statutory Funding Objective Basis. The assumptions that have the most significant effect on the results of the valuation are:

- Discount rate pre-retirement 6.51%
- Discount rate post-retirement 4.26%
- Revaluation in deferment (CPI) 2.95%
- Pension increases: fixed 5% pa and RPI max 3.45%
- Retirement mortality assumptions are based on S2PA tables projected by each member's year of birth.

Somerset Wildlife Trust's contribution to the Recovery Plan is £71,000 per annum.

As permitted under FRS 102 the Trust accounts for the defined benefit scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme and recognises a liability for the present value of the contributions payable by the Trust under the Recovery Plan. The present value of £376,000 has been calculated using a discount rate of 5.6% representing the single equivalent discount rates derived using the iBoxx AA-rated corporate bond curve as at 31 March 2025.

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categorisation of financial instruments

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	799	847	799	847
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	1,017	1,148	1,107	1,227
	1,816	**1,995**	**1,906**	**2,074**

Item of income, expenditure, gain or losses

	Group				Charity			
	Income £'000	Expense £'000	Net gains £'000	Net losses £'000	Income £'000	Expense £'000	Net gains £'000	Net losses £'000
2025								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	16	8	-	(42)	16	8	-	(42)
	16	**8**	**-**	**(42)**	**16**	**8**	**-**	**(42)**
2024								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	25	5	18	-	25	5	18	-
	25	**5**	**18**	**-**	**25**	**5**	**18**	**-**

19. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Minimum lease payments on non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Within one year	5	8	5	8
Due one to five years	4	5	4	5
	9	**13**	**9**	**13**

20. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2024 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	Investment gains £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	2,217	3,198	(3,152)	(134)	(42)	2,087
Total unrestricted funds	**2,217**	**3,198**	**(3,152)**	**(134)**	**(42)**	**2,087**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves (heritage funds)	1,715	-	-	809	-	2,524
Operating freehold	959	-	(23)	-	-	936
Nature reserves development	16	-	(3)	-	-	13
Development fund	500	-	-	(500)	-	-
Innovation fund	35	-	-	(15)	-	20
Nature reserves fund	75	-	(75)	-	-	-
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	132	-	-	(36)	-	96
Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme	500	-	(376)	(124)	-	-
Total designated funds	**3,932**	**-**	**(477)**	**134**	**-**	**3,589**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,310	1,417	(1,718)	-	-	1,009
More space for nature - nature reserves	123	176	(133)	25	-	191
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	81	527	(263)	(25)	-	320
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmental Records Centre	-	30	(30)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**1,514**	**2,150**	**(2,144)**	**-**	**-**	**1,520**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves (heritage funds)	3,073	-	-	-	-	3,073
Total endowment funds	**3,073**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3,073**
Total funds	**10,736**	**5,348**	**(5,773)**	**-**	**(42)**	**10,269**

Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds represent the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for a particular purpose and are maintained in accordance with the policy explained in the Trustees' report.

Designated funds

The nature reserve fund represents funds other than endowment funds that the charity has used to purchase nature reserves.

The operating freehold fund represents the value of the Trust's freehold property, comprising the main headquarters in Taunton and buildings at Honeygar.

The designated nature reserve development fund represents proceeds from the sale of land during 2016/17 which the charity has set aside specifically for re-investment in nature reserves.

The designated development fund represents funds that the charity has set aside for investment in delivering the Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy.

The innovation fund represents funds that have been set aside to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the delivery of the Trust's programme of work.

The nature reserves fund represents funds set aside to to mitigate the reduction in agri-environment income.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund represents the cumulative surplus generated through SERC activities which has been earmarked for future investment in SERC activities.

The Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme fund represents funds that were set aside should a future liability arise which is now recognised as a provision.

Restricted funds

The restricted income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the unexpended balances of donations, grants and other income, which are to be applied for specific purposes within the charity's objectives:

- **More space for nature**
  - Nature recovery – improving nature everywhere through a Nature Recovery Network.
  - Nature reserves – manage our nature reserves for conservation purposes.
- **A movement for nature** – taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.
- **Telling Somerset's story** – through our online State of Nature platform that informs action and monitors progress.

Nature recovery includes £347,000 (2024: £277,000) from Natural England from the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme.

21. TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Designated funds		
Nature reserves	809	328
Operating freehold reserve	-	(12)
Development reserve	(500)	(1,234)
Innovation fund	(15)	15
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	(36)	66
Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme	(124)	500
Restricted funds		
More space for nature - nature recovery	-	16
More space for nature - nature reserves	25	(339)
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	(25)	-
Unrestricted funds	(134)	660
	-	-

The designated nature reserves transfer represents land acquired in the year.

The designated operating freehold reserve transfer in 2024 represents the depreciation charged in the year on the Trust's freehold property.

The designated development transfer represents the use of the reserve to offset the planned deficit in 2024/25 as the Trust invested in its development.

The designated innovation fund transfer represents funds that have been set aside by the charity to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the Trust's programme of work.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund transfer represents the movement in the cumulative funds which have been set aside for future investment in SERC.

The Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme transfer represents the funds that were set aside and are now recognised as a provision (see note 17).

The restricted fund transfer represents the transfer of funds as agreed with the donor.

22. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Designated Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Endowment Funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	457	3,460	-	3,073	6,990
Investments	799	-	-	-	799
Current assets	2,412	129	1,520	-	4,061
Current liabilities	(1,581)	-	-	-	(1,581)
	2,087	**3,589**	**1,520**	**3,073**	**10,269**

23. SUBSIDIARY COMPANY

SWT (Sales) Limited income and expenditure statement for the year ended March 2025

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Turnover	734	592
Cost of sales	516	485
Gross profit	**218**	**107**
Administrative expenses	131	115
Net profit	**87**	**(8)**
Taxation	-	-
Net profit after taxation	**87**	**(8)**
Paid under gift aid to Trust	87	(8)
Profit brought forward	-	-
Retained profit carried forward	**-**	**-**
Turnover includes a charge of £111,000 (2024: £39,000) for services to the Trust. The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds of SWT (Sales) Limited was:		
Assets	187	213
Liabilities	(187)	(221)
Funds	**-**	**(8)**

24. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(467)	222
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	136	139
Losses/(gains) on investments	42	(18)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(126)	(132)
Loss/(profit) on disposal of fixed assets	3	(2)
Increase/(decrease) in provision for liabilities	376	(50)
(Increase) in debtors	(102)	(6)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	728	(164)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**590**	**(11)**

25. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	482	290
Deposit accounts (less than 3 months)	1,901	2,299
Investment cash holdings	9	36
	2,392	**2,625**

26. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	Endowment	Funds
	General £'000	Designated £'000	Funds £'000	Funds £'000	2024 £'000
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	1,345	-	730	-	2,075
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature - nature recovery	194	-	771	-	965
More space for nature - nature reserves	438	-	147	-	585
A movement for nature	1	-	292	-	293
Telling Somerset's story	198	-	23	-	221
Other trading activities (including SWT (Sales) Ltd)	634	-	-	-	634
Investments	132	-	-	-	132
Total	**2,942**	**-**	**1,963**	**-**	**4,905**
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds:					
Cost of raising funds	313	14	-	-	327
Membership recruitment and retention	296	-	-	-	296
Merchandising costs	2	-	-	-	2
Investment management fees	5	-	-	-	5
SWT (Sales) Ltd	650	-	-	-	650
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature - nature recovery	231	23	1,043	-	1,297
More space for nature - nature reserves	647	75	271	-	993
A movement for nature	407	-	481	-	888
Telling Somerset's story	220	-	23	-	243
Total	**2,771**	**112**	**1,818**	**-**	**4,701**
Net gain on investments	18	-	-	-	18
Net income/(expenditure)	**189**	**(112)**	**145**	**-**	**222**
Transfers between funds	660	(337)	(323)	-	-
Net movement in funds	**849**	**(449)**	**(178)**	**-**	**222**
Reconciliation of funds					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2023	1,368	4,381	1,692	3,073	10,514
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2024	**2,217**	**3,932**	**1,514**	**3,073**	**10,736**

27. STATEMENT OF FUNDS 2024

	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	Investment Gains £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	1,368	2,942	(2,771)	660	18	2,217
Total unrestricted funds	**1,368**	**2,942**	**(2,771)**	**660**	**18**	**2,217**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves (heritage funds)	1,387	-	-	328	-	1,715
Operating freehold	994	-	(23)	(12)	-	959
Nature reserves development	16	-	-	-	-	16
Development fund	1,734	-	-	(1,234)	-	500
Innovation fund	34	-	(14)	15	-	35
Nature reserves fund	150	-	(75)	-	-	75
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	66	-	-	66	-	132
Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme	-	-	-	500	-	500
Total designated funds	**4,381**	**-**	**(112)**	**(337)**	**-**	**3,932**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,271	1,066	(1,043)	16	-	1,310
More space for nature - nature reserves	182	551	(271)	(339)	-	123
A movement for nature- Team Wilder	239	323	(481)	-	-	81
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmntal Records Centre	-	23	(23)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**1,692**	**1,963**	**(1,818)**	**(323)**	**-**	**1,514**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves (heritage funds)	3,073	-	-	-	-	3,073
Total endowment funds	**3,073**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3,073**
Total funds	**10,514**	**4,905**	**(4,701)**	**-**	**18**	**10,736**

28. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Designated Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Endowment Funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	454	2,674	-	3,073	6,201
Investments	847	-	-	-	847
Current assets	1,393	1,258	1,514	-	4,165
Current liabilities	(477)	-	-	-	(477)
	2,217	**3,932**	**1,514**	**3,073**	**10,736**

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

We would like to thank all our members, donors and grant givers for their generous support which is helping nature to recover across Somerset including all those who wish to remain anonymous.

Legacies

James Francis Archibald
Jennifer Beryl Brewster
Patricia Hilary Buck
Alfred David Charles
Niall Christie
Eileen Anne Cockerham
Mary Carwardine Cooper
Eileen Hemmings
Carole Jane Howie
Diana Mary Killen
Anne Elizabeth Lloyd-Jones
Catherine Valori Menneer
Rosemary Margaret Morgan
Barbara Price
Dr George Malcolm Annesley Satchwell
Terry John Sheehan
Audrey Mary Syme
Meryl Kay Taylor
Jennifer Ruth Tennant
Lady Patricia Margaret Williamson
Michael Guy Wilson
Derek Norman Landers Yeomans

Patrons

Phillipa Archer
David and Loredana Buchan
Dudley Cheesman
Pete and Trish Comley
John Deverell CBE
Charles Fattorini
James and Alka Hughes- Hallett
Stanley and Jennifer Johnson
Anne Lloyd-Jones
Jean Mantle
Rohan and Lily Masson-Taylor
Mark O'Neill
John Poingdestre
Gill Rickards and Simon Hart
Laura Roberts
Janet Robinson and Paul Groom
Tim and Dede Sanderson
Paul Sheppard and Lucy Dunford
Paul and Mona Sinclair
Patricia Stainton
Lucy Starling
Clive Taylor
Jane Taylor
Patrick Thomson
Chris and Maria Thring
Robert Unwin
Sarah Warren
Neil and Sarah

Corporate members and partners

A C Mole
Bradfords Building Supplies Ltd
Classic Cottages
Frobishers Juices Ltd
Glastonbury Festivals Ltd
Habitat Aid Ltd
Melhuish and Saunders Ltd
Priory Close Veterinary Practice
Somerset Council (LNP & SERC)
Somerset Rivers Authority
Stay Original Co
Wessex Water (LNP)

Grants and Trusts

The City Charity Trust
Hamamelis
Groundworks Trust & Tesco Stores – Langport, Illminster, Shepton
Mallett
Battens
Michael Marks
The Rural Prosperity Fund
The Ninesquare Trust
Natural England – Conservation and Enhancement Scheme
The Foxglove Trust
Joseph Strong Frazer
Thatchers Foundation
Sir John & Lady Amory's CT
Fairfield Charitable Trust
AJH Ashby Will Trust
Neighbourly (Southern Coop)
Norman Family Charitable Trust
Alkpit
Ludlow Trust
Stephen Clark 1965 CS
The Harris Foundation
The Dorothy Whitney Elmhirst Trust
The Tree Council
The AJ&BA Day Charitable Trust
Linmardon
Royal Society of Wildlife Trust
Blair Foundation
The Wildflower Society
FiPL - Blackdown Hills and Mendip Hills National Landscape
Charities Aid Foundation

We would like to acknowledge all donations made in memory of Heather Corrie.

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS

Key people

Patron
Simon King OBE

President
Position currently vacant

Vice-Presidents
Dudley Cheesman
Roger Martin
Chris Sperring MBE

Directors and Trustees
The directors of the charitable company ("the Trust") are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Trustees on the date of approval of this report, all of whom were members for the whole of the financial year in question unless stated otherwise, were as follows:

Chair
Rupert Taylor

Vice-Chair
Tina Trickett

Treasurer
Stephen Rogers

Elected Trustees
Matthew Bell
Amy Coulthard
Edward Green
(resigned 9 November 2024)
Philip Holms
(resigned 9 November 2024)
Stuart McBride
Holly Purdey
Stephen Rogers
Dr Richard Scarlett
Dr Daniel Skinner
Dr Mark Steer
Rupert Taylor
Tina Trickett

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity. Charity number 238372. Company number 818162. Registered office: 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AW

SWT (Sales) Ltd Directors
Georgia Dent
Malcolm Hutton
Stuart McBride
Damien Reid
Peter Solly
Tina Trickett
(appointed 4 June 2024)
Chair of SWT (Sales) Ltd
Patrick Vandesteen

Executive Team
Georgia Dent, Chief Executive Officer
James Grischeff, Director of Nature Recovery
Adam Murray, Director of Action for Nature
Paul Smith, Director of Business Planning & Development

Advisers

Senior Statutory Auditor
Michelle Ferris, **Albert Goodman**, Goodwood House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2PX

Bankers
Lloyds Bank, 31 Fore Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HN

CCLA Investment Management Limited, One Angel Lane, London, EC4R 3AB

Solicitors
Clarke Willmott, Blackbrook Gate, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PG

Investment Managers
Rathbones Investment Management Limited, 10 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4NT

Land Agents
Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 1 High Street, Chard, Somerset

PICTURE CREDITS:

Cover, Terry Whittaker/2020 VISION

P2, Jamie Hall

P3, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P4, Chris Gomersall/2020VISION

P6, Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P7, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P8 (kingfisher), Malcolm Brown

P8 (shrill carder bee), Gabrielle Horup

P9 (Somerset Levels), Nick Upton/2020VISION

P9 (harvest mouse), Amy Lewis

P10, James Adler

P12 (common blue butterfly), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P12 (buzzard), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P16 (common blue butterfly), Tom Hibbert

P16 (family), Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION

P17 (crab), Cathy Lewis

P18, Andrew Parkinson/2020VISION

P20, Jamie Hall

P22, Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P24 (orchids) Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

P24 (cow), Matthew Roberts

P25 (bechstein's bat), Chris Damant

P26 (beaver), Nick Upton

P26 (apples), Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION

P29, Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P30, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P32 (crab), Nick Upton

P32 (pine marten), Terry Whittaker/2020 VISION

P33 (relaxation), Matthew Roberts

P34 (trainee), Fergus Coyle

P37, Jamie Hall

P38, Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

P40 (sphagnum moss), Ben Porter

P41 (snipe), Fergus Gill

P42 (common blue butterfly), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P42 (fox) Richard Steel/2020 Vision

P43 (great white egret), Derek Moore

P45 (Somerset Levels), Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P45 (dipper), Andy Rouse / 2020VISION

P46, Chris Gomersall/2020VISION

P52 (large blue butterfly), Keith Warrington

P53, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P54 (common frog), Margaret Holland

P54 (four spotted chaser), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P56 (large blue butterfly), Ross Hoddinott

P59, Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P60 (six spot burnet moth), Shirley Freeman

P60 (grey heron), Terry Whittaker/2020 VISION

P62, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P63 (volunteers), Mark Hamblin / 2020VISION

P63 (roe deer), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P64 (water vole), Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

P64 (Glastonbury Tor), Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P65 (great spotted woodpecker), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P65 (adder), Jamie Hall

P67, Guy Edwardes/2020VISION

P68, Kieron Huston

P69, John Bridges

P70, Bob Coyle

P71, Andy Rouse / 2020VISION

P72, Andy Rouse / 2020VISION

P73, Andy Rouse / 2020VISION

P74, Andy Rouse / 2020VISION

P76 (badger), Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P76 (sphagnum moss), Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION

P77, Russell Savory

P78, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P79, Vaughn Matthews

P80, Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

P85, Andrew Parkinson/2020VISION

P99, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

P102, Janet Packham

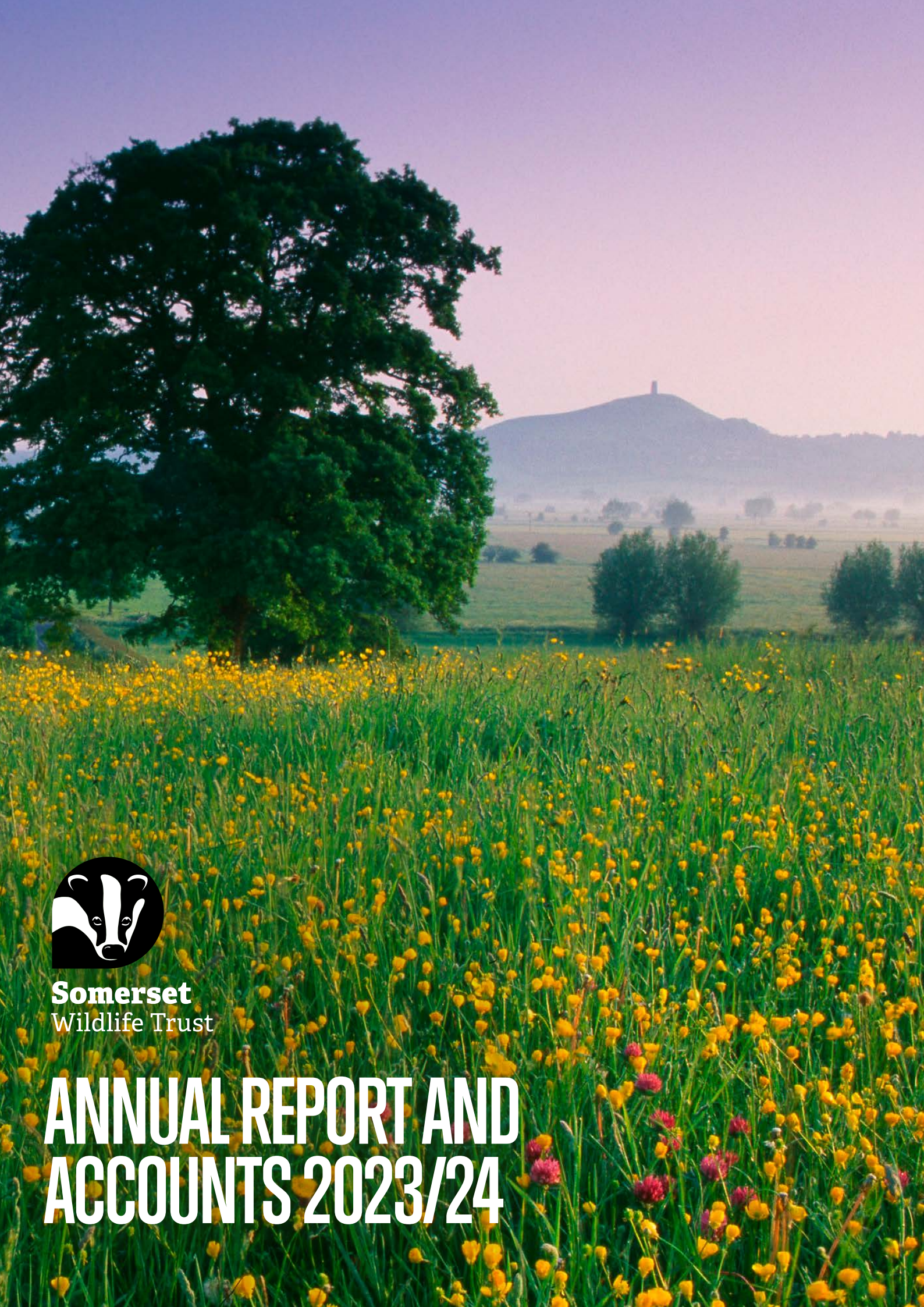
P103, Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

P104, Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 238372

Accounts



Somerset
Wildlife Trust

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023/24

THANK YOU

It sometimes feels that those two simple words are just not enough. Two words to reflect our enormous gratitude to the huge number of members, supporters and funders who over 60 years have believed in and supported our work, and enabled us to stand up for nature when it has needed us most. Without you, we cannot do the work that we do.

Thank you to our dedicated and hard-working staff - whose passion and commitment for nature remains a driving force of all that we do, and also inspires so many people to join the Wildlife Trust family. Thank you to our amazing volunteers who give up so much of their time to support us. You are a vital extension of our staff teams, and without who we simply could not carry out vital work on our nature reserves, carry out species monitoring and deliver other engagement and fundraising work.

Thank you to our campaigners who stand up, speak out, and are counted, meaning that nature has a powerful voice on their side.

We are proud of all that we have achieved together for our wonderful county, and how our effort is amplified on a national scale by being part of the The Wildlife Trusts, 46 independent Wildlife Trusts working together under a national strategy. It's humbling to know that as a county, there are so many people that are so committed to working towards nature's recovery. And we know that you will inspire many more to come with you.

Thank you.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity.
Charity number 238372.
Company number 818162.
Registered office:
34 Wellington Road, Taunton,
Somerset TA1 5AW

Created by **Kirby Everett**
Kirby.Everett@somersetwildlife.org

Designed by **Tina Hobson**
tinahobson.com

CONTENTS

Part 1 | View from the top 4
Introduction from our Chair 6
Message from our CEO 8

Part 2 | Our strategy 10
Our approach 12
Wilder Somerset 2030 13
Organisational transformations 14
Our shared values 15

Part 3 | Strategic report 16
How we raised and spent our money 18
Goal 1 More space for nature 20
Goal 2 A movement for nature 28
Goal 3 Telling Somerset's story 36

Our people and organisation 42
Developing Somerset Wildlife Trust 44
Volunteers 48
Fundraising 50

Financial review 54
Objectives and activities 57
Structure, governance and management 60
Statement of trustees' responsibilities 65

Part 4 | Independent auditor's report 66

Part 5 | Financial Statements 72
Consolidated statement of financial activities 74
Consolidated and trust balance sheets 75
Consolidated statement of cash flows 76
Notes forming part of the financial statements 78

Gifts and donations 94
Key people and advisors 95

PART 1:

View from the top

- Introduction from our Chair
- Message from our CEO

Our target is
30%
of our land and seas being managed positively for nature by 2030

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHAIR

"We have blueprints for success we must replicate on a wider scale"

This is my first Annual Report since taking over as Chair, so I'd like first of all to say thank you to our previous Chair, Graeme Mitchell, for leaving the Trust in such good shape. As this is the Trust's 60th anniversary year, it seems appropriate to reflect on some of the changes the county has seen since those first fifteen people put in just £1 each to create the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation, as it was then.

Since then, the county has seen increased urbanisation and development, massive changes in farming practices and of course we've been subject to the broader impacts of climate change. All of these things have had an impact on Somerset's wildlife; we've lost grassland habitats, seen the water quality in our rivers deteriorate and experienced massive species decline over this period.

Set against this though are some grounds for hope; the recent changes in legislation, designed to help meet the national target for 30% of our land and seas being managed positively for nature by 2030, have meant that new opportunities such as Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality offer the potential for significant funding becoming available for nature recovery and restoration.

And we've shown what's possible when we put our minds to it, as the first Somerset State of Nature Report completed this year demonstrates; wading birds such as great

Somerset Wildlife Trust
1964 – 2024

white egret and bittern have increased as a result of recent projects, beavers have returned to the county, and we now have two 'super' National Nature Reserves in the Somerset Wetlands and on the Mendip Hills. They are blueprints for success we must replicate on a wider scale.

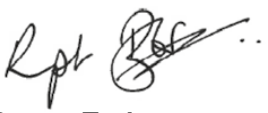
So what might the next 60 years look like? It's clear that nature remains under great pressure on both a local and global scale. The impacts of increasing weather volatility and the continued demand for land for development such as housing and infrastructure continue to put huge pressure on our wildlife and natural environment.

But I take huge encouragement from things such as the move towards nature-friendly farming, which represents a critical opportunity for us to work with the farming community to find a way that we can both produce food and help nature recover. Positive too is the continuing collaboration with other environmental and conservation partners. We cannot act alone; delivering at scale, and with many different nature stakeholders is vital if we are to achieve the ambitious targets set for nature recovery.

We need to see science as our ally too, not just in terms of the potential for technological innovations to help with things like species revival, but also looking at how using science and evidence-based information is critical in terms of informing and underpinning the actions we need to take going forwards.

In terms of broader social changes, my sense is that the next generation will be increasingly environmentally conscious and active for nature. Broadening our audiences overall to achieve our goal of supporting 1 in 4 people in the county to connect with nature is vital, and we are committed to being as inclusive as possible and bringing on board every one that shares our values.

Which brings me to my final point, which is that our biggest asset is the fantastic support and commitment from our supporters, members and volunteers, who collectively give me confidence that we will continue to make a massive contribution to nature recovery over the next 60 years!



Rupert Taylor

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

"This has been a year of change as we adjust our focus and resources to achieve our Wilder Somerset 2030 targets"

In 1964, fifteen people showed their passion and commitment by creating a trust for nature, paying in £1 each. These amazing pioneers could see that nature was in decline and took visible action to turn that around. They're the original Team Wilder. Roll forwards sixty years and we've grown to being an organisation that has over 22,000 members, more than 350 volunteers supporting us in a range of different ways, and are approaching 100 staff, delivering a huge array of projects across the county - all focussed on achieving nature's recovery.

When I joined the Trust five years ago, we had just 37 staff. Thanks to having a clear strategic approach set out in our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, we have been able to expand our teams purposefully, ensuring that we are able to deliver more and have greater impact, as both the ecological and climate emergencies accelerate in pace. We are lucky to be supported by a skilled and experienced board of Trustees who, with excellent counsel, have enabled careful growth for the purpose of achieving more for nature.

This has been a year of change at the Trust as we adjust our focus and resources to achieve the targets we have set in Wilder Somerset 2030. New ambition to create a movement for nature in Somerset through Team Wilder, develop our evidence base, and support other landowners to take action, along with new opportunities such as green finance initiatives offer significant potential to scale up our delivery to achieve more for nature, but require an investment in skills and capacity at the Trust.

To this end, we've invested in our leadership team, bringing on three Directors who will provide strategic leadership to achieve the three goals of our strategy, creating opportunities in each area and growing and supporting our teams. We've identified a need for investment in science, monitoring and data, so have created a new Innovation and Evidence team, at the same time supporting Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) to increase efficiency and capacity to analyse data to report on biodiversity trends and patterns across the county.

Expanding our partnerships is critical to successfully achieving our goals. Through the Local Nature Partnership and with Somerset Council we are leading the development of Somerset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. With Somerset Environmental Records Centre and the Local Nature Partnership we have delivered the first ever Somerset State of Nature Report which will be used to monitor our progress to reversing nature's decline.

Crucially, to achieve the goal of 30% of land in management for nature by 2030, a goal for us, Somerset and the UK, we must work with land managers across the county. Our pioneering Landscape Recovery project team are working with 15 land managers to find collaborative ways of restoring

22,692 members of Somerset Wildlife Trust in 2024

350 volunteers supporting us in a range of different ways

87 staff, delivering a huge array of projects across the county

Somerset's lowland peat; our land advisory team provide support and advice to farmers, communities, estates and businesses across the county; and our nature reserves team have worked hard this year to create a second 'super' National Nature Reserve in the Mendip Hills – Somerset is the only one with two 'super' NNRs.

Our consultancy has been relaunched as Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy (SWTC) and will be focused on supporting delivery of our strategic goals including arboricultural, land management and land advice services. We are now providing high quality advice to land owners on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), carbon credits and nutrient neutrality. Through SWTC we seek to set a high standard for environmental consultancy in Somerset.

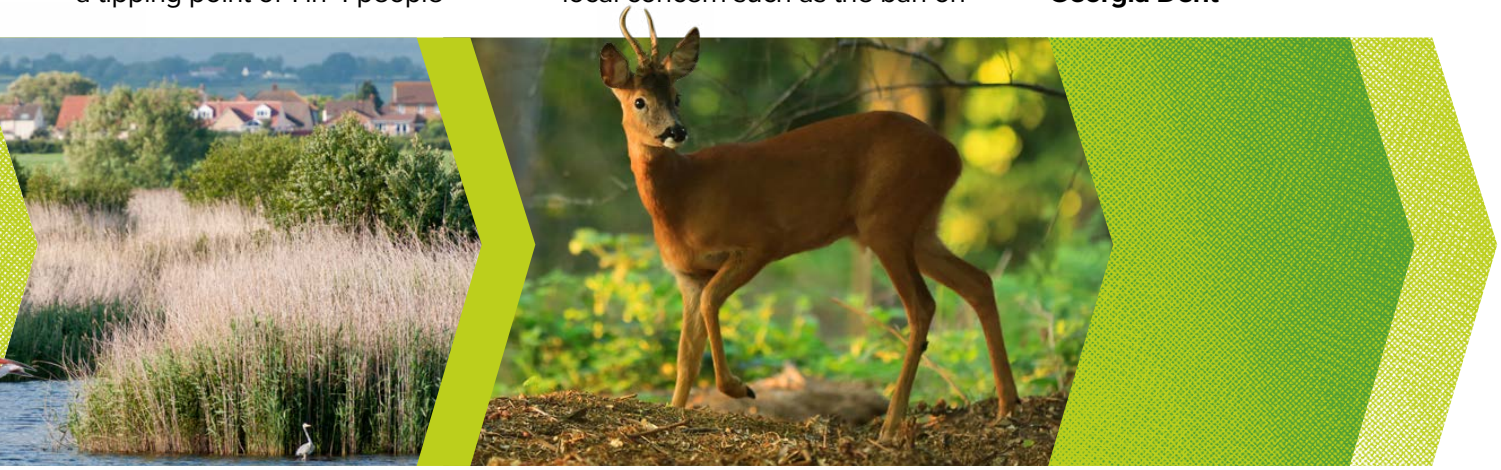
Most importantly we need to inspire and support a movement for change across Somerset through Team Wilder, building on the work of our 15 early pioneers, to create a tipping point of 1 in 4 people taking visible action, from farmers to communities to young people and businesses. We've secured funding to work with communities across Somerset and to develop a youth forum, growing our engagement team and focusing on becoming a more inclusive and diverse organisation creating a culture where everyone feels welcome.

You told us to be bold in our advocacy and speak with a strong voice for nature when we consulted to write Wilder Somerset 2030. We are the largest charity in Somerset focussed on nature and as one of 46 Wildlife Trusts we're part of a national movement with almost one million members. Through delivery of our national Wildlife Trusts strategy, Bringing Nature Back, we are working more closely than ever with The Wildlife Trusts to ensure that we put Somerset's voice behind national advocacy campaign work to bring about legislative change.

We have campaigned hard on a range of issues that are of local concern such as the ban on horticultural peat, water quality, and the use of neonicotonoids, and have added volume to the national work surrounding issues related to the Environment Bill such as the REUL Bill. We are really proud of what has been achieved – and our supporters should be too, because so many took the time to write to their MPs, sign e-petitions and make some noise for nature when it needed it the most.

We've achieved an enormous amount for nature this year. I am immensely proud of the whole team - staff, volunteers, supporters and members - for all we've achieved. The challenge is great but I am still able to see seeds of hope – blueprints for a brighter future where, if we continue to collaborate, we can scale up to meet that challenge. I am excited about what we can achieve together.

Georgia Dent



PART 2:

Our strategy

- Our approach
- Wilder Somerset 2030
- Organisational transformations
- Our shared values

Currently only
10%
of the county
can be classified
in good natural
or semi-natural condition

OUR APPROACH

OUR VISION

A Somerset-wide nature recovery network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

OUR MISSION

Working for the changes needed for nature and people to thrive together.

Created in 2020, and co-designed by trustees, staff, members and supporters, our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy remains the lodestar for all that we do. This Annual Report sees us nearly at the halfway point of that strategy. Though the outlook for nature is bleak and the pressures on it remain and accelerate in pace, over this time we have also seen some really positive progress, and learned a great deal about where best to focus our efforts. We know that if we work together with our supporters, partners and wider nature stakeholders in the county, we can bring nature back. **Nature can't wait**.

WILDER SOMERSET 2030

GOAL 1
MORE SPACE FOR NATURE

▶ Nature is improving everywhere with restored natural processes, connected and protected through a Nature Recovery Network, with at least 30% of land and sea managed positively for nature (30 by 30).

▶ Currently only 10% of the county can be classified in good natural or semi-natural condition with species-rich natural habitats supporting abundant and diverse wildlife.

▶ Tripling the land managed for nature is a challenge but we will buffer and connect our nature reserves to the wider landscape and work in partnership with our peers, partners, communities, farmers, landowners, and individuals to influence how land is managed across the county, ensuring it is with nature in mind.

GOAL 2
A MOVEMENT FOR NATURE

▶ Everyone has the opportunity to experience nature, with at least 1 in 4 people taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.

▶ Awareness of the environment is higher now than it has been for several generations, but our collective behaviours do not yet match our concern or the scale of the challenge.

▶ We will inspire more people to turn awareness into nature-positive behaviours and action - a critical mass that can tip the balance for nature's recovery. Value for nature comes from experiencing it, so connecting people to it and enabling them to share their experience with others is vital.

GOAL 3
TELLING SOMERSET'S STORY

▶ The story of nature's recovery in Somerset is told through our interactive State of Nature tool that monitors progress and informs action.

▶ We need a clear understanding of what is happening to wildlife over time in terms of biodiversity and abundance so we can make clear decisions for nature's recovery, based on scientific data and evidence.

▶ We will monitor trends, fill the gaps in our species knowledge, and increase the number of records held by teaming innovative and meaningful data recording methodologies, with a strong programme of public citizen science opportunities and training. Nature needs more eyes on the ground.

ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

We have identified four key transformations that we believe will enable us to realise our strategic goals and achieve our strategy. These transformations form a continuous dynamic process that underpins our collective ability to achieve our vision of a thriving natural world.

1 We will invest in a skilled, inclusive, diverse workforce and learning culture

We invest in our people, staff and volunteers, ensuring we have the skills and experience needed to achieve our goals and create opportunities for people to develop their careers and achieve their goals. We are relevant to and inclusive of all communities, we listen and learn from them and understand their needs and aim to speak with an authentic, credible voice.

2 We will create a step change in the scale and diversity of funding for nature's recovery in Somerset

We will engage with more supporters who share our values and goals, from corporates to individuals, and diversify our income streams, including through innovation such as green finance, to ensure our core delivery model is funded through our unrestricted income. We will use project funding for time limited or innovative work. We will expand our commercial activities, identifying new opportunities and always setting high standards for environmental integrity and due diligence.

3 We will speak up for nature with a bold, authentic voice

We are bold and confident speaking out for nature, backed by our members and supporters, with a strong brand and clear communications approach. We are not afraid to say we are part of nature and what nature needs to thrive. We invest in science, monitoring and research to be evidence-led in our delivery, advocacy and policy. We hold ourselves and others to account through the Somerset State of Nature. We use our knowledge, expertise and evidence to inform decision making in Somerset that impacts on the environment. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of governance, transparency and accountability.

OUR SHARED VALUES

Somerset Wildlife Trust share the following fundamental values, which underpin all of our work and support our journey to a Wilder Somerset 2030.

1 We believe everyone can make a contribution to nature's recovery

2 We love Somerset - it's amazing wildlife and its communities

3 We are confident and brave in order to achieve the greatest impacts for nature

4 We encourage innovative thinking and action for nature's recovery

5 We are passionate about nature

4 We will show leadership across Somerset to support and influence change

Our direct contribution is only part of the solution to tackling the ecological and climate emergencies, to truly be effective we must support, influence and inspire others to take positive action and lead by example in our delivery including our own environmental impact. We manage existing and acquire new land to protect the precious and vulnerable species until the wider landscape improves and demonstrate how nature can recover sharing our learning with others. We test and trial innovative new approaches to land management including financing, to support other landowners. Our visitor strategy recognises the important role our land plans in connecting people with nature balanced with protecting vulnerable species and habitats. We invest in digital technologies to improve our efficiency, effectiveness and connect with people.

PART 3:

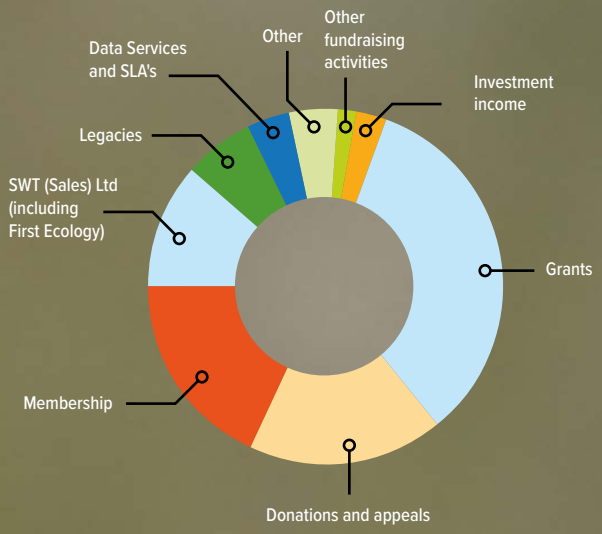
Strategic report

- How we raised and spent our money
- **Goal 1:** More space for nature
- **Goal 2:** A movement for nature
- **Goal 3:** Telling Somerset's story
- **Our people and organisation**
- Financial review
- Objectives and activities
- Structure, governance and management
- Statement of trustees' responsibilities

1 in 4
people to take action
for nature's recovery
as part of Team Wilder

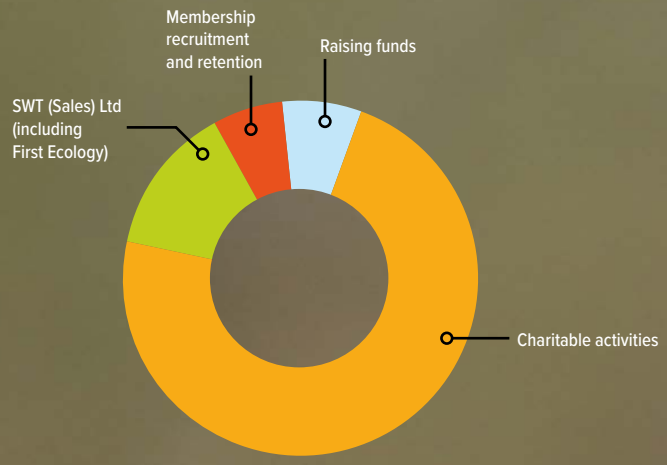
HOW WE RAISED AND SPENT OUR MONEY

INCOME BY SOURCE



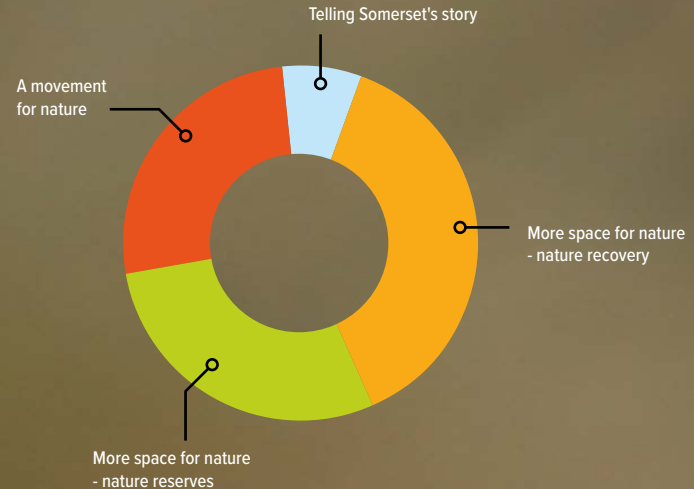
	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Change %
Grants	1,652	2,528	-35%
Donations and appeals	875	901	-3%
Membership	890	856	4%
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	553	529	5%
Legacies	310	270	15%
Other	214	79	171%
Data Services and SLA's	198	141	40%
Investment income	132	61	116%
Other fundraising activities	81	71	14%
Total income	4,905	5,436	-10%

EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITY



	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Change %
Charitable activities	3,421	3,445	-1%
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	650	589	10%
Membership recruitment and retention	296	283	5%
Raising funds	334	294	14%
Total expenditure	4,701	4,611	2%

EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES



	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Change %
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,297	1,628	-20%
More space for nature - nature reserves	993	803	24%
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	888	796	12%
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmental Records Centre	243	219	11%
Total expenditure	3,421	3,446	-1%

GOAL 1

More space for nature

FACTS AND STATS

16 of the 18 species of bat resident in Britain call Somerset home, making it one of the best counties for these mammals.

Somerset contains **60%** of Great Britain's nationally scarce spider species

In Somerset we recorded:

37 breeding pairs of great white egrets (2022/23)

27 marsh harrier, 11 nests and 26 chicks (2023)

61% increase of bittern in 8 years (2014-22)

169 bearded reedling in one day in 2019 from just 20 in Somerset 10 years ago

There are an estimated **50** beavers in the Avon and Frome area

(Source: Somerset State of Nature Report 2023)

The challenge

The drivers of biodiversity loss in the UK are complex and often interlinked. Direct habitat loss and fragmentation related largely to development, agricultural activities and other land use change, teamed with overexploitation of resources, a surge in invasive species, pollution and climate change have led to drastic changes in the quality of our habitats and the ecosystems within that support species and deliver benefits to people and communities.

Our approach

The 30 by 30 goal is a national ambition, supported by the UK government and The Wildlife Trusts - a tool that guides how we collectively can put nature into recovery and connect green spaces. In Somerset only around 10% of the county can be classified as in good natural or semi-natural condition with species-rich natural habitats that support abundant and diverse wildlife, and enable species to move, reproduce and thrive. This figure includes all the county's nature reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and legally designated sites. Our approach remains constant; working with partners and other stakeholders to build a strong, interconnected network of wild spaces across the county. One that delivers good quality habitats that support abundant wildlife, and restores the resilience of our ecosystems at a landscape-scale, so they can provide us with healthy soils, clean air and water and help us to adapt to a changing climate.

What we aimed for

Our nature reserves are high quality, biodiverse places but need to be **better connected to the wider landscape** so species can move and expand. One of our key aims this year has been to explore how we can do this via either strategic **land aquisition or partnership** to extend these core areas, and at the same time demonstrate how to develop these various sites for wildlife using new innovative **land management practices**, and how this might be paid for through **green finance** and other new funding mechanisms being brought to the market such as nutrient neutrality. Vital too was the need to increase our work with a **greater number of landowners, farmers and communities** across the county, in focussed landscape areas, to understand how we could best **share our knowledge** and **support them** to operate in a way that means they can deliver for business, local economy and nature at the same time.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

In the last year we purchased over 35 acres of new land which we will enhance and create habitats, to support existing and returning species and enable nature recovery.

Over 50 substantial land holdings have been given nature recovery advice by our land management specialists.

Our Mendip Hills Facilitation Fund has expanded substantially to an area now covering over 5,290 hectares with 36 members, nine of which have joined in the last year.

WHAT WE DID:

DRIVING FORWARDS A LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY FOR SOMERSET

This year, in partnership with the Local Nature Partnership (LNP), we have been providing advice and support to Somerset Council to deliver a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the county. Required by law, LNRS are a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies, funded by DEFRA, that help identify priority habitats for improvement, and those that offer the best opportunities to reverse the decline of nature across the wider environment. It has been a significant opportunity for Somerset Wildlife Trust to use its decades of experience to support the county to deliver real nature recovery, doing so in a collaborative way.

CONNECTING THE MENDIP HILLS

Along with eight other organisations, including Natural England, Avon Wildlife Trust, Mendip Hills National Landscape, the National Trust, the Woodland Trust and Butterfly Conservation, we were delighted this year to celebrate the declaration of Somerset's second 'super' National Nature Reserve (NNR) in the Mendip Hills - the only county with two, following the declaration of the Somerset Wetlands NNR the previous year.

Encompassing 1,413 hectares of land, the new 'super' NNR brings together Ebbor Gorge and Rodney Stoke nature reserves with 29 other nature-rich reserves, many of which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and an additional 400 hectares of land within the Mendip Hills Natural Landscape area, and stretches from woodlands in Wells, across the southern Mendip slopes and Brean Down in the Severn Estuary. The partnership will be at the heart of nature recovery in the Mendip Hills and will see land managers work together to conserve and help restore steep limestone slopes, traditional wildflower grasslands, ancient wooded combes, spectacular gorges and rocky outcrops to maximise the benefits for nature, science, and people, improving nature recovery on a landscape-scale and creating more opportunities for people to connect with the natural world. We are incredibly excited to have achieved this across what is another iconic Somerset landscape and demonstrates the power of local partnership in terms of delivering against national 2030 targets.

FIRST STEPS TO RETURN LOST SPECIES TO SOMERSET

This year we have been laying the foundations upon which we can support the return of selected species that we feel can make our landscape more biodiverse, either through their ability to manage water and natural processes, bring back balance to nature through predation, control vegetation, provide food, or just add to our enjoyment of the countryside by being inspiring and beautiful.

We were so pleased to be able to create a new role within the Trust – a Human and Wildlife Coexistence Officer. Alicia has wasted no time in working with communities to increase understanding about how they can co-exist with existing species and those returning to the county.

CHRIS EYLES,

Senior Reserves Manager, West Mendip

In one sentence describe your job: I plan and implement a wide range of practical land management work on the Mendip nature reserves, delivering high biodiversity habitats in the landscape.

What energises you in your job?: Observing the long term effects of the habitat management we carry out on our nature reserves – for example, seeing a bank of species-rich grassland buzzing with life, and thinking "we did that" – is simply the best job satisfaction I could wish for.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: We have an amazing team of people working at the Trust with an incredible depth and range of conservation knowledge, and a shared goal of doing everything we can to protect our natural heritage. I'm very proud to be a part of that team.

It's really important we listen to communities and any concerns, and establish systems through which people can benefit from the many advantages these species bring for nature and communities, including flood and drought mitigation, climate adaptation, and restoring resilient ecosystems, while simultaneously minimising challenges that might arise.

Through partnership consultation, we are in the process of developing a beaver strategy for Somerset. This strategy when complete will be delivered by Beaver Advisory Groups and will support, advise and enable communities and landowners to live next to this species, maximising benefits for nature and society but also providing much support for potential issues that might arise. We became a significant supporting partner for the Two Moors Pine Marten Project, led by our friends at Devon Wildlife Trust which aims to bring this, our only arboreal mammal, back to Exmoor.

We have also have been in discussion with projects conducting feasibility studies for white-tailed

eagle reintroductions to Wales and wildcat reintroductions to Devon to make sure Somerset is included in social engagement work prior to any licence applications being made.

WORKING WITH AND SUPPORTING SOMERSET'S FARMING COMMUNITIES

With around 74% of land in Somerset in agricultural production, we recognise how important farmers are both to our county and to deliver our ambitions for nature. With increasing climate change issues, Britain's exit from the European Union, changes to farming subsidies and the Agriculture Act, farming is changing rapidly. This year we have continued to work with some amazing farmers who have been evolving their land management practices to work in harmony with nature at the same time as running a successful business. We have learned a great deal from them about how we go about creating sustainable farming systems that deliver the changes we need to recover the health of our natural environment and how, by working more closely with them, we can create more sustainable farming systems that deliver environmental gain, maximise natural management solutions and secure a long-term economic future for farming within the county. Our Mendip Facilitation Fund project brought together 36 farmers providing valuable training opportunities on subjects such as soil health, hedgerow management, dormouse habitat, silvopasture and no-fence collar demonstrations. Alongside Somerset Council the project also sourced funding to plant over 5,000 trees as of the Treescape Fund. This year has also seen the creation of a really forward-thinking farm cluster of 36 farmers in this landscape too who, with their collective experience and skills have explored new ideas and approaches to sustainable land management that will deliver benefits across their landholdings.

We have also focussed more support for farmers on the Somerset Levels & Moors through our Defra funded Adapting the Levels ELMS Landscape Recovery Project. This is a two year pilot working with 15 landowners, with a focus again on supporting them to adapt their operations to recover nature and protect the quality of our soils, notably peat in the lowlands, whilst still growing healthy food. These conversations are so vital for finding common ground and a platform to discuss new area such as regenerative farming and the benefits of developing Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMS), such as the one the Trust operates in this landscape. As landowners ourselves, our reserve staff go to great lengths to engage positively with farming neighbours. We retain many as graziers to deliver conservation grazing with their animals, demonstrating that food can be produced on our land whilst prioritising nature.

SAVING SOMERSET'S PRECIOUS PEATLANDS

Healthy, functioning peatlands are superhero habitats when it comes to combatting climate change and supporting rare, specialist species. Somerset alone, is currently estimated to be storing almost 11 million tonnes of carbon, equivalent to the carbon sequestered if 182 million trees were grown for 10 years. Unfortunately, across the UK approximately 80% of our precious peatland is actively eroding. When peat dries out the carbon it holds, and has held for millenia, is released into the atmosphere so we must keep peat wet and in the ground. It might take 1,000 years for 1 metre of peat to form, however under heavy drainage that same 1 metre could be lost in only 33 years.

Somerset is one of only two counties left where peat extraction is still taking place, so this year has seen us double down on our work to protect and restore it at all

costs through a range of projects, partnerships and activities.

We have been highly active this year in terms of mobilising our supporter base and wider public, alongside the wider Wildlife Trust movement in terms of supporting a campaign to bring about promised legislation to ban the use of horticultural peat as a first step to a total ban. We have continued our work at Honeygar to remove the site from the drainage network so we can hold the water table higher and keep the peat wet. We have put in new dams and small, solar powered pumps and collected hydrological data and evidence from our interventions there to inform our wider peat work and share our learnings with other landowners. We host the Somerset Peatland Partnership through the Local Nature Partnership and this too has enabled us to add to the science of peat restoration by carrying out greenhouse gas monitoring on a range of sites, at the same time, engaging positively with farmers and landowners to make informed decisions about how to navigate the changing political and environmental landscape and explore their own potential peat restoration projects at the same time as delivering viable farming businesses.

Alongside buffering the site by aquiring a new piece of land at Westhay South, we have also continued our work to fast track the enhanced resilience of our Westhay NNR reserve, completing a second year of trialling an innovative new peat restoration technique to raise water levels on the site and safeguard the peat resource, protect precious populations of wetland species and protect rare and fragile mire habitats. You can read more about that in the Spotlight overleaf.

SIAN RUSSELL

Peatland Partnership Project Coordinator

In one sentence describe your job: I coordinate the Somerset Peatland Partnership and project manage peatland restoration work at Westhay Moor.

What energises you in your job?: Knowing that the project is helping to keep carbon in the peat locked away rather than being released and contributing to climate change, also getting to see sundews on a regular basis!

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: The Trust is making a real stand for wildlife and the adaptation for climate change in the county, from youth engagement work, community climate events and farm cluster work there is so much positive work and energy going in from some very talented people and volunteers.

ALICIA HALLETT

Human-Wildlife Co-existence Officer

In one sentence describe your job: My role is to find ways to support human communities around wildlife that already exists or may be returning to the county to live alongside each other, capitalising on any benefits our co-existence can bring and mitigating any challenges we might pose to each other.

What energises you in your job?: The people I work with and meet whose passion and determination to address the combined biodiversity and climate crises is infectious! And the ability to give nature a voice as an equal stakeholder. I'm energised by feeling like I can simultaneously support people and nature.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Working for a company whose values align with my own, that is trying to make a positive difference, and, crucially, that is empowering people from all walks of life to enjoy and nurture nature in whatever way is possible for them.

SPOTLIGHT

Cell bunding work at Westhay

Along with a range of rich wetland habitats, flora and fauna, Westhay is home to the largest surviving fragment of lowland acid mire in South-West England. For years our reserves team and volunteers have battled the scrub and bracken which encroaches onto the rare wetland habitats and further dries out its precious peat. With continued unpredictable changes in weather patterns and events, it was becoming clear that more drastic, adaptive action was needed to prevent the water from draining from the site leading to the peat drying out and releasing its carbon stores. It was vital that we improved the hydrology in site to increase the resilience of this very special place for the longer term and preserve the precious peat and the carbon contained within - and ensure that the rare and specialist plant, invertebrate and animal communities associated with peatlands have a home long into the future.

We turned to an innovative new technique called cell bunding, used regularly to restore upland peat but not previously used on lowland peat. Following a period of removing vegetation from the site and a number of preliminary hydrology interventions, this year has seen our team repairing fissures and cracks in the peat that exist below the surface by using existing healthy peat from the site to create deep trench 'bunds'. This technique turns over and compresses degraded peat creating a water resistant barrier around each unit that reduces movement of water horizontally through the peat layers and enables the water table to be held for longer within each unit. This will provide natural flood management during wet periods and drought relief in dry periods.

As a result of this work the site will be able to support more specialist peat bog species including sphagnum mosses and the amazing carnivorous sundew.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2024/25:

MORE LAND TO SUPPORT AMAZING WILDLIFE

Our reserves currently provide some of the finest examples of nature-rich places in the country. We will be working to further improve our network through targeted efforts to make them safer and more accessible for people and, through specific work, enrich habitats for species like large blue butterfly, bittern and water vole. We will work hard to ensure they remain excellent quality habitats and, where designated, are in “favourable condition”, demonstrating to the county what good habitat management looks like.

We are making targeted efforts to expand the reserve network to include land that might be restored to eventually become nature-rich, through aquisition or partnership. We do this again to innovate our approaches and demonstrate good land management practices to others how this might be done and work with researchers to improve techniques and better understand the benefits of this work to society.

WORKING WITH OTHERS DELIVERING NATURE RECOVERY AT A GREATER SCALE

As a member of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) we have worked hard with the council to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This coming year, this strategy will be embedded in the county planning policy framework and provide clear and stretching ambitions for nature recovery and we are committed to doing all we can to ensure its success and impact.

We will be working with a range of different land owners offering advice and support to recover nature, initially focussing on our priority landscapes and supporting the thousands of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in the county. Our intention is to work with farmers, businesses and the public sector to increase ambitions within their business to help us deliver.

UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING FINANCING FOR NATURE

We will better understand and even trial a range of finance regimes delivering nature recovery, both from government and from the private sector. We will also be directly engaged with the whole range of new government subsidy regimes for nature, biodiversity net gain with developers, nutrient neutrality and carbon markets to better understand how we can fund nature’s recovery.

GOAL 2

A movement for nature

FACTS AND STATS

86% people said that protecting the environment is important to them.

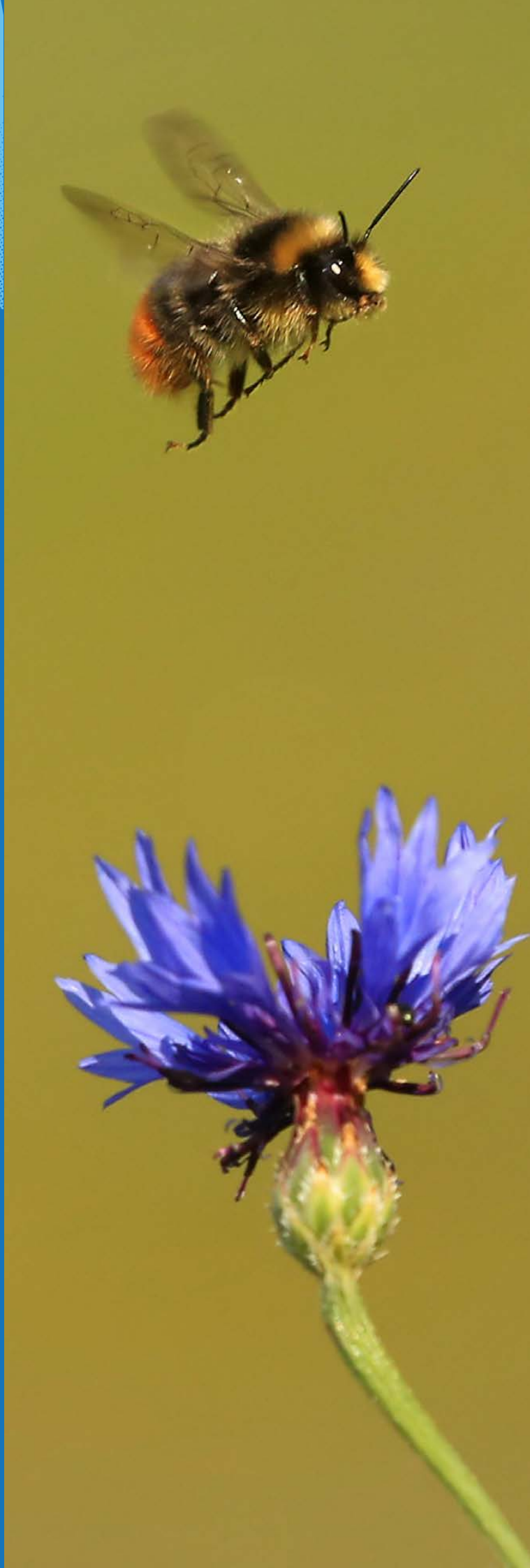
However less than a third of people said they often or always did any one of the listed social actions for the environment which included voting for political parties with strong environmental policies, signing petitions or participating in campaigns or demonstrations about environmental issues.

(Source: The People and Nature Survey for England 2020-21)

84% of children and young people surveyed agreed that looking after the environment was important to them

87% children and young people said that they would like to do more to look after the environment

(Source: The Children's People and Nature Survey for England 2023 Update)



The challenge

David Attenborough once said, 'No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced'. Awareness of the environment is higher now than it has been for several generations, but our collective behaviours do not yet match our concern or the scale of the challenge. We are helping people be more aware of the issues and then act on their knowledge. Team Wilder is a movement for nature. It's a network of communities taking action in their local area, it's young people gathering for a youth forum to have their say on nature, it's farmers choosing to manage their land with wildlife in mind and so much more. Through it, we offer a range of inspiring action-orientated initiatives which empower people to take part, and bring their skills, experiences and time to act for nature in a way that works for them.

Our approach

Evidence shows us that if 25% of the population take action and we are visible doing it, we create a social tipping point - a magic moment when an idea or social behaviour crosses a threshold and where the majority will follow. Team Wilder uses this principle as it's underlying motivation, and pulls in the science, knowledge and practical application of behaviour change, community organising, movement building and nature connection to build a team of people taking action for nature across the county that they love.

What we aimed for

This year we looked to **expand our Team Wilder work** across the county and reach new and more diverse audiences.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we launched the **Wilder Communities 30x30** project which equipped us with a new **Youth Officer** to kickstart our **youth engagement programme** and an additional **Community officer** enabling us to extend our reach into the south and east of the county. Our **Somerset Nature Connections** project came to an end this year, but our learning enabled us to take forward an ambition to develop a new wellbeing offer. Supporting and educating a wider audience about the key issues in light of political uncertainty, saw the birth of "**Wilder Matters**" - a series of online events getting to the heart of the biggest environmental topics of the day and their relevance to Somerset, breaking down the jargon and supporting people to take action for nature.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

50+ new people trained in using iNaturalist (as part of community projects to record citizen science data)

NEARLY 150 people from communities across Somerset joined our first Wilder Community forum in Oct 2023.

NEARLY 400 people attended 5 Wilder Matters events, discussing peat, water quality, the Somerset State of Nature, our political system and species reintroductions.

OVER 100 experiential events and training workshops including wellbeing walks, species identification, and wilder churches.

WHAT WE DID:

SOMERSET NATURE CONNECTIONS

With its last year this year, this very special three and a half year project has demonstrated how facilitated weekly nature connection courses can have enormous benefits to mental health and wellbeing and people's ability to manage it ongoing, with many participants even describing their experience as "life-changing" or "life-saving". Involvement in the six week courses this year have led to independent communities taking their own action to support nature's recovery, including; setting up community gardens, a forest school and nature connection courses/ support groups. Furthermore, 38 community groups (such as care settings, services supporting children/young people, mental health projects, art and walking and services supporting displaced communities) were also supported to bring the benefits of nature connection into their work as a result of training and nature connection sessions throughout the project.

CAMPAIGNING AND ADVOCACY

The Wildlife Trusts has a long history of campaigning for nature – speaking out against laws or developments that would put habitats or species at risk. Collectively the 46 individual Wildlife Trusts have over 1 million members - that's a serious voice. Our strategy said that we would use a bolder, more confident voice in Somerset, and this year, we have been much more proactive both in terms of supporting national campaigns on key issues, including those related to the Environment Bill and then preparing for a General Election. We have also delivered bespoke projects around the key issues that are closest to our hearts in Somerset, namely the banning of peat extraction, water quality of our rivers, nutrient overload on the Somerset Levels & Moors, the use of neonicotonoids and the removal of the Acoustic Fish Deterrant (AFD) at the developing Hinkley C site on our coast. We have been humbled by the hundreds of people that have taken the time to sign an e-petition, write to their MP or spread the word within their communities.

We have been active on many other less visible issues too, responding to other selective developments and planning applications where we believe nature and wildlife is at risk. Our resources are limited which is why engaging with, educating and then mobilising our supporter base is so vital. To that end we created a new series of online public events - Wilder Matters - delivering five events discussing peat, water quality, the Somerset state of Nature, our political system and species reintroductions, with nearly 400 people in attendance.

27 communities have requested a Wilder Churches and Burial Grounds plaque to display in their community

KRISTEN LAMBERT

Wilder Lives Manager

In one sentence describe your job: Supporting individuals and communities to access nature and wildlife connection opportunities in Somerset.

What energises you in your job?: The passionate and dedicated people I get to work with, both Trust colleagues (staff and volunteers) and those within the communities I work with.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: I'm proud to work as part of the engagement team at the Trust because people within the team are not only passionate about the future of nature and wildlife in Somerset and actively supporting it's recovery, but also that it's essential for us to do better, to ensure those previously underrepresented within this sector are supported to access and take action for nature in ways that are meaningful to them and their communities.

RELAUNCH OF PCNR

Somerset's Private & Community Nature Reserves (PCNR) Network was set up in the 1990s to support people who own or manage land primarily for nature. After a pause due the pandemic, this year, we prepared plans to bring the network back to life and relaunch it. This user-led network, hosted and supported by the Trust, provides peer-to-peer support and resources for landowners, smallholders and community groups (such as local woodland trusts and community orchards). Through the network, landowners and land managers are able to collaborate and share ideas on how their land can act as a vital stepping stone for wildlife across the landscape and deliver benefits for nature, people, and climate. Collectively, we manage land throughout Somerset that supports meadows, hedgerows, orchards, and woodlands, ponds, streams and lakes, many of which are designated as Local Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) - a classification that provides a means of identifying

and safeguarding some of the county's best sites for wildlife. Recording of these sites by SERC started in 2008/9 and we have lost 48 sites - the current number is 2099 equating to 7.03% of Somerset, so it's vital that we are able to protect and connect these sites to the wider landscape.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

It's really important that we monitor and understand changes in both the diversity (the variety) of species we have and, more importantly, the abundance (the quantity) of wildlife species we have across the county. This year, we have continued to deliver our very popular annual programme of public citizen science species counts – the Great Somerset Wildlife Count - which uses the popular iNaturalist recording platform. We also now have Wilder Community Champions going into communities to train community leads in iNaturalist to lead data collection, helping to expand the numbers of Community Mapping projects delivered across the county.

Another huge success this year has been the continued unwavering commitment by our Shore Search and Sea Watch projects. We have run over two dozen citizen science events with up to ten people attending each. Porpoises continued to be spotted at various locations, especially at Hurlstone Point, and Shore Search surveys have recorded over 100 taxa of marine species. Volunteers also led on three coastal research projects on porpoise photo ID, the distribution, size and age of toothed topshell (climate indicator species) and pacific oyster distribution (invasive species).

We ran 37 Shore Search and Sea Watch citizen science events along Somerset's coastline

WILDER COMMUNITIES

Our Wilder Community Officers support local people to take action for nature on their patch - assisting with group establishment, community consultation and nature recovery projects. Thanks to National Heritage Lottery Funding, we have been able to successfully deliver a range of brilliant community projects including; setting up a new Yeovil Green Forum, creating two giant bug hotel installations and wildflower area in Lyngford Park with Priorswood community and supporting landscaping with a tree planting project in Glastonbury.

MARK WARD

Somerset's Wilder Coast Project Manager

In one sentence describe your job: My focus is to support local communities, businesses, young people and individuals in raising awareness of our coastal ecosystems and the need to protect and monitor them.

What energises you in your job?: Being out in nature and inspiring people about the coast and the sea.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Being part of an enthusiastic and dedicated team spreading the Team Wilder message.

SPOTLIGHT

Youth programme launches to create young hearts with green minds

Recent studies have shown that most young people lose their connection to nature after the age of ten, and once lost, it can take twenty years to recover. We believe it's vital that young people are able to value, explore, and strengthen their connection to nature, in ways that are relevant and inspiring to them - for nature's sake and for their own health and wellbeing.

Thanks to the recruitment of a Wilder Youth Officer, this year we have been able to progress our plans for our youth programme, kicking off with the launch of our new Wilder Youth Forum which brings together 20 active passionate young people between the ages of 12 – 24. With the long-term goal of embedding youth voice into the charity, the forum meets bi-monthly in different locations around the county to input on a range of projects, as well as equipping them with the skills and experience they need to speak up about the environmental issues they care about.

We have been able to support these young people to build initial connections with nature, provide guidance and training such as species ID, participate in youth-specific volunteering days and offer work experience opportunities on our reserves and across other teams. Through these activities and more, we are committed to involving youth voice in the Wildlife Trusts movement and supporting the many young people across Somerset already taking a leading role in nature recovery.

BRYONY SLAYMAKER

Wilder Communities Manager

In one sentence describe your job: Along with a brilliant team of community officers it's my job to support communities and individuals to take meaningful action for nature in their local area and every day lives.

What energises you in your job?: Witnessing people across all generations taking action for nature and influencing their friends and family to do the same.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: We're local, we love Somerset and the incredible wildlife in our county.

HANNAH PADDISON

Volunteering and Community Support Officer

In one sentence describe your job: As Volunteer and Community Support Officer I coordinate and support staff to deliver our volunteering opportunities as well as work on a number of projects including the PCNR Network and Wilder Churches.

What energises you in your job?: Spending time with the volunteers, communities and individuals who are taking action for nature across Somerset. Learning from others and seeing people's passion for conservation never fails to amaze me.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: The people! I am proud of the staff, volunteers and communities I work with who all share the same goal to protect and preserve our wildlife and wild places.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2024/25:

DELIVERING A NEW ENGAGEMENT DELIVERY PLAN

The work we've done to build Team Wilder this year has given us opportunities to test and learn and refine our approach. In 2024/25 we'll be looking to build on our successes to ensure we can continue to empower people to take meaningful action for nature, seeking sustainable sources of funding, and using the Team Wilder ethos across all engagement work we do at the Trust.

DEVELOPING OUR VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

We are currently developing a Volunteer Strategy to cover 2025 – 2030. It will set out how we envision volunteers supporting us to achieve our strategy goals, and how we see our volunteer opportunities evolving.

INCREASING OUR EXPERIENCE TOUR DELIVERY

The popular, income-generating 'private' guided walks led by our Visitor Experience Officer will be expanded to include more reserves, and also offered pro bono to under-represented groups around the county.

HELPING PINE MARTEN BOUNCE BACK

This year will see us take a key role in the Pine Martens Bounce Back: Two Moors Pine Marten Project, working across Dartmoor and Exmoor. We'll be hosting the Pine Martens Engagement Officer (Exmoor) who will inspire and support diverse audiences to become Pine Marten Pioneers, growing their conservation skills, capacity and leadership confidence in the process.

WELLBEING NETWORK

Over the next three years, a Wellbeing Officer will be supporting groups/professionals to embed nature connection for wellbeing, supporting healthier, happier communities who care and take action for nature and wildlife in Somerset.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

The next year will be a crucial time for measuring impact, as we have now embedded the Team Wilder approach across our work and developed a baseline. Our impact measurement will focus on measuring behaviour change in individuals and across the communities we work with, as well as collecting stories to bring the numbers to life.

SPOTLIGHT

Community collaboration for nature in action

This year, we had an amazing opportunity to work with a local community in Priorswood, near Taunton to create a beautiful space for nature in Lyngford Park. The last 12 months has seen them pitch in to create a beautiful habitat for wildlife. As part of this project, renowned artists Alice Cunningham and Jon England constructed triangular frames from pallets donated from Hestercombe Gardens which were then packed with nature materials by local families. Children from Brook Green Nursery where the structures have been installed also planted an area with wildflower seed and made signs to let people know about the project. This small project of improving a public space for nature has seen a huge number of people contribute and is a brilliant example of Team Wilder in action, bringing together local families, Brook Green Nursery, Priorswood Community Centre, local artists, the Somerset County Council Parks and Open Spaces team and Somerset Art Works.

GOAL 3

Telling Somerset's story

FACTS AND STATS

Habitats in Somerset have seen dramatic decreases in species richness since 1990, with terrestrial insects deteriorating most significantly.

5.14% loss of Somerset's total grassland habitats, with some areas significantly higher at 11.5%.

60% Decline in fritillary distribution from 1990 to 2021, with overall butterfly distribution in decline over last 30 years.

21 'Good' quality rivers in Somerset in 2019, down from 38 in 2009.

260% increase in non-native invasive species cover between 1990-2021, with 37 species recorded.

The challenge

It is only through the collection of scientific data that we can pull together a strong evidence base that will enable us to show trends, patterns and distribution of habitats and species, that in turn can help inform where best to focus our efforts to restore nature in Somerset. The Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) has collated over 2.4 million records covering 150 years,large majority of the species do not have enough regular recording data for population trend analysis.

Our approach

Nature needs more eyes on the ground so in order to fill the gaps in our species knowledge, and increase the number of records held, our approach has been to combine innovative and meaningful data recording methodologies, with a strong programme of public citizen science opportunities and training, fuelled by our Team Wilder programme of work, to increase the number of individuals and communities capturing data for us.

What we aimed for

Our key aims this year were to explore and embed **new innovative monitoring technology** to support our overall **monitoring efforts**, and in addition to species, using **modern equipment and tools**, establish **new metrics** that will enable us to **track changes** in biodiversity net gain, carbon storage and water quality, habitat creation and land use change. Important too was to **scale up our citizen science programme** and ensure that our strong relationships with **local authorities** continued, with Somerset Wildlife Trust being involved at an earlier, more strategic level in terms of delivering a meaningful nature recovery strategy for the whole county.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Coastal citizen science groups: 37 Shoresearch and Sea Watch events, monitoring coastal species.

451 people have now signed up as observers to our Great Somerset Wildlife Count project on iNaturalist, taking part in 5 regular species monitoring projects across the year, clocking up a whopping 2,150 species observations.

1,465 PEOPLE have now downloaded our Big Count citizen science pack, a total of 178 people have joined this project on iNaturalist, and a total of 1,183 observations were recorded in the 2023 count.

WHAT WE DID:

FIRST SOMERSET STATE OF NATURE REPORT LAUNCHES

This year saw us launch the first ever Somerset State of Nature Report, in partnership with SERC and the Local Nature Partnership (LNP). The first of its kind for Somerset, and leading on from the national State of Nature Report released in 2023, the Somerset State of Nature Report 2023, is a comprehensive overview of the county's landscapes, providing an important benchmark of how nature and wildlife is faring across the county in context of national declines and, where data allows, shows trends in the abundance and distribution of species and quality of habitats, identifying the key pressures that wildlife is facing. This will enable us to target our limited resources on where we can have most impact and where collaboration with other partners can amplify that success.

The report makes for sobering reading. It's clear that Somerset's ecosystems have been impacted by climate change, changes in land management, development and pollution; and invasive species and diseases are further threatening habitats. But the report also features seeds of hope: positive case studies which demonstrate that where there has been focussed effort on a landscape-scale, underpinned by a truly meaningful and committed partnership approach to nature restoration, the results can be simply outstanding, such as the success that has been experienced in the Avalon Marshes in terms of restoring the peat voids left by extraction.

SCALING UP OUR SCIENCE, EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH CAPABILITIES

The decisions we make about what priorities to set for our nature recovery programme must be based on good science and evidence. Over decades, we have accrued a great deal of species and habitat data and evidence, but this year, in order to improve and modernise this element of our work and put more structure in place for monitoring our impact going forwards, we created a new Innovation and Evidence team.

The Trust is both exploring new opportunities in the nature recovery space such as BNG and carbon, and testing innovative land management approaches such as those at Honeygar, and it's important that we share our learning with our peers and provide evidence to support the decisions we have taken.

An important component of this ambition will be to increase our engagement with the academic research community. Developing more partnership in research will support us as a science and evidence-led organisation. Building on our work with the University of the West of England, this year we have already started new projects with Bristol University and have begun conversations with a wider range of leading academics on the work we are doing around peatland research. Working closely with the Somerset Environmental Records Centre staff we will be reviewing the first Somerset State of Nature report and looking to understand

ELLEN PHILPOTT

SERC Support Officer

In one sentence describe your job: To assist the team in general data input, processing and analysis.

What energises you in your job?: To be able to contribute towards the important evidence required to inform others of the state of Somerset's habitats and species.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: The trust does so much work towards ensuring a sustainable, biodiverse and protected environment, that it gives me hope for the future as a young adult.

how to direct our academic partnership work to fill evidence gaps in line with our strategy. It will also be important to be responsive to ideas from external partners, recognising the need for innovation and technological development to facilitate the process of data collection and analysis.

MARCHING ON WITH MONITORING AT HONEYGAR

We are on a journey with Honeygar to transform this former dairy farm into a haven for wildlife, to increase biodiversity and abundance on the site, restore natural processes and precious lowland peat. To create a site that will serve as an exemplar for nature-based solutions, where we can trial and explore best practice for new approaches to land management and funding mechanisms, and where we can demonstrate and share our ideas with others to inspire and stimulate change.

Central to our ability to deliver this is the ongoing implementation of a rigorous and annual monitoring programme. With the help of partners and a strong technical team, this year we scaled up our survey and monitoring efforts on the site significantly and have been able to gather large volumes of information to inform our work moving forwards.

Over the past 12 months, we have completed major interventions on site to reduce water being drained and pumped away from Honeygar. We have also established a mixed grazing and cutting regime to get a variety of sward lengths to improve biodiversity.

Thanks to our staff team, university partners, our Honeygar Rangers group (new this year), 38 dip wells and a whole range of other innovative measurement equipment, Honeygar is now fully mapped and surveyed, hydrological regimes identified and baseline data collected for different species on site, soil types, carbon and greenhouse gases, water quality and the physical condition of land and buildings.

CASE STUDY

Wired for sound - bio acoustic bird monitoring

We've been working with innovative technology company, Wilder Sensing, since 2022 to help monitor and track changes in bird species on Honeygar as our interventions on site progress and as natural processes and habitats transform over time. At Honeygar, we have four audio sensors deployed on site in a variety of different habitats that are recording audio data 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. These sensors are set to record bird song in the audible range on a continuous basis.

The audio data is collected each week and uploaded and processed utilising Wilder Sensing's innovative Artificial Intelligence analysis, and when set to a 90% confidence interval, have collected a staggering 1.3 million records from just four sensors. Notable bird species recorded at Honeygar include cuckoo, spotted flycatcher, snipe, cetti's warbler, lapwing and kingfishers.

As a result of the success of the Wilder Sensing Project so far, a further four audio sensors will be deployed at Honeygar, in addition to three bat sensors and a further 10 audio sensors deployed across our nature reserves in the Avalon Marshes, enabling us to be able to continuously monitor on a landscape-scale, producing huge datasets that will have immense value in demonstrating nature's recovery in the county and draw insights as to how bird species are responding to climate change. With this expansion we will be truly looking at monitoring nature recovery on a continuous basis at scale that has not been previously seen within the county.

JOE HAMPSON

Honeygar Wilding Officer

In one sentence describe your job: I lead the transformation and ecological restoration of Honeygar, engaging with stakeholders to promote nature recovery and climate resilience through innovative land management and peat restoration strategies.

What energises you in your job?: Collaborating with passionate colleagues, engaging with the community, and witnessing the tangible impact of our conservation efforts at Honeygar.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: That we lead by example in restoring nature, tackling climate change, and engaging communities, creating a sustainable future for Somerset's diverse wildlife and landscapes.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO IN 2024/25:

IMPROVE AND DEVELOP AN UPDATED SOMERSET STATE OF NATURE REPORT

To properly monitor Somerset's performance in terms of nature recovery, the previously published Somerset State of Nature Report needs further development in readiness for its next publication and for it to be accessible by a range of other stakeholders. This will focus primarily on the ultimate nature recovery indicator, which remains the extent and abundance of our Somerset wildlife species.

MORE EVIDENCE MADE MORE AVAILABLE

In order to better monitor our progress and iterate the Somerset State of Nature Report going forwards, we need more and better data from a variety of sources. We want to make the gathering and delivery of habitat and species data easier, so everyone from individuals, communities, schools, specialist groups and others can do it simply and contribute to creating a picture our overall performance for nature's recovery. We will increase our citizen science programme in the coming year and, through our Team Wilder approach engage with more communities to recruit champions in this area.

MORE RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN BEST RECOVER NATURE

With resources strained, we recognise that to ensure the best possible outcomes for nature we need to work in partnership with a range of experts in a range of technical fields. We will work in partnership with a broad range of researchers and experts to learn more about nature and launch our academic research programme as part of that work. This will generate support, increase data collection and drive innovation in research into the new areas emerging, for example, peat, BNG and carbon. We will do more work to develop our ambition at developing a national centre of excellence for lowland peat research at our Honeygar site.

SOPHIE LAURIE

Head of Innovation and Evidence

In one sentence describe your job: I lead a team of specialists including in the Somerset Environmental Records Centre, who focus on making sure everything we do in the Somerset Wildlife Trust is based on sound information and evidence.

What energises you in your job?: Looking for innovative opportunities to grow our evidence base and show the value of working in partnership with Somerset Wildlife Trust, bringing in new and exciting public and private sector projects to deliver our ambitions for nature recovery.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust?: Being part of an organisation of passionate people wanting to really make an impact on halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity in Somerset and the wider UK.

Our people and organisation

- Developing Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Volunteers
- Fundraising

Volunteers contributed
200 hours
to undertake
50 dormouse
monitoring surveys.

DEVELOPING SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

The Trust has grown significantly over the past five years. We are now an organisation of nearly 100 people working across a number of sites in the county.

We have office-based teams working in a hybrid way, engagement and community staff that are mobile, and reserve-based staff and volunteers who are on the ground right across the county. We are proud of the way our teams work together, collaborate and support each other to achieve our vision. With this growth we recognised that we needed to invest further in the organisational infrastructure and support services for our staff and ensure we could continue to support the Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy effectively.

This year we progressed our digital transformation strategy to support knowledge sharing, improve data access, streamline decision-making and foster greater collaboration between all of our teams. In addition, we looked to further progress our inclusivity plans, invest in the development of our staff and volunteers, enable a more mobile and distributed staff base and progress our plans to become an employer of choice.

Exploring new commercial opportunities and creating new revenue streams is key if we are to continue to fund nature recovery in the long term. This year we have looked to expand our commercial offering through our consultancy business Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy (SWTC), land management, carbon credit and BNG credits.

Highlights from our work in 2023/24

Digital transformation: We are focussed on our outcomes and impact for nature, and our aim is to engage with people across the whole county. Facilitating really effective hybrid working gives us this flexibility, so to support this we need the IT infrastructure to make this work. This year we

HELUN JONES

Head of People, Culture and Resources

In one sentence describe your job: My team and I look after all the back-office operations, except finance, that keep the organisation running. Some of our role includes Facilities, HR, I.T., Health and Safety, Purchasing and Office Administration.

What energises you in your job? The knowledge that I have a great team who are willing to go the extra mile to achieve results to support the organisations aim of restoring habitats to enable nature to thrive and encouraging healthy landscapes.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? I am always amazed at the wonderful projects taking place such as the Somerset Tree strategy through the LNP and the Seven Estuary recovery work with its associated partners that my colleagues are involved in making a difference to our landscape. My colleagues' passion to make Somerset an area where landscape and its waterways are habitats for wildlife to thrive in is outstanding and provides groundbreaking work to take action against the climate and ecological emergency that we face. I am proud to be part of such an ambitious Trust that makes a difference to our region, its inhabitants and its wildlife.

VICTORIA BROWN

Business, People and Culture Administrator

In one sentence describe your job: I provide administration support to the People, Culture and Resources team. This also includes Governance so I organise and attend various Council and Committee meetings and support our team of 12 Trustees.

What energises you in your job? I really enjoy helping people which is quite often what administration is – providing support to enable others to do their job effectively. And I find everyone's passion for what they do really inspiring.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Knowing that we are making a difference for Somerset and the future generations that will live here.

have rolled out SharePoint across the organisation enabling visibility and access to key staff policies and processes, data and activities, no matter where our staff are, which will save huge amounts of administration time. Key to the success of this has been a programme of content migration, process digitisation and strengthening the security of our data through the further roll out of our CRM software. Our digital strategy this year has also focussed on creating 'digital reserves' - virtual tours of some of our most popular sites on the Avalon Marshes for those who may not be able to visit – for which we have been nationally recognised.

EDI and Safeguarding Supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion is deeply important to the Trust. It is vital that staff, visitors and volunteers have an inclusive and safe experience and that they are protected from harm, abuse or neglect. We champion equality and fairness and we are committed to being an inclusive employer. We have established EDI and Safeguarding working groups, policies and plans, trained staff and Trustee representatives in both EDI and Safeguarding, and have a programme of information provision including a calendar of EDI events.

Our Safeguarding plan is based on the pillars of safer recruitment, induction and training of staff, policies and procedures, record keeping and risk assessment, and CQI – commitment to learning. We have implemented a robust reporting system and distributed key information contact cards to all our public facing staff and updated our induction and ongoing training to continually support development in this area.

Commercial Activities Our wholly owned subsidiary, First Ecology and its accredited team of specialists and consultants have been providing professional, high integrity ecological services to a diverse client

base in Somerset and beyond since 2010. Whilst it has operated as a separate entity, First Ecology's purpose has always been strategically aligned with the charity's goal of nature conservation and all of its profits are channelled back to the charity.

Towards the end of the year, we rebranded First Ecology to Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy (SWTC), with the aims of maximising opportunities to deliver integrated land advice and land management to a broader range of landowners and capitalise on the opportunities offered in new markets such as BNG, ensuring our consultancy team are more aligned with the broader organisational aims. This has included the recruitment of a specialist arboriculturist to realise growth opportunities in this space and creation of a specialist land advice team.

Our Honeygar site continues to thrive under our care. We have developed our thoughts for our Honeygar site and have recruited a project lead to deliver the next phase which focusses on the buidlings and how we develop them to reflect our overall vision for the site. Throughout our work at Honeygar we are exploring new green finance opportunities such as BNG and carbon credits to test and learn from the processes in order to generate long-term income to manage land for nature and share this learning with other landowners, successes and failures.

Facilities and Environmental Strategy Our aspiration is to provide fit for purpose healthy, productive, collaborative and inspiring workspaces for our increasingly mobile and distributed workforce. Based on feedback from our Staff Survey, we have created an action plan to improve our facilities and improvements have been made to office layouts, heating, water systems, and electrical safety.

Whether it is building facilities, utilities and energy, transport or our own landholdings, it is critical that we consider the carbon impact in our decisions, and inspire others to take action by leading by example. It is our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and, following our environmental audit we have begun implementing our plans to reduce our carbon footprint. To reduce travel impact, we have further embedded hybrid working, a new electric vehicle (EV) has been purchased, and a charging point installed, and we are looking into a Cycle to work and Electric Vehicle purchasing scheme.

People: Our people are what make our organisation successful. It's important that we create a working culture that invests in, supports and nurtures people so we attract and retain staff and volunteers that

PHILLIP WRIGHT

Facilities and Environmental Impact Manager

In one sentence describe your job: Ensuring that our facilities and working environment is both and safe and comfortable for Staff, Volunteers and Visitors alike. Monitoring and adapting our Carbon footprint to reach Carbon Neutrality by 2030.

What energises you in your job? Visiting our different locations around the county and gaining new knowledge from our incredible staff.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Its fabulous to be able to assist in the background of this fabulous organisation, and it always feels good to tell people where I work.

EMMA GOULD
HR Specialist

In one sentence describe your job: As HR Specialist I am responsible for ensuring personnel best practice is captured across the Trust with an employee centred focus.

More succinctly: It is a privilege to work with the whole of the Trusts dedicated team whose roles are varied and interesting to ensure the promotion of ecological and environmental benefits for the county and wildlife.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? When I witness the passion our employees have towards their jobs and in particular hearing what an amazing difference the Trust makes educating communities about the importance of nature and the reintroduction of species.

in turn ensures we are a stable, successful and resilient charity. We want to create a culture that celebrates success, innovation and creativity as well as embracing diversity and inclusion, and enables us to authentically 'live' our organisation values.

We have recruited specialist HR resource, and as a result have been able to revamp our recruitment process, update our policies and role descriptions to reflect best practice. We have received really positive feedback on our inclusive approach to recruitment. We've delivered training in safer recruitment, that encompasses safeguarding, stakeholder welfare and inclusivity, as well as ensuring we develop and recruit to achieve a defined level of digital literacy.

To further support the growth of the organisation we have also restructured our teams to create three new directorates that strengthen our ability to deliver, our strategic goals. We are now a Disability Confident Employer, and will be working on getting to the next level on this pathway in the coming year.

OUR PLANS FOR 2024/25

Skills, Training and development
Further cement our commitment to our staff by rolling out a new development and support process to identify skills and training needs with a focus on continual improvement and future needs.

Long term facilities plan
Develop a long-term plan to deliver fit for purpose and aspirational office spaces which supports our commitment to Carbon net zero.

Commercial
Further explore the potential around BNG and looking to test and further develop our land advice and land management services for the benefit of nature through SWTC.

Digital transformation
Continue to roll out our transformation programme including automated reporting of key data, replacing legacy systems to streamline our processes and information flow and further broaden our digital reserves work.

Diversity and inclusion
To achieve our goals for nature's recovery we need everyone to be involved. We will continue to embed our newly launched our new EDI strategy across all parts of the organisation and will be proactively seeking to improve everything from our recruitment to our policies and our governance to make sure everyone can access all of our activities, work and volunteering opportunities and join our events.

VOLUNTEERS

Our commitment to our volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do. Volunteers founded the Somerset Wildlife Trust in 1964 and today remain fundamental to our work. They come from all walks of life, with a range of skills and experience, and we rely on their support to help create a Somerset rich in wildlife for everyone. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical habitat management and field surveys, to support for office activities and events, to running the Trust as members of Council, operating across the whole county from our brilliant coast all the way across our key landscapes and projects. Our aim is to make volunteering at Somerset Wildlife Trust a welcoming and rewarding experience, supporting volunteers with training and recognition and our volunteering policy aims to reflect the high esteem in which the Trust holds every single one of them.

In 2023, 368 volunteers contributed 12,533 hours in support of our work. We were able to celebrate and recognise their achievements at our Annual Volunteer Awards which took place at our AGM This year we have enhanced the way we deliver communications to our volunteers to ensure they feel valued and connected to our work.

Our plans for 24/25

This year we are planning to develop a Volunteer Strategy for 2025 – 2030. This will provide a strong foundation for involving and supporting volunteers to deliver our Wilder 2030 Strategy, and will set out our commitment to recruiting, retaining, and supporting volunteers and how we see our volunteering opportunities evolving into the future.

"It's been a life changing experience. I've learned so much about wildlife in Somerset and the importance of nature recovery. Meeting other like-minded people has been wonderful too."

"I find volunteering very rewarding, and I get great support from the Somerset Wildlife Trust staff. It's a chance to do something completely different to my day job and learn new skills."

"Feel I'm doing "my bit" to give something back to Somerset - such a beautiful county. Plus the physical work also helps my health and fitness - physically and mentally."

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising continues to be a vital source of income for Somerset Wildlife Trust, helping the continued delivery of our 2030 strategy.

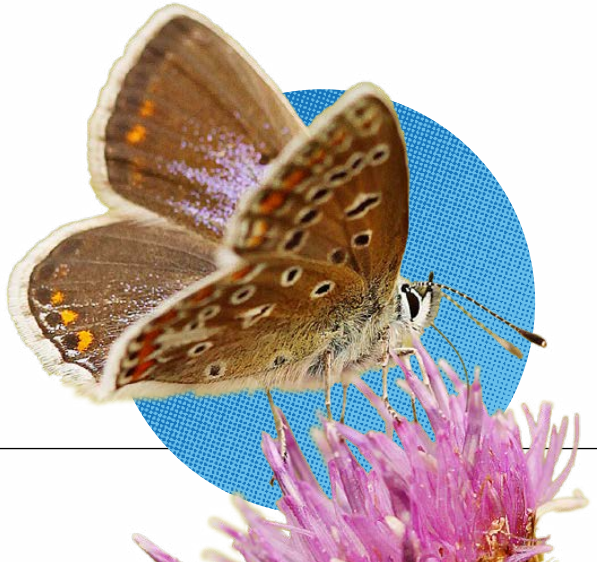
In 2023/24, despite continued global turbulence and a national cost of living crisis, 68% of our income came from fundraising activities. Our supporters helped us raise over £3.4 million in income, spread across a diverse range of fundraising channels. This income has helped us continue our essential work across Somerset, protecting wildlife and wild places.

A note from our Head of Fundraising, Rebecca Walford:

The past year has presented significant challenges for fundraising efforts. The lingering impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the current cost of living crisis in the UK, have created a particularly tough environment. Despite these hurdles, our dedicated team and loyal supporters have shown incredible resilience and innovation, ensuring that we continue to secure the necessary funds to advance our mission. Their unwavering commitment has been instrumental in helping us navigate these trying times.

As the cost of living crisis persists, many individuals continue to face financial difficulties, with household budgets being stretched to their limits. In Somerset, the need for environmental support is increasingly urgent. Our State of Nature report, published in November 2023, underscores the critical threats posed by biodiversity loss and the climate crisis. These challenges highlight the essential role of our efforts and the ongoing need for robust community support.

Amid the current challenges, the passion and dedication of our supporters stand out as a source of hope. Their unwavering commitment to preserving Somerset's wildlife and wild spaces has been truly inspiring and alongside this, we have witnessed an increase in the number of supporters, fueled by a growing awareness of environmental issues. We are lucky to have a skilled and determined team of fundraisers who have been been instrumental in navigating these trying times with creativity and perseverance, and their hard work and passion ensure that we continue to secure the essential resources needed to continue our critical work.



Membership

Membership continues to be the largest source of unrestricted income for the Trust, bringing in 18% of our income this year. Our membership numbers have increased to 22,692 individuals, both within Somerset and from further afield. This steady growth, with membership income increasing by around 4% annually, provides essential core funding for our daily operations. We deeply appreciate our members, whose ongoing support enables us to protect and preserve Somerset's wildlife and wild spaces.

Trusts and grants

Trusts and grants are pivotal in funding our wide-ranging initiatives, from small trusts providing £1,000 to substantial grants from national bodies. In the past year we secured income from 36 successful applications, supporting a diverse portfolio of projects across the organisation. This included extensive work across the Somerset Levels, including a purchase of land adjoining Westhay Moor NNR and additional funding for our flagship initiative at Honeygar. Other funding helping us to grow our Team Wilder engagement delivery. Our strategic approach building strong relationships with grant providers and local Somerset Trusts remains instrumental in securing funding for impactful projects and our ongoing core work. We are grateful to the ongoing commitment from the Trust and Grant giving bodies who support us and their confidence in our work

ZOË FOWLER

Supporter Care Co-ordinator

In one sentence describe your job: As Supporter Care Co-ordinator I take care of membership administration, keep the database up to date, add new members each week, and ensure memberships are renewed and cancelled. I also process donations, send out communications such as welcome letters / emails, renewal reminders and goodbye letters / emails, and also fulfil shop orders. I also liaise with SWWFL, help with admin within the Fundraising Team and make the staff newsletter.

More succinctly: Admin, admin and more admin!

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? The work that we do for wildlife, and the passionate, creative and hard-working people we have to make this happen.

Community fundraising

Community fundraising has been the area most impacted by the challenges posed by the cost of living crisis. However, despite this, our enthusiastic supporters have engaged in diverse activities such as running, walking, caving, and opening their gardens, showcasing innovative approaches to fundraising. Beyond financial support, these efforts significantly contribute to our Team Wilder initiative, encouraging people to take action for Somerset's wildlife. This collective effort not only raises essential core funds but also strengthens community bonds and encourages environmental stewardship. Through these grassroots activities, we not only mitigate financial pressures but also foster a sense of shared responsibility towards protecting and preserving our natural heritage for future generations.

Major gifts

Philanthropic gifts are integral in supporting both our core operations and our ambitious new projects and land acquisitions. Their contributions have been crucial to advancing our ongoing initiatives, particularly at Honeygar through the Pioneer scheme. This support includes our dedicated group of 56 Patrons, whose regular giving forms a reliable foundation for our fundraising efforts. The continued generosity of this committed group of generous donors not only ensures the stability of our programs but also helps us further key areas of our strategy.

Becoming patrons has brought us closer to the Trust, enabling us to learn much more about their activities and the complex decisions that they often have to make. The events that they run for the patrons provide not only great opportunities to learn more about the natural world and its conservation, but they have also allowed us to spend time with the staff, including our CEO, giving us a greater feeling of connectedness and a chance to feed in our views.

Neil and Sarah Williams Joint Patrons

MICHAEL WOODMAN
Philanthropy Manager

In one sentence describe your job: Connecting donors with the work of my colleagues to enable them to ensure their support is having as significant an impact as impossible.

What energises you in your job? The passion and expertise of our wonderful supporters and my brilliant colleagues. The range of beautiful landscapes in Somerset is something very special as well.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? I'm proud of the vital impact the Trust has had across the county since its founding and to be part of such a dedicated and knowledgeable team working to protect nature and connect people with it too.

LUCY MARSH
Legacy Manager

In one sentence describe your job: As Legacy Manager I am solely responsible for ensuring Somerset Wildlife Trust receives, maximises and protects all legacies bequeathed to the organisation.

What energises you in your job? My role as Legacy Manager is very varied and I wear numerous hats, including being a lawyer, administrator, counsellor, fundraiser, estate agent, auctioneer, property developer, negotiator, arbitrator, forecaster and stockbroker to name just a few.

What makes you proud to be at Somerset Wildlife Trust? Legacy income is vital for the survival of Somerset Wildlife Trust, and I am very proud to work and live in Somerset and be part of a team that helps protect and preserve our wildlife and wild places for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Legacies

In 2023/24, legacies contributed £310,000, funds which are vital for bolstering our cash reserves, which in turn help fund strategic projects and can be used to support our work during challenging periods. Unfortunately, delays from HMRC have prolonged the process of receiving bequests from wills, in some cases up to four years from the original gift notification.

We are grateful to the 145 individuals who have generously pledged to include the Somerset Wildlife Trust in their wills, a commitment we deeply appreciate. These legacies are not just financial support; they demonstrate a true commitment to our work, ensuring our ability to thrive and endure through uncertain times. Each gift demonstrates trust in our work and secures our ability to continue making a difference.

Having been members of the Somerset Wildlife Trust for very many years and witnessed the brilliant conservation work they do, we feel the least we can do is to remember the Trust in our Wills. We hope that our gift will help the Trust continue their excellent work in safeguarding Somerset's wildlife for future generations to enjoy.

Mike and Angela Merrifield, Life members and legacy pledgers

FINANCIAL REVIEW

An overall surplus of £222,000 (£732,000: 2022/23) was recognised, with total group funds increasing to £10.7 million (£10.5 million: 2022/23), as we continue to grow and invest in the delivery of our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy.

A total of £4.9 million (£5.4 million: 2022/23) income was recognised in the year, 70% of which, was from grants, membership, donations and appeals. Overall expenditure grew slightly to £4.7 million (£4.6 million: 2022/23).

A surplus of £400,000 (£239,000: 2022/23) was achieved on unrestricted funds after transfers which was primarily due to income raised in the year for the purchase of tangible and heritage assets (land). This included £323,000 for the acquisition of 35 acres of land at Westhay.

There was a £178,000 reduction (£306,000 surplus: 2022/23) in restricted funds representing planned expenditure of funds for specific purposes as agreed with the funders.

Overall group funds increased by £222,000 from £10.5 million to £10.7 million, £6.2 million of which, is represented by tangible and heritage (land) fixed assets including £4.8 million for land holdings.

We continue to recognise the importance of financial resilience, particularly in the current challenging economic climate. During the year the financial reserves policy was reviewed and updated to ensure that financial reserves holdings remain adequate given recent growth. Investment in the development of new commercial activities is on-going to ensure diversification and future income growth to support financial stability.

Income

Income for the year totalled £4.9 million (£5.4 million: 2022/23), mainly from grant funding and the continued generosity of members and supporters.

Grant income for the year totalled £1.7 million (£2.5 million: 2022/23) representing the largest source of income in the year and 35% of overall income. This included £292,000 from the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme and £168,000 from DEFRA for the ELMS Landscape Recovery project. The reduction compared to 2022/23 is due to the completion of two significant projects in 2022/23. A total of £452,000 (£437,000: 2022/23) grants were received through agri-environment schemes, which specifically support

the management of our nature reserves and represent 27% of total grant income.

Membership income continues to be a vital source of unrestricted income for the Trust and grew to £890,000 (£856,000: 2022/23), the second largest source of income in the year and representing 18% of total income. The number of members also grew to 22,692 (22,265: 2022/23).

Income from donations and appeals totalled £875,000 (£901,000: 2022/23) representing the third largest source of income. This included £335,000 towards both the acquisition and initial restoration of the land at Westhay and £177,000 raised for Honeygar.

A total of £310,000 (£270,000: 2022/23) legacy income was recognised in the year from 27 bequests.

Income from other trading activities totalled £634,000 (£600,000: 2022/23). This includes a 5% increase in income achieved by the Trust's wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Ltd, which totalled £553,000 (£530,000: 2022/23).

Investment income increased to £132,000 (£61,000: 2022/23) due to an increase in interest rates.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure grew slightly to £4.7 million (£4.6 million: 2022/23).

The majority of our expenditure continues to be represented by staff costs as we rely on our staff to enable the delivery of our goals. Staff costs totalled £2.7 million (£2.6 million: 2022/23) representing 58% of total expenditure. Overall our average staff numbers increased from 84 to 87 as a result of planned growth.

Nature recovery expenditure totalled £1.3 million (£1.6 million: 2022/23), a reduction compared to the previous year due to the completion of significant grant funded projects in 2022/23.

Our land, including our nature reserves, is critical to developing a strong Nature Recovery Network across Somerset and £993,000 (£803,000: 2022/23) was used for management and improvement. The Ash Dieback emergency works were completed in the year, supported by the Green Recovery Challenge Fund Ash Dieback project, and whilst there will be on-going costs associated with managing the disease it is not anticipated to be at such an exceptional level.

Expenditure on building a movement for nature, Team Wilder, increased by 12% to £888,000 (£796,000: 2022/23). This included delivery of grant funded projects including the Wilder Coast project and Somerset Nature Connections partnership nature and wellbeing project which was completed in the year.

SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)

As a result of continued planned investment in our wholly-owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Ltd, expenditure increased by 10% to £650,000 (£589,000: 2022/23) representing 14% of overall expenditure.

Raising funds

Overall expenditure increased by 18% and totalled £630,000 (£577,000: 2022/23) primarily as a result of new fundraising initiatives trialled in the year to support future unrestricted income growth.

Support costs

Support costs increased to £764,000 (£718,000: 2022/23), a small increase of 7% as a result of cost of living increases and overall organisational growth but still representing a similar proportion of overall expenditure at 16% (15%: 2022/23).

Financial reserves

Policy

The Trust has a policy of holding reserves of funds to:

- Enable it to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to further the aims of the Trust when no other source of income is available.
- Provide adequate working capital to carry out projects for which funds have been granted by external bodies, but for which those funds are payable only after expenditure has been incurred.
- Provide a reserve to cover contractual obligations and short-term payment of essential costs, such as staff salaries, in the event of an unanticipated shortfall in funds and/or fluctuations in income.
- Meet any legal obligation on the Trust to meet any future costs.

Holdings

Total reserves at the end of the year increased to £10.7 million (£10.5 million: 2022/23) although a significant proportion of this total is represented by tangible and heritage (land) fixed assets, restricted funds and designated funds leaving free financial reserves of £1.76 million (£871,000: 2022/23).

Total reserves	£10,736,000
Less:	
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	(£6,201,000)
Restricted funds	(£1,514,000)
Designated funds	(£1,258,000)
Free financial reserves	**£1,763,000**
Target free financial reserves range	**£900,000 - £1,800,000**

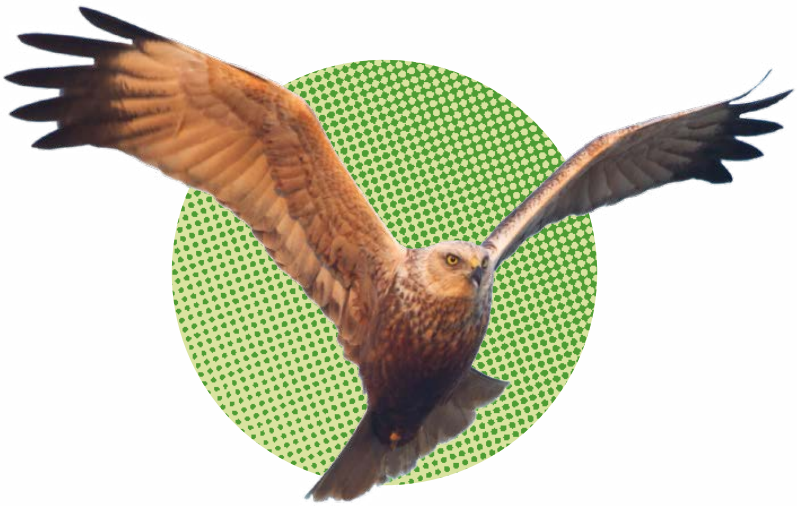
In accordance with the financial reserves policy, which was reviewed during the year, the Trust aims to hold between three and six months' core operating costs as free financial reserves which equates to between £900,000 to £1.8 million. Free financial reserves held in the income fund are currently within the target range and equate to just below 6 months' core operating costs.

Investments

The value of the Trust's investment portfolio increased to £847,000 (£836,000: 2022/23) following an improvement in market conditions. Investment income increased to £25,000 (£23,000: 2022/23). The Trust recognised a £18,000 gain (£93,000 loss: 2022/23) arising from revaluations in the year.

The investment portfolio is managed by Rathbone Greenbank to provide the Trust with a range of sound marketable investments providing a balance of regular income and opportunity for capital growth. This requires a balanced portfolio consisting of investment grade fixed interest stocks or funds of fixed interest stocks and equities.

An ethical investment policy has been adopted to ensure that the investment portfolio consists of stocks consistent with the Trust's values and aims, whilst ensuring that its investments actively support its aims and objectives. The Trust's ethical investment policy seeks to encourage investment in companies with strong sustainability policies and practices that respect and protect wildlife, communities and their wider environment.



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Charitable purpose

Somerset Wildlife Trust is set up to achieve three charitable objects:

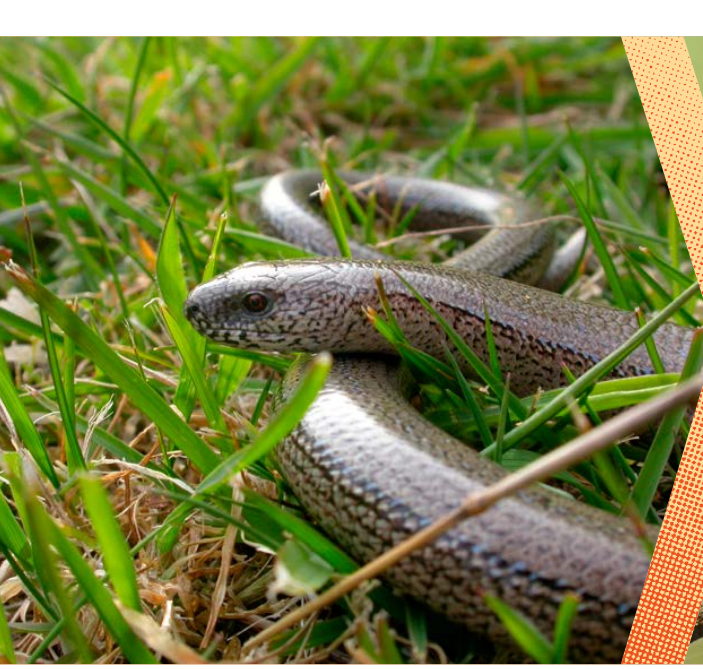
1 For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance, protection and enjoyment of wildlife and its habitats, including places of botanical, geographical, zoological, archaeological or scientific interest and places of natural beauty;

2 To advance the education of the public in the principles of biodiversity conservation and of sustainable development;

3 To promote research in all branches of ecology and geology. The Trust delivers its charitable purposes through its strategic objectives as described in this report.

4 Measuring our success. The Trust measures its success by:

- The Senior Leadership Team and Trust Council monitoring progress towards charitable goals and their achievement through quarterly reviews of the implementation of the annual business plan and performance against budget
- Regular dialogue with all members of the Executive Team and in particular the CEO as well as field visits to existing reserves and potential acquisitions.
- Engagement with third parties including partners, major donors and other Wildlife Trusts members.
- Qualitative feedback from Trustees, members, supporters, volunteers and staff.
- The quality and longevity of relationships with partner organisations, funders and neighbours.
- Hosting Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC), which collects and provides data on species and habitats across Somerset, including on Trust nature reserves, to external parties, the public and specialist groups
- Annual endorsement from Members of the report and accounts and future plans at the Annual General Meeting.
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints received.



Measuring our impact

This year the Trust undertook to review the way it more clearly monitors and measures the impact of its work – ie. how our interventions bring about positive change – and our progress against our goals.

Measuring impact in the area of engagement – our Goal 2 activity - is incredibly difficult, and we are not alone, inside and outside of the Wildlife Trust movement. We are far from experts in this field and are still learning about how best we can monitor our impact within this workstream, and are working as part of a national Wildlife Trust Working Group on this, exploring and testing a number of approaches to arrive at what might work for us, learning from the many specialist bodies working in this space. Two key changes we are primarily interested in measuring are nature connectedness and behaviour change (meaningful action for nature), alongside other indirect and unintended impacts of our work such as social inclusion. There is much more to do in the coming year to develop this work to build the best picture we can of the impact we are having on the ground and how we are contributing to creating this tipping point for nature.

Measuring our progress against Goal 1 of our strategy is also complex. Our goal is to ensure nature is improving everywhere within a resilient nature recovery network and at least 30% of land and sea are managed positively for nature in Somerset. There is currently no clear guidance from Defra or Natural England as to which areas of land can be included in the target so Somerset Wildlife Trust is currently following the example led by the Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL) which has taken the wording and spirit of the Kunming-Montreal Framework. Under the WCL definitions, for Somerset we estimate that just 10% of our land area is currently part of the 30x30 target largely due to our large number of SSSI's, 76% of which are in favourable or recovering status and are being managed for nature. We recognise that there is still more evidence to gather.

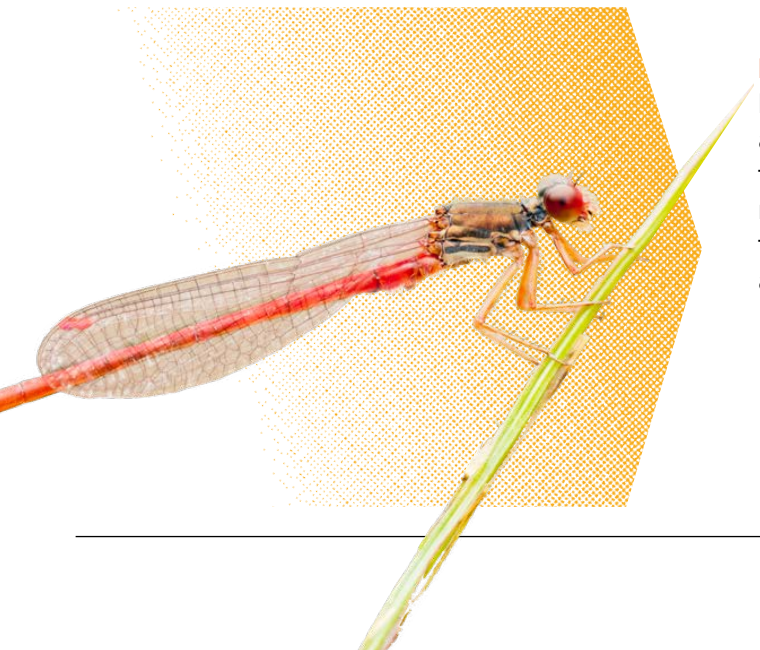
Launched this year The Somerset State of Nature Report however forms a critical benchmark – one that we will return to at regular intervals - that will help us collectively assess the impact of our Goal 1 work. It is from here that we will be able to track trends of change, both positive and negative, for the quality, quantity, distribution, connectivity and resilience or our habitats within the wider nature recovery network, alongside the resilience of those habitats. It will also enable us to assess the biodiversity and abundance of species that are both at risk and 'common'.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The Trust's public benefit is enshrined in its charitable objectives and activities – providing multiple benefits for the public which are wide-ranging and longlasting.

Restoring nature at landscape-scale

The Trust's work aims to restore nature at scale across our landscapes including by restoring, creating and protecting habitats that are or can be biodiversity-rich. There is increasing attention to how to enable development of 'ecosystem services' which offer public benefit in addition to nature restoration; for example: flood risk management, carbon storage, pollination, pollution control, improved health and wellbeing and aesthetic beauty. Government and businesses are now recognising the essential role that nature plays in supporting the economy, not least through the provision of these public goods and services. This is starting to be reflected in emerging legislation.



Land management advice for nature

Through providing advice and assistance to farmers and landowners to manage their land for the benefit of wildlife, the Trust helps to support the rural economy, the countryside and landscapes that are enjoyed and valued by the wider public.

Nature reserves

The Trust's 66 nature reserves, located throughout Somerset, are used extensively by the public for quiet recreation; many have access on clearly marked paths along with information and interpretation for visitors and visiting helps to build connection with nature and supporting health and wellbeing.

Team Wilder – a movement for nature

Team Wilder is supporting people, communities and organisations across Somerset to take action for nature to help us restore, create and protect habitats and build their connection with nature. We are committed to being an inclusive organisation and are actively working to involve more diverse communities and more young people in our work. We aim to empower them to take practical action for nature whether at home, at school or at work for their own wellbeing and to help nature recover.

Research

Evidence and advice provided by the Trust to local authorities, landowners and communities helps to ensure that decisions on policies such as land management, development, health and wellbeing take full account of the public benefit of wildlife and a healthy environment.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Structure

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its articles of association.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is one of 46 independent Wildlife Trusts working together as a federated movement known as The Wildlife Trusts, covering the UK and Crown Territories. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts' role, one of the 46, is defined by the Royal Charter to support The Wildlife Trusts.

Somerset Wildlife Trust has one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activities of SWT (Sales) Limited are that of overseeing the environmental consultancy, trading under the name Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, previously First Ecology.

It is based at the Trust's Callow Rock Offices. SWTC trades under SWT (Sales) Ltd and is a company limited by shares and registered in England No. 1317396.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) was established in 1986 by Somerset County Council and Somerset Wildlife Trust. The core work of SERC is to gather, manage, supply and analyse/ interpret biological and geological data and hold the county list of sites recognised for their natural value. Data gathered by SERC is used to build up a comprehensive picture of the biodiversity and geodiversity of Somerset, and help to monitor the state of the natural environment. SERC is a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres and has close links to the National Biodiversity Network, and the National Federation of Biological Recorders.

South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL) is an Associate trading subsidiary (set up for mutual trading) and jointly owned by eight Wildlife Trusts, including Somerset Wildlife Trust, to help secure regular financial support through memberships recruited face to face. SWWFL provides membership recruitment services for Somerset, Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Wiltshire and Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts.

Governance

COUNCIL

Members elected to serve on Council have a dual role as a Trustee of the Charity and a Director of the company. There can be no fewer than eight and no more than 12 Trustees. All members of Council are volunteers, give freely of their time and have no beneficial interest in the group or charity. Trustees are elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting and serve for an initial three-year term. Each Trustee can serve for three consecutive terms of three years subject to re-election at the end of each three-year term. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are elected by Council following the AGM and serve one-year terms.

In addition, each new Council member receives a full induction into the work and administration of the charity. Council members receive regular updates on the work of the Trust and any training deemed necessary to enable members to carry out their responsibilities. The Counsil meets quarterly.

At the Trust AGM in November 2023 , six Trustees were elected for their first terms of office. Council is assisted by Committees:

This year we have updated our committee structure to be more effective in directly supporting the delivery of our Wilder Somerset

2030 strategy, and to continue to support the organisation's growth in general terms, but also as we expand into new areas of activities. All Standing Committees meet quarterly unless otherwise stated

COMMITTEES

Finance, Risk and Audit Committee: Monitor financial management including policies and controls, act as Audit Committee, make recommendations to Council on financial policy and capital investment decisions and monitor our risk framework.

People, Culture and Resources Committee (formed Feb 2024): Oversight of policies and key controls relating to the recruitment, development and wellbeing of staff and volunteers and monitoring of our responsiveness to Members feedback. Monitors our safeguarding policies and response and delivery of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Health and Safety Committee: Oversight on all health and safety matters in the Trust, reviews of risk assessments and control frameworks.

Remuneration Committee: Consider and make recommendations on the annual salary review for the Chief Executive Officer and Directors, remuneration policy and benchmarking and discretionary pay increases.

Nominations Committee (Meets as and when needed) Supervision and lead involvement in the process for the recruitment of new Trustees as well as Non-Executive Directors of subsidiaries. Responsible for considering the balance of skills and experience of the Council and planning succession for the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer.

Governance Committee (biannual): Consists of the chair of Council, the chairs of each of the Standing Committees and the CEO; it considers overall governance for the Trust in the context of the Charitable and strategic objectives of the Trust and the risks and uncertainties therein; developments in the legal or regulatory framework, including the Charity Governance Code, and the effectiveness of Council.

Risk management

Over the last year, we have taken steps to improve and strengthen our risk management systems and processes. This has been deemed necessary and appropriate due to the continued growth and diversification of our assets, partnerships and work programmes as well as our staff and volunteers. These improvements (some ongoing), include:

- Updating the risk management framework, using guidance from RSWT, to enable improved consistency and transparency in the classification and management of risks.
- Integrating risk assessment formally into the planning of all major projects starting in 2024.
- Providing risk training to senior and executive staff.
- Bringing risk management into the remit of the Finance and Audit Committee for improved Trustee oversight.

As a result, the Trust has improved its capability to manage risks proportionately in its day-to-day operations, and acknowledge that more work is required to embed the changes made. We have determined that some levels and types of risk are more acceptable than others in achieving our ambitious strategic aims.

Principal risks and uncertainties

- Leadership capacity: we have recruited three Executive roles to extend and deepen leadership, provide improved support to the CEO, and enhance our ability to deliver our strategy.
- Future funding: we are fortunate to have a strong financial position, generous donors, and access to government funding for reserves. However, creating sustained new funding to cover rising costs and enable progress is a perennial challenge. Revenue diversification is key, and we expect Green Finance and our Sales business to play prominent roles in our future funding model.
- Delivery and engagement: new partnerships and delivery approaches are needed to achieve change at the pace and scale needed.
- Health, safety and wellbeing (including safeguarding): a continued priority risk area, recognising our responsibilities to our people, members, and public. No significant incidents have occurred in the year. Our staff engagement and loyalty is high, but we believe we can always do more to provide the best for, and so achieve the best from, all our people. The new PC&R Committee ensures greater focus in this area.

Transactions involving Council members and related parties

During 2023/24 a total of £1,000 (2023: £1,000) was received from Trustees in respect of donations and membership.

Strategy and policy setting

Council is responsible for furthering the objectives of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association. Council determines the strategic direction of the Trust through the 10-year Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy which was formally launched in May 2021. The strategy is available to download from the Trust's website.

The focus of Council's ongoing work is: supervising the strategic fit of key decisions including investments and plans for diversification of activities; monitoring delivery; and ensuring the income and expenditure of the Trust and its property and assets are managed appropriately. The Council always seeks to maintain a short term and longer term focus on the Trust's need to achieve resilient business models that are capable of sustaining nature protection and enhancement.

Staffing and remuneration

Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer and supports the appointment process for members of the Directors of the Charity. Trustees delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team through agreement of clear strategic objectives for the Trust which have demonstrable outcomes for wildlife in the county. Trustees monitor progress quarterly as well as ensuring that the Trust's financial affairs are managed appropriately.

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Chair of Trustees. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day to day running of the Trust and has delegated powers of authority approved by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer delegates decision-making powers through the Senior Leadership Team into the organisation.

During the year the Trust employed 75 full-time equivalent staff (2023: 71) 4 of which worked for SERC and 12 for SWT (Sales) Ltd. The Trust continues to adopt hybrid working, with many staff working primarily from their homes or elsewhere to deliver projects and manage nature reserves, with attendance at their office base and staff meetings held.

The Trust's headquarters is in Taunton with other staff based at Ford Farm, the Avalon Marshes Centre and Callow Rock. The staff are organised into functional teams, such as reserves, and also work in cross-functional teams, such as for delivering major projects.

All job descriptions are graded by the Salary Grading Panel. The Salary Grading Panel assesses each job description and grades within the Trust's grading criteria which consists of 13 levels, each of which has a corresponding salary band which is benchmarked against similar roles in the external market and other Wildlife Trusts.

The pay arrangements for the Directors Team are determined by the Chief Executive Officer and approved by the Remuneration

Committee using external and Wildlife Trusts' benchmarking. The Chief Executive Officer's salary is determined by the Remuneration Committee following representation from the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Key matters

Complaints

The Trust treats all complaints seriously. In the year 2023/24 the Trust received 3 complaints (2023: 3). No complaints were received in 2023/24 about our fundraising (2023: 0).

All of the complaints were responded to within seven days. Complaints are individually reviewed by the relevant Senior Leadership Team staff and monitored by the Chief Executive Officer and Trustees as part of a system for continuous improvement.

How we fundraise

As a charity, fundraising is essential to Somerset Wildlife Trust's ability to meet our core purpose and deliver public benefit. We receive most of our financial support from grants and individuals, including our members.

We are committed to a transparent and ethical approach to all our fundraising activity. We make every effort to ensure that our fundraising activity never feels unreasonably intrusive, persistent or pressurised, but rather focuses on inspiring support and celebrating the impact of fundraised income.

Our members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do and our work is only possible thanks to their generosity and their commitment to take action locally for nature.

We do:

- recruit new members face to face at venues and events across Somerset, including Trust nature reserves, and via our website (including as part of national Wildlife Trust campaigns), telephone and occasional targeted door drops;
- send appeal letters and other fundraising communications to selected supporters who have opted-in to marketing by post and/or digitally;
- seek philanthropic support from major donors, patrons, trusts, foundations, companies and other grant givers;
- invite donations via our website, other giving platforms and collection boxes;
- promote the importance of supporting our work, including via gifts in wills and gifts in memory;
- organise online fundraising auctions and other fundraising events; and
- encourage our members, supporters and local businesses to fundraise in aid of our work (community fundraising) as part of taking action for nature - Team Wilder.

We do not:

- sell or pass on supporter details to any other organisation or buy lists of other charities' donors.

Our members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted and can change these at any time, by contacting us.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and committed to follow its Code of Practice, which sets out standards of behaviour of fundraisers.

We are signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out from receiving fundraising communications from us and received no requests from this service to opt out in the year.

We ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances are protected, including by continually updating our database to prevent communications being sent to any vulnerable people who have been identified.

Our fundraising is mainly carried out by Trust staff with support from a very limited number of carefully selected professional fundraisers which are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers which act as agents in raising funds on the charity's behalf.

Face to face fundraising at venues and events is conducted on our behalf by staff of South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL), an associate trading subsidiary jointly owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust and seven other Wildlife Trusts. SWWFL is a corporate member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising which conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with SWWFL's face-to-face fundraisers to monitor quality.

We seek feedback from all new members until recently using a third-party service, Quality Telephone Services (QTS) and now by survey sent by email to understand their experience of joining us, including feedback on SWWFL recruiters, thus identifying any areas where we can make further improvements. QTS are also occasionally used to make outbound telephone calls to confirm Gift Aid status.

We use Work for Good to enable local small businesses to fundraise for us via sales of their products as commercial participators and online platforms for our virtual fundraising auction and matched annual fundraising appeals run by the Big Give.

Health and safety

The Health and Safety Committee meets quarterly and presents reporting to Council after each meeting. The health and safety of employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the general public are of paramount importance to the Trust. Accidents are recorded, there were 3 involving staff, 4 involving volunteers and 1 contractor injury causing lost time. They were caused by a variety of factors but working practices and use of protective equipment are areas for continued focus. We also record near misses.

At a strategic level our approach to Ash Dieback clearance has been governed by the need to ensure public safety on our Reserves and adjoining land. We recognise this work can cause concern and, for public safety, signs and barriers are used to restrict access to Reserves where work is planned and ongoing.

Safeguarding

As an organisation that works with children and vulnerable adults, the Trust acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. Our safeguarding policy is published on our website at www.somersetwildlife/policies/safeguarding.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Trust is committed to being inclusive in all aspects of our work from staff to trustees, volunteers to participants at our events. By recognising, respecting and valuing differences, and adopting more diverse perspectives, our staff, trustees, volunteers and supporters can become more effective ambassadors for nature as they can reach wider audiences. As such, equality, diversity and inclusion are enshrined in our core values, our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, our policies and activities.

This year we launched our EDI action plan. The plan provides a framework for the delivery of EDI in support of the Trust's strategy and to ensure that everyone can benefit from and take action for nature. It places diversity and inclusion at the heart of our culture, supporting us in our endeavours to reflect the society we work within, as well as providing a barometer for excellence.

Carbon impact

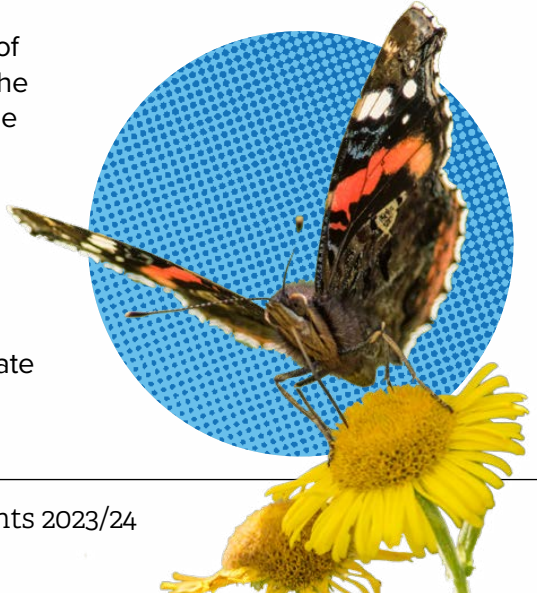
The Trust has committed to be a Net-Zero Carbon organisation by 2030 and to do this will mitigate its climate impacts (such as buildings, staff transport, landholdings, purchasing and waste). Our landholdings are our major sources, including cattle grazing and we have researched this area in detail to understand the implications for us. Carbon release from dried out peat, as on Honeygar, is a key area of focus for us and we do detailed research into the impact of holding water on peat to lock in the carbon and avoid emissions. We are working with The Wildlife Trusts on annual carbon reporting which will be published in the future.

The Trust is using the Wilder Carbon process developed by Kent Wildlife Trust to ensure we can benchmark accurately with other Wildlife Trusts and measure our footprint and sequestration using the best available data and emission factors recommended by DEFRA/ Natural England.

A Climate and Nature Emergency Working Group of key staff and trustees has been established to monitor progress towards net-zero and the Trust's carbon footprint is measured each year.

Environment Policy

Our Environment Policy considers the direct impacts of all our activities including our built properties, landholding and reserves management, purchasing and transport. The Policy is available on our website.



The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Trustees on 6 August 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Rupert Taylor
Chair

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Somerset Wildlife Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the income and expenditure of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Rupert Taylor
Chair

PART 4:

Independent auditor's report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

to the Members of Somerset Wildlife Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Somerset Wildlife (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the consolidated and parent charitable company Balance Sheets, the consolidated Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

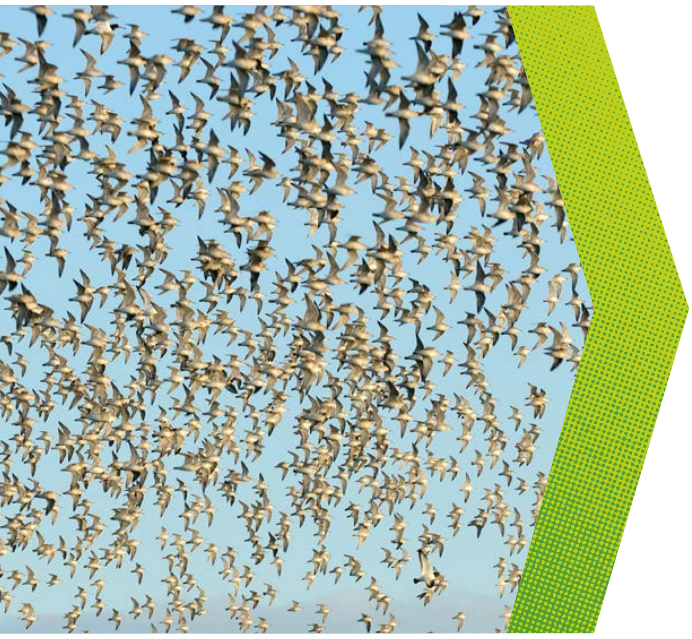
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.



Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit: the information given in the Annual Report, which includes the Directors' Report and Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report and Strategic Report included within the Annual Report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

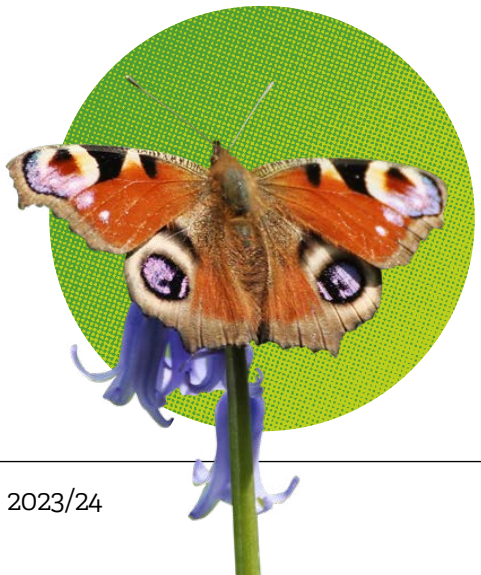
The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company, including the Companies Act 2006, Charity Act 2011, and employment legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and considering legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and



- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation, claims and breaches of relevant legislation; and
- reviewing correspondence with the Charity Commission and other relevant regulators.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponisbilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

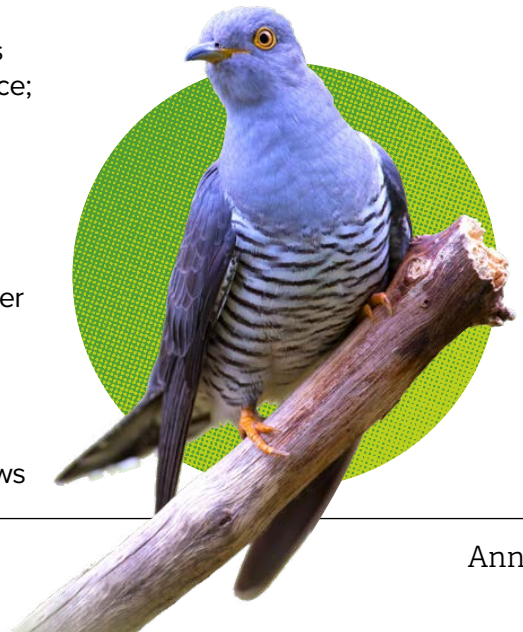
Use of our report

This report is made solely to the group and parent charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the group and parent charitable company's members and trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the group and parent charitable company and the group and parent charitable company's members as a body and the parent charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

.....
Michelle Ferris BSC (Hons) FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Albert Goodman LLP, Statutory Auditor

Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 2PX

Date: 6 August 2024



PART 5:

Financial statements

- Consolidated statement of financial activities
- Consolidated and Trust balance sheets as at 31 March 2024
- Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2024
- Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

Membership
income:
£890,000

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(Including consolidated income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds General £'000	Unrestricted Funds Designated £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Endowment Funds £'000	Total Funds 2024 £'000	Total Funds 2023 £'000
Income from:							
Membership, donations and legacies	2	1,345	-	730	-	2,075	2,027
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature - nature recovery	3	194	-	771	-	965	1,659
More space for nature - nature reserves	3	438	-	147	-	585	601
A movement for nature – Team Wilder	3	1	-	292	-	293	330
Telling Somerset's story – Somerset Environmental Records Centre	3	198	-	23	-	221	158
Other trading activities (including SWT (Sales) Ltd)	4	634	-	-	-	634	600
Investments	5	132	-	-	-	132	61
Total		**2,942**	**-**	**1,963**	**-**	**4,905**	**5,436**
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds:							
Cost of raising funds	6	313	14	-	-	327	285
Membership recruitment and retention	6	296	-	-	-	296	283
Merchandising costs	6	2	-	-	-	2	2
Investment management fees	6	5	-	-	-	5	7
SWT (Sales) Ltd	6	650	-	-	-	650	589
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature - nature recovery	6	231	23	1,043	-	1,297	1,627
More space for nature - nature reserves	6	647	75	271	-	993	803
A movement for nature – Team Wilder	6	407	-	481	-	888	796
Telling Somerset's story – Somerset Environmental Records Centre	6	220	-	23	-	243	219
Total		**2,771**	**112**	**1,818**	**-**	**4,701**	**4,611**
Net gain/(loss) on investments		18	-	-	-	18	(93)
Net income/(expenditure)		**189**	**(112)**	**145**	**-**	**222**	**732**
Transfers between funds	21	660	(337)	(323)	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		**849**	**(449)**	**(178)**	**-**	**222**	**732**
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2023		1,368	4,381	1,692	3,073	10,514	9,782
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2024		**2,217**	**3,932**	**1,514**	**3,073**	**10,736**	**10,514**

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above. The notes on pages 78 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED AND TRUST BALANCE SHEETS

As at 31 March 2024

	Notes	Group 2024 £'000	Group 2023 £'000	Charity 2024 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11	1,413	1,491	1,391	1,463
Heritage assets	11	4,788	4,460	4,788	4,460
Investments	12	847	836	847	836
		7,048	**6,787**	**7,026**	**6,759**
Current assets					
Stock	13	1	1	1	1
Debtors	14	1,575	1,569	1,625	1,545
Deposit accounts		2,299	2,192	2,299	2,192
Cash at bank and in hand		290	656	259	645
		4,165	**4,418**	**4,184**	**4,383**
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	477	641	465	578
Net current assets		**3,688**	**3,777**	**3,719**	**3,805**
Total assets less current liabilities		**10,736**	**10,564**	**10,745**	**10,564**
Provisions for liabilities	16	-	50	-	50
Total net assets		**10,736**	**10,514**	**10,745**	**10,514**
The funds of the charity					
Endowment funds		3,073	3,073	3,073	3,073
Restricted funds		1,514	1,692	1,514	1,692
Designated funds		3,932	4,381	3,932	4,381
Unrestricted funds		2,217	1,368	2,226	1,368
Total charity funds	**20**	**10,736**	**10,514**	**10,745**	**10,514**

The notes on pages 78 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 74 to 93 were approved by the Trustees on 6 August 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Rupert Taylor
Chair

Stephen Rogers
Treasurer

Somerset Wildlife Trust
Registered company number 818162

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by operating activities	25	(11)	192
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Dividends, interest and rental income		132	61
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		16	5
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(403)	(538)
Proceeds from sale of investments		142	262
Purchase of investments		(116)	(249)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(229)**	**(459)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(240)**	**(267)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,865	3,132
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	**26**	**2,625**	**2,865**

The notes on pages 78 to 93 form part of these financial statements.

Total income from donations and appeals:

£875,000

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Charitable company status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. The liability of the guarantors, who are the members, is limited to £1 per guarantor. At 31 March 2024 the charity had 22,692 members. The company is registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5AW. On behalf of the members, the Council controls the company.

(b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention with the exception of listed investments which are included at their fair value.

The Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

(c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

(d) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Limited on a line-by-line basis. A separate Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account for the charity has not been presented because the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption afforded by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006. The surplus in the year for the charity was £222,000 (2023: £732,000). Note 23 gives full details of the results of the subsidiary undertaking for the year to 31 March 2024.

(e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds
Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Certain unrestricted funds have been designated by the Trustees for specific purposes.

Designated funds
Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Council for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds that are used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

Endowment funds
The nature reserves endowment fund represents amounts received specifically for, and expended on, the purchase of nature reserves.

(f) Income

All income is included in the SOFA when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income for works that have been completed but has not yet been received is included as accrued income. The stage of completion is determined by comparing the services rendered to date to the accepted quotation or contract.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the Trust that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate.

Grants are included in the SOFA in the year they are receivable and when any performance conditions attached to the grant have been met.

Income from investments and from rental income is included in the SOFA in the year it is receivable.

The total income in respect of membership receivable is included as membership in note 2. Income from life membership is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

Gifts in kind are included in the SOFA at their estimated current value in the year in which they are receivable.

Trading income is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

(g) Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where an employee works in more than one department, their costs are allocated on the basis of time worked in each department. Certain overhead costs, such as relevant insurance premiums, are allocated on the basis of staff numbers, while others are allocated on an actual usage basis.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

(h) Tangible and heritage fixed assets and depreciation

Heritage assets are assets of historical or scientific importance that are held to advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of the charity and through public access contribute to the nation's culture and education at either a national or local level. Freehold nature reserves are included in heritage fixed assets at their acquisition costs and they are not revalued or depreciated. The charity aims to preserve and enhance its nature reserves, which are not held for their resale potential. The market value of the reserves is of no practical relevance to the charity's activities. No depreciation is provided because the reserves have an indefinite life.

The costs of leasehold nature reserves are amortised over the period of the lease.

All other tangible fixed assets are held at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided on all other tangible fixed assets as follows:

Freehold property 2% on a straight line basis
Computers on a straight line basis over 3 years
Plant and equipment 15% on written down value
Motor vehicles 25% on written down value
Office equipment, furniture and fittings 15% on written down value

(i) Investments

Listed Investments are stated at fair value which equates to market value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes all net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. The investment in the subsidiary is stated at cost.

(j) Stock

Stock consists of publications for distribution to members and purchased goods for resale. Stock is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

(k) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

(l) Financial instruments

The Trust only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and liabilities of the Trust and their measurement are as follows:

Financial assets – trade debtors, amounts owed by subsidiary company, legacies receivable other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amotised cost. Investment porfolios are basic financial instruments measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank and deposit accounts are classified as a basic financial instrument and measured at face value.

Financial liabilities which includes trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments and are measured at amortised cost.

(m) Pension costs

The Trust operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Pension contributions in relation to the defined contribution scheme are recognised as an expense in the statement of financial activities as incurred. The Trust contributes 7% of gross annual salary for participating employees.

(n) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the SOFA as incurred.

(o) Volunteer support

The Trust receives support from a wide variety of volunteers. It is not practical to place a value on the time volunteered by all these persons, due to the variety of duties performed, the differences in time spent, and the sheer number of volunteers who kindly donated their time.

(p) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

The Trustees are of the opinion that there are no other estimates or assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

During 2019/20 the progression of Ash Dieback disease on the Trust's nature reserves became apparant. A specialist report was commissioned during the year, and as a result, a provision of £600,000 was recognised in the year for the estimated future cost of removing dangerous trees in priority areas; primarily along roads and paths. Whilst there will continue to be ongoing works associated with Ash Dieback disease the emergency work has now been completed. Further details are included in note 16.

(q) Provisions

The Trust recognises a provision where it has a liability which is of uncertain timing or amount. Movements in provisions are recognised in the SOFA in the period in which they occur. Provisions are discounted where the time impact of money is material.

2. MEMBERSHIP, DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Membership	890	-	890	856	-	856
Donations and appeals	145	730	875	155	746	901
Legacies	310	-	310	270	-	270
	1,345	**730**	**2,075**	**1,281**	**746**	**2,027**

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2023 £'000
More space for nature - nature recovery						
DEFRA	-	172	172	-	23	23
Natural England	-	327	327	-	660	660
Statutory body grants	-	72	72	-	115	115
Other grants	-	200	200	-	810	810
Consultancy fees	194	-	194	51	-	51
	194	**771**	**965**	**51**	**1,608**	**1,659**
More space for nature - nature reserves						
DEFRA	418	26	444	431	6	437
Statutory body grants	-	-	-	-	1	1
Other grants	-	121	121	-	135	135
Grazing licences and property lettings	19	-	19	16	-	16
Wood and firewood sales	1	-	1	12	-	12
	438	**147**	**585**	**459**	**142**	**601**
A movement for nature - Team Wilder						
DEFRA	-	3	3	-	-	-
Natural England	-	-	-	-	2	2
Statutory body grants	-	17	17	-	61	61
Other grants	1	272	273	-	267	267
	1	**292**	**293**	**-**	**330**	**330**
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset's Environmental Records Centre						
Other grants	-	23	23	-	17	17
Service level agreements	92	-	92	65	-	65
Data services	96	-	96	76	-	76
Sales income	10	-	10	-	-	-
	198	**23**	**221**	**141**	**17**	**158**
	831	**1,233**	**2,064**	**651**	**2,097**	**2,748**

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Charity £'000	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 23) £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Charity £'000	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 23) £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Shop sales	2	-	2	2	-	2
Fundraising events	7	-	7	27	-	27
Other fundraising activities	72	-	72	41	-	41
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	-	553	553	-	530	530
	81	**553**	**634**	**70**	**530**	**600**

5 INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Dividends receivable from equity shares	25	-	25	23	-	23
Interest receivable from bank and deposit accounts	107	-	107	38	-	38
	132	**-**	**132**	**61**	**-**	**61**

6. BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Activities undertaken directly £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Expenditure on raising funds						
Cost of raising funds	253	74	327	215	70	285
Membership recruitment and retention	257	39	296	244	39	283
Merchandising costs	2	-	2	2	-	2
Investment management fees	5	-	5	7	-	7
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	525	125	650	487	102	589
	1,042	**238**	**1,280**	**955**	**211**	**1,166**
Charitable activities						
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,161	136	1,297	1,489	138	1,627
More space for nature - nature reserves	851	142	993	673	130	803
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	685	203	888	596	200	796
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmental Records Centre	198	45	243	181	38	219
	2,895	**526**	**3,421**	**2,939**	**506**	**3,445**
	3,937	**764**	**4,701**	**3,894**	**717**	**4,611**

SUPPORT COST BREAKDOWN BY ACTIVITY

	Costs of generatng voluntary income £'000	Membership recruitment and retention £'000	SWT (Sales) Ltd £'000	More space for nature - nature recovery £'000	More space for nature - nature reserves £'000	A movement for nature - Team Wilder £'000	Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environment Records Centre £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Finance	11	2	27	30	31	30	10	141	130
HR/Staff support	7	1	17	18	19	18	6	86	83
Office costs	8	2	20	22	23	21	7	103	73
Property and motor vehicles	6	1	16	17	18	17	6	81	74
Recoverable VAT	(5)	-	-	(3)	(15)	(3)	-	(26)	(8)
Marketing	29	28	1	2	16	72	1	149	155
Information technology	9	2	23	26	27	25	8	120	105
National support	4	1	10	11	11	11	4	52	50
Insurance	1	-	2	2	2	2	1	10	6
Governance	4	1	9	10	11	10	3	48	49
	74	**38**	**125**	**135**	**143**	**203**	**46**	**764**	**717**

BASIS OF ALLOCATION

Finance	Headcount
HR/staff support	Headcount
Office costs	Headcount
Property and motor vehicles	Headcount
Recoverable VAT	Actual resources expended
Marketing	Actual resources expended
Information technology	Headcount
National support	Headcount
Insurance	Headcount
Governance	Headcount

7. OTHER COST DISCLOSURES

	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Depreciation	139	111
Auditors' remuneration:		
Audit fees	13	13
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(2)	-

8. STAFF COSTS

	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Wages and salaries	2,362	2,215
Social security costs	219	216
Pension costs	153	146
	2,734	**2,577**

The number of employees whose renumeration exceeded £60,000 was as follows:

	Total 2024	Total 2023
£60,000 - £69,999	-	1
£70,000 - £79,999	1	1
	1	**2**

Total remuneration of key management personnel in the period was £504,000 (2023: £496,000).

The key management personnel of the group and the parent charity comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Engagement, Director of Nature Recovery, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/ Deputy CEO, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management, Head of Nature Recovery, Head of Engagement, Head of Communications, Head of Fundraising, Head of Innovation and Science, Head of People, Culture and Resources, Director of Commercial and Nature Based Solutions and Head of Finance.

The average number of employees during the year, analysed by function, was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Charitable activities	78	73
Raising funds	8	10
Governance	1	1
	87	**84**

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year totalled 75 (2023: 71).

9. TRUSTEE EMOLUMENTS

	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Donations received from Trustees	1	1

Trustees did not receive any remuneration or benefits in kind during either year. One trustee was reimbursed for travel expenses during the year (2023: one).

10. PENSION COSTS

Defined contribution scheme

The Trust contributes 7% of annual salary to employees' current pension schemes, all of which are now defined contribution in nature. The pension charge for the year in respect of these contributions amounted to £153,000 (2023: £146,000).

11. TANGIBLE AND HERITAGE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Nature reserves						
	Freehold (Heritage funds) £'000	Leasehold £'000	Freehold and leasehold property £'000	Plant and equipment £'000	Vehicles £'000	Office equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost							
At 1 April 2023	4,460	104	1,146	695	190	302	6,897
Additions	328	-	-	29	17	29	403
Disposals	-	-	(13)	(11)	(7)	(2)	(33)
At 31 March 2024	**4,788**	**104**	**1,133**	**713**	**200**	**329**	**7,267**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2023	-	104	151	339	139	213	946
Charge for the year	-	-	23	57	17	42	139
Disposals	-	-	-	(11)	(7)	(1)	(19)
At 31 March 2024	**-**	**104**	**174**	**385**	**149**	**254**	**1,066**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2024	**4,788**	**-**	**959**	**328**	**51**	**75**	**6,201**
At 31 March 2023	**4,460**	**-**	**995**	**356**	**51**	**89**	**5,951**

Charity

	Nature reserves						
	Freehold (Heritage funds) £'000	Leasehold £'000	Freehold and leasehold property £'000	Plant and equipment £'000	Vehicles £'000	Office equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost							
At 1 April 2023	4,460	104	1,146	653	190	245	6,798
Additions	328	-	-	29	17	25	399
Disposals	-	-	(13)	(11)	(7)	-	(31)
At 31 March 2024	**4,788**	**104**	**1,133**	**671**	**200**	**270**	**7,166**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2023	-	104	151	316	139	165	875
Charge for the year	-	-	23	54	17	36	130
Disposals	-	-	-	(11)	(7)	-	(18)
At 31 March 2024	**-**	**104**	**174**	**359**	**149**	**201**	**987**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2024	**4,788**	**-**	**959**	**312**	**51**	**69**	**6,179**
At 31 March 2023	**4,460**	**-**	**995**	**337**	**51**	**80**	**5,923**

Heritage fixed assets

Heritage assets are represented as freehold nature reserves above. A summary of transactions relating to heritage assets over the last five years is as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £'000	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Cost of acquisitions	323	187	1,144	108	1
Value of donated assets	5	-	-	-	-
Carrying amount of disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds of disposals*	-	-	35	-	-
Value of impairment	-	-	-	-	-

*Proceeds of disposals in 2022 represents the sale of land that was donated to Trust.

12. INVESTMENTS

Group

	Listed Securities £'000	Cash holdings £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Cost				
At 1 April 2023	769	18	787	691
Additions	116	141	257	511
Disposals	(140)	(123)	(263)	(415)
At 31 March 2024	**745**	**36**	**781**	**787**
Revaluations				
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2023	49	-	49	244
Net gains/(losses) arising on revaluations in the year	18	-	18	(93)
Disposals/reverse revaluations	(1)	-	(1)	(102)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2024	**66**	**-**	**66**	**49**
Fair value at 31 March 2024	**811**	**36**	**847**	**836**

Charity

	Listed Securities £'000	Cash holdings £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Cost				
At 1 April 2023	769	18	787	691
Additions	116	141	257	511
Disposals	(140)	(123)	(263)	(415)
At 31 March 2024	**745**	**36**	**781**	**787**
Revaluations				
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2023	49	-	49	244
Net gains/(losses) arising on revaluations in the year	18	-	18	(93)
Disposals/reverse revaluations	(1)	-	(1)	(102)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2024	**66**	**-**	**66**	**49**
Fair value at 31 March 2024	**811**	**36**	**847**	**836**

At 31 March 2024 the charity had one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activity of SWT (Sales) Limited is that of environmental consultancy work (see note 23).

13. STOCKS

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Stocks	1	1	1	1
	1	**1**	**1**	**1**

14. DEBTORS

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Trade debtors	711	833	581	489
Other debtors	76	18	76	20
Prepayments and accrued income	427	521	398	451
Legacies receivable	361	197	361	197
Amounts owed by subsidiary company	-	-	209	388
	1,575	**1,569**	**1,625**	**1,545**

Other debtors includes £nil (2023: £nil) due after more than one year.

15. CREDITORS

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year				
Trade creditors	263	278	258	276
Other creditors and accruals	214	363	207	302
	477	**641**	**465**	**578**

16. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Provisions				
Balance at 1 April 2023	50	289	50	289
Provisions recognised in the year	-	-	-	-
Provisions utilised in the year	(50)	(239)	(50)	(239)
Balance at 31 March 2024	**-**	**50**	**-**	**50**

17. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categorisation of financial instruments

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	847	836	847	836
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	1,148	1,048	1,227	1,093
	1,995	**1,884**	**2,074**	**1,929**

Item of income, expenditure, gain or losses

	Group				Charity			
	Income £'000	Expense £'000	Net gains £'000	Net losses £'000	Income £'000	Expense £'000	Net gains £'000	Net losses £'000
2024								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	25	5	18	-	25	5	18	-
	25	**5**	**18**	**-**	**25**	**5**	**18**	**-**
2023								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	23	7	-	(93)	23	7	-	(93)
	23	**7**	**-**	**(93)**	**23**	**7**	**-**	**(93)**

18. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Minimum lease payments on non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Within one year	8	5	8	5
Due one to five years	5	1	5	1
	13	**6**	**13**	**6**

19. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

The following transactions took place after the balance sheet date but prior to the approval of the financial statements. These are non-adjusting post balance sheet events in accordance with FRS 102.

Land acquisition

The Trust has purchased 31.57 hectares of land at Sharpham for £748,000. The purchase was completed in June 2024. A philanthropic loan totalling £810,000 enabled the purchase, repayable over a 3 year term ending June 2027. No interest is payable In respect of the loan.

20. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	Investment gains £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	1,368	2,942	(2,771)	660	18	2,217
Total unrestricted funds	**1,368**	**2,942**	**(2,771)**	**660**	**18**	**2,217**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves (heritage funds)	1,387	-	-	328	-	1,715
Operating freehold	994	-	(23)	(12)	-	959
Nature reserves development	16	-	-	-	-	16
Development fund	1,734	-	-	(1,234)	-	500
Innovation fund	34	-	(14)	15	-	35
Nature reserves fund	150	-	(75)	-	-	75
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	66	-	-	66	-	132
Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme	-	-	-	500	-	500
Total designated funds	**4,381**	**-**	**(112)**	**(337)**	**-**	**3,932**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature - nature recovery	1,271	1,066	(1,043)	16	-	1,310
More space for nature - nature reserves	182	551	(271)	(339)	-	123
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	239	323	(481)	-	-	81
Telling Somerset's story - Somerset Environmental Records Centre	-	23	(23)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**1,692**	**1,963**	**(1,818)**	**(323)**	**-**	**1,514**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves (heritage funds)	3,073	-	-	-	-	3,073
Total endowment funds	**3,073**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3,073**
Total funds	**10,514**	**4,905**	**(4,701)**	**-**	**18**	**10,736**

Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds represent the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for a particular purpose and are maintained in accordance with the policy explained in the Trustees' report.

Designated funds

The nature reserve fund represents funds other than endowment funds that the charity has used to purchase nature reserves.

The operating freehold fund represents the value of the Trust's freehold property, comprising the main headquarters in Taunton and buildings at Honeygar.

The designated nature reserve development fund represents proceeds from the sale of land during 2016/17 which the charity has set aside specifically for re-investment in nature reserves.

The designated development fund represents funds that the charity has set aside for investment in delivering the Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy.

The innovation fund represents funds that have been set aside to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the delivery of the Trust's programme of work.

The nature reserves fund represents funds set aside to to mitigate the reduction in agri-environment income.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund represents the cumulative surplus generated through SERC activities which has been earmarked for future investment in SERC activities.

The Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme fund represents funds set aside should a future liability arise as a result of the contingent liability set out in note 24.

Restricted funds

The restricted income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the unexpended balances of donations, grants and other income, which are to be applied for specific purposes within the charity's objectives:

- **More space for nature**
  - Nature recovery – improving nature everywhere through a Nature Recovery Network.
  - Nature reserves – manage our nature reserves for conservation purposes.
- **A movement for nature** – taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.
- **Telling Somerset's story** – through our online State of Nature platform that informs action and monitors progress.

Nature recovery includes £292,000 (2023: £414,000) from Natural England from the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme, £15,000 (2023: £297,000) in respect of the Discovery Grant and £277,000 (2023: £117,000) in respect of the Restoration Grant.

21. TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Designated funds		
Nature reserves	328	-
Operating freehold reserve	(12)	(12)
Development reserve	(1,234)	(100)
Innovation fund	15	-
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	66	-
Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme	500	-
Restricted funds		
More space for nature - nature recovery	16	(419)
More space for nature - nature reserves	(339)	(45)
A movement for nature - Team Wilder	-	5
Endowment funds		
Nature reserves	-	187
Unrestricted funds	660	384
	-	-

The designated nature reserves transfer represents land acquired in the year.

The designated operating freehold reserve transfer represents the depreciation charged in the year on the Trust's freehold property.

The designated development transfer represents the re-alignment of funds following a review of the Trust's financial reserves holding in the year.

The designated innovation fund transfer represents funds that have been set aside by the charity to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the Trust's programme of work.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund transfer represents the movement in the cumulative surplus achieved through activities which has been set aside for future investment in SERC.

The Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme transfer represents the funds that have been set aside should a future liability arise as a result of the contingent liability set out in note 24.

The restricted fund transfer represents the transfer of assets purchased during the year through projects and grants.

22. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Designated Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Endowment Funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	454	2,674	-	3,073	6,201
Investments	847	-	-	-	847
Current assets	1,393	1,258	1,514	-	4,165
Current liabilities	(477)	-	-	-	(477)
	2,217	**3,932**	**1,514**	**3,073**	**10,736**

23. SUBSIDIARY COMPANY

SWT (Sales) Limited income and expenditure statement for the year ended March 2024

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Turnover	592	543
Cost of sales	485	434
Gross profit	**107**	**109**
Administrative expenses	115	109
Net profit	**(8)**	**-**
Taxation	-	-
Net profit after taxation	**(8)**	**-**
Paid under gift aid to Trust	(8)	-
Retained profit carried forward	**-**	**-**
Turnover includes a charge of £39,000 (2023: £14,000) for services to the Trust. The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds of SWT (Sales) Limited was:		
Assets	213	198
Liabilities	(221)	(198)
Funds	**(8)**	**-**

24. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Trust participated in the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme, a hybrid, multi-employer pension scheme which provided benefits to members on a defined benefit or defined contribution basis.

During the year ended 31 March 2022, we were made aware of a potential issue relating to the date of closure of the defined benefit section of this Scheme. A detailed investigation has been undertaken by RSWT to establish the extent to which this could result in financial liability to employers, including Somerset Wildlife Trust, who participated in that section.

Whilst that investigation is nearing completion our position is complicated by the earlier Section 75 clause in relation to our part of the Scheme - the status of which might now be disputed or uncertain. We are seeking to resolve this matter within the next 12 to 18 months and should then be able to determine what, if any, liability we may have.

The Trust has therefore not made a provision for any liability in these financial statements. The Trustees have however designated £500,000 as a precautionary measure (see note 20).

25. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	222	732
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	139	111
(Gains)/losses on investments	(18)	93
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(132)	(61)
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(2)	-
(Decrease) in provision for liabilities	(50)	(239)
(Increase) in debtors	(6)	(469)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(164)	25
Net cash provided by operating activities	**(11)**	**192**

26. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	290	656
Deposit accounts (less than 3 months)	2,299	2,192
Investment cash holdings	36	17
	2,625	**2,865**

27. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	Endowment	Funds
	General £'000	Designated £'000	Funds £'000	Funds £'000	2023 £'000
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	1,011	270	746	-	2,027
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature - nature recovery	51	-	1,608	-	1,659
More space for nature - nature reserves	459	-	142	-	601
A movement for nature	-	-	330	-	330
Telling Somerset's story	141	-	17	-	158
Other trading activities (including SWT (Sales) Ltd)	600	-	-	-	600
Investments	61	-	-	-	61
Total	**2,323**	**270**	**2,843**	**-**	**5,436**
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds:					
Cost of raising funds	285	-	-	-	285
Membership recruitment and retention	283	-	-	-	283
Merchandising costs	1	-	-	-	1
Investment management fees	7	-	-	-	7
SWT (Sales) Ltd	589	-	-	-	589
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature - nature recovery	131	35	1,461	-	1,627
More space for nature - nature reserves	510	50	244	-	804
A movement for nature	439	-	357	-	796
Telling Somerset's story	202	-	17	-	219
Total	**2,447**	**85**	**2,079**	**-**	**4,611**
Net (loss) on investments	(93)	-	-	-	(93)
Net income/(expenditure)	**(217)**	**185**	**764**	**-**	**732**
Transfers between funds	383	(112)	(458)	187	-
Net movement in funds	**166**	**73**	**306**	**187**	**732**
Reconciliation of funds					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2022	1,202	4,308	1,386	2,886	9,782
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2023	**1,368**	**4,381**	**1,692**	**3,073**	**10,514**

28. STATEMENT OF FUNDS 2023

	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	Investment Gains £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	1,202	2,323	(2,447)	383	(93)	1,368
Total unrestricted funds	**1,202**	**2,323**	**(2,447)**	**383**	**(93)**	**1,368**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,387	-	-	-	-	1,387
Operating freehold	1,006	-	-	(12)	-	994
Nature reserves development	16	-	-	-	-	16
Development reserve	1,564	270	-	(100)	-	1,734
Innovation fund	34	-	-	-	-	34
Nature reserves fund	200	-	(50)	-	-	150
Honeygar	35	-	(35)	-	-	-
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	66	-	-	-	-	66
Total designated funds	**4,308**	**270**	**(85)**	**(112)**	**-**	**4,381**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature - nature recovery	913	2,238	(1,461)	(418)	-	1,272
More space for nature - nature reserves	234	236	(244)	(45)	-	181
A movement for nature	239	352	(357)	5	-	239
Telling Somerset's story	-	17	(17)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**1,386**	**2,843**	**(2,079)**	**(458)**	**-**	**1,692**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	2,886	-	-	187	-	3,073
Total endowment funds	**2,886**	**-**	**-**	**187**	**-**	**3,073**
Total funds	**9,782**	**5,436**	**(4,611)**	**-**	**(93)**	**10,514**

29. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Designated Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Endowment Funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	497	2,381	-	3,073	5,951
Investments	836	-	-	-	836
Current assets	726	2,000	1,692	-	4,418
Current liabilities	(641)	-	-	-	(641)
Provisions for liabilities	(50)	-	-	-	(50)
	1,368	**4,381**	**1,692**	**3,073**	**10,514**

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

We would like to thank all our members, donors and grant givers for their generous support which is helping nature to recover across Somerset including all those who wish to remain anonymous.

Legacies

Joyce Andrews
Susan Boss
Margaret Joyce Bristow
Christopher John Cornell
Sylvia Cumper
Shirley Price Jones
Marjory Kinsley-Templar
Elizabeth Jane McDonnell
Alice McMichael
John Millington
Ursula Angela Liona Mond
Aideen Dorothy Campbell Perry

Patrons

Phillipa Archer
David and Loredana Buchan
Dudley Cheesman
John Deverell CBE
Charles Fattorini
James and Alka Hughes- Hallett
Stanley and Jennifer Johnson
Anne Jones
Jean Mantle
Rohan and Lily Masson-Taylor
Lesley O'Mara
Mark O'Neill
Nigel and Janet Phillips
John Poingdestre
Gill Rickards and Simon Hart
Laura Roberts
Janet Robinson and Paul Groom
Tim and Dede Sanderson
Paul Sheppard and Lucy Dunford
Paul and Mona Sinclair
Lucy Starling
Clive Taylor
Jane Taylor
Chris and Maria Thring
Patrick Thomson
Robert Unwin
Sarah Warren
Neil and Sarah Williams
Giles Woodward

Corporate members and partners

A C Mole
Habitat Aid Ltd
Melhuish and Saunders Ltd

Grants and Trusts

AJH Ashby Wills Trust + HSBC
Aviva
Banister Charitable Trust
Biffa Awards
BizGive
Blair Foundation
CAF - America
Charitable Trust
Clark Foundation
Defra FiPL funding
Defra #Species Survival Fund
Devon Wildlife Trust
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
Ecological Restoration Fund
Elmgrant Charitable Trust
Environment Agency
Ernest Cook
Ewing and Haines Charitable Trust
The Fairfield Charitable Trust
Foxglove Charitable Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation
Glastonbury Town Fund
Golden Bottle Trust
Groundworks
Hamamelis Charitable Trust
Highways England / RSWT
Hinkley Community Fund
John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust
Joseph Strong Frazer Trust
Keith Showering Charitable Trust
Leonard Laity Stoate
Linmardon Trust
Ludlow Trust
MacRobert Trust
Mendip Hills AONB
Natural England
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Ninesquare Trust
Norman Smith Charitable Oliver Morland
Roger and Sarah Bancroft Clark
RSWT Precious Peatland Settlement
Settlement 1965
ShareGift
Smith Charitable Trust
Somerset Community Foundation
Spar Community Awards
Steel Charitable Trust
The Stephen Clark Charitable
Tesco Stores
Trust company (UK) Ltd Verdon-Valencia Community Fund
Wessex Water
Wild Flower Society

We would like to acknowledge all donations made in memory of Heather Corrie.

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS

Key people

Patron
Simon King OBE

President
Stephen Moss

Vice-Presidents
Dudley Cheesman
Roger Martin
Chris Sperring MBE

Directors and Trustees
The directors of the charitable company ("the Trust") are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Trustees on the date of approval of this report, all of whom were members for the whole of the financial year in question unless stated otherwise, were as follows:

Chair
Graeme Mitchell
(resigned 18 November 2023)
Rupert Taylor
(appointed 18 November 2023)

Vice-Chair
Matthew Bell
(resigned 4 March 2024)
Tina Trickett
(appointed 12 March 2024)

Treasurer
Richard Atkin
(resigned 1 August 2023)
Stephen Rogers
(appointed 1 August 2023)

Elected Trustees
Richard Atkin
(resigned 1 August 2023)
Matthew Bell
Amy Coulthard
Edward Green
Philip Holms
Stuart McBride
Graeme Mitchell
(resigned 18 November 2023)
Holly Purdey
Stephen Rogers
(appointed 1 August 2023)
Dr Richard Scarlett
Dr Daniel Skinner
Dr Mark Steer
Rupert Taylor
(appointed 18 November 2023)
Tina Trickett

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity.
Charity number 238372.
Company number 818162.
Registered office: 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AW

SWT (Sales) Ltd Directors
Malcolm Hutton
Stuart McBride
Damien Reid
Peter Solly
Georgia Dent
Tina Trickett
(appointed 4 June 2024)
Patrick Vandesteen

Senior Leadership Team
Katie Arber,
Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy Chief Executive Officer
(resigned 14 July 2023)
Simon Clarke,
Head of Nature Recovery
Georgia Dent,
Chief Executive Officer
Kirby Everett,
Head of Marketing and Communications
Rachael Fickweiler,
Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management
James Grischeff,
Director of Nature Recovery *(appointed 19 February 2024)*
Helun Jones,
Head of People, Culture and Resources
Sophie Laurie,
Head of Innovation and Evidence *(appointed 5 February 2024)*
Kate Matravers-Cox,
Head of Finance
Adam Murray,
Director of Action for Nature *(appointed 4 December 2023)*
Paul Smith,
Director of Business Planning and Development *(appointed 16 April 2024)*
Rebecca Walford,
Interim Head of Fundraising
(appointed 3 July 23, resigned 31 March 24)
Head of Fundraising
(appointed 1 April 2024)
Mark Ward,
Interim Head of Engagement *(appointed 16 October 2023, resigned 31 March 2024)*
Scott West,
Director of Commercial and Nature-based Solutions
(resigned 9 October 2023)

Advisers

Senior Statutory Auditor
Michelle Ferris, **Albert Goodman**, Goodwood House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2PX

Bankers
Lloyds Bank, 31 Fore Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HN

CCLA Investment Management Limited, One Angel Lane, London, EC4R 3AB

Solicitors
Clarke Willmott, Blackbrook Gate, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PG

Investment Managers
Rathbones Investment Management Limited, 10 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4NT

Land Agents
Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 1 High Street, Chard, Somerset

PICTURE CREDITS:

Cover, **Alamy**

p2, p9 (landscape), p30 (orchard), p31 (swan), p32 (landscape), p36, p61, **Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION**

p3, p8, p9 (deer), p10-11, p12, p16-17, p28, p50 (common blue), p56 (hedgehog), p56 (fly agaric), p60 (kingfisher), p71, **Jon Hawkins/Surrey Hills Photography**

p4-5, p15, p54-55, **Amy Lewis**

p6, **Chris Maguire**

p7, **Nick Upton/2020VISION**

p14, (community garden) **Paul Harris/2020VISION**

p14, (Cranes) **Nick Upton/2020VISION**

p18-19, **Vaughn Matthews**

p20, **Ben Porter**

p22 (beaver), **Nick Upton**

p22 (bluebells), **Luke Massey/2020VISION**

p23 (pine marten), p39 (dormouse), p49, **Terry Whittaker/2020VISION**

p23, p25, p26, p31, p33, p34, p39, p40, p41, p44, p45, p46, p47, p50, p51, p52, p53 (portraits), **Kirby Everett**

p24 (landscape), p52 (lapwing), **Mark Hamblin/2020VISION**

p24 (otter), p67, p72-73, p77, **Andy Rouse/2020VISION**

p26 (Westhay), **Sian Russell**

p27, **Jamie Hall**

p30 (volunteers), **Matthew Roberts**

p32 (starfish), **Dan Bolt**

p33 (youth), **Matt Slater**

p35 (poppies), P38 (moss), p48 (knot), p69, **Chris Gomersall/2020VISION**

p38 (landscape), **Honeygar project**

p40, **Wired for Sound**

p42-43, **Thinesh Thirugnanasampanthar**

p48 (volunteers), **xxxx**

p58, **Andrew Parkinson/2020VISION**

p59 (volunteers), **Lizzie Wilberforce**

p59 (frog), **Dale Sutton/2020vision**

p60 (slow worm), **Bruce Shortland**

p63, **Les Binns**

p64, **John Bridges**

p66, p70, **Janet Packham**

p68 (deer), **Gillian Day**

p68 (shrill carder bee), **Gabrielle Horup**

p91, **David Tipling/2020VISION**

p94, **Guy Edwardes/2020VISION**

Back cover, **Danny Green/2020VISION**

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 238372

Accounts

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022-23

Somerset
Wildlife Trust

CONTENTS

WHAT WE DO 3

WELCOME FROM CHAIR OF COUNCIL 4

STRATEGIC REPORT 5
More space for nature 6
A movement for nature 10
Telling Somerset's story 13
Developing our charity 15
Financial review 18

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 23

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT 24

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES 28

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST 29

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 32
Consolidated statement of financial activities 33
Consolidated and Trust balance sheets as at 31 March 2023 34
Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2023 35
Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 37

GIFTS AND DONATIONS 54

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS 55

WHAT WE DO

Somerset Wildlife Trust is an independent charity and our vision is of a Somerset-wide Nature Recovery Network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

We are working to make the changes needed for nature and people to thrive together by building a movement for nature – Team Wilder – and we will tell the story of nature's recovery in Somerset to inform action and monitor progress – Somerset's State of Nature.

We rely on donations from our members and many supporters, as well as funding from grant-giving bodies and companies, and profits from our ecological consultancy, First Ecology. We have many volunteers giving their time to help us and Team Wilder is increasing the action being taken for nature right across Somerset.

We are part of a national federation of 46 local Wildlife Trusts which are working together to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030.

WELCOME FROM CHAIR OF COUNCIL

2022-2023 was another year of continued growth and expansion as we move along the road to a Wilder Somerset.

Against a post-Covid backdrop of inflation, freak weather events and deeply worrying proposed changes in government environmental legislation, our work to deliver our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy has continued with determination, resulting in significant achievements.

To deliver our strategy we need to grow our team, income and impact and to support this in 2022-23 we began to diversify our sources of income to reflect emerging market opportunities and to grow our commercial activities through our subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. This included growing our land management advice, bidding for with 13 Levels' farmers successfully to undertake a pilot Environmental Land Management Scheme to develop green finance mechanism that support nature's recovery, as well as working with Kent Wildlife Trust to develop Wilder Carbon.

Our Avalon Marshes reserves and work at Honeygar, our first wilding site, are central to our efforts to safeguard peat, this most precious of habitats given the climate emergency. Our work with partners to restore lowland peat has been bolstered by the involvement of the Somerset Local Nature Partnership, which represents many stakeholders from within and beyond the conservation sector. Likewise, Natural England's declaration of the Somerset Wetlands 'Super' National Nature Reserve (NNR), now provides a framework which brings more land into protected status within this landscape.

Ash Dieback continues to be of ongoing concern and has dominated much of the work of our nature reserves managers alongside cyclical habitat management. Our reserves remain vital stepping stones in our ambition to create a strong Nature Recovery Network, and keeping them in the best condition continues to be a significant financial commitment. Thanks to grant funding we were also able to introduce novel digital interpretation at Catcott and Westhay, also creating an Island Hide and boardwalk through the reeds.

Our work to build Wilder Communities and for those living within them to live Wilder Lives was significantly boosted thanks to funding secured to reach new audiences and embed the ethos of Team Wilder in more parts of Somerset, supporting our desire to deliver our newly created Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy. Foundations for our growing youth work were set thanks to the completion of our Green Mentor project, and our Somerset Nature Connections partnership project showed how putting nature into lives can be truly transformational.

We transitioned our volunteer-led Area Groups into a larger Team Wilder events team, and thank them for their tireless commitment over many years to the Trust. We have recruited Wilder 'Champions' across the county to support communities in their journey to put nature back in their towns and villages and we developed a range of exciting new citizen science projects, including the launch of The Big Count.

Our efforts this year have been amplified by those of our loyal members and supporters who continue to inspire us with their passion for nature. From supporting appeals and fundraising in different ways, to campaigning, engaging with their MPs on important issues and working in their communities at a grassroots level to bring about the changes we need for nature, they remain the lifeblood of our charity, as do the hundreds of volunteers that help us in so many ways.

And last, but certainly not least, I am incredibly grateful for the commitment, tenacity and energy of our staff, whose numbers grew this year as we widened the breadth of skills to deliver our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy.

This is my last report as Chair of the Trust, as my tenure concludes at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. So much has changed in those five years including through the impact of Ash Dieback and the Covid pandemic. During the darkest days of Covid, we finalised our 10-year strategy towards a Wilder Somerset 2030 and made the decision to buy Honeygar, a former dairy farm, which is now the site of our most ambitious project ever, a pioneering wilding project that has already garnered significant interest and support.

Whilst the change for us as an organisation has been rapid, nature is our constant. The joy of spending time at our nature reserves cannot be matched and access to nature for all must be the lodestar for all that we do.

We have done much this year to ensure that Somerset Wildlife Trust is in robust financial shape to weather the challenges that the uncertain economic climate brings and are confident that we will continue to make good progress in the coming year.

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

STRATEGIC REPORT
ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

We know that we cannot do this alone, so working in partnership with others has been of strategic importance this year.

The report set out on pages 6–21 is a strategic report and Directors' report as required by sections 414A and 415 of the Companies Act 2006 and has been prepared in accordance with Part 15 of this Act and a Trustees' Report as required by the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.

Cockchafer

MORE SPACE FOR NATURE

Our strategy sets out to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030 so Somerset has a strong and connected network of wild spaces – Somerset's Nature Recovery Network. We know that we cannot do this alone, so working in partnership with others has been of strategic importance this year.

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Working with our landscape partners, supporting Natural England's declaration of the 6,140 hectare Somerset Wetlands 'super' NNR,** which includes many of our Avalon Marshes nature reserves, thus laying the foundation for a wider Government supported Somerset Nature Recovery Area project on the Somerset Levels and Moors
- **Expanding our work with landowners in both West and East Mendip,** with landowners playing their part in filling vital gaps in Somerset's Nature Recovery Network
- **Launch of a new Climate Adaptation toolkit** to help climate vulnerable communities make decisions and take action on climate adaptation
- **Continuing to host and chair Somerset's Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** with notable progress in the areas of peat restoration, completing a Tree Strategy for Somerset, and championing Green Prescribing
- **Progressing preliminary plans to rewet the peat soils at Honeygar,** completing habitat and species surveys and collecting baseline carbon and greenhouse gas data
- **Wilder Carbon launched with Honeygar as one of two pathfinder projects** meaning Soil Association accredited carbon emission units can officially be purchased - a pioneering product in a new market
- **Completing the majority of priority tree safety work** arising from the impacts of Ash Dieback
- **Our Dormouse Reconnected project, in partnership with National Highways,** saw us pilot the installation and use of wildlife bridges along the M5 near Taunton, to help reconnect isolated populations of critically rare hazel dormice with wider populations towards the Blackdown Hills

Our nature reserves are vital if we are to reverse the continuing declines in biodiversity. Fighting spiralling costs, our staff alongside our amazing volunteers, have been busy maintaining habitats, repairing infrastructure, and delivering all of the critical work needed to ensure habitats remain in quality condition as well as overseeing new, accessible visitor features. Much of this work was funded by two Green Recovery Challenge Fund grants which allowed us to complete the majority of critical tree safety work to ensure our nature reserves are safe and the impacts of Ash Dieback on our woodland reserves and nature's recovery are minimised and make significant improvements at Westhay and Catcott.

The experience for visitors to some of our key reserves is now enhanced through installing new benches, a boardwalk and a dipping platform. Seeing the plans for our new Island Hide at Westhay Moor come to fruition was a significant milestone. The boardwalk and hide, with its innovative design, now offer spectacular access through the reedbeds.

We want everyone to have the opportunity to access nature and to break down real and perceived barriers to visiting nature reserves. Our innovative digital InfoPoints at Westhay and Catcott enable visitors to use their mobile device to access digital information to help guide them round the reserves and learn about the wildlife there during their visit.

Whilst our nature reserves are a vital backbone of Somerset's Nature Recovery Network, greater connectivity between these nature-rich areas is vital to enhance the resilience of wildlife across the county, particularly in the face of climate change. Honeygar, our new wilding site that will enhance the connectivity of our Avalon Marshes reserves, has seen an extremely busy year, with rewetting activity already seeing results and baseline monitoring carried out. We were also able to buy the 'gallop', which will improve connectivity between the north and south halves of Green Down thanks to a generous supporter.

Working in partnership is also key in terms of driving that connectivity. We developed a holistic new vision for the Severn Estuary and progressed our approach to supporting returning species, namely beaver and pine marten. The success of our Mendip Facilitation Fund partnership with landowners has proven the power of collaboration and communication in identifying and achieving interconnected goals.

And on the Levels and Moors, our Adapting the Levels partnership project highlighted awareness of how critical our ability to adapt to climate change is moving forwards, creating an' Adaptation Toolkit' for communities and other organisations to use to make the very best decisions in climate vulnerable areas.

We have been able to broaden the scope of our land management advisory delivery, developing a library of online resources, freeing up capacity to provide specialist advice to smallholders, farmers, community groups and businesses in Somerset through a combination of our ecological consultancy, First Ecology and our new commercial services team. Through collaboration, we have delivered a series of sustainable land management training sessions covering topics including green finance and regenerative agriculture.

Working with the policy and advocacy teams at the central Wildlife Trusts we worked hard to defend nature and campaign for change around the issues of the Retainer EU Law Bill (REUL), water quality and, in particular, peat extraction. On a more local level, our work, in conjunction with the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) has enabled us to push forwards county-wide plans to help nature, the economy and climate work more harmoniously together.

CASE STUDY 1: Honeygar

In 2021, faced with an ecological and climate crisis Somerset Wildlife Trust took the bold act of acquiring Honeygar, a former dairy farm on the Somerset Levels for a pioneering wilding project to create an exemplar of nature-based solutions - a site where we could demonstrate and share our ideas with others to inspire and stimulate change.

By rewetting Honeygar's soils to protect its rare lowland peat, capture and store carbon and greenhouse gases, and by restoring the land for wildlife through alternative management practices, we wanted to show how nature's recovery can have other important benefits.

We have now completed initial rewetting works on the site - seeing results as early as the autumn, collected baseline carbon and greenhouse gas data, carried out habitat and species surveys with the help of specialist volunteers, mapped the whole site, and made improvements to the entrance, paths, bridges, ditches and rights of way. A pop-up laboratory for staff, students and volunteers was added, supporting our partnership with the University of the West of England (UWE).

Farmers, local and national government representatives, other Wildlife Trusts, donors, prospective funders all visited Honeygar to gain a better understanding of our vision and approach.

Honeygar was launched as one of two pathfinder projects through Wilder Carbon - a landmark new initiative developed by Kent Wildlife Trust which aims to rapidly scale up native habitat restoration in the UK by leveraging green carbon finance. The project has been validated by Soil Association Certification, meaning that carbon units at Honeygar can now officially be sold on the open market. The fantastic support we have had for Honeygar means we ended the year very close to achieving our £3.405m phase 1 target, with just £145k still to fundraise.

CASE STUDY 2: Collaboration, communication and connection in Mendip

In the summer, 16 Mendip Hills' farmers came together for the first time to take part in a four-day training programme which we were able to deliver through a successful Farming in Protected Landscape funding bid. At the end of the week the group created a shared vision based on their values and aspirations for their landscape. The programme has been so successful that we have been able to extend the training to explore financial planning, planned grazing and landscape planning next year, and the work has been selected as a DEFRA case study for the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

It did not stop there; one of the group members was announced as 2022's Sheep Farmer of the Year for the holistic and regenerative approach they have taken on their farm; six group members committed to undertaking a silvopasture-based tree planting programme in collaboration with Mendip District Council and the Local Authority Treescape Fund; and after running a training session on a Farm Carbon Toolkit, three members become case study farms for Mendip District Council's climate emergency declaration.

CASE STUDY 3: Somerset Peat Partnership Discovery Project

The Somerset Peatland Partnership brings peatland landowners, farmers, and communities together to prepare for landscape-scale changes to water and land management across Somerset, that will shift our peatlands from a landscape dominated by carbon emissions to one managed to deliver net sequestration by 2025.

Along with partners within the Local Nature Partnership, Somerset Wildlife Trust were successful in applying to the DEFRA Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme Discovery Grant, for funding to engage with landowners across the Somerset and North Somerset Levels and Moors with the aim of creating peat forming habitats - a first for Somerset lowlands.

We were able to have thoughtful and productive one to one discussions with farmers and landowners about a variety of topics, including greenhouse gas monitoring and emissions from peatland, and were able to offer site-based greenhouse gas flux demonstrations. A range of events covering topics such as raising water levels, paludiculture, restoration and greenhouse gas emissions proved very popular, indicating an appetite for knowledge within the landowner community.

In discovering the restoration potential of various peatland sites in the project area, environmental assessments have been commissioned for 10 sites, alongside 11 hydrological scoping reports and the installation of over 150 dipwells to monitor groundwater levels within the peatland. The project also successfully obtained restoration grant funding for 67 hectares of degraded peatland within the Somerset Wetlands NNR at Shapwick Heath and Westhay Moor.

CASE STUDY 4: Dormice reconnected

Reconnecting populations and habitats forms part of our Nature Recovery goal. Dormice are synonymous with the British countryside and an incredibly special inhabitant of Somerset's beautiful, ancient coppiced woodland. These beautiful creatures are rare and vulnerable, due to a reduction in wild habitats and the building of more roads, which they cannot cross easily. To help counteract this, we partnered with National Highways to launch a new project, Dormouse Reconnected. We are working with Animex International to pilot the installation and use of wildlife bridges along the M5 near Taunton, to help reconnect isolated populations of critically rare hazel dormice with wider populations towards the Blackdown Hills.

The project has involved working with the local community, volunteers and local businesses to record, monitor and improve habitats at local green-spaces close to the motorway embankment – as part of Team Wilder. We have also partnered with Somerset Council to manage and re-plant a community area to help deliver Somerset's ecological strategy, in which the hazel dormouse feature as a keynote species. We hope that by working with our generous partners and the local community, we support this isolated population, help them thrive and have a lasting impact.

2023-24 PLANS

- **Grow the successful Mendip Farm Cluster** and expand the area of the cluster to include the whole of the Mendip Hills, fostering even greater collaboration with groups of farmers and land managers to plan for nature's recovery at a landscape-scale
- **Work with our partners on the Mendips to bring together our Mendip nature reserves and other land together into a Mendip Super NNR declared by Natural England,** in the same way that has been achieved with the Somerset Wetlands NNR
- **Work closely with Somerset Council and other stakeholders to complete a Local Nature Recovery Strategy** for Somerset which will become an important asset to map and plan for nature's recovery in the county
- **Make further interventions to rewet Honeygar's precious peat soils** to create the conditions for more biodiverse habitats to form and carbon emissions to reduce, alongside planning for Phase 2 of the site's development
- **Using the science and evidence available, continue to manage our nature reserves** to be as diverse and dynamic as they can be to act as vital, resilient stepping stones within Somerset's Nature Recovery Network
- **Continue to explore, develop and champion nature-based business models** alongside the new ELMS scheme, to support funding our nature reserves and further develop the network of good practice that exists within our nature-friendly farming and landowner network

A MOVEMENT FOR NATURE

For nature to recover we need more people taking action for nature, a critical mass of at least one in four to tip the balance in nature's favour so more people follow their example. To do this we are building a movement for nature across Somerset – Team Wilder.

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Empowered communities to take action** by launching a new Community Empowerment pack, alongside a range of other advice sheets and resources for communities and individuals, supporting the 'WIlder Communities' element of our Team Wilder workstream
- **Secured funding of nearly £600K to work with communities, young people and individuals** in a range of areas, including along the coast and enable them to engage better with their local wildlife, running a successful 'WIld Beach' and 'Coastal School Champions Award' programmes
- **Relaunched our Wilder Gardening offering to include new resources to support people at home,** how to fundraise through our Open Garden scheme, and we extended our garden plaque scheme for a wider range of green spaces
- **Successfully recruited and trained Wilder Champions across the county** to support our volunteering and community engagement work
- **Worked more closely with the Nature Recovery team to create meaningful Team Wilder action** through advocacy and campaign work, citizen science, and encouraging people, particularly in unexplored nature corridors, to see their green space as critical pieces of the wider Nature Recovery Network for Somerset
- **The Somerset Nature Connections project,** a three year project, funded through the National Lottery Community Fund, now completed, worked directly with over 170 participants across a range of nature-based activities resulting in incredibly positive feedback on the impact connecting with nature had on their health and wellbeing

We know that for us to achieve our target of 30% of land and sea in recovery for nature in Somerset we cannot act alone. The ethos of Team Wilder is to show that everyone can make a contribution, and it is our mission to empower the whole county to take action for nature wherever they are, in whatever way they can. But we need volume. We have seen a positive surge in people's attitudes to nature, but so many people have yet to take their first step on a journey to; to learn about it, to value it and to put it into their everyday lives. Much of what we have done this year has been to extend our Team Wilder approach to support people across a more diverse audience in taking that first step to nature connection in a range of different ways.

This work was given a boost thanks to funding awarded across the country to wildlife trusts by the National Lottery Jubilee Fund to help us work with a wider range of reach communities with our focus being Taunton and Yeovil. Thanks to other funding, we have been able to make real progress in embedding the Team Wilder approach in many communities along Somerset's Coast.

Our Somerset Nature Connections project, in partnership with Somerset's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, advocates the five pathways to nature to support people to use nature to enhance their mental wellbeing. Our Wilder Churches initiative has gone from strength to strength, with a more parishes now involved in looking after and monitoring their church grounds. We boosted our Wilder Gardening offering, created an annual programme of events, and added a new strand Wilder Matters which explores some of the really big issues to create a better understanding how people can play a part in driving change.

Working with the nature recovery team and Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) we expanded our citizen science programme – supporting a range of species counts, community mapping projects and increasing the training and use of iNaturalist – a platform for collecting species data across the whole county. And of course we already have an amazing group of advocates for nature in the county – our wonderful volunteers, who have been tireless in their commitment to support our work in a range of ways. Through an annual volunteer survey, it was heartwarming to see that 93% of volunteers said they had an excellent or good experience volunteering with us.

We want everyone to have the opportunity to access nature and to break down real and perceived barriers to visiting nature reserves. We've installed new, innovative digital InfoPoints at Westhay and Catcott which enable visitors to use their mobile device to access digital information to help guide them round the reserves and learn about the wildlife there during their visit. We've created virtual tours so people can experience the reserve from their own home and also view trail cams, wildlife footage and much more.

CASE STUDY 5: Working towards a Wilder Coast

Our Wilder Coast has teamed up with Our Highbridge to work with local communities to improve green infrastructure around the River Brue and other green and blue spaces in the town – increasing access for all and looking for ways the area can be made more friendly for wildlife.

We are also working with Stacked Wonky Youth Dance Academy that works with young people in West Somerset. A cohort of eight young people (aged 12 to 18) have been developing performative innovative outdoor actions which will demonstrate their concern for the climate and ecological crises and the roles young people can plan. We will continue to develop both these projects over the next few years.

CASE STUDY 6: Wilder Gardening

Team Wilder is about everyone taking meaningful action for nature, in their local spaces. That could be parks, gardens, churchyards and schools which are all important within the Nature Recovery Network.

Our team of Wilder Gardening Champions, as part of the Wildlife Gardening Group, have been offering advice to private gardeners and communities to improve their space for wildlife. Over 250 people received a "This is a Wildlife Garden" award last year, and we received some useful feedback which has resulted in a revamp this year to recognise smaller spaces, courtyards, balconies, and allotments. A number of gardeners also opened up their space to raise funds for whilst and showcase wildlife gardening through the Wilder Open Garden Scheme.

CASE STUDY 7: Wilder Youth

Supporting the next generation of nature guardians and campaigners is crucial. Through our involvement in The Ernest Cook Trust's Green Influencers Scheme with additional funding from the Ninesquare Trust, our Green Mentor has, this year, supported four groups of Green Influencers in developing their own environmental action projects.

Three groups in Taunton, Glastonbury and Cheddar were awarded their own additional funds and created a variety of exciting projects: Priorswood raised awareness of the importance of pollinators by creating a short information film and leading seed ball making workshops in school; St Benedict's led a 'Peat Free' campaign, taking action by building composters and a wormery; and The Space, Cheddar focused on litter picking in their local area

2023-24 PLANS

- **Launch our new Heritage Lottery project, Somerset Wilder Communities 30x30,** and work with communities to create a framework to support a greater number of people taking community-led positive actions for nature within three priority nature recovery corridors
- **Recruit a Youth Officer** to develop a Youth Forum and increase engagement with young people and youth organisations across the county
- **Hold our very first Team Wilder Celebration event** – Wilder 2023 – to recognise and share the amazing work of our Wilder Communities and Wilder Champions
- **Strengthen the Wilder Lives programme** – embedding our ethos of nature connection and wellbeing across all of our activities with training, champion programme, expanding individual learning opportunities and resources, particularly for youth audiences and schools
- **Team Wilder events team to deliver a county-wide event programme** working with our Wilder Communities and Champions across a range of themes, including a series of online 'Wilder Matters' workshops on key conservation topics
- **Working with SERC take forward our citizen science programme,** training more groups to use the iNaturalist platform, continue our successful ShoreSearch and Sea Watch coastal surveys, and collect meaningful species data across the county to be bed into the annual Somerset State of Nature report
- **Support our Wilder Mendip nature recovery work** working with established and new partners to deliver a programme of events and activities that strengthen our relationships with landowners in this part of the county
- **Bridging the gap between our work and empowering others to take action by working more closely with the Team Wilder team** to provide a range of self-guided resources, campaigning toolkits and citizen science opportunities so people can play a real role in turning nature's fortunes around

TELLING SOMERSET'S STORY

Monitoring and demonstrating progress towards nature's recovery in Somerset through a shared online Somerset State of Nature platform is our third strategic goal. This will inform what action is needed and where, whether by us or by others.

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Launched our first The Big Count,** our biggest citizen science event as part of the Great Somerset Wildlife Count programme, with nearly 1,000 records logged in total and hundreds of people, signing up to iNaturalist and taking part
- **Worked with a range of nature stakeholders across the county to collate and analyse baseline habitat and species data** in order to create the first Somerset State of Nature document
- **Developed and created a new online recording system** to replace our outdated recording system to facilitate faster, easier input of data from a wider range of specialist recording groups
- **Made significant improvements to our internal data storage** capabilities to allow wider, more flexible access to county-wide species data moving forwards
- **Supported the Team Wilder team** on a range of citizen science projects and campaigns and provided guidance for community groups
- **Created a baseline online Community Map for every parish in the county, pre-populated with information on the ecological networks and nature corridors being developed in their area** – a starting point from which communities and groups can make a really helpful and meaningful contribution to our overall State of Nature mission
- **Completing an inventory of our Ancient Trees**

It is really important that we monitor and understand changes in both the diversity and the abundance of wildlife species we have across the county. This in turn helps us track the health of the ecosystems that exist to support them (and us), which are coming under increasing pressure from changes in our climate - and then make informed decisions on how our efforts are best directed. To do this, we need data.

We have undertaken a great deal of work to evaluate and modernise how we collect, analyse and share data, maps and ecological assessments of the quality and condition of the county's habitats - and thus biodiversity of the county as a whole - to ensure we have the fullest picture upon which to base our priorities. A new online recording system and approach to storing the data recorded will help us build a real picture of what is happening in Somerset. This then forms the foundation for the State of Nature in Somerset.

Collecting as much data as possible is vital, so we have been pleased to engage with many more communities across the county this year to set up community mapping

and citizen science projects to monitor a range of habitats and species. Mass participation citizen science counts, under the umbrella of the Great Somerset Wildlife Count have been popular and have generated thousands of records, and we were able to launch our first The Big Count, which brought in nearly a thousand records in its first year.

New approaches to data warehousing and data collection developed this year means that we will be able to be more responsive to new commercial opportunities and it means our data can be searched and accessed more easily and better inform decision-making within the county, particularly with regards to planning and development as we develop our Local Nature Recovery Strategy .

CASE STUDY 8: State of Nature

Developing a baseline for the first State of Nature was always going to be a complex challenge given the gaps in meaningful county records and data, access to the variety of places it is currently held and the format of that data.

Vital to us developing this baseline was figuring out which data sets would work best for assessing habitat condition and land use change – both of which can work as predictors for overall landscape health and also how best to represent the species element of the State of Nature - a more complex problem to solve – but one that was trialled using methods such as detection probability and distribution data.

Working closely with Somerset West & Taunton and Sedgemoor districts we were able to develop a methodology to collect data for these districts and expand this to produce results for the remaining two districts and the county as a whole. Overall, SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) conditions, land use, river conditions, invasive species and a select few individual species were assessed, providing a solid foundation for the work to continue and expand.

CASE STUDY 9: Taunton Big Bat Count

Bats are important indicator species in Somerset and their presence, or lack of, gives us important information about the quality of habitats within our urban environments. As an extension of the citizen science and engagement we' have been doing using iNaturalist, the Somerset Bat Group and SERC put into practice a new method for recording casual 'in flight' bat records. Echo Meters can turn any phone or tablet into a bat recording device and provide auto identification based on bat calls.

We organised and promoted a Taunton Big Bat Count, which included a guided walk with an expert and a roster of small groups taking the equipment and leading themselves on a walk through a predefined area of Taunton. Back at the office, we were able to watch on the big screen as new bat records were added to iNaturalist and at the end of the night, as each group came in, we were able to sit down and talk through what had been seen and where, with a near real-time map of bat sightings available through an iNaturalist project. A great success, the format and resources then being passed onto the Somerset Bat Group to then replicate in other areas of the county.

CASE STUDY 10: Shift to a new online data search service

Access to good quality data is vital if we are to develop meaningful and timely conservation strategies to address the climate and ecological challenges we face. Data can help us identify gaps in the Nature Recovery Network, highlight trends in species populations or habitat changes which otherwise may go unnoticed. A major change in SERC this year is a move to a new online data search service and moving all of SERC's existing data across to this new system.

In modernising our systems, we can improve and streamline access to our records. Clients and other stakeholders can now interact directly with the data, being able to view and change their own maps, filter species and sites with distances and year of record etc, and really fine tune what they wish to download or print based on much greater detail. In addition, we are now able to offer more flexible ways to pay for and access that data over time.

2023-24 PLANS

- **Promote and roll out our new online recording system to all of our specialist recording groups** to better facilitate their own recording, training them in the use of new technology to ensure that the data we receive is easily integrated into our data 'banks'
- **Publish the county's first Somerset State of Nature report** as a pilot for developing a 'live' online platform for a range of stakeholders to consult to make the best decisions for the county's wildlife
- **Work closely with the Team Wilder team to continue to support more communities** to become involved in gathering habitat and species data and develop their own community maps
- **Develop plans for an online Somerset State of Nature** report with the Somerset Local Nature Partnership
- **Train Wilder Champions and others in the use of iNaturalist** – our platform of choice for mass audience citizen science participation

DEVELOPING OUR CHARITY

We need to build our organisation to deliver a Wilder Somerset 2030 and to ensure our own actions support our aims. We grew in 2022-23 to support our ambitious plans and refocused our work to match our goals.

2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Brought in new skills and expertise to support a growing number and range of projects,** and to support the organisation in developing new commercial areas of work
- **Strengthened our HR and resources function** to ensure that we are able to better recruit, retain, train and support our staff and help them achieve their goals
- **Made sure Somerset Wildlife Trust remains a supportive and inclusive place to work** by setting up an EDI and Inclusion task force, launching our EDI and Inclusion plan policy and progressing our staff wellbeing agenda by increasing access to more on demand staff resources
- **Retained membership despite the post-Covid economic climate** – with over 22,000 members we have a bigger voice, with passionate and committed supporters who understand that their support is more important than ever
- **Rolled out the use of our new supporter database to the wider organisation,** enabling us to deepen or relationships with donors and supporters, develop bespoke targetted campaigns and save money by automating a range of different fundraising functions
- **Progressed our digital transformation strategy** with the recruitment of a Digital Transformation Officer to audit and future-proof our digital and began a project to migrate to SharePoint to support hybrid and cross-team working

Our people are what make our charity successful. We have grown our staff team significantly bringing new skills on board to reflect the organisation we need to be to have the impact nature needs to recover.

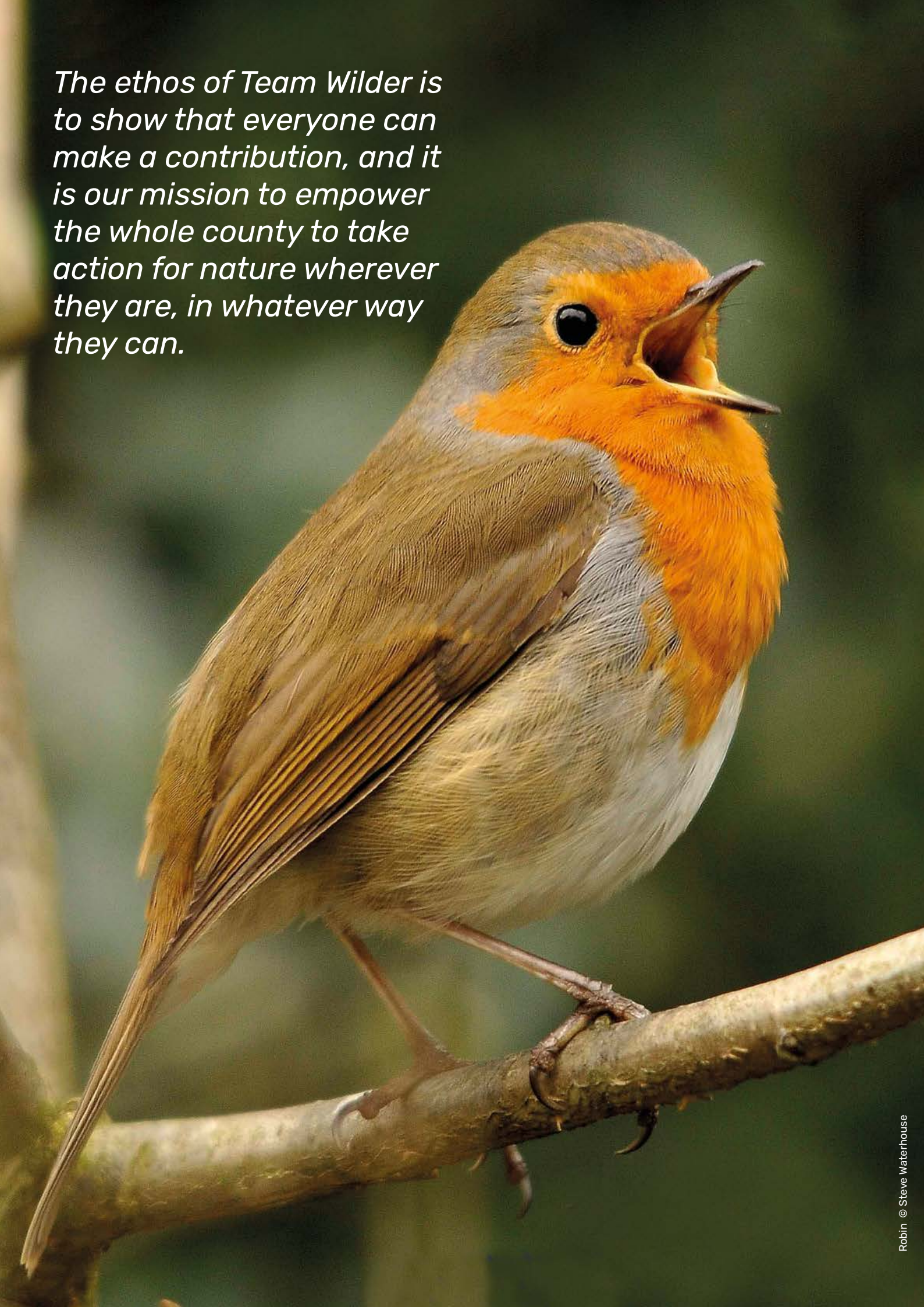
Expanding our HR and Resources function, we are working to create a culture that invests in, supports, nurtures, acknowledges and rewards people so we attract and retain staff and volunteers, embrace diversity and inclusion, and can authentically 'live' our values. We reviewed our recruitment and induction process and our training programme to harness the talent and commitment of our people and empower them to grow and develop new skills, including digital ones.

It is our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and we have committed to develop and deliver a climate and environmental strategy to achieve that. Whether it is office procurement, utilities and energy, building facilities, transport or our own landholdings, it is critical that we consider the carbon impact in our decisions, and inspire and enable others to take action for nature and the climate by leading by example. We have carried out an environmental impact/carbon audit of our operations, which has raised areas where we can make changes to reduce our impact.

2023-24 PLANS

- **Progress our digital transformation strategy,** applying and using technology to streamline our processes and the way we access the information we need to make good decisions and share knowledge and skills, creating a more collaborative culture and improving internal communications
- **Take forward plans to expand our commercial operations,** embed our land management service offering, take advantage of new opportunities such as BNG, and realise the full potential of First Ecology, our ecological consulting arm which will become the lynch pin of our commercial services
- **Secure long-term funding to maintain and improve the condition of our existing landholdings,** particularly in light of the transition to ELMS, climate change, and explore and invest in new land purchases
- **Address the need to provide inspiring and fit for purpose working environments** that support a more mobile and more distributed staff team to access the facilities they need to carry out their job function and collaborate more effectively with colleagues
- **Following the environmental impact/carbon audit of our operations,** lead by example and make changes to reduce our impact in areas wherever possible

The ethos of Team Wilder is to show that everyone can make a contribution, and it is our mission to empower the whole county to take action for nature wherever they are, in whatever way they can.



Robin © Steve Waterhouse

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Despite the challenging economic climate the Trust had a strong financial year and recognised an overall surplus of £731k (£2.8m: 2021-22), although a much lower surplus of £166k (£185k: 2021-22) was recognised on unrestricted funds (excluding designated funds). We continued to grow our staff and invest in the delivery of our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, with 52% more invested in charitable activities achieved primarily as a result of grant funding secured.

A total of £5.4m (£6m: 2021-22) income was recognised in the year, 47% of which, was from grants. Overall expenditure increased by 38% to £4.6m (£3.4m: 2021-22) with 75% invested in our charitable activities supporting nature's recovery.

A surplus of £239k (£818k: 2021-22) was achieved on unrestricted funds after transfers, including an increase of £73k in designated funds primarily as a result of legacy income recognised in the year, including from legacies receivable, which has been credited to the designated development reserve.

We recognised a surplus of £306k (£793k: 2021-22) on restricted funds which represents funds received during the year for specific purposes as agreed with the funder, which will be expended in future financial years. This includes £1.2m raised for Honeygar in the last two financial year's which will support its development and wilding.

A surplus of £187k (£1.1m: 2021-22) was recognised on endowment funds for the acquisition of 67 hectares of land to extend Westhay and incorporate the gallop into Green Down nature reserve, both generously funded through grants and major gifts.

Whilst overall charity funds increased by £731k from £9.8m to £10.5m, a significant proportion these funds are represented by tangible and heritage assets (land and buildings), restricted funds and designated funds. As a result of continued planned growth in 2023-24 our financial reserves target has increased which has resulted in free financial reserves being £989k below the target, which is set as four months' planned expenditure, although discretionary designated funds provide reassurance and ensure on-going financial stability as they exceeded this shortfall.

We recognise the importance of ongoing financial resilience, particularly in the increasingly challenging economic climate and during the year have invested in the development of new commercial activities, including land advisory and ecological services, to diversify and grow future income to support on-going financial stability.

INCOME

Income for the year totalled £5.4m (£6.1m: 2021-22) as a result of grant funding and the continued generosity of supporters.

As a result of significant projects, grant income grew to £2.5m (£1.6m: 2021-22) representing the largest source of income in the year and 47% of overall income. This included £647k from two Green Recovery Challenge Fund projects and £643k from Natural England for nature recovery, which included £414k from the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme. A total of £438k (£470k: 2021-22) grants were received through agri-environment schemes, which specifically support the management of our nature reserves and represent 17% of total grant income.

Income from donations and appeals totalled £901k (£2m: 2021-22) representing 17% of total income and includes £630k raised for Honeygar.

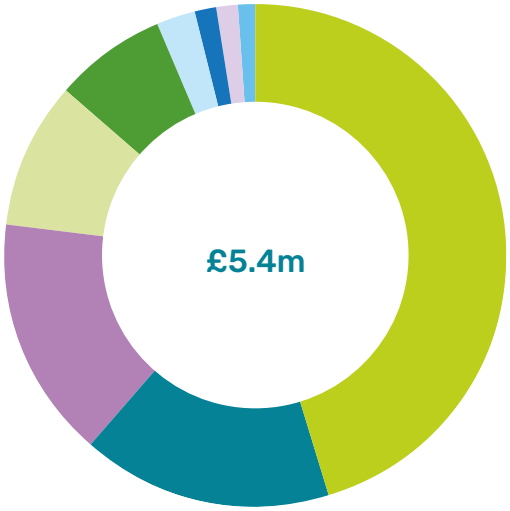
Membership income grew to £856k (£835k: 2021-22) and remained the third largest source of income in the year at 16% of total income. The number of members also grew slightly to 22,265 (22,108: 2021-22).

Income from other trading activities totalled £600k (£627k: 2021-22). This includes £529k (£571k: 2021-22) income achieved by the Trust's wholly owned subsidiary, which includes First Ecology. The reduction in income compared to 2021-22 is primarily due to more higher value contracts being awarded in the previous year combined with staff changes and time invested in the development of other commercial activities.

A total of £270k (£637k: 2021-22) legacy income was recognised in the year and has been credited to the designated development reserve for future projects.

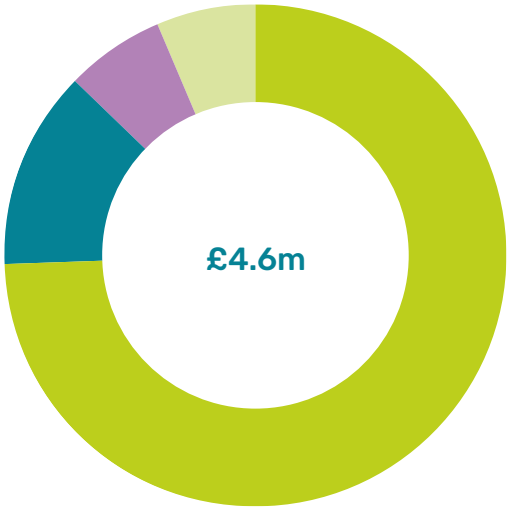
Investment income increased to £61k (£17k: 2021-22) primarily due to an increase in interest rates.

Income by source



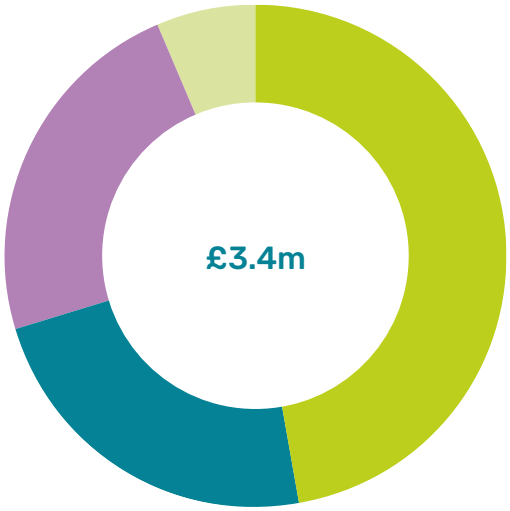
	2022-23 £000s	2021-22 £000s	CHANGE %
Grants	2,528	1,613	57
Donations and appeals	901	2,052	-56
Membership	856	835	3
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	529	571	-7
Legacies	270	637	-58
Data Services and SLAs	141	168	-16
Other	79	123	-36
Other fundraising activities	71	55	29
Investment income	61	17	259
Total income	**5,436**	**6,071**	**-10**

Expenditure by activity



	2022-23 £000s	2021-22 £000s	CHANGE %
Charitable activities	3,446	2,261	52
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	589	552	7
Membership recruitment	283	288	-2
Raising funds	294	250	18
Total expenditure	**4,612**	**3,351**	**38**

Expenditure on charitable activities



	2022-23 £000s	2021-22 £000s	CHANGE %
More space for nature – nature recovery	1,628	515	216
More space for nature – nature reserves	803	866	-7
A movement for nature	796	697	14
Telling Somerset's story	219	183	20
Total expenditure	**3,446**	**2,261**	**52**

EXPENDITURE

Overall expenditure grew by 38% to £4.6m (£3.4m: 2021-22). Expenditure on charitable activities supporting nature's recovery in Somerset increased by 52% to £3.4m (£2.3m: 2021-22) as we continued to invest in strategic projects and grow our staff team.

Staff costs continue to be our largest area of expenditure and grew to £2.6m (£1.9m: 2021-22) representing 56% of total expenditure. We have continued to invest in new roles to deliver grant funded projects, improve our resources function and develop new commercial areas of work to diversify income.

Investment in nature recovery work grew significantly by 216% to £1.6m representing 35% of total expenditure. This was primarily due to significant grant funded projects delivered in the year including the wilding of Honeygar. The year saw the successful completion of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund Avalon Marshes project and the Interreg Two Seas project.

Our nature reserves are critical to developing a strong Nature Recovery Network across Somerset and £803k (£866k: 2021-22) was used for their management and improvement.

Expenditure on building a movement for nature, Team Wilder, increased by £99k to £796k (£697k: 2021-22). This included delivery of grant funded projects including the Somerset Nature Connections partnership nature and wellbeing project and Wilder Coast project.

Expenditure on Telling Somerset's Story increased by 20% to £219k (£183k: 2021-22).

SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)

As a result of planned investment in our wholly-owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Ltd, which is expected to increase the surplus returned to the Trust over time and support the delivery of the strategy, expenditure increased by 7% to £589k (£552k: 2021-22) representing 13% of overall expenditure. As a result of the planned investment to develop new commercial services SWT (Sales) Ltd recognised a lower net profit than in previous year's totalling £0.2k (£72k: 2021-22) which has been Gift Aided to the Trust.

Membership recruitment and raising funds

Overall the cost of raising funds and membership recruitment totalled £569k (£528k: 2021-22) representing 12% of overall expenditure. Membership recruitment costs totalled £283k (£288k: 2021-22). The cost of raising funds increased by 19% to £285k (£241k: 2021-22).

Support costs

Support costs increased to £718k (£544k: 2021-22) as a result of investment in IT, resources and HR to support organisational growth but still representing a lower proportion of overall expenditure at 15% (16%: 2021-22).

FINANCIAL RESERVES HOLDINGS

Total reserves at the end of the year increased to £10.5m (£9.8m: 2021-22), although a significant proportion of this total is represented by tangible and heritage (land) fixed assets, leaving available financial reserves of £2.87m (£2.87m: 2021-22).

Total reserves	£10,513,760
Less:	
Restricted funds	(£1,691,964)
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	(£5,950,519)
Total available reserves	**£2,871,277**

In accordance with the financial reserves policy, the Trust aims to hold four months' planned expenditure in the income fund which equates to a target of £1.86m for 2023-24. The Trust's £2.87m reserves consist of £871k in the income fund and £2m which has been designated by Trustees for specific purposes. The Trust's existing reserves held in the income fund are £989k below the target and equate to just under two months' planned expenditure.

Council intends to review the Trust's designated funds in the current financial year to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate given the significant changes and developments in the last few years. It is noteworthy that whilst the aim of holding four months' planned expenditure in income fund means that the existing income fund reserve is £989k below the target, discretionary designated funds provide reassurance as they exceeded this shortfall.

The Trustees have designated £1.99m for specific purposes to support the management of nature reserves, future land purchase, innovation opportunities, future investment in Somerset Environmental Records Centre and strategic investment to support the delivery of charitable activities as outlined in note 19. The Trust designates all legacy receipts to the designated development reserve on receipt to support future strategic investment in the Trust's charitable objectives.

Total available reserves	£2,871,277
Designated funds	(£1,999,829)
Income fund	**£871,448**
Income fund target	**£1,860,000**

The careful management of cash flow is crucial to ensuring that there is sufficient cash to deliver the Trust's planned programme of works as grant income is often payable in arrears. Within the income fund the Trust aims to hold two months' planned expenditure in unrestricted cash which equates to approximately £400k.

FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

The Trust has a policy of holding reserves of funds to:

- Enable it to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to further the aims of the Trust when no other source of income is available.
- Provide adequate working capital to carry out projects for which funds have been granted by external bodies, but for which those funds are payable only after expenditure has been incurred.
- Provide a reserve to cover contractual obligations and short-term payment of essential costs, such as staff salaries, in the event of an unanticipated shortfall in funds and/or fluctuations in income.
- Meet any legal obligation on the Trust to meet any future costs.

INVESTMENTS

The value of the Trust's investment portfolio fell by 11% to £836k (£936k: 2021-22) mainly due to market conditions. Investment income increased to £23k (£15k: 2021-22). The Trust recognised a £93k loss (£34k gain: 2021-22) arising from revaluations in the year.

The investment portfolio is managed by Rathbone Greenbank to provide the Trust with a range of sound marketable investments providing a balance of regular income and opportunity for capital growth. This requires a balanced portfolio consisting of investment grade fixed interest stocks or funds of fixed interest stocks and equities.

An ethical investment policy has been adopted to ensure that the investment portfolio consists of stocks consistent with the Trust's obligation to further its charitable activities, whilst ensuring that its investments do not conflict with its aims and objectives. The Trust's ethical investment policy seeks to encourage investment in companies with strong sustainability policies and practices that respect and protect wildlife, communities and their wider environment.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Key risks are identified and managed through a Register of Risks which is used to guide management decisions and reporting to Council. The structure and basis of the Risk Register are being reviewed recognising the growth of the Trust and the need to develop more diversified income sources. This will enable improved integration of the risk perspective into the Council's governance process.

The Trustees have examined the principal areas of the Trust's work and considered the major risks arising in each of these areas. In the opinion of the Trustees, the Trust has established processes and systems which, under normal circumstances, should allow the risks identified by them to be mitigated to an acceptable level in its day-to-day operations.

The Trustees have identified the current principal risks as:

- A more challenging fundraising and commercial environment combined with higher costs due to inflation and economic pressures.
- Transition to the new government agri-environment Environmental Land Management Scheme leading to a potential reduction in income.
- Potential difficulties with staff recruitment and retention as we rely on the specialist knowledge of our staff to enable the delivery of our strategy.
- Increased need to consider ways to achieve landscape-scale nature-based programmes, recognising that nature reserves do not offer the total, sufficient solution towards biodiversity improvement.

It is really important that we monitor and understand changes in both the diversity and the abundance of wildlife species we have across the county.

Beaver © Nick Upton

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

CHARITABLE PURPOSE

Somerset Wildlife Trust is set up to achieve three charitable objects:

1. For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance, protection and enjoyment of wildlife and its habitats, including places of botanical, geographical, zoological, archaeological or scientific interest and places of natural beauty;
2. To advance the education of the public in the principles of biodiversity conservation and of sustainable development;
3. To promote research in all branches of ecology and geology.

The Trust delivers its charitable purposes through its strategic objectives as described in this report.

The Trust measures its success by:

- The Senior Leadership Team and Trust Council monitoring progress towards charitable goals and their achievement through quarterly reviews of the implementation of the annual business plan and performance against budget
- Regular dialogue with all members of the Executive Team and in particular the CEO as well as field visits to existing reserves and potential acquisitions.
- Engagement with third parties including partners, major donors and other RSWT members.
- Qualitative feedback from Trustees, members, supporters, volunteers and staff.
- The quality and longevity of relationships with partner organisations, funders and neighbours.
- Hosting Somerset Environmental Records Centre, which collects and provides data on species and habitats across Somerset, including on Trust nature reserves, to external parties, the public and specialist groups
- Annual endorsement from Members of the report and accounts and future plans at the Annual General Meeting.
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints received

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The Trust's public benefit is enshrined in its charitable objectives and activities – providing multiple benefits for the public which are wide-ranging and long-lasting.

Restoring nature at landscape-scale

The Trust's work aims to restore nature at scale across our landscapes including by restoring, creating and protecting habitats that are or can be biodiversity-rich. There is increasing attention to how to enable development of 'ecosystem services' which offer public benefit in addition to nature restoration; for example: flood risk management, carbon storage, pollination, pollution control, improved health and wellbeing and aesthetic beauty. Government and businesses are now recognising the essential role that nature plays in supporting the economy, not least through the provision of these public goods and services. This is starting to be reflected in emerging legislation.

Land management advice for nature

Through providing advice and assistance to farmers and landowners to manage their land for the benefit of wildlife, the Trust helps to support the rural economy, the countryside and landscapes that are enjoyed and valued by the wider public.

Nature reserves

The Trust's 66 nature reserves, located throughout Somerset, are used extensively by the public for quiet recreation; many have access on clearly marked paths along with information and interpretation for visitors and visiting helps to build connection with nature and supporting health and wellbeing.

Team Wilder – a movement for nature

Team Wilder is supporting people, communities and organisations across Somerset to take action for nature to help us restore, create and protect habitats and build their connection with nature. We are committed to being an inclusive organisation and are actively working to involve more diverse communities and more young people in our work. We aim to empower them to take practical action for nature whether at home, at school or at work for their own wellbeing and to help nature recover.

Research

Evidence and advice provided by the Trust to local authorities, landowners and communities helps to ensure that decisions on policies such as land management, development, health and wellbeing take full account of the public benefit of wildlife and a healthy environment.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURE

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its articles of association.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (registered charity number 207238) along with 46 other local Wildlife Trust members throughout the UK which are collectively known as The Wildlife Trusts.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is also a partner in the South West Wildlife Trusts, an independent charity formed by seven of the eight Wildlife Trusts located in the South West of England and the Isles of Scilly to increase the effectiveness of the Wildlife Trusts in the South West. Somerset Wildlife Trust has one wholly owned subsidiary,

SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activities of SWT (Sales) Limited are that of overseeing the environmental consultancy, trading under the name First Ecology.

First Ecology is the Trust's consultancy. It provides ecological consultancy, protected species services, planning support and arboricultural services to a wide range of clients. It is based at the Trust's Callow Rock Offices. First Ecology trades under SWT (Sales) Ltd and is a company limited by shares and registered in England No. 1317396.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) was established in 1986 and is hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust. The core work of SERC is to gather, manage and supply biological and geological data and hold the county list of sites recognised for their natural value. Data gathered by SERC is used to build up a comprehensive picture of the biodiversity and geodiversity of Somerset, and help to monitor the state of the natural environment. SERC is a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres and has close links to the National Biodiversity Network, and the National Federation of Biological Recorders.

South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL) is an Associate trading subsidiary (set up for mutual trading) and jointly owned by eight Wildlife Trusts, including Somerset Wildlife Trust, to help secure regular financial support through memberships recruited face to face. SWWFL provides membership recruitment services for Somerset, Avon, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Wiltshire and Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts.

GOVERNANCE

Council

Members elected to serve on Council have a dual role as a Trustee of the Charity and a Director of the company. There can be no fewer than eight and no more than twelve Trustees. All members of Council are volunteers, give freely of their time and have no beneficial interest in the group or charity. Trustees are elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting and serve for an initial three-year term. Each Trustee can serve for three consecutive terms of three years subject to re-election at the end of each three-year term. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are elected by Council following the AGM and serve one-year terms.

To ensure that Council is equipped to deliver its responsibilities it carries out skills analysis of existing members before new ones are appointed. In addition, each new Council member receives a full induction into the work and administration of the charity. Council members receive regular updates on the work of the Trust and any training deemed necessary to enable members to carry out their responsibilities.

At the Trust AGM in November 2022, four Trustee's were elected and four Trustees were re-elected having reached the end of a maximum three-year term allowed.

Council is assisted by committees:

Finance and Resources Committee: scrutiny of accounts, oversight of investments and financial controls, policy development, advice on business risk and resource management and income generation;
Health and Safety Committee: oversight on all health and safety matters in the Trust.
Risk Management Committee: advising on the Trust's risk appetite and risk tolerance, reviewing and monitoring current and potential business risks.
Remuneration Committee: consider and make recommendations on the annual salary review for the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team, remuneration policy and benchmarking, discretionary pay increases and the identification and management of risk related to recruitment and retention of employees; and
Governance Committee: the chairs of all committees meet with the Chair of Council and the Chief Executive twice a year to ensure good governance across the Trust.

Transactions involving Council members and related parties

During 2022-23 a total of £882 (2022: £1,389) was received from Trustees in respect of donations and membership.

Strategy and policy setting

Council is responsible for furthering the objectives of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association. The

focus of Council's work is on setting and reviewing the strategic direction for the Trust, on monitoring its delivery of agreed targets and to ensure that the income and expenditure of the Trust and its property and assets are managed appropriately. Council determines the strategic direction of the Trust through the 10-year Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy which was formally launched in May 2021. The strategy is available to download from the Trust's website.

Staffing

Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer and supports the appointment process for members of the Senior Leadership Team of the Charity. Trustees delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team through agreement of clear strategic objectives for the Trust which have demonstrable outcomes for wildlife in the county. Trustees monitor progress quarterly as well as ensuring that the Trust's financial affairs are managed appropriately.

Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer and supports the appointment process for members of the Senior Leadership Team. The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Chair of Trustees. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day to day running of the Trust and has delegated powers of authority approved by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer delegates decision-making powers through the Senior Leadership Team into the organisation.

During the year the Trust employed 71 full-time equivalent staff (2022: 59) 4 of which worked for SERC and 11 for SWT (Sales) Ltd. The Trust continues to adopt hybrid working, with many staff working primarily from their homes or elsewhere to deliver projects and manage nature reserves, with attendance at their office base and staff meetings held.

The Trust's headquarters is in Taunton with other staff based at Ford Farm, the Avalon Marshes Centre and Callow Rock. The staff are organised into functional teams, such as reserves, and also work in cross-functional teams, such as for delivering major projects.

Key management personnel remuneration

All job descriptions are graded by the Salary Grading Panel. The Salary Grading Panel assesses each job description and grades within the Trust's grading criteria which consists of 13 levels, each of which has a corresponding salary band which is benchmarked against similar roles in the external market and other Wildlife Trusts.

The pay arrangements for the Senior Leadership Team are determined by the Chief Executive Officer and approved by the Remuneration Committee using external and Wildlife Trusts' benchmarking. The Chief Executive Officer's salary is determined by the Remuneration Committee following representation from the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Complaints

The Trust treats all complaints seriously. In the year 2022-23 the Trust received 3 complaints (2021-22: 12). Actions were taken to successfully resolve all of these complaints. No complaints were received in 2022-23 about our fundraising (2021-22: 0).

All of the complaints were responded to within seven days.

Complaints are individually reviewed by the relevant Senior Leadership Team staff and monitored by the Chief Executive Officer and Trustees as part of a system for continuous improvement.

How we fundraise

As a charity, fundraising is essential to Somerset Wildlife Trust's ability to meet our core purpose and deliver public benefit. We receive most of our financial support from grants and individuals, including our members.

We are committed to a transparent and ethical approach to all our fundraising activity. We make every effort to ensure that our fundraising activity never feels unreasonably intrusive, persistent or pressurised, but rather focuses on inspiring support and celebrating the impact of fundraised income.

Our members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do and our work is only possible thanks to their generosity and their commitment to take action locally for nature.

We do:

- recruit new members face to face at venues and events across Somerset, including Trust nature reserves, and via our website (including as part of national Wildlife Trust campaigns), telephone and occasional targeted door drops;
- send appeal letters and other fundraising communications to selected supporters who have opted-in to marketing by post and/or digitally;
- seek philanthropic support from major donors, patrons, trusts, foundations, companies and other grant givers;
- invite donations via our website, other giving platforms and collection boxes;
- promote the importance of supporting our work, including via gifts in wills and gifts in memory;
- organise online fundraising auctions and other fundraising events; and
- encourage our members, supporters and local businesses to fundraise in aid of our work (community fundraising) as part of taking action for nature – Team Wilder.

We do not:

- sell or pass on supporter details to any other organisation or buy lists of other charities' donors.

Our members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted and can change these at any time, by contacting us.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and committed to follow its Code of Practice, which sets out standards of behaviour of fundraisers.

We are signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out from receiving fundraising communications from us and received no requests from this service to opt out in the year.

We ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances are protected, including by continually updating our database to prevent communications being sent to any vulnerable people who have been identified.

Our fundraising is mainly carried out by Trust staff with support from a very limited number of carefully selected

professional fundraisers which are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers which act as agents in raising funds on the charity's behalf.

Face to face fundraising at venues and events is conducted on our behalf by staff of South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL), an associate trading subsidiary jointly owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust and seven other Wildlife Trusts. SWWFL is a corporate member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising which conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with SWWFL's face-to-face fundraisers to monitor quality.

We seek feedback from all new members until recently using a third-party service, Quality Telephone Services (QTS) and now by survey sent by email to understand their experience of joining us, including feedback on SWWFL recruiters, thus identifying any areas where we can make further improvements. QTS are also occasionally used to make outbound telephone calls to for example confirm Gift Aid status.

We use Work for Good to enable local small businesses to fundraise for us via sales of their products as commercial participators and online platforms for our virtual fundraising auction and matched annual fundraising appeals run by the Big Give.

Volunteering

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve. Volunteers founded the Somerset Wildlife Trust in 1964 and today remain fundamental to our work. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical habitat management and field surveys, to support for office activities and events, to running the Trust as members of Council. Our volunteering policy aims to reflect the high esteem in which the Trust holds volunteers, who are an established, valued and integral part of the Trust.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Committee meets quarterly and presents reporting to Council after each meeting. The health and safety of employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the general public are of paramount importance to the Trust – for accidents it was 2 staff, 3 volunteers and 1 project participant. They were caused by a variety of factors but working practices and use of protective equipment are areas for continued focus. There was one near miss and we are continuing to work on improving recording of these events.

At a strategic level our approach to Ash Dieback clearance has been governed by the need to ensure public safety on our Reserves and adjoining land. We recognise this work can cause concern and, for public safety, signs and barriers are used to restrict access to Reserves where work is planned and ongoing

Safeguarding

As an organisation that works with children and vulnerable adults, the Trust acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. Our safeguarding policy is published on our website at somersetwildlife.org/policies/safeguarding.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Trust is committed to being inclusive in all aspects of our work from staff to trustees, volunteers to participants at our events. By recognising, respecting and valuing differences, and adopting more diverse perspectives, our staff, trustees, volunteers and supporters can become more effective ambassadors for nature as they can reach wider audiences. As such, EDI is enshrined in our core values, our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, our policies and activities.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan was planned to be issued in the year but is not yet complete. It should be ready for publication in 2023-24.

The Plan will codify and better structure our approach and progress. It aims to provide a framework for the delivery of EDI in support of the Trust's strategy and to ensure that everyone can benefit from and take action for nature. It places diversity and inclusion at the heart of our culture, supporting us in our endeavours to reflect the society we work within, as well as providing a barometer for excellence.

Carbon impact

The Trust has committed to be a Net-Zero Carbon organisation by 2030 and to do this will mitigate its climate impacts (such as buildings, staff transport, landholdings, purchasing and waste). Our landholdings are our major sources, including cattle grazing and we have researched this area in detail to understand the implications for us. Carbon release from dried out peat soils, as on Honeygar, is a key area of focus for us and we do detailed research into the impact of rewetting to move from carbon source to sink. We will report on this in future years.

The Trust is also supporting communities to develop adaptation pathways to climate change on the Somerset Levels though the Co-adapt project.

The Trust is using the Wilder Carbon process developed by Kent Wildlife Trust to ensure we can benchmark accurately with other Wildlife Trusts and measure our footprint and sequestration using the best available data and emission factors recommended by DEFRA/Natural England.

A Climate and Nature Emergency Working Group of key staff and trustees has been established to monitor progress towards net-zero and the Trust's carbon footprint is measured each year.

Environment policy

Our Environment Policy considers the direct impacts of all our activities including our built properties, landholding and reserves management, purchasing and transport. The Policy is available on our website.

We have grown our staff team significantly bringing new skills on board to reflect the organisation we need to be to have the impact nature needs to recover.

Spider on sphagnum moss © Ross Hoddinot/2020VISION

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Somerset Wildlife Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the income and expenditure of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Trustees on 1 August 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Somerset Wildlife (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the consolidated and parent charitable company Balance Sheets, the consolidated Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Annual Report, which includes the Directors' Report and Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report and Strategic Report included within the Annual Report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or

- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company, including the Companies Act 2006, Charity Act 2011, and employment legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and considering legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation, claims and breaches of relevant legislation; and
- reviewing correspondence with the Charity Commission and other relevant regulators.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the group and parent charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the group and parent charitable company's members and trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the group and parent charitable company and the group and parent charitable company's members as a body and the parent charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Michelle Ferris BSC (Hons) FCA DChA
Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of Albert Goodman LLP,
Statutory Auditor

Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset TA1 2PX

1 August 2023

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We grew in 2022-23 to support our ambitious plans and refocussed our work to match our goals.

Green woodpecker © Joshua Copping

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCLUDING CONSOLIDATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds General £	Unrestricted funds Designated £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	1,011,490	269,611	745,972	-	2,027,073	3,524,946
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature – nature recovery	3	51,506	-	1,607,613	-	1,659,119	709,654
More space for nature – nature reserves	3	458,899	-	142,353	-	601,252	738,987
A movement for nature	3	-	-	330,211	-	330,211	265,710
Telling Somerset's story	3	140,788	-	17,169	-	157,957	187,819
Other trading activities (including SWT (Sales) Ltd)	4	599,969	-	-	-	599,969	626,663
Investments	5	60,582	-	-	-	60,582	17,332
Total		**2,323,234**	**269,611**	**2,843,318**	**-**	**5,436,163**	**6,071,111**
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds:							
Cost of raising funds	6	285,466	-	-	-	285,466	240,738
Membership recruitment and retention	6	283,423	-	-	-	283,423	287,506
Merchandising costs	6	1,493	-	-	-	1,493	1,713
Investment management fees	6	6,864	-	-	-	6,864	7,915
SWT (Sales) Ltd	6	588,551	-	-	-	588,551	551,692
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature – nature recovery	6	130,948	35,000	1,461,543	-	1,627,491	514,595
More space for nature – nature reserves	6	509,625	50,002	243,676	-	803,303	866,220
A movement for nature	6	439,347	-	356,725	-	796,072	697,141
Telling Somerset's story	6	202,096	-	17,169	-	219,265	183,012
Total		**2,447,813**	**85,002**	**2,079,113**	**-**	**4,611,928**	**3,350,532**
Net (loss)/gain on investments		(92,779)	-	-	-	(92,779)	34,344
Net income/(expenditure)		**(217,358)**	**184,609**	**764,205**	**-**	**731,456**	**2,754,923**
Transfers between funds	20	383,479	(112,068)	(458,429)	187,018	-	-
Net movement in funds		**166,121**	**72,541**	**305,776**	**187,018**	**731,456**	**2,754,923**
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2022		1,201,951	4,308,407	1,386,188	2,885,758	9,782,304	7,027,381
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2023		**1,368,072**	**4,380,948**	**1,691,964**	**3,072,776**	**10,513,760**	**9,782,304**

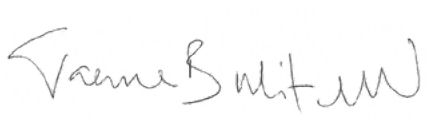
All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above. The notes on pages 37 to 52 form part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED AND CHARITY BALANCE SHEETS
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Charity 2023 £	Charity 2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11	1,490,614	1,256,804	1,462,719	1,231,934
Heritage assets	11	4,459,905	4,272,386	4,459,905	4,272,386
Investments	12	836,057	935,695	836,060	935,698
		6,786,576	**6,464,885**	**6,758,684**	**6,440,018**
Current assets					
Stock	13	1,277	1,329	1,277	1,329
Debtors	14	1,568,681	1,099,864	1,544,162	1,127,960
Deposit accounts		2,192,096	2,153,802	2,192,096	2,153,802
Cash at bank and in hand		655,791	967,220	645,051	956,063
		4,417,845	**4,222,215**	**4,382,586**	**4,239,154**
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	640,661	615,977	577,665	608,204
Net current assets		**3,777,184**	**3,606,238**	**3,804,921**	**3,630,950**
Total assets less current liabilities		**10,563,760**	**10,071,123**	**10,563,605**	**10,070,968**
Provisions for liabilities (Ash Dieback)	16	50,000	288,819	50,000	288,819
Total net assets		**10,513,760**	**9,782,304**	**10,513,605**	**9,782,149**
The funds of the charity					
Endowment funds		3,072,776	2,885,758	3,072,776	2,885,758
Restricted funds		1,691,964	1,386,188	1,691,964	1,386,188
Designated funds		4,380,948	4,308,407	4,380,948	4,308,407
Unrestricted funds		1,368,072	1,201,951	1,367,917	1,201,796
Total charity funds	**19**	**10,513,760**	**9,782,304**	**10,513,605**	**9,782,149**

The notes on pages 37 to 52 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 33 to 52 were approved by the Trustees on 1 August 2023 and signed on their behalf by:



Graeme Mitchell
Chair

Richard Atkin
Treasurer

Somerset Wildlife Trust
Registered company number 818162

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	24	192,012	2,546,261
Cash flows from investing activities			
Dividends, interest and rental income		60,582	17,332
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		5,455	35,000
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(538,043)	(1,634,007)
Proceeds from sale of investments		261,892	96,684
Purchase of investments		(248,618)	(101,599)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(458,732)**	**(1,586,590)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(266,720)**	**959,671**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		3,132,096	2,172,425
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	**25**	**2,865,376**	**3,132,096**

The notes on pages 37 to 52 form part of these financial statements.

There is now a real opportunity to better align nature, food production and sustainable livelihoods that will benefit us all.

Snail © Jon Hawkins

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Charitable company status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. The liability of the guarantors, who are the members, is limited to £1 per guarantor. At 31 March 2023 the charity had 22,265 members. The company is registered in England & Wales. The registered office address is 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5AW. On behalf of the members, the Council controls the company.

(b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention with the exception of listed investments which are included at their fair value.

The Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

(c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

(d) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Limited on a line-by-line basis. A separate Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account for the charity has not been presented because the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption afforded by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006. The surplus in the year for the charity was £731,456 (2022: £2,754,923). Note 22 gives full details of the results of the subsidiary undertaking for the year to 31 March 2023.

(e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds
Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Certain unrestricted funds have been designated by the Trustees for specific purposes.

Designated funds
Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Council for a future purpose.

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds that are used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

Endowment funds
The nature reserves endowment fund represents amounts received specifically for, and expended on, the purchase of nature reserves.

(f) Income

All income is included in the SOFA when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income for works that have been completed but has not yet been received is included as accrued income. The stage of completion is determined by comparing the services rendered to date to the accepted quotation or contract.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the Trust that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Unless restricted, legacies are credited to the designated development reserve on receipt.

Grants are included in the SOFA in the year they are receivable and when any performance conditions attached to the grant have been met. Grants received in respect of the purchase of specific nature reserves are credited to the nature reserves endowment fund.

Income from investments and from rental income is included in the SOFA in the year it is receivable.

The total income receivable in respect of membership is included within note 2. Income from life membership is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

Gifts in kind are included in the SOFA at their estimated current value in the year in which they are receivable.

Trading income is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

(g) Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where an employee works in more than one department, their costs are allocated on the basis of time worked in each department. Certain overhead costs, such as relevant insurance premiums, are allocated on the basis of staff numbers, while others are allocated on an actual usage basis.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

(h) Tangible, intangible and heritage fixed assets and depreciation

Heritage assets are assets of historical or scientific importance that are held to advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of the charity and through public access contribute to the nation's culture and education at either a national or local level. Freehold nature reserves are included in heritage fixed assets at their acquisition costs and they are not revalued or depreciated. The charity aims to preserve and enhance its nature reserves, which are not held for their resale

potential. The market value of the reserves is of no practical relevance to the charity's activities. No depreciation is provided because the reserves have an indefinite life.

The costs of leasehold nature reserves are amortised over the period of the lease.

All other tangible fixed assets are held at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided on all other tangible fixed assets as follows:

Freehold property: 2% on a straight line basis
Computers: on a straight line basis over 3 years
Plant and equipment: 15% on written down value
Motor vehicles: 25% on written down value
Office equipment, furniture and fittings: 15% on written down value

Intangible assets are amortised over the length of their contractual term.

(i) Investments

Listed Investments are stated at fair value which equates to market value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes all net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. The investment in the subsidiary is stated at cost.

(j) Stock

Stock consists of publications for distribution to members and purchased goods for resale. Stock is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

(k) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

(l) Financial instruments

The financial assets and liabilities of the Trust and their measurement are as follows:

Financial assets – trade debtors, amounts owed by subsidiary company, legacies receivable other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amotised cost. Investment porfolios are basic financial instruments measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank and deposit accounts are classified as a basic financial instrument and measured at face value.

Financial liabilities which includes trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments and are measured at amortised cost.

(m) Pension costs

The Trust operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Pension contributions in relation to the defined contribution scheme are recognised as an expense in the statement of financial activities as incurred. The Trust contributes 7% of gross annual salary for participating employees.

(n) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the SOFA as incurred.

(o) Volunteer support

The Trust receives support from a wide variety of volunteers. It is not practical to place a value on the time volunteered by all these persons, due to the variety of duties performed, the differences in time spent, and the sheer number of volunteers who kindly donated their time.

(p) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

The Trustees are of the opinion that apart from the Ash Dieback provision there are no other estimates or assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

The Trust has a liability to manage the impact of Ash Dieback on its nature reserves and during 2019-20 the progression of Ash Dieback disease on the Trust's nature reserves became apparant. A specialist report was commissioned during the year, and as a result, a provision of £600k was recognised in the year for the estimated future cost of removing dangerous trees in priority areas; primarily along roads and paths. The majority of the works have now been completed and it is antciptated that the remaining works to clear 1,298 metres of trees in high priority areas will be completed in 2023-24 at an estimated cost of £50,000. The actual cost incurred will depend on the progression of the disease and further areas of Trust woodland which require management may be identified in due course. Further details are included in note 16.

(q) Provisions

The Trust recognises a provision where it has a liability which is of uncertain timing or amount. Movements in provisions are recognised in the SOFA in the period in which they occur. Provisions are discounted where the time impact of money is material.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £
Membership	855,973	-	855,973	835,332	-	835,332
Donations and appeals	155,517	745,972	901,489	145,780	1,906,530	2,052,310
Legacies	269,611	-	269,611	237,304	400,000	637,304
	1,281,101	**745,972**	**2,027,073**	**1,218,416**	**2,306,530**	**3,524,946**

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £
More space for nature – nature recovery						
DEFRA	-	23,347	23,347	-	-	-
Natural England	-	659,553	659,553	-	29,331	29,331
Statutory body grants	-	114,601	114,601	-	93,923	93,923
Other grants	-	810,112	810,112	-	486,748	486,748
Consultancy fees	51,506	-	51,506	99,652	-	99,652
	51,506	**1,607,613**	**1,659,119**	**99,652**	**610,002**	**709,654**
More space for nature – nature reserves						
DEFRA	431,144	6,369	437,513	469,823	-	469,823
Statutory body grants	-	720	720	-	76,577	76,577
Landfill tax credit scheme	-	30,802	30,802	-	35,705	35,705
Other grants	-	104,462	104,462	-	136,628	136,628
Grazing licences and property lettings	15,567	-	15,567	15,709	-	15,709
Wood and firewood sales	12,188	-	12,188	4,545	-	4,545
	458,899	**142,353**	**601,252**	**490,077**	**248,910**	**738,987**
A movement for nature						
Education provision	-	-	-	1,300	-	1,300
Natural England	-	2,000	2,000	-	-	-
Statutory body grants	-	60,833	60,833	-	68,333	68,333
Other grants	-	267,378	267,378	-	196,077	196,077
	-	**330,211**	**330,211**	**1,300**	**264,410**	**265,710**
Telling Somerset's story						
Statutory body grants	-	-	-	-	4,000	4,000
Other grants	-	17,169	17,169	-	16,196	16,196
Service level agreements	64,438	-	64,438	82,625	-	82,625
Data services	76,350	-	76,350	65,247	-	65,247
Sales income	-	-	-	19,751	-	19,751
	140,788	**17,169**	**157,957**	**167,623**	**20,196**	**187,819**
	651,193	**2,097,346**	**2,748,539**	**758,652**	**1,143,518**	**1,902,170**

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Charity £	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 22) £	Total 2023 £	Charity £	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 22) £	Total 2022 £
Shop sales	1,897	-	1,897	2,345	-	2,345
Fundraising events	27,317	-	27,317	16,142	-	16,142
Other fundraising activities	41,297	-	41,297	36,853	-	36,853
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	-	529,458	529,458	-	571,323	571,323
	70,511	**529,458**	**599,969**	**55,340**	**571,323**	**626,663**

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £
Dividends receivable from equity shares	23,044	-	23,044	15,393	-	15,393
Interest receivable from bank and deposit accounts	37,538	-	37,538	1,939	-	1,939
	60,582	**-**	**60,582**	**17,332**	**-**	**17,332**

6. BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2023 £	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2022 £
Expenditure on raising funds						
Cost of raising funds	215,217	70,249	285,466	186,906	53,832	240,738
Membership recruitment and retention	244,459	38,964	283,423	260,080	27,426	287,506
Merchandising costs	1,493	-	1,493	1,713	-	1,713
Investment management fees	6,864	-	6,864	7,915	-	7,915
SWT (Sales) Ltd (including First Ecology)	486,754	101,797	588,551	447,781	103,911	551,692
	954,787	**211,010**	**1,165,797**	**904,395**	**185,169**	**1,089,564**
Charitable activities						
More space for nature – nature recovery	1,488,865	138,626	1,627,491	447,010	67,585	514,595
Mores space for nature – nature reserves	673,003	130,300	803,303	764,085	102,135	866,220
A movement for nature	596,771	199,301	796,072	545,306	151,835	697,141
Telling Somerset's story	180,964	38,301	219,265	145,309	37,703	183,012
	2,939,603	**506,528**	**3,446,131**	**1,901,710**	**359,258**	**2,260,968**
	3,894,390	**717,538**	**4,611,928**	**2,806,105**	**544,427**	**3,350,532**

Support cost breakdown by activity

	Costs of generating voluntary income £	Membership recruitment £	SWT (Sales) Ltd £	More space for nature – nature recovery £	More space for nature – nature reserves £	A movement for nature £	Telling Somerset's story £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Finance	9,458	2,043	22,916	31,395	27,087	28,228	8,622	129,749	91,794
HR/staff support	6,082	1,314	14,735	20,187	17,417	18,155	5,545	83,435	41,291
Office costs	5,349	1,155	12,960	17,758	15,319	15,967	4,876	73,384	88,419
Property and motor vehicles	5,409	1,168	13,103	17,947	15,486	16,142	4,930	74,185	57,126
Recoverable VAT	(1,656)	-	-	(828)	(4,967)	(828)	-	(8,279)	(15,773)
Marketing	30,290	29,975	974	1,334	16,095	75,920	367	154,955	96,153
Information technology	7,670	1,657	18,579	25,450	21,961	22,889	6,990	105,196	70,569
National and regional support	3,630	784	8,796	12,049	10,396	10,836	3,309	49,800	43,869
Insurance	457	99	1,108	1,518	1,310	1,365	417	6,274	6,799
Governance	3,560	769	8,626	11,816	10,196	10,627	3,245	48,839	64,180
	70,249	**38,964**	**101,797**	**138,626**	**130,300**	**199,301**	**38,301**	**717,538**	**544,427**

Basis of allocation

Finance	Headcount
HR/staff support	Headcount
Office costs	Headcount
Property and motor vehicles	Headcount
Recoverable VAT	Actual resources expended
Marketing	Actual resources expended
Information technology	Headcount
National and regional support	Headcount
Insurance	Headcount
Governance	Headcount

7. OTHER COST DISCLOSURES

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Depreciation	111,549	81,030
Auditors' remuneration		
Audit fees – current auditor	12,740	12,450
Audit fees – previous auditor	-	(1,749)
Taxation compliance – current auditor	330	330
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(290)	(35,000)

8. STAFF COSTS

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Wages and salaries	2,214,837	1,666,840
Social security costs	216,331	149,040
Pension costs	145,616	111,254
	2,576,784	**1,927,134**

The number of employees whose renumeration exceeded £60,000 was as follows:

	Total 2023	Total 2022
£60,000 – £69,999	1	1
£70,000 – £79,999	1	-
	2	**1**

Total remuneration of key management personnel in the period was £496,363 (2022: £415,228).

The key management personnel of the group and the parent charity comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy CEO, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management, Head of Nature Recovery, Head of Engagement, Head of Communications, Head of Business Development and Operations, Head of People, Culture and Resources, Director of Commercial and Nature Based Solutions and Head of Finance.

The average number of employees during the year, analysed by function, was:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Charitable activities	73	58
Raising funds	10	10
Governance	1	1
	84	**69**

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year totalled 71 (2022: 59).

9. TRUSTEE EMOLUMENTS

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Reimbursement of Trustees' travel and subsistence costs	269	969
Donations received from Trustees	882	1,389

Trustees did not receive any remuneration or benefits in kind during either year.

One Trustee was reimbursed for travel expenses during the year (2022: one).

10. PENSION COSTS

Defined contribution scheme

The Trust contributes 7% of annual salary to employees' current pension schemes, all of which are now defined contribution in nature. The pension charge for the year in respect of these contributions amounted to £145,616 (2022: £111,254).

11. TANGIBLE AND HERITAGE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Nature reserves Freehold (Heritage funds)	Nature reserves Leasehold	Freehold and leasehold property	Plant and equipment	Vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost							
At 1 April 2022	4,272,386	103,946	1,135,688	434,602	164,024	256,257	6,366,903
Additions	187,519	-	10,412	262,360	26,285	51,467	538,043
Disposals	-	-	-	(1,807)	-	(5,404)	(7,211)
At 31 March 2023	**4,459,905**	**103,946**	**1,146,100**	**695,155**	**190,309**	**302,320**	**6,897,735**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2022	-	103,762	128,725	307,882	127,340	170,004	837,713
Charge for the year	-	2	22,762	33,162	11,910	43,713	111,549
Disposals	-	-	-	(1,660)	-	(386)	(2,046)
At 31 March 2023	**-**	**103,764**	**151,487**	**339,384**	**139,250**	**213,331**	**947,216**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2023	**4,459,905**	**182**	**994,613**	**355,771**	**51,059**	**88,989**	**5,950,519**
At 31 March 2022	**4,272,386**	**184**	**1,006,963**	**126,720**	**36,684**	**86,253**	**5,529,190**

Charity

	Nature reserves Freehold (Heritage funds)	Nature reserves Leasehold	Freehold and leasehold property	Plant and equipment	Vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost							
At 1 April 2022	4,272,386	103,946	1,135,688	395,134	164,024	207,641	6,278,819
Additions	187,519	-	10,412	259,872	26,285	40,942	525,030
Disposals	-	-	-	(1,807)	-	(3,662)	(5,469)
At 31 March 2023	**4,459,905**	**103,946**	**1,146,100**	**653,199**	**190,309**	**244,921**	**6,798,380**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2022	-	103,762	128,725	287,889	127,340	126,783	774,499
Charge for the year	-	2	22,762	29,976	11,910	38,363	103,013
Disposals	-	-	-	(1,660)	-	(96)	(1,756)
At 31 March 2023	**-**	**103,764**	**151,487**	**316,205**	**139,250**	**165,050**	**875,756**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2023	**4,459,905**	**182**	**994,613**	**336,994**	**51,059**	**79,871**	**5,922,624**
At 31 March 2022	**4,272,386**	**184**	**1,006,963**	**107,245**	**36,684**	**80,858**	**5,504,320**

Heritage fixed assets

Heritage assets are represented as freehold nature reserves above.

A summary of transactions relating to heritage assets over the last five years is as follows:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of acquisitions	187,519	1,143,824	107,584	500	-
Value of donated assets	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying amount of disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds of disposals*	-	35,000	-	-	-
Value of impairment	-	-	-	-	-

*Proceeds of disposals in 2022 represents the sale of land that was donated to the Trust.

12. INVESTMENTS

Group

	Listed securities £	Cash holdings £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Cost				
At 1 April 2022	680,388	11,074	691,462	676,948
Additions	248,618	261,892	510,510	247,787
Disposals	(159,577)	(255,477)	(415,054)	(233,273)
At 31 March 2023	**769,429**	**17,489**	**786,918**	**691,462**
Revaluations				
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2022	244,233	-	244,233	231,592
Net (losses)/gains arising on revaluations in the year	(92,779)	-	(92,779)	34,344
Disposals/reverse revaluations	(102,315)	-	(102,315)	(21,703)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2023	**49,139**	**-**	**49,139**	**244,233**
Fair value at 31 March 2023	**818,568**	**17,489**	**836,057**	**935,695**

Charity

	Subsidiary company £	Listed securities £	Cash holdings £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Cost					
At 1 April 2022	3	680,388	11,074	691,465	676,951
Additions	-	248,618	261,892	510,510	247,787
Disposals	-	(159,577)	(255,477)	(415,054)	(233,273)
At 31 March 2023	**3**	**769,429**	**17,489**	**786,921**	**691,465**
Revaluations					
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2022	-	244,233	-	244,233	231,592
Net (losses)/gains arising on revaluations in the year	-	(92,779)	-	(92,779)	34,344
Disposals/reverse revaluations	-	(102,315)	-	(102,315)	(21,703)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2023	**-**	**49,139**	**-**	**49,139**	**244,233**
Fair value at 31 March 2023	**3**	**818,568**	**17,489**	**836,060**	**935,698**

At 31 March 2023 the charity had one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited (Registered number: 1317396). The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activity of SWT (Sales) Limited is that of environmental consultancy work (see note 22).

13. STOCKS

	Group		Charity	
	2023 £	2022 £	2023 £	2022 £
Stocks	1,277	1,329	1,277	1,329
	1,277	**1,329**	**1,277**	**1,329**

14. DEBTORS

	Group		Charity	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Trade debtors	833,026	420,513	487,860	365,239
Other debtors	17,770	64,032	19,586	60,113
Prepayments and accrued income	520,485	485,419	451,004	379,930
Legacies receivable	197,400	129,900	197,400	129,900
Amounts owed by subsidiary company	-	-	388,312	192,778
	1,568,681	**1,099,864**	**1,544,162**	**1,127,960**

Other debtors includes £nil (2022: £nil) due after more than one year.

15. CREDITORS

	Group		Charity	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year				
Trade creditors	277,722	265,065	276,167	263,007
Other creditors and accruals	362,939	350,912	301,498	345,197
	640,661	**615,977**	**577,665**	**608,204**

16. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

	Group		Charity	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Provisions				
At 1 April 2022	288,819	445,419	288,819	445,419
Provisions recognised in the year	-	-	-	-
Provisions released in the year	(238,819)	(156,600)	(238,819)	(156,600)
At 31 March 2023	**50,000**	**288,819**	**50,000**	**288,819**

17. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categorisation of financial instruments

	Group		Charity	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	836,057	935,695	836,060	935,698
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	1,048,197	614,445	1,093,158	748,030
	1,884,254	**1,550,140**	**1,929,218**	**1,683,728**

Item of income, expenditure, gain or losses

	Group				Charity			
	Income £	Expense £	Net gains £	Net losses £	Income £	Expense £	Net gains £	Net losses £
2023								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	23,044	6,864	-	(92,779)	23,044	6,864	-	(92,779)
	23,044	**6,864**	**-**	**(92,779)**	**23,044**	**6,864**	**-**	**(92,779)**
2022								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	15,393	7,915	34,344	-	15,393	7,915	34,344	-
	15,393	**7,915**	**34,344**	**-**	**15,393**	**7,915**	**34,344**	**-**

18. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Minimum lease payments on non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2023 £	2022 £	2023 £	2022 £
Within one year	5,275	-	5,275	-
Due one to five years	670	-	670	-
	5,945	**-**	**5,945**	**-**

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Investment gains £	At 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	1,201,951	2,323,234	(2,447,813)	383,479	(92,779)	1,368,072
Total unrestricted funds	**1,201,951**	**2,323,234**	**(2,447,813)**	**383,479**	**(92,779)**	**1,368,072**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,387,313	-	(2)	-	-	1,387,311
Operating freehold	1,006,158	-	-	(12,350)	-	993,808
Nature reserves development	16,354	-	-	-	-	16,354
Development reserve	1,563,944	269,611	-	(99,930)	-	1,733,625
Innovation fund	33,542	-	-	-	-	33,542
Nature reserves fund	200,000	-	(50,000)	-	-	150,000
Honeygar	35,000	-	(35,000)	-	-	-
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	66,096	-	-	212	-	66,308
Total designated funds	**4,308,407**	**269,611**	**(85,002)**	**(112,068)**	-	**4,380,948**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature – nature recovery	913,137	2,237,626	(1,461,543)	(418,635)	-	1,270,585
More space for nature – nature reserves	234,340	236,005	(243,676)	(44,794)	-	181,875
A movement for nature	238,711	352,518	(356,725)	5,000	-	239,504
Telling Somerset's story	-	17,169	(17,169)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**1,386,188**	**2,843,318**	**(2,079,113)**	**(458,429)**	-	**1,691,964**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	2,885,758	-	-	187,018	-	3,072,776
Total endowment funds	**2,885,758**	**-**	**-**	**187,018**	-	**3,072,776**
Total funds	**9,782,304**	**5,436,163**	**(4,611,928)**	**-**	**(92,779)**	**10,513,760**

Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds represent the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for a particular purpose and are maintained in accordance with the policy explained in the Trustees' report.

Designated funds

The nature reserve fund represents funds other than endowment funds that the charity has used to purchase nature reserves.

The operating freehold fund represents the value of the Trust's freehold property and main headquarters in Taunton.

The designated nature reserve development fund represents proceeds from the sale of land during 2016-17 which the charity has set aside specifically for re-investment in nature reserves.

The designated development reserve fund represents funds that the charity has set aside for investment in income generation, capital investment and future projects.

The innovation fund represents funds that have been set aside to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the delivery of the Trust's programme of work.

The nature reserves fund represents funds re-allocated from the designated development reserve to mitigate the potential loss of agri-environment income.

The Honeygar fund is the proceeds from the sale of land in 2021-22 which the charity has earmarked for Honeygar.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund represents the cumulative surplus generated through SERC activities which has been earmarked for future investment in SERC activities.

Restricted funds

The restricted income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the unexpended balances of donations, grants and other income, which are to be applied for specific purposes within the charity's objectives:

- More space for nature
  - Nature recovery – improving nature everywhere through a Nature Recovery Network.
  - Nature reserves – manage our nature reserves for conservation purposes.
- A movement for nature – taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.
- Telling Somerset's story – through our online State of Nature platform that informs action and monitors progress.

Nature recovery includes £414,251 (2022: £16,432) from Natural England from the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme, £296,937 (2022: £16,432) in respect of the Discovery Grant and £117,314 (2022: £Nil) in respect of the Restoration Grant.

20. TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Designated funds		
Operating freehold reserve	(12,350)	373,055
Development reserve	(99,930)	90,841
Innovation fund	-	(6,571)
Honeygar	-	35,000
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	212	66,096
Restricted funds		
More space for nature – nature recovery	(418,635)	(1,539,682)
More space for nature – nature reserves	(44,794)	-
A movement for nature	5,000	-
Endowment funds		
Nature reserves	187,018	1,144,325
Unrestricted funds	383,479	(163,064)
	-	-

The designated operating freehold reserve transfer represents the depreciation charged in the year on the Trust's freehold property and main headquarters in Taunton and capital investment in Honeygar.

The designated development reserve transfer represents designated funds expended during the year to support investment in approved projects agreed by Council.

The designated innovation fund transfer in 2021-22 represents funds that have been set aside by the charity to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the Trust's programme of work.

The designated Honeygar fund transfer in 2021-22 represents the proceeds from the sale of land in the year which has been earmarked to support the development of Honeygar.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund transfer represents the movement in the cumulative surplus achieved through activities which has been set aside for future investment in SERC.

The restricted fund and endownment fund transfer represents the transfer of assets purchased during the year through projects and grants.

21. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	496,624	2,381,119	-	3,072,776	5,950,519
Investments	836,057	-	-	-	836,057
Current assets	726,052	1,999,829	1,691,964	-	4,417,845
Current liabilities	(640,661)	-	-	-	(640,661)
Provisions for liabilities	(50,000)	-	-	-	(50,000)
	1,368,072	**4,380,948**	**1,691,964**	**3,072,776**	**10,513,760**

22. SUBSIDIARY COMPANY
SWT (Sales) Limited income and expenditure statement for the year ended March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Turnover	543,469	573,188
Cost of sales	433,889	403,265
Gross profit	**109,580**	**169,923**
Administrative expenses	109,418	97,432
Net profit	**162**	**72,491**
Taxation	-	-
Net profit after taxation	**162**	**72,491**
Paid under gift aid to Trust	162	72,491
	-	-
Profit brought forward	152	152
Retained profit carried forward	**152**	**152**

Turnover includes a charge of £14,011 (2022: £1,865) for services to the Trust.

The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds of SWT (Sales) Limited was:

Assets	453,281	197,990
Liabilities	(453,126)	(197,835)
Funds	**155**	**155**

23. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Trust participated in the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme, a hybrid, multi-employer pension scheme which provides benefits to members on a defined benefit or defined contribution basis. During 2014-15 the Trust received notification that the Section 75 clause in the scheme had been breached due to their no longer being any active members in the defined contribution section of the scheme. Formal notification of the value of the Section 75 debt was received in March 2020 which represented the Trust's only remaining liability under the scheme and this was settled during the year ended 31 March 2021. During the year ended 31 March 2022, the Trust was notified of a potential issue relating to the defined benefit section of the Scheme. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) is currently investigating whether additional payments to the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme are required to meet historic pension liabilities. RSWT's investigations may require legal proceedings against other third parties. The outcome of this process is not expected to be known for 12 to 24 months. As it is not possible to reliably estimate the value of any potential liability, no provision has been made for this in the financial statements.

24. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	731,456	2,754,923
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	111,549	81,030
Losses/(gains) on investments	92,779	(34,344)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(60,582)	(17,332)
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(290)	(35,000)
(Decrease) in provision for liabilities	(238,819)	(156,600)
(Increase) in debtors	(468,817)	(414,261)
Decrease in stocks	52	361
Increase in creditors	24,684	367,484
Net cash provided by operating activities	**192,012**	**2,546,261**

25. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash at bank and in hand	655,791	967,220
Deposit accounts (less than 3 months)	2,192,096	2,153,802
Investment cash holdings	17,489	11,074
	2,865,376	**3,132,096**

26. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Unrestricted funds General £	Unrestricted funds Designated £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	981,112	237,304	2,306,530	-	3,524,946
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature – nature recovery	99,652	-	610,002	-	709,654
More space for nature – nature reserves	490,077	-	248,910	-	738,987
A movement for nature	1,300	-	264,410	-	265,710
Telling Somerset's story	167,623	-	20,196	-	187,819
Other trading activities (including First Ecology)	626,663	-	-	-	626,663
Investments	17,332	-	-	-	17,332
Total	**2,383,759**	**237,304**	**3,450,048**	**-**	**6,071,111**
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds (including First Ecology)	1,089,564	-	-	-	1,089,564
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature – nature recovery	97,737	2	416,858	-	514,595
More space for nature – nature reserves	519,859	-	346,359	-	866,220
A movement for nature	363,134	-	334,007	-	697,141
Telling Somerset's story	162,816	-	20,196	-	183,012
Total	**2,233,110**	**2**	**1,117,420**	**-**	**3,350,532**
Net gains on investments	34,344	-	-	-	34,344
Net income/(expenditure)	**184,993**	**237,302**	**2,332,628**	**-**	**2,754,923**
Transfers between funds	(163,064)	558,421	(1,539,682)	1,144,325	-
Net movement in funds	**21,929**	**795,723**	**792,946**	**1,144,325**	**2,754,923**
Reconciliation of funds					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2021	1,180,022	3,512,684	593,242	1,741,433	7,027,381
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2022	**1,201,951**	**4,308,407**	**1,386,188**	**2,885,758**	**9,782,304**

27. STATEMENT OF FUNDS 2022

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Investment gains £	At 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	1,180,022	2,383,759	(2,233,110)	(163,064)	34,344	1,201,951
Total unrestricted funds	**1,180,022**	**2,383,759**	**(2,233,110)**	**(163,064)**	**34,344**	**1,201,951**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,387,315	-	(2)	-	-	1,387,313
Operating freehold	633,103	-	-	373,055	-	1,006,158
Nature reserves development	16,354	-	-	-	-	16,354
Development reserve	1,235,799	237,304	-	90,841	-	1,563,944
Innovation fund	40,113	-	-	(6,571)	-	33,542
Nature reserves fund	200,000	-	-	-	-	200,000
Honeygar	-	-	-	35,000	-	35,000
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	-	-	-	66,096	-	66,096
Total designated funds	**3,512,684**	**237,304**	**(2)**	**558,421**	**-**	**4,308,407**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature – nature recovery	37,551	2,832,126	(416,858)	(1,539,682)	-	913,137
More space for nature – nature reserves	270,109	310,590	(346,359)	-	-	234,340
A movement for nature	285,582	287,136	(334,007)	-	-	238,711
Telling Somerset's story	-	20,196	(20,196)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**593,242**	**3,450,048**	**(1,117,420)**	**(1,539,682)**	**-**	**1,386,188**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	1,741,433	-	-	1,144,325	-	2,885,758
Total endowment funds	**1,741,433**	**-**	**-**	**1,144,325**	**-**	**2,885,758**
Total funds	**7,027,381**	**6,071,111**	**(3,350,532)**	**-**	**34,344**	**9,782,304**

28. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS 2022

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	249,961	2,393,471	-	2,885,758	5,529,190
Investments	935,695	-	-	-	935,695
Current assets	921,091	1,914,936	1,386,188	-	4,222,215
Current liabilities	(615,977)	-	-	-	(615,977)
Provisions for liabilities	(288,819)	-	-	-	(288,819)
	1,201,951	**4,308,407**	**1,386,188**	**2,885,758**	**9,782,304**

We are also leading by example with clear commitments and a plan to reduce our own environmental impact.

Bloody-nosed beetle © Tom Hibbert

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

We would like to thank all our members, donors and grant givers for their generous support which is helping nature to recover across Somerset including all those who wish to remain anonymous.

LEGACIES

Roger Charles Airey
Jean Allan
Patricia Bartlett
Jasmine Chilcott
Patricia Lindsay Curtis
Beryl Hawkins
Muriel Hunnikin
Gillian Morley Langdon
Janet Gwynne Maitland
Hester Melonie May Pickles
Reg Redmore
Meryl Kay Taylor
Brian Stanley Turner
Brenda Zakis

PATRONS

Phillipa Archer
David and Loredana Buchan
Dudley Cheesman
John Deverell CBE
Margaret Drabble
James and Alka Hughes-Hallett
Stanley and Jennifer Johnson
Anne Jones
Julia Manning
Jean Mantle
Rohan and Lily Masson-Taylor
Mark O'Neill
Nigel and Janet Phillips
Caroline Rathbone
Laura Roberts
Janet Robinson and Paul Groom
Tim and Dede Sanderson
Paul Sheppard and Lucy Dunford
Paul and Mona Sinclair
Lucy Starling
Clive Taylor
Chris and Maria Thring
Patrick Thomson
Robert Unwin
Sarah Warren
Neil and Sarah Williams
Giles Woodward

CORPORATE MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

A C Mole
Branston Ltd
Classic Cottages
Dunster Beach Holidays Ltd
Golledge Electronics
Habitat Aid Ltd
Homethos
John Fowler Holiday Parks
Kennedys Law
Meddcare
Melhuish & Saunders
Somerset Birdwatching Holidays
Southern Co-op
Stay Original Company Ltd
Taunton and Pickeridge Golf Club
TePe Oral Hygiene Products Ltd
The Gardens Group
Travel Chapter Ltd
John Wainwright & Co Ltd
Wessex Water
West Country Wills

TRUSTS AND GRANTS

Aggregate Industries
Annett Trust
Battens Charitable Trust
Biffa Award
Blair Foundation
Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust
Canadian Foundation
Chase Manufacturing
Community Impact Mitigation Fund
Curry Fund
DEFRA
D'Olyly Carte Charitable Trust
Environment Agency
Ernest Cook Trust
Ewing and Haines Charitable Trust
Fairfield Charitable Trust
Forestry Commission
Foxglove Trust
Friends of Longrun Meadow
FWAG South West
Garfield Weston Charitable Trust
Green Recovery Challenge Fund
Hamamelis Trust
Henry C Hoare Charitable Trust
Interreg 2 Seas
LEADER
Mendip District Council
Mendip Hills AONB
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Nature for Climate Peatland Discovery Fund
Natural England
Ninesquare Charitable Trust
Oliver Morland Charitable Trust
Quantock Hills AONB
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts
Sedgemoor District Council
Sir John and Lady Heathcoat Amory Charitable Trust
Somerset Community Foundation
Somerset Community Foundation (HPC Community Fund)
Somerset County Council
Somerset Rivers Authority
Somerset West and Taunton
South Somerset District Council
Spark Somerset
St James Place
Steel Charitable Trust
Swire Charitable Trust
The Banister Charitable Trust
The Wildlife Trusts
The Woodland Trust
Torr Works Enhancement Fund
Verdon Smith Charitable Trust
Viridor Credits Environmental Company
Wessex Water
Wildflower Society

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS

KEY PEOPLE

Patron
Simon King OBE

President
Stephen Moss

Vice-Presidents
Dudley Cheesman
Roger Martin
Chris Sperring MBE

Directors and Trustees
The directors of the charitable company ("the Trust") are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Trustees on the date of approval of this report, all of whom were members for the whole of the financial year in question unless stated otherwise, were as follows:

Chair
Graeme Mitchell

Vice-Chair
Matthew Bell

Treasurer
Richard Atkin

Elected Trustees
Richard Atkin
Matthew Bell
Amy Coulthard (appointed 22 November 2022)
Edward Green
Lorna Harrison (resigned 12 August 2022)
Simon Hicks (resigned 5 November 2022)
Philip Holms
Stuart McBride
Graeme Mitchell
Sarah Nason (resigned 5 November 2022)
Holly Purdey
Richard Scarlett (appointed 22 November 2022)
Dr Daniel Skinner (appointed 22 November 2022)
Dr Mark Steer
Tina Trickett (appointed 22 November 2022)

SWT (Sales) Ltd Directors
Malcolm Hutton
Stuart McBride
David Mounsey (resigned 1 July 2022)
Damien Reid (appointed 22 November 2022)
Peter Solly (appointed 22 November 2022)
Georgia Stokes
Patrick Vandesteen (appointed 30 May 2023)

Senior Leadership Team
Katie Arber, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy Chief Executive Officer (resigned 14 July 2023)
Jolyon Chesworth, Head of Engagement (resigned 10 March 2023)
Simon Clarke, Head of Nature Recovery
Kirby Everett, Head of Communications
Rachael Fickweiler, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management
Helun Jones, Head of People, Culture and Resources (appointed 17 June 2022)
Kate Matravers-Cox, Head of Finance
Georgia Stokes, Chief Executive Officer
Scott West, Director of Commercial and Nature-based Solutions (appointed 15 August 2022)

ADVISERS

Senior Statutory Auditor
Michelle Ferris, Albert Goodman, Goodwood House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PX

Bankers
Lloyds Bank, 31 Fore Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HN

Solicitors
Clarke Willmott, Blackbrook Gate, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PG

Investment Managers
Rathbone Greenbank Investments, 10 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4NT

Land Agents
Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 1 High Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1QF

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity.
Charity number 238372.
Company number 818162.

Registered office: 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AW

Somerset
Wildlife Trust

34 Wellington Road
Taunton
Somerset TA1 5AW

01823 652400
somersetwildlife.org

Charity number 238372
Company number 818162

Hedgehog

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 238372

Accounts

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021-22

Somerset
Wildlife Trust

CONTENTS

WHAT WE DO 3

WELCOME FROM CHAIR OF COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER 4

STRATEGIC REPORT 5
More space for nature 6
A movement for nature 8
Telling Somerset's story 10
Developing our charity 12
Financial review 14

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 19

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT 20

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES 24

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST 25

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 28
Consolidated statement of financial activities 29
Consolidated and Trust balance sheets as at 31 March 2022 30
Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2022 31
Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 33

GIFTS AND DONATIONS 50

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS 51

WHAT WE DO

Somerset Wildlife Trust is an independent charity and our vision is of a Somerset-wide Nature Recovery Network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

We are working to make the changes needed for nature and people to thrive together by building a movement for nature – Team Wilder – and we will tell the story of nature's recovery in Somerset to inform action and monitor progress – Somerset's State of Nature.

We rely on funding from our members and many supporters, as well as income from grant-giving bodies and companies, and profits from our ecological consultancy, First Ecology. We have many volunteers giving their time to help us and Team Wilder will increase the action being taken for nature right across Somerset.

We are part of a national federation of 46 local Wildlife Trusts which are working together to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030.

WELCOME FROM CHAIR OF COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

2021-22 was a transformational year, when we launched our ambitious strategy, Wilder Somerset 2030, and grew to support its delivery.

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of our staff, volunteers, supporters and partners, Somerset Wildlife Trust has emerged far stronger from the pandemic than we had ever imagined. We are well positioned to lead nature's recovery and to co-ordinate and support the fantastic community-led initiatives happening across the county.

With nature and the climate in crisis, we made a commitment in our new strategy to be bold and act quickly, and to bring more people and partners to our cause so we can amplify our impact by taking action for nature's recovery locally.

Launched in May 2021, we have set three strategic goals. First, we need more space for nature, with at least 30% of Somerset's land and sea being managed positively for nature by 2030. Nature needs to be improving well beyond the existing nature-rich areas, which include our own nature reserves, with restored natural processes, connected and managed through a Nature Recovery Network. Secondly, we will be developing a countywide movement for nature, with the goal of at least one in four people taking positive action for nature in their communities, businesses, schools, homes and elsewhere. Team Wilder has got off to a great start and momentum is already building across Somerset. Our third goal is to grow knowledge of habitats and species in Somerset so we can track our progress to our 30% target and involve more people in doing this.

A former dairy farm plus adjacent fields – a total of 81 hectares – were secured in the heart of the Avalon Marshes in 2021-22 for our first wilding project. Honeygar is central to achieving our strategic goals and should, over the coming years, demonstrate alternative land management practices on lowland peat that benefit nature, climate adaptation and generate nature-based income so others will follow our lead.

A truly pioneering wilding project, Honeygar should demonstrate a new and powerful solution to the ecological and the climate crisis, and has generated significant interest from landowners, conservationists, academics and others who are keen for us to explore the impact of rewetting the peat and restoring natural processes. Tremendous early support meant we were able to purchase the site from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation much earlier than expected and launch our public fundraising appeal in March 2022.

Support for Honeygar and our wider work meant we ended 2021-22 in a strong financial position. We are now a larger charity with more staff, hundreds of volunteers, a growing ecological consultancy, First Ecology, and expanded partnership working. People are the lifeblood of the Trust and whether you are part of Team Wilder, a member, supporter, trustee, volunteer or work for our charity, we want to thank you for everything you do.

By continuing to work together and reaching out to more people, we will create a Wilder Somerset – a place where nature and people both can thrive. We know we must work harder to attract more people from a variety of backgrounds and generations to join us in helping nature recover, and will ensure we are an inclusive place to work, so we are relevant to all the communities of Somerset. We are also leading by example with clear commitments and a plan to reduce our own environmental impact, including a commitment to be net carbon zero by 2030.

The future will undoubtedly present us with challenges, including as a result of the rising cost of living. We are confident the Trust is well placed to ensure Somerset's Nature Recovery Network is strengthened and nature forms part of all our lives.

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

Georgia Stokes
Chief Executive Officer

STRATEGIC REPORT
ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Our strategy sets out to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030.

The report set out on pages 6–17 is a strategic report and Directors' report as required by sections 414A and 415 of the Companies Act 2006 and has been prepared in accordance with Part 15 of this Act and a Trustees' Report as required by the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.

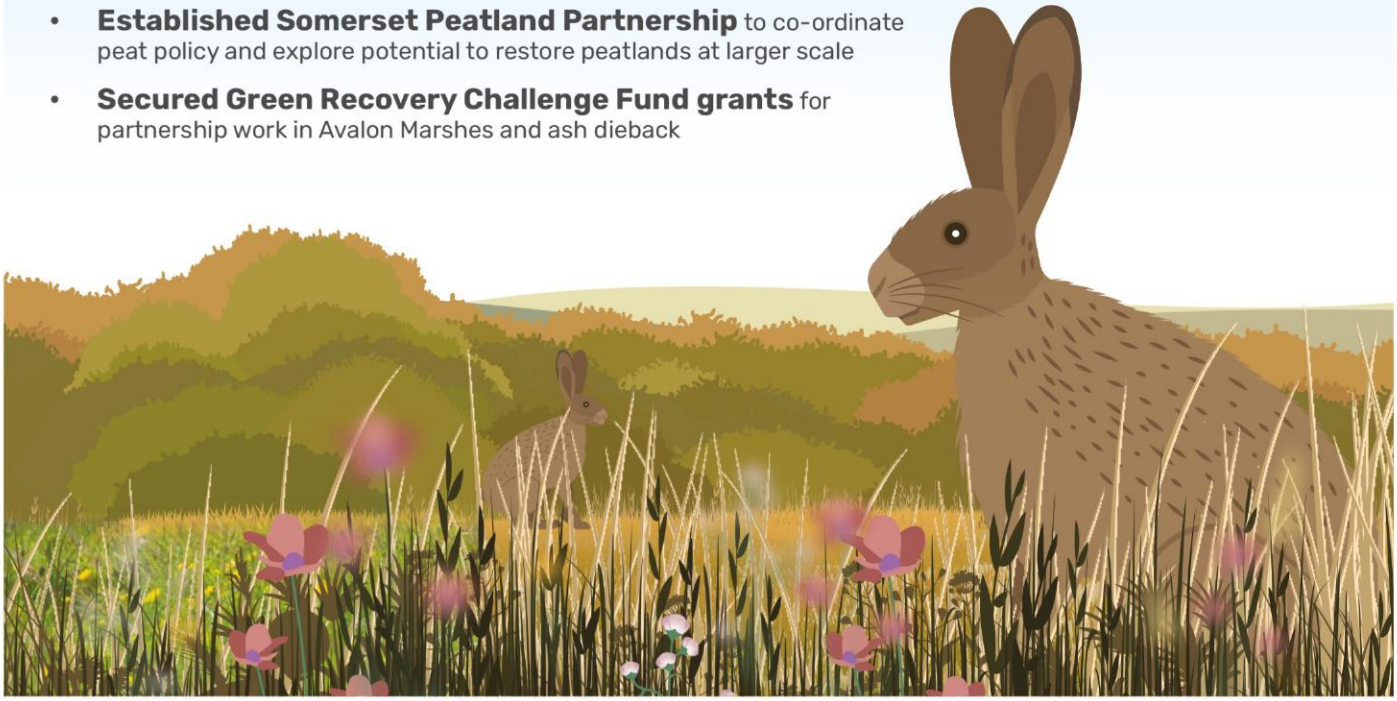
Red fox

MORE SPACE FOR NATURE

Our strategy sets out to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030 so Somerset has a strong and connected network of wild spaces – Somerset's Nature Recovery Network.

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Acquired Honeygar** as a pioneering wilding site on the Somerset Levels and Moors
- **Established land advisory team** to provide bespoke advice to farmers and landowners, including Yeo Valley
- **Improved water retention** at our internationally important wetland reserve, Westhay Moor, and footpaths for visitors
- **More Mendip landowners working together** for nature's recovery - farm cluster covers 18% of Mendip Hills AONB area
- **Established Somerset Peatland Partnership** to co-ordinate peat policy and explore potential to restore peatlands at larger scale
- **Secured Green Recovery Challenge Fund grants** for partnership work in Avalon Marshes and ash dieback



Nature reserves are vital refuges for wildlife and core habitats in the wider landscape but we must work with and influence the practices of many more landowners and make strategic land acquisitions ourselves – like Honeygar and to buffer our nature reserves – if we are to reverse the tide of nature loss.

Given over 70% of Somerset is in agricultural use, it is only by working with more farmers and landowners that nature will recover. Change is happening in farming and land use payments and there is now a real opportunity to better align nature, food production and sustainable livelihoods that will benefit us all.

We continued to advise and run events for landowners through funded projects, particularly in Mendip, while also beginning to offer a wider paid-for land advisory service across the county. Two farmers became Trustees adding important voices to our strategic decision-making.

Our reserves team remained busy with cyclical habitat management and projects to replace stock fencing and improve visitor infrastructure. The return of volunteers to support our reserves' staff as Covid restrictions eased was greatly welcomed.

2021-22 was the second year of a major three-year felling programme as a result of widespread ash dieback particularly in Mendip. While natural regeneration is favoured, replanting began of native broadleaved trees on some reserves. Management of Black Rock nature reserve was returned to the National Trust so it will continue to form part of the Nature Recovery Network.

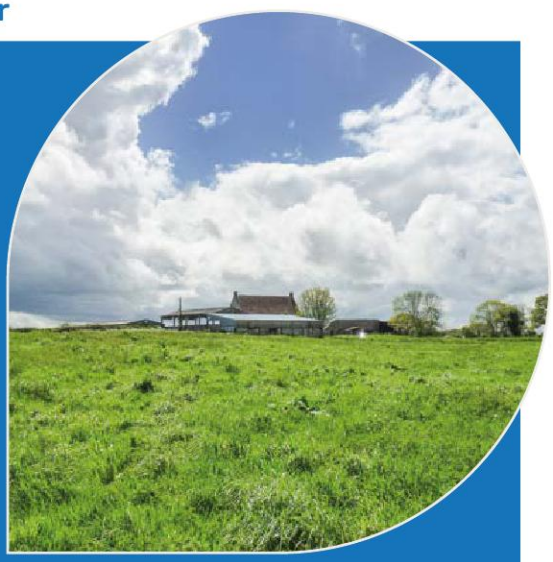
Our ecological consultancy First Ecology worked with clients in Somerset and beyond producing biodiversity enhancement strategies and implementing surveys, mitigation, compensation and enhancement for sites and species, all helping to fund our wider work and supporting nature's recovery. Client projects included installing hundreds of dormouse and bat boxes in woodland adjacent to Havent Reservoir, and roost grids across mine openings at the regionally important Box Mine for the protection of bats and people, as well as ecological baseline surveys for Yeo Valley.

CASE STUDY: Pioneering new approaches at Honeygar

Honeygar is probably our most ambitious project ever and strategically sited in the heart of the Avalon Marshes to connect existing nature-rich sites, including our own Catcott and Westhay nature reserves. By rewetting Honeygar's peat soils and wilding its 81 hectares, we will reduce the carbon emissions from the soils and allow nature to return. Wilding is a new approach for us and we completed baseline monitoring of soils, carbon, water and wildlife at Honeygar and began rewetting its peat soils.

We believe Honeygar is a twenty first century solution to nature's recovery and should encourage new financially sustainable ways to manage land on the Levels and Moors, including through schemes like Wilder Carbon. We will share what we learn so Honeygar's influence extends well beyond its boundaries.

Set up by Kent Wildlife Trust, Wilder Carbon is the UK's first high integrity natural climate solution that will match approved projects like Honeygar to buyers of carbon credits who are demonstrably reducing their carbon emissions.



CASE STUDY: Working together for nature

Over the last five years, we have brought together 30 farmers and landowners to work as a farm cluster to improve soil health and connect and restore key habitats, across 3,613 hectares of West Mendip. We have developed a strong peer to peer learning network, running training on everything from scrub management to grazing schemes. Walks we have led have enhanced identification skills and habitat knowledge. Surveys carried out by specialist volunteers on dormice and adders have helped inform the cluster on what action to take action and where to help nature recover on their land and supporting Somerset's Nature Recovery Network.

Soil health is a foundation of biodiversity, vital for carbon capture and part of a regenerative farming approach. We helped three of the cluster members conduct full carbon baseline assessments, using the Farm Carbon Toolkit, which are now case studies for wider action in Mendip as part of the Mendip Council's Climate Emergency response.

2022-23 PLANS

- **Achieve declaration of Somerset Wetlands Super National Nature Reserve and Nature Recovery Project status** for Levels and Moors to support restoration at a landscape-scale linked to climate resilience
- **Continue to rewet peat at Honeygar** to enhance biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions and widen engagement with local farmers and the community
- **Work through Somerset Local Nature Partnership to establish a Somerset Tree Strategy** and to retain and restore Somerset's peat
- **Start to deliver the Severn Vision** with partners to better conserve the Severn Estuary and the wildlife it supports
- **Complete initial phase of ash dieback safety works**
- **Continue to manage our nature reserves as key sites** for wildlife in Somerset and review their ability to deliver nature-based solutions
- **Expand work with farmers and landowners** including developing land advice services as an income generator

A MOVEMENT FOR NATURE

For nature to recover we need more people taking action for nature, a critical mass of at least one in four to tip the balance in nature's favour so more people follow their example. To do this we are building a movement for nature across Somerset – Team Wilder.

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Launched Team Wilder** in Somerset with resources, training and a pioneering Community Action Map
- **Engaged with more communities and people** to act locally to help nature recovery
- **Extended youth work with five Green Influencer groups** mentored to turn their ideas into practical action for the environment
- **Expanded team of Water Guardians monitoring water quality** on Rivers Brue, Tone and Parrett with in total over 300 volunteers working for nature's recovery across Somerset
- **Refocused Wilder Open Gardens scheme** so more people can open their gardens, raising funds and inspiring visitors to garden for nature
- **Resumed outdoor sessions as part of Somerset Nature Connections project** supporting mental health and nature connection
- **Completed Somerset's Brilliant Coast project** and secured funding to continue working with coastal communities

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to experience nature but unless more people do something on their local patch for wildlife, we won't be able to achieve our target of 30% of Somerset being in good condition for nature. We can all contribute in our gardens, schools, parks, workplaces, community spaces and on Somerset's farms and agricultural land. The power to create a better future for nature lies in collective action so a strong network of habitats exist across the county across which nature can move freely and spread.

Volunteers always have been essential to our work and will always be but widening who we work with geographically and socially is critical to achieve our one in four target.

2021-22 was the start of transitioning to a new model for how we engage with people – community organising.

People and communities are a key connector of our three strategic goals and Team Wilder is growing rapidly. We began to build a library of resources on our website ranging from how to set up a 'Friends of Group', to how to comment on planning applications and engage with neighbourhood plans. A Team Wilder e-news was launched plus a Facebook channel to share community wildlife initiatives, and ask questions or advice of others. Community fundraising is now fully integrated into our Team Wilder approach and resources were added to our website to help more people fundraise for us.

Visitor numbers remained high at our nature reserves, including young families and people with limited mobility at our flagship Westhay Moor National Nature Reserve, who benefited from the improved easy access path created.

2022-23 PLANS

- **Extend work in Somerset's towns** – Taunton, Shepton Mallet and Yeovil – thanks to Next Door Nature Jubilee National Heritage Lottery Fund grant to all Wildlife Trusts
- **Seek funding to extend Team Wilder** to more urban and diverse communities in Somerset
- **Support diverse communities near Somerset's coast** to access nature and enhance habitats thanks to HPC Community Fund grant for new Wilder Coast project
- **Train teachers to run Wild Beach** – our beach-based version of forest schools – and participate in the Somerset Coastal School Champion Awards
- **Support Somerset teachers and their pupils** to enhance their schools grounds for wildlife through workshops and advice in a new Wilder Schools' pack
- **Establish a Youth Forum** to influence and inform our work, and help diverse young people find their voice and take action for nature
- **Grow Wilder Churches** to enhance the Nature Recovery Network through local action

CASE STUDY: Team Wilder – Wilder Churches

We launched Wilder Churches, an innovative project with the Diocese of Bath and Wells, to support local communities to care for their churchyards and burial grounds – an essential part of the Nature Recovery Network. We developed online training during lockdown, as well as lots of guidance and toolkits for action. Somerset Botany Group volunteers supported by surveying sites to help communities understand the species present. With over 350 people involved with the project so far and many more accessing recordings of training online, we expect Wilder Churches to extend in the coming year and will be rerunning our virtual training programme.

CASE STUDY: Team Wilder – coastal communities

Somerset's 53 miles of coastline are an important habitat and feeding ground for many species, where we have been working since 2018. Berrow Conservation Group help look after the important dune habitat. As part of our Somerset's Brilliant Coast project, we helped them set up an annual citizen science programme, training them to carry out surveys of plants, bats, birds, bees, butterflies and freshwater invertebrates, and to lead nature walks around the dunes for local people who might otherwise never visit them. They are one of several coastal communities already taking action for nature as part of Team Wilder.

CASE STUDY: Nature connections for wellbeing

Our Somerset Nature Connections project is tackling barriers that prevent people experiencing the health and wellbeing benefits of getting into the natural environment. Sessions led by our team in the Mendip, Blackdown and Quantock Hills are supporting mental wellbeing and social isolation through a wide range of activities run in these spectacular places.

For some participants, attending these sessions was the first time they had left their house in over a year and it was amazing for us to be able to help them reconnect with the outdoors again particularly in the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which are partners in this project

TELLING SOMERSET'S STORY

Monitoring and demonstrating progress towards nature's recovery in Somerset through a shared online Somerset State of Nature platform is our third strategic goal. This will inform what action is needed and where, whether by us or by others.

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Launched Great Somerset Wildlife Count** citizen science programme with pilot Frog and Toad spawn count
- **Created parish-level pilot Nature Recovery Network map** in Taunton to help communities to target action for nature
- **Conducted baseline State of Nature Reports** for two Somerset District Councils – Sedgemoor and Somerset West & Taunton
- **Started two-year inventory of Somerset's ancient trees** that will help protect ancient woodland and wood-pasture
- **Completed five-year Local Geological Sites Survey**, updating designations and boundaries to inform future planning decisions

It is only by gathering evidence of the abundance and diversity of wildlife and habitat condition that we will be able to make the best decisions for nature's recovery and deliver the right solutions for climate change and people.

Developing Somerset's Nature Recovery Network map continued to be central to telling Somerset's story. Based on maps of ecological networks pioneered by the Trust over the last decade and using geographic information system technology to map and analyse habitats across Somerset, we continued to refine our knowledge of the core wildlife habitats that need to be protected and enhanced, and the locations that provide the best opportunity to be improved for nature to link core areas, helping nature to spread and populations to be more resilient and recover.

We have been hosting Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) within the Trust for many years, which holds millions of species' records but most are of protected or rare species, within higher quality habitats, such as on our own nature reserves. To know how we are progressing towards our 2030 goal of 30% of Somerset being managed positively for nature, we need to fill knowledge gaps, particularly of what species are present in the wider landscape, including those deemed to be more 'common'.

2021-22 was the start of establishing clear baselines of the State of Nature in Somerset and involving many more people in collecting and submitting data. Through Team Wilder, our new movement of people taking action for nature on their local patch, citizen science initiatives like our new Great Somerset Wildlife Count will mean many more and varied sightings will be added, giving a much truer picture of what is present and abundance trends.

The SERC database is also used to gather information for planning decisions. Data searches were in higher demand than ever before, showing the development pressure Somerset is under.

2022-23 PLANS

- **Hold our first Big Count of the Great Somerset Wildlife Count** to extend our citizen science programme
- **Continue inventory of Somerset's ancient trees**
- **Develop plans for an online Somerset State of Nature** report with the Somerset Local Nature Partnership
- **Roll out community mapping** to more Somerset communities

CASE STUDY: Great Somerset Wildlife Count

We launched our major citizen science project the Great Somerset Wildlife Count to encourage more people to connect with nature and to share what they see helping increase our species' records.

Frog and toad spawn were chosen for our pilot count, both easily recognised and an important indicator of water quality. This pilot allowed us to trial the recording technology, iNaturalist, and learn how best to engage supporters to become a growing army of citizen scientists.

47 records were submitted, all but one of common frog spawn, a species of which we had very few records previously. Many more people downloaded our pack full of information about frogs and toads and actions to take to help them. Encouraged by the willingness of people to get involved, we are now developing the Great Somerset Wildlife Count with other focal points in the year.

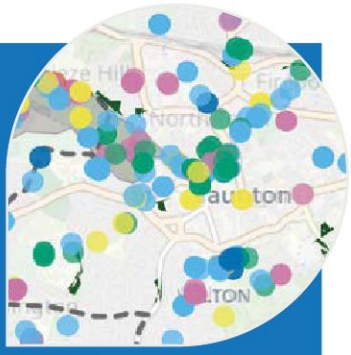
CASE STUDY: Baseline state of nature reports

SERC produced baseline state of nature reports commissioned by Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset West & Taunton Council which showed that both districts had experienced declines in the condition of their Sites of Special Scientific Interest and freshwater system conditions, and, as worryingly, invasive species had increased.

While recognising that significant losses happened post-World War II to the 1990s, our research also revealed that between 1995 to 2015 about four percent of existing grasslands had been lost to urban expansion and agriculture, another concerning change, while there had been a small gain in woodland.

The methodology used is repeatable so trends can be monitored over time. For now it is being used to discover the state of nature in Mendip and South Somerset so the picture will be clear for the whole of Somerset helping to inform what action needs to be taken where.

CASE STUDY: Community mapping



We pioneered a new community mapping approach to help people learn about their wildlife and habitats, contribute their own records to grow knowledge of the species present, and identify key actions they can take locally for nature's recovery.

Developed by SERC with the support of Taunton communities and Natural England funding, this work means more people can get involved with their local green spaces and take action for nature. We may even discover unknown areas of the county that are important for wildlife.

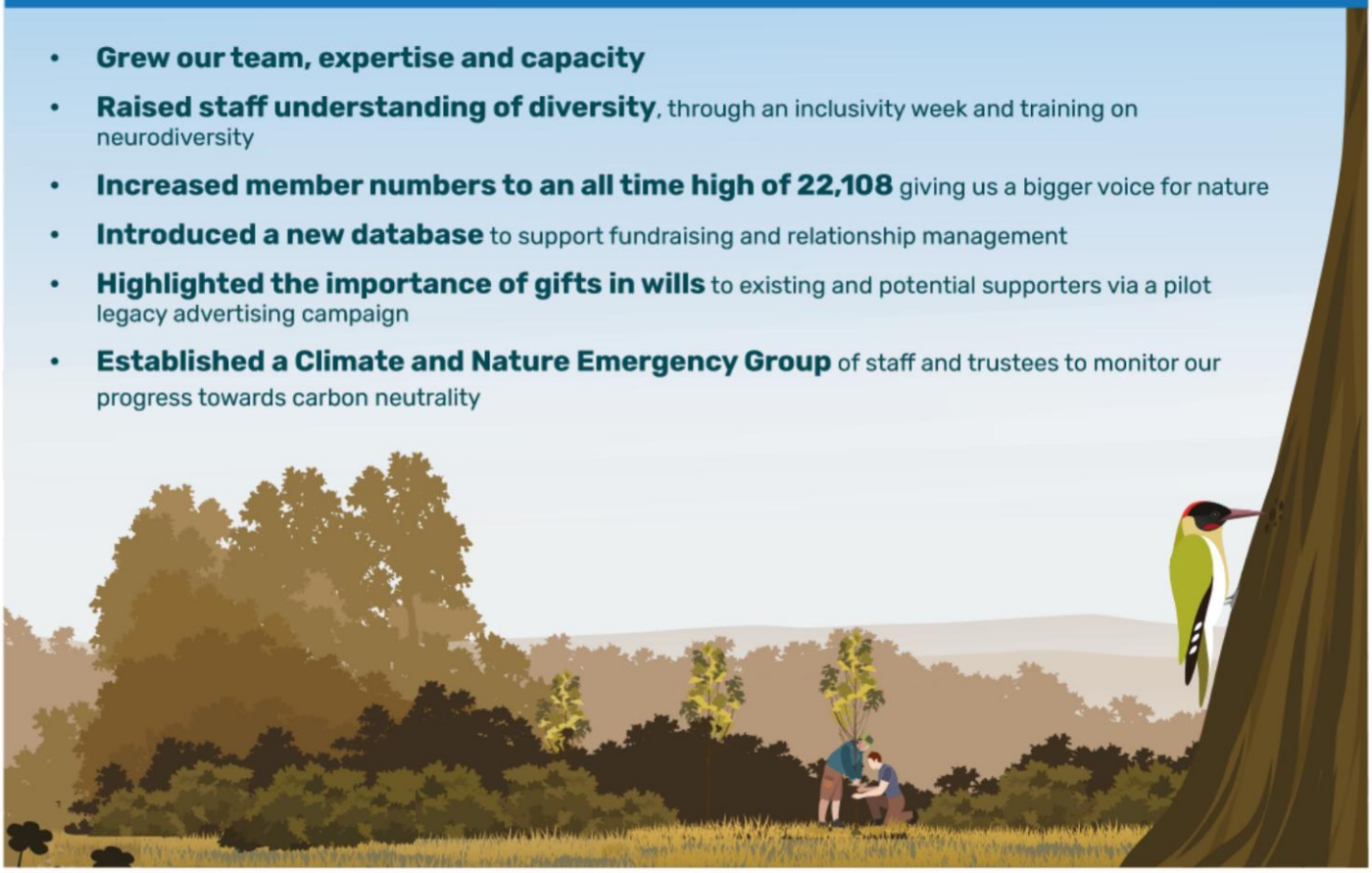
The maps use ecological network maps developed by the Trust with SERC over recent years to show the habitats that exist today, highlighting connectivity (or lack of) across Somerset plus species' data. Parishes can see how their area sits in the wider landscape and opportunities to work with neighbouring parishes to develop certain habitats.

DEVELOPING OUR CHARITY

We need to build our organisation to deliver a Wilder Somerset 2030 and to ensure our own actions support our aims. We grew in 2021-22 to support our ambitious plans and refocussed our work to match our goals.

2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Grew our team, expertise and capacity**
- **Raised staff understanding of diversity**, through an inclusivity week and training on neurodiversity
- **Increased member numbers to an all time high of 22,108** giving us a bigger voice for nature
- **Introduced a new database** to support fundraising and relationship management
- **Highlighted the importance of gifts in wills** to existing and potential supporters via a pilot legacy advertising campaign
- **Established a Climate and Nature Emergency Group** of staff and trustees to monitor our progress towards carbon neutrality



People are the lifeblood of our charity and central to our new strategy, connecting our three strategic goals. We adapted our team structure and roles to ensure we have the expertise, support and influence we will need if we are to succeed in our vision for nature's recovery in Somerset.

From the pandemic we have emerged as a hybrid organisation, with many staff now working largely from home and others continuing to work on our reserves and elsewhere with schools, outdoors and with groups across Somerset. Technology and communications will be ever more important as we move ahead and transform how we work.

It is vital that we lead by example in all we do by ensuring our operations and land use mean we achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. We conducted our second annual environmental audit to monitor our environmental impact updating our carbon footprint and identifying key areas of focus to reduce our emissions.

The coming year will see us maintain the direction of travel set in our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy while recognising that this is a most challenging economic climate for decades, which may affect our ability to fundraise, recruit and our costs.

2022-23 PLANS

- **Publish our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Plan** and continue to work to become more inclusive
- **Better understand the carbon emissions from conservation grazing** as part of our carbon reduction strategy
- **Plan for Passivehaus buildings standards at Honeygar**
- **Review our ways of working and culture** following the pandemic to support our values and staff wellbeing
- **Assess how we need to transform digitally** to support our goals and culture
- **Diversify our sources of income**, including by growing trading income from SWT (Sales) Ltd., First Ecology, SERC and land management advice services

For nature to recover we need more people taking action for nature, a critical mass of at least one in four to tip the balance in nature's favour.

Barn owl © Danny Green/2020VISION

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Trust had another exceptional year with income growing to £6.1m (£3.8m: 2020-21), including £2.3m raised for Honeygar, our new pioneering 81-hectare wilding project on the Somerset Levels and Moors. 34% more was invested in our charitable activities supporting nature's recovery, including as a result of new grants secured.

Of the £2.3m secured for the acquisition and wilding of Honeygar, £1.5m supported the purchase of Honeygar in 2021-22 and some will be spent in future years as we begin the process of restoring natural processes. Expenditure grew by £900k to £3.4m (£2.5m: 2020-21) as we increased our spending on delivering our new strategic goals, in particular, making space for nature and developing Team Wilder, our new movement for nature.

We achieved a surplus of £818k (£1.17m: 2020-21) on unrestricted funds after transfers, including an increase of £396k in designated funds representing the funds raised for the acquisition of the buildings at Honeygar.

We recognised a surplus of £793k (£186k: 2020-21) on restricted funds, as a result of funds given by funders to deliver specific outcomes that will be spent in future financial years. This includes £679k raised for Honeygar but not yet spent. We recognised a surplus of £1.1m (£108k: 2020-21) on endowment funds which primarily represents the funds raised for the acquisition of land at Honeygar.

A significant proportion of the £2.8m increase in overall charity funds (£7m in 2020-21 to £9.8m in 2021-22) is represented by tangible and heritage assets (land and buildings), restricted funds and designated funds. As a result of planned growth in 2022-23, our financial reserve target has increased which has resulted in the income fund being £262k below our financial reserves target, which is set as four months' operating costs. The Trust recognises the importance of ongoing financial resilience particularly in the increasingly challenging economic climate and as such plans to develop alternative income streams through growth in land advisory and ecological consultancy, alongside continuing to grow fundraising.

INCOME

Income for the year totalled £6.1m (£3.8m: 2020-21), primarily due to the generosity of supporters through increased donations, legacies and grant funding, including £2.3m to support Honeygar.

Income from donations and appeals grew to £2m (£913k: 2020-21) representing the largest source of income in the year and 33% of overall income. This includes an exceptional £1.5m donation restricted for Honeygar.

Grant income was the second largest source of income and grew to £1.6m (£1.3m: 2020-21), representing 27% of total income. The increase in grant income compared to 2020-21 is mainly due to new grant funded projects including £348k received in the year for two Green Recovery Challenge Fund projects and £105k for Honeygar. A total of £470k (£411k: 2020-21) grants were received through agri-environment schemes, which support the management of our nature reserves and represent 29% of total grant income.

The Trust's membership continued to grow resulting in membership income increasing by £79k to £835k (£737k: 2020-21) and remained the third largest source of income in the year at 14% of total income.

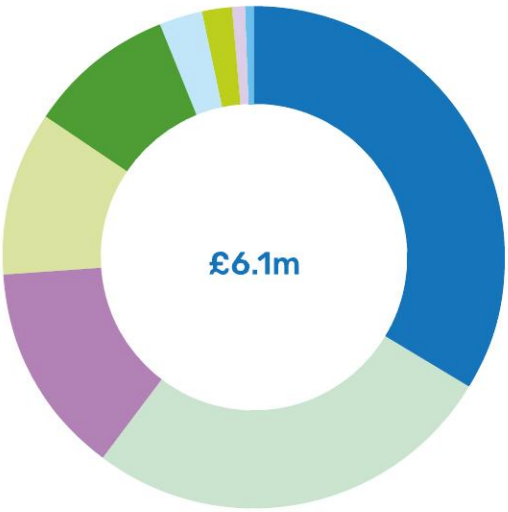
Income from other trading activities totalled £627k (£510k: 2020-21). This includes a 21% increase in income achieved by the Trust's wholly owned subsidiary, trading as First Ecology, following a reduction in income recognised in the previous year due to the pandemic when growth plans were put on hold. First Ecology's income totalled £571k (£473k: 2020-21).

A total of £637k (£202k: 2020-21) legacy income was recognised in the year, £400k of which is restricted for Honeygar and £237k has been credited to the designated development reserve for future projects.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre, which is hosted by the Trust, achieved a 48% growth in income which totalled £188k (£127k: 2020-21), primarily from Service Level Agreements and data searches.

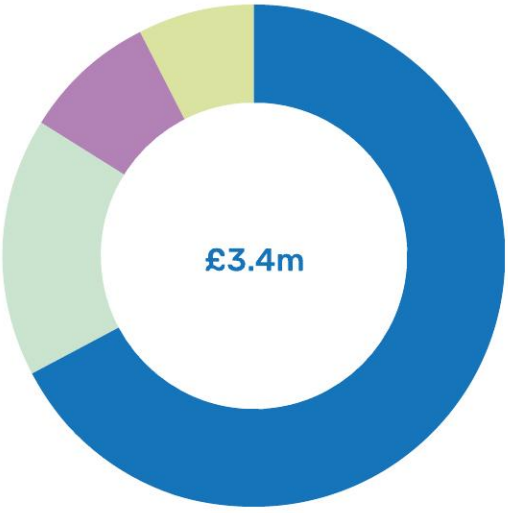
The Trust recognises the need to diversify its income sources and achieved an 81% increase in income from the provision of land advice and other consultancy services to £100k (£19k: 2020-21).

Income by source



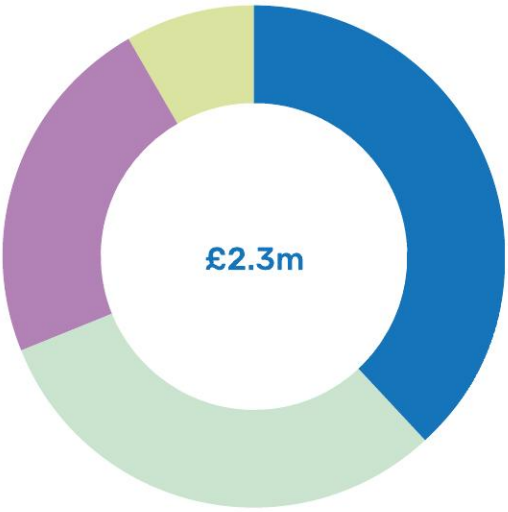
	2021-22 £000s	2020-21 £000s	CHANGE %
Donations and appeals	2,052	913	125
Grants	1,613	1,260	28
Membership	835	757	10
Legacies	637	202	215
First Ecology	571	473	21
Data Services and SLAs	168	124	35
Other	123	44	180
Other fundraising activities	55	36	53
Investment income	17	13	31
Total income	**6,071**	**3,822**	**59**

Expenditure by activity



	2021-22 £000s	2020-21 £000s	CHANGE %
Charitable activities	2,261	1,689	34
First Ecology	552	441	25
Membership recruitment	288	187	54
Raising funds	250	228	10
Total expenditure	**3,351**	**2,545**	**32**

Expenditure on charitable activities



	2021-22 £000s	2020-21 £000s	CHANGE %
More space for nature – nature reserves	866	798	9
A movement for nature	697	475	47
More space for nature – nature recovery	515	260	98
Telling Somerset's story	183	155	18
Total expenditure	**2,261**	**1,688**	**32**

EXPENDITURE

Our overall expenditure grew by 32% to £3.4m (£2.5m: 2020-21) while spending on our charitable activities supporting nature's recovery in Somerset increased by 34% to £2.3m (£1.7m: 2020-21). We grew our staff team to deliver our new Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, resumed year round face to face membership recruitment and began new strategic projects thanks to grant funding success.

Staff costs remained our largest area of expenditure and we added specialist roles particularly in our nature recovery, land management and engagement teams to enable us to deliver our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy.

Our nature reserves are critical to developing a strong Nature Recovery Network across Somerset and £866k (£798k; 2020-21) was used for their management and improvement, plus continuing urgent work needed as a result of Ash Dieback on our reserves, representing 26% of total expenditure. A grant from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund enabled more Ash Dieback work to be completed than in 2020-21, which resulted in much of the increase in nature reserve expenditure.

Additionally investment in non-reserves nature recovery work almost doubled, growing by £254k to £515k (£260k: 2020-21). This was primarily thanks to new grant funding secured, including an important Somerset Local Nature Partnership Peatland Discovery project, that is being hosted by the Trust, and investment in the core nature recovery team, including by the creation of land management advisory and nature-based solutions roles.

Expenditure on building a movement for nature, Team Wilder, increased by £222k to £697k (£475k: 2020-21) as the team was expanded and refocused to support more communities across Somerset to take action for nature, while continuing to deliver grant funded projects including Somerset's Brilliant Coast and the Somerset Nature Connections partnership nature and wellbeing project.

First Ecology (SWT (Sales) Ltd)

As a result of planned growth and investment in our wholly-owned subsidiary to deliver more of our strategy and over time increase the surplus returned to the Trust, SWT (Sales) Ltd trading as First Ecology's expenditure increased by 25% to £552k (£441k: 2020-21), representing 16% of overall expenditure. First Ecology's net profit of £72k (£91k: 2020-21) in this investment year has been Gift Aided to the Trust.

Membership recruitment and raising funds

Membership recruitment costs rose significantly by 54% to £288k (£187k: 2020-21) following the resumption of year round face to face membership recruitment by South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited. Non-membership recruitment fundraising expenditure grew by 10% to £250k (£228k: 2020-21). Overall the cost of raising funds and membership recruitment totalled £528k (£404k: 2020-21), an increase of £124k compared to 2020-21, and representing 15% of overall expenditure.

Support costs

Support costs totalled £544k (£504k: 2020-21) representing 19% of overall expenditure.

FINANCIAL RESERVES HOLDINGS

Total reserves at the end of the year amounted to £9.8m (£7m: 2020-21), although a significant proportion of this total is represented by tangible and heritage (land) fixed assets, leaving available financial reserves of £2.87m (£2.46m: 2020-21).

Total reserves	£9,782,304
Less:	
Restricted funds	(£1,386,188)
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	(£5,529,190)
Total available reserves	**£2,866,926**

In accordance with the financial reserves policy, the Trust aims to hold four months' planned expenditure in the income fund which equates to a target of £1.2m for 2022-23. The Trust's £2.87m reserves consist of £952k in the income fund and £1.9m which has been designated by Trustees for specific purposes. The Trust's existing reserves held in the income fund are £262k below the target and equate to just over three months' planned expenditure.

The Trustees have designated £1.9m for specific purposes to support the management of nature reserves, future land purchase, innovation opportunities, future investment in Somerset Environmental Records Centre and strategic investment to support the delivery of charitable activities as outlined in note 20. The Trust designates all legacy receipts to the designated development reserve on receipt to support future strategic investment in the Trust's charitable objectives.

Total available reserves	£2,866,926
Designated funds	(£1,914,936)
Income fund	**£951,990**
Income fund target	**£1,214,000**

The careful management of cash flow is crucial to ensuring that there is sufficient cash to deliver the Trust's planned programme of works as grant income is often payable in arrears. The Trust aims to hold approximately £400k in unrestricted cash.

FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

The Trust has a policy of holding reserves of funds to:

- Enable it to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to further the aims of the Trust when no other source of income is available.
- Provide adequate working capital to carry out projects for which funds have been granted by external bodies, but for which those funds are payable only after expenditure has been incurred.
- Provide a reserve to cover contractual obligations and short-term payment of essential costs, such as staff salaries, in the event of an unanticipated shortfall in funds and/or fluctuations in income.
- Meet any legal obligation on the Trust to meet any future costs.

INVESTMENTS

The value of the Trust's investment portfolio at the end of the year increased to £936k (£909k: 2020-21) and generated income of £15k (£13k: 2020-21). The Trust recognised a £34k gain (£183k gain: 2020-21) arising from revaluations in the year.

The investment portfolio is managed by Rathbone Greenbank to provide the Trust with a range of sound marketable investments providing a balance of regular income and opportunity for capital growth. This requires a balanced portfolio consisting of investment grade fixed interest stocks or funds of fixed interest stocks and equities.

An ethical investment policy has been adopted to ensure that the investment portfolio consists of stocks consistent with the Trust's obligation to further its charitable activities, whilst ensuring that its investments do not conflict with its aims and objectives. The Trust's ethical investment policy seeks to encourage investment in companies with strong sustainability policies and practices that respect and protect wildlife, communities and their wider environment and does not invest in fossil fuels or other environmentally damaging activities.

RISK MANAGEMENT

All key risks are identified and managed through a Register of Risks which is reviewed regularly by Council members. A risk-based approach is being embedded in all of the organisation's planning and decision-making so that any major risks are anticipated and planned for in a structured way.

The Trustees have examined the principal areas of the Trust's work and considered the major risks arising in each of these areas. In the opinion of the Trustees, the Trust has established processes and systems which, under normal circumstances, should allow the risks identified by them to be mitigated to an acceptable level in its day-to-day operations and to support working practices during and emerging from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Trustees have identified the current principal risks as:

- A more challenging fundraising environment combined with higher expected costs due to inflation and economic pressures.
- Transition to the new government agri-environment Environmental Land Management Scheme leading to a potential reduction in income.
- Liabilities resulting from ash dieback disease on our nature reserves.

It is only by gathering evidence of the abundance and diversity of wildlife and habitat condition that we will be able to make the best decisions for nature's recovery.

Dormouse

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

CHARITABLE PURPOSE

Somerset Wildlife Trust is set up to achieve three charitable objects:

1. For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance, protection and enjoyment of wildlife and its habitats, including places of botanical, geographical, zoological, archaeological or scientific interest and places of natural beauty;
2. To advance the education of the public in the principles of biodiversity conservation and of sustainable development;
3. To promote research in all branches of ecology and geology.

The Trust delivers its charitable purposes through its strategic objectives as described in this report.

The Trust measures its success by:

- The Senior Leadership Team and Trust Council monitoring progress towards charitable goals and their achievement through quarterly reviews of the implementation of the annual business plan and performance against budget
- Monitoring agreed Key Performance Indicators for key work areas, including membership, fundraising and wider income generation
- Setting objectives for all staff which link to the annual business plan and reviewing progress regularly at one to one and annual review meetings
- Continuing to develop successful relationships with partner organisations and funders
- Hosting Somerset Environmental Records Centre, which collects and provides data on species and habitats across Somerset, including on Trust nature reserves, to external parties, the public and specialist groups
- Annual endorsement of the report and accounts and future plans at the Annual General Meeting of members
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints received

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The Trust's public benefit is enshrined in its charitable objectives and activities – providing multiple benefits for the public which are wide-ranging and long-lasting.

Restoring nature at landscape-scale

The Trust's work aims to restore nature at scale across our landscapes including by restoring, creating and protecting habitats that are or can be biodiversity-rich and also provide essential ecosystem services for the public, such as flood risk management, carbon storage, pollination, pollution control, improved health and wellbeing, and aesthetic beauty. Government and businesses are now recognising the essential role that nature plays in supporting the economy, not least through the provision of these public goods and services.

Land management advice for nature

Through providing advice and assistance to farmers and landowners to manage their land for the benefit of wildlife, the Trust helps to support the rural economy, the countryside and landscapes that are enjoyed and valued by the wider public.

Nature reserves

The Trust's 66 nature reserves, located throughout Somerset, are used extensively by the public for quiet recreation; many have access on clearly marked paths along with information and interpretation for visitors and visiting helps to build connection with nature and supporting health and wellbeing.

Team Wilder – a movement for nature

Team Wilder is supporting people, communities and organisations across Somerset to take action for nature to help us restore, create and protect habitats and build their connection with nature. We are committed to being an inclusive organisation and are actively working to involve more diverse communities and more young people in our work. We aim to empower them to take practical action for nature whether at home, at school or at work for their own wellbeing and to help nature recover.

Research

Evidence and advice provided by the Trust to local authorities, landowners and communities helps to ensure that decisions on policies such as land management, development, health and wellbeing take full account of the public benefit of wildlife and a healthy environment.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURE

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its articles of association.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (registered charity number 207238) along with 46 other local Wildlife Trust members throughout the UK which are collectively known as The Wildlife Trusts.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is also a partner in the South West Wildlife Trusts, an independent charity formed by seven of the eight Wildlife Trusts located in the South West of England and the Isles of Scilly to increase the effectiveness of the Wildlife Trusts in the South West. Somerset Wildlife Trust has one wholly owned subsidiary,

SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activities of SWT (Sales) Limited are that of overseeing the environmental consultancy, trading under the name First Ecology.

First Ecology is the Trust's consultancy. It provides ecological consultancy, protected species services, planning support and arboricultural services to a wide range of clients. It is based at the Trust's Callow Rock Offices. First Ecology trades under SWT (Sales) Ltd and is a company limited by shares and registered in England No. 1317396.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) was established in 1986 and is hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust. The core work of SERC is to gather, manage and supply biological and geological data and hold the county list of sites recognised for their natural value. Data gathered by SERC is used to build up a comprehensive picture of the biodiversity and geodiversity of Somerset, and help to monitor the state of the natural environment. SERC is a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres and has close links to the National Biodiversity Network, and the National Federation of Biological Recorders.

South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL) is an Associate trading subsidiary (set up for mutual trading) and jointly owned by eight Wildlife Trusts, including Somerset Wildlife Trust, to help secure regular financial support through memberships recruited face to face. SWWFL provides membership recruitment services for Somerset, Avon, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Wiltshire and Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts.

GOVERNANCE

Council

Members elected to serve on Council have a dual role as a Trustee of the Charity and a Director of the company. There can be no fewer than eight and no more than twelve Trustees. All members of Council are volunteers, give freely of their time and have no beneficial interest in the group or charity. Trustees are elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting and serve for an initial three-year term. Each Trustee can serve for three consecutive terms of three years subject to re-election at the end of each three-year term. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are elected by Council following the AGM and serve one-year terms.

To ensure that Council is equipped to deliver its responsibilities it carries out skills analysis of existing members before new ones are appointed. In addition, each new Council member receives a full induction into the work and administration of the charity. Council members receive regular updates on the work of the Trust and any training deemed necessary to enable members to carry out their responsibilities.

At the Trust AGM in November 2021, four Trustees were elected.

During 2021-22, a review of the Trust's Articles of Association was undertaken to bring them up to date and to incorporate new guidelines from the Charity Commission. The revised Articles of Association were approved at the AGM in November 2021.

Council is assisted by five committees:
Finance and Resources Committee: scrutiny of accounts, oversight of investments and financial controls, policy development, advice on business risk and resource management and income generation;
Health and Safety Committee: oversight on all health and safety matters in the Trust.
Risk Management Committee: advising on the Trust's risk appetite and risk tolerance, reviewing and monitoring current and potential business risks.
Remuneration Committee: consider and make recommendations on the annual salary review for the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team, remuneration policy and benchmarking, discretionary pay increases and the identification and management of risk related to recruitment and retention of employees; and
Governance Committee: the chairs of all committees meet with the Chair of Council and the Chief Executive twice a year to ensure good governance across the Trust.

Transactions involving Council members and related parties

During 2021-22 a total of £1,389 (2021: £1,053) was received from Trustees in respect of donations and membership.

Strategy

Council is responsible for furthering the objectives of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association. The focus of Council's work is on setting and reviewing the strategic direction for the Trust, on monitoring its delivery of agreed targets and to ensure that the income and expenditure of the Trust and its property and assets are managed appropriately. Council determines the strategic direction of the Trust through the 10-year Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy which was formally launched in May 2021. The strategy is available to download from the Trust's website.

Staffing

Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer and supports the appointment process for members of the Senior Leadership Team. Trustees delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team through agreement of clear strategic objectives for the Trust which have demonstrable outcomes for wildlife in the county. Trustees monitor progress quarterly as well as ensuring that the Trust's financial affairs are managed appropriately.

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Chair of Trustees. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day to day running of the Trust and has delegated powers of authority approved by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer delegates decision-making powers through the Senior Leadership Team into the organisation.

During the year the Trust employed 59 full-time equivalent staff (2021: 50), four of which worked for SERC and 11 for First Ecology. The Trust continues to adopt hybrid working, with many staff working primarily from home or elsewhere to deliver projects and manage nature reserves.

The Trust's headquarters is in Taunton with other staff based at Ford Farm, the Avalon Marshes Centre and Callow Rock. The staff are organised into functional teams, such as reserves, and also work in cross-functional teams, such as for delivering major projects.

Key management personnel remuneration

All job descriptions are graded by the Salary Grading Panel. The Salary Grading Panel assesses each job description and grades within the Trust's grading criteria which consists of 11 levels, each of which has a corresponding salary band which is benchmarked against similar roles in the external market and other Wildlife Trusts.

The pay arrangements for the Senior Leadership Team are determined by the Chief Executive Officer and approved by the Remuneration Committee using external and Wildlife Trusts' benchmarking. The Chief Executive Officer's salary is determined by the Remuneration Committee following representation from the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Complaints

The Trust treats all complaints seriously. In the year 2021-22 the Trust received 12 complaints (2021: 1). No complaints were received in 2021-22 about our fundraising (2021: 0).

All of the complaints were responded to within seven days. Complaints are individually reviewed by the relevant Senior Leadership Team staff and monitored by the Chief Executive Officer and Trustees as part of a system for continuous improvement.

How we fundraise

As a charity, fundraising is essential to Somerset Wildlife Trust's ability to meet our core purpose and deliver public benefit. We receive most of our financial support from grants and individuals, including our members.

We are committed to a transparent and ethical approach to all our fundraising activity. We make every effort to ensure that our fundraising activity never feels unreasonably intrusive, persistent or pressurised, but rather focuses on inspiring support and celebrating the impact of fundraised income.

Our members and supporters are the foundation of everything we do and our work is only possible thanks to their generosity and their commitment to take action locally for nature.

We do:

- recruit new members face to face at venues and events across Somerset, including Trust nature reserves, and via our website (including as part of national Wildlife Trust campaigns), telephone and occasional targeted door drops;
- send appeal letters and other fundraising communications to selected supporters who have opted-in to marketing by post and/or digitally;
- seek philanthropic support from major donors, patrons, trusts, foundations, companies and other grant givers;
- invite donations via our website, other giving platforms and collection boxes;
- promote the importance of supporting our work, including via gifts in wills and gifts in memory;
- organise online fundraising auctions and other fundraising events; and
- encourage our members, supporters and local businesses to fundraise in aid of our work (community fundraising) as part of taking action for nature – Team Wilder.

We do not:

- sell or pass on supporter details to any other organisation or buy lists of other charities' donors.

Our members and supporters have the opportunity to express their preferences on how they are contacted and can change these at any time, by contacting us.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and committed to follow its Code of Practice, which sets out standards of behaviour of fundraisers.

We are signed up to the Fundraising Preference Service to enable individuals to opt out from receiving fundraising communications from us and received no requests from this service to opt out in the year.

We ensure that fundraising is conducted to the highest quality and that individuals who may be in vulnerable circumstances are protected, including by continually updating our database to prevent communications being sent to any vulnerable people who have been identified.

Our fundraising is mainly carried out by Trust staff with support from a very limited number of carefully selected professional fundraisers which are fundraising agencies or third-party service providers which act as agents in raising funds on the charity's behalf.

Face to face fundraising at venues and events is conducted on our behalf by staff of South West Wildlife

Fundraising Limited (SWWFL), an associate trading subsidiary jointly owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust and seven other Wildlife Trusts.

SWWFL is a corporate member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising which conduct 'mystery shopping' surveys with SWWFL's face-to-face fundraisers to monitor quality. The SWWFL face-to-face fundraising team were trained in safe methods of operating to ensure social distancing and contact free sign-up processes when operations re-started post lockdowns to keep both staff and the public safe. Covid-specific risk assessments were in place and updated regularly in line with the changing restrictions in place.

We seek feedback from all new members using a third-party service, Quality Telephone Services (QTS) to understand their experience of joining us including feedback on SWWFL recruiters, thus identifying any areas where we can make further improvements. QTS are also occasionally used to make outbound telephone calls to confirm Gift Aid status and solicit an optional increase in a member's regular donation.

We use Work for Good to enable local small businesses to fundraise for us via sales of their products as commercial participators.

Volunteering

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and achieve. Volunteers founded the Somerset Wildlife Trust in 1964 and today remain fundamental to our work. They carry out a variety of roles, from practical habitat management and field surveys, to support for office activities and events, to running the Trust as members of Council.

Our volunteering policy aims to reflect the high esteem in which the Trust holds volunteers, who are an established, valued and integral part of the Trust.

Safeguarding

As an organisation that works with children and vulnerable adults, the Trust acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity. Our safeguarding policy is published on our website at somersetwildlife.org/policies/safeguarding.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Trust is committed to being inclusive in all aspects of our work from staff to trustees, volunteers to participants at our events. An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan is being developed that will be published in 2022-23.

The Plan aims to provide a framework for the delivery of EDI in support of the Trust's strategy and to ensure that everyone can benefit from and take action for nature. It places diversity and inclusion at the heart of our culture, supporting us in our endeavours to reflect the society we work within, as well as providing a barometer for excellence.

By recognising, respecting and valuing differences, and adopting more diverse perspectives, our staff, trustees, volunteers and supporters can become more effective ambassadors for nature. As such, EDI is enshrined in our core values, our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, our policies and activities.

The Plan aims to provide everyone with the opportunity and encouragement to access nature within a supportive and welcoming environment, enriching their lives and encouraging them to take action for nature's recovery.

Environment policy

The Trust has committed to be a net-zero carbon organisation by 2030 and to do this will mitigate its climate impacts (such as buildings, staff transport, landholdings, purchasing and waste) as well as adapt its operations to the impending climate threats such as heat, drought, flood and sea level rise. It is also supporting communities to develop adaptation pathways on the Somerset Levels though the Co-adapt project.

The Trust is using the Wilder Carbon process developed by Kent Wildlife Trust to ensure we can benchmark accurately with other Wildlife Trusts and measure our footprint and sequestration using the best available data and emission factors recommended by DEFRA/Natural England.

A Climate and Nature Emergency Working Group of staff and trustees has been established to monitor progress towards net-zero and the Trust's carbon footprint is measured each year.

With nature and the climate in crisis, we made a commitment in our new strategy to be bold and act quickly.

Hare © Ben Simmonds

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Somerset Wildlife Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the income and expenditure of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Trustees on 19 July 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Somerset Wildlife (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2022, which comprise the consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the consolidated and parent charitable company Balance Sheets, the consolidated Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Annual Report, which includes the Directors' Report and Strategic Report prepared for the purposes of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report included within the Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report and Strategic Report included within the Annual Report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or

- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company, including the Companies Act 2006, Charity Act 2011, and employment legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and considering legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation, claims and breaches of relevant legislation; and
- reviewing correspondence with the Charity Commission and other relevant regulators.

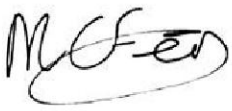
There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the group and parent charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the group and parent charitable company's members and trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the group and parent charitable company and the group and parent charitable company's members as a body and the parent charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Michelle Ferris BSC (Hons) FCA DChA
Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of Albert Goodman LLP,
Statutory Auditor

Goodwood House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset TA1 2PX

19 July 2022

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We grew in 2021-22 to support our ambitious plans and refocussed our work to match our goals.

Round-leaved sundew

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCLUDING CONSOLIDATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds General £	Unrestricted funds Designated £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds 2022 £	Total funds 2021 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	981,112	237,304	2,306,530	-	3,524,946	1,871,246
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature – nature recovery	3	99,652	-	610,002	-	709,654	164,407
More space for nature – nature reserves	3	490,077	-	248,910	-	738,987	626,881
A movement for nature	3	1,300	-	264,410	-	265,710	415,105
Telling Somerset's story	3	167,623	-	20,196	-	187,819	126,664
Other trading activities (including First Ecology)	4	626,663	-	-	-	626,663	509,555
Investments	5	17,332	-	-	-	17,332	13,496
Other income	6	-	-	-	-	-	95,265
Total		**2,383,759**	**237,304**	**3,450,048**	**-**	**6,071,111**	**3,822,619**
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds (including First Ecology)	7	1,089,564	-	-	-	1,089,564	856,350
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature – nature recovery	7	97,737	-	416,858	-	514,595	260,496
More space for nature – nature reserves	7	519,859	2	346,359	-	866,220	798,341
A movement for nature	7	363,134	-	334,007	-	697,141	475,089
Telling Somerset's story	7	162,816	-	20,196	-	183,012	154,546
Total		**2,233,110**	**2**	**1,117,420**	**-**	**3,350,532**	**2,544,822**
Net gain/(loss) on investments		34,344	-	-	-	34,344	183,097
Net income/(expenditure)		**184,993**	**237,302**	**2,332,628**	**-**	**2,754,923**	**1,460,894**
Transfers between funds	21	(163,064)	558,421	(1,539,682)	1,144,325	-	-
Net movement in funds		**21,929**	**795,723**	**792,946**	**1,144,325**	**2,754,923**	**1,460,894**
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2021		1,180,022	3,512,684	593,242	1,741,433	7,027,381	5,566,487
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2022		**1,201,951**	**4,308,407**	**1,386,188**	**2,885,758**	**9,782,304**	**7,027,381**

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above. The notes on pages 33 to 48 form part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED AND TRUST BALANCE SHEETS
AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

		Group		Trust	
		2022	2021	2022	2021
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12	1,256,804	847,651	1,231,934	832,560
Heritage assets	12	4,272,386	3,128,562	4,272,386	3,128,562
Investments	13	935,695	908,540	935,698	908,543
		6,464,885	**4,884,753**	**6,440,018**	**4,869,665**
Current assets					
Stock	14	1,329	1,690	1,329	1,690
Debtors	15	1,099,864	685,603	1,127,960	698,147
Deposit accounts		2,153,802	1,802,732	2,153,802	1,802,732
Cash at bank and in hand		967,220	346,515	956,063	333,459
		4,222,215	**2,836,540**	**4,239,154**	**2,836,028**
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	615,977	248,493	608,204	233,048
Net current assets		**3,606,238**	**2,588,047**	**3,630,950**	**2,602,980**
Total assets less current liabilities		**10,071,123**	**7,472,800**	**10,070,968**	**7,472,645**
Provisions for liabilities	17	288,819	445,419	288,819	445,419
Total net assets		**9,782,304**	**7,027,381**	**9,782,149**	**7,027,226**
The funds of the charity					
Endowment funds		2,885,758	1,741,433	2,885,758	1,741,433
Restricted funds		1,386,188	593,242	1,386,188	593,242
Designated funds		4,308,407	3,512,684	4,308,407	3,512,684
Unrestricted funds		1,201,951	1,180,022	1,201,796	1,179,867
Total charity funds	**22**	**9,782,304**	**7,027,381**	**9,782,149**	**7,027,226**

The notes on pages 33 to 48 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 29 to 48 were approved by the Trustees on 19 July 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

Richard Atkin
Treasurer

Somerset Wildlife Trust
Registered company number 818162

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	25	2,546,261	1,101,245
Cash flows from investing activities			
Dividends, interest and rental income		17,332	13,496
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		35,000	-
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(1,634,007)	(155,886)
Proceeds from sale of investments		96,684	139,039
Purchase of investments		(101,599)	(150,978)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(1,586,590)**	**(154,329)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**959,671**	**946,916**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,172,425	1,225,509
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	**26**	**3,132,096**	**2,172,425**

The notes on pages 33 to 48 form part of these financial statements.

There is now a real opportunity to better align nature, food production and sustainable livelihoods that will benefit us all.

Bee © Jon Hawkins

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Charitable company status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. The liability of the guarantors, who are the members, is limited to £1 per guarantor. At 31 March 2022 the charity had 22,018 members. The company is registered in England & Wales. The registered office address is 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5AW. On behalf of the members, the Council controls the company.

(b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention with the exception of listed investments which are included at their fair value.

The Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

(c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

(d) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Limited on a line-by-line basis. A separate Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account for the charity has not been presented because the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption afforded by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006. The surplus in the year for the charity was £2,754,923 (2021: £1,460,894). Note 23 gives full details of the results of the subsidiary undertaking for the year to 31 March 2022.

(e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds
Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Certain unrestricted funds have been designated by the Trustees for specific purposes.

Designated funds
Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Council for a future purpose.

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds that are used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

Endowment funds
The nature reserves endowment fund represents amounts received specifically for, and expended on, the purchase of nature reserves.

(f) Income

All income is included in the SOFA when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income for works that have been completed but has not yet been received is included as accrued income. The stage of completion is determined by comparing the services rendered to date to the accepted quotation or contract.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the Trust that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Unless restricted, legacies are credited to the designated development reserve on receipt.

Grants are included in the SOFA in the year they are receivable and when any performance conditions attached to the grant have been met. Grants received in respect of the purchase of specific nature reserves are credited to the nature reserves endowment fund.

Government grants are included within other income and are recognised where there is entitlement, when receipt is considered probable and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from investments and from rental income is included in the SOFA in the year it is receivable.

The total income receivable in respect of membership is included within note 2. Income from life membership is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

Gifts in kind are included in the SOFA at their estimated current value in the year in which they are receivable.

Trading income is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

(g) Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where an employee works in more than one department, their costs are allocated on the basis of time worked in each department. Certain overhead costs, such as relevant insurance premiums, are allocated on the basis of staff numbers, while others are allocated on an actual usage basis.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

(h) Tangible, intangible and heritage fixed assets and depreciation

Heritage assets are assets of historical or scientific importance that are held to advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of the charity and through public access

contribute to the nation's culture and education at either a national or local level. Freehold nature reserves are included in heritage fixed assets at their acquisition costs and they are not revalued or depreciated. The charity aims to preserve and enhance its nature reserves, which are not held for their resale potential. The market value of the reserves is of no practical relevance to the charity's activities. No depreciation is provided because the reserves have an indefinite life.

The costs of leasehold nature reserves are amortised over the period of the lease.

All other tangible fixed assets are held at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided on all other tangible fixed assets as follows:

Freehold property: 2% on a straight line basis
Computers: on a straight line basis over 3 years
Plant and equipment: 15% on written down value
Motor vehicles: 25% on written down value
Office equipment, furniture and fittings: 15% on written down value

Intangible assets are amortised over the length of their contractual term.

(i) Investments

Listed Investments are stated at fair value which equates to market value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes all net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. The investment in the subsidiary is stated at cost.

(j) Stock

Stock consists of publications for distribution to members and purchased goods for resale. Stock is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

(k) Cash and equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

(l) Financial instruments

The Trust only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and liabilities of the Trust and their measurement are as follows:

Financial assets – trade debtors, amounts owed by subsidiary company, legacies receivable, other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost. Investment portfolios are basic financial instruments measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank and deposit accounts are classified as a basic financial instrument and measured at face value.

Financial liabilities which includes trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments and are measured at amortised cost.

(m) Pension costs

The Trust operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Pension contributions in relation to the defined contribution scheme are recognised as an expense in the statement of financial activities as incurred. The Trust contributes 7% of gross annual salary for participating employees.

(n) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the SOFA as incurred.

(o) Volunteer support

The Trust receives support from a wide variety of volunteers. It is not practical to place a value on the time volunteered by all these persons, due to the variety of duties performed, the differences in time spent, and the sheer number of volunteers who kindly donated their time.

(p) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

The Trustees are of the opinion that apart from the Ash Dieback provision there are no other estimates or assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

The Trust has a liability to manage the impact of Ash Dieback on its nature reserves and during 2019-20 the progression of Ash Dieback disease on the Trust's nature reserves became apparent. A specialist report was commissioned during the year, and as a result, a provision of £600k was recognised in the year for the estimated future cost of removing dangerous trees in priority areas; primarily along roads and paths. A significant amount of work has been undertaken over the past two years to deal with this issue and it is anticipated that the remaining works to clear 5,205 metres of trees in high priority areas will be completed in 2022-23 at an estimated cost of £288,819. The actual cost incurred will depend on the progression of the disease and further areas of Trust woodland which require management may be identified in due course. Further details are included in note 17.

(q) Provisions

The Trust recognises a provision where it has a liability which is of uncertain timing or amount. Movements in provisions are recognised in the SOFA in the period in which they occur. Provisions are discounted where the time impact of money is material.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £
Membership[1]	835,332	-	835,332	756,831	-	756,831
Donations and appeals	145,780	1,906,530	2,052,310	775,314	137,369	912,683
Legacies	237,304	400,000	637,304	196,732	5,000	201,732
	1,218,416	**2,306,530**	**3,524,946**	**1,728,877**	**142,369**	**1,871,246**

[1] Membership includes corporate membership £11,300 (2021: £7,417).

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £
More space for nature – nature recovery						
Natural England	-	29,331	29,331	-	12,732	12,732
Statutory body grants	-	93,923	93,923	-	30,715	30,715
Other grants	-	486,748	486,748	-	101,881	101,881
Consultancy fees	99,652	-	99,652	19,079	-	19,079
	99,652	**610,002**	**709,654**	**19,079**	**145,328**	**164,407**
More space for nature – nature reserves						
DEFRA	469,823	-	469,823	411,269	-	411,269
Statutory body grants	-	76,577	76,577	-	4,150	4,150
Landfill tax credit scheme	-	35,705	35,705	-	65,422	65,422
Other grants	-	136,628	136,628	-	121,078	121,078
Grazing licences and property lettings	15,709	-	15,709	14,506	-	14,506
Wood and firewood sales	4,545	-	4,545	10,456	-	10,456
	490,077	**248,910**	**738,987**	**436,231**	**190,650**	**626,881**
A movement for nature						
Education provision	1,300	-	1,300	-	-	-
Statutory body grants	-	68,333	68,333	5,000	120,478	125,478
Other grants	-	196,077	196,077	-	289,627	289,627
	1,300	**264,410**	**265,710**	**5,000**	**410,105**	**415,105**
Telling Somerset's story						
Statutory body grants	-	4,000	4,000	-	200	200
Other grants	-	16,196	16,196	-	1,997	1,997
Service level agreements	82,625	-	82,625	78,861	-	78,861
Data services	65,247	-	65,247	43,336	-	43,336
Sales income	19,751	-	19,751	2,270	-	2,270
	167,623	**20,196**	**187,819**	**124,467**	**2,197**	**126,664**
	758,652	**1,143,518**	**1,902,170**	**584,777**	**748,280**	**1,333,057**

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Trust £	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 23) £	Total 2022 £	Trust £	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 23) £	Total 2021 £
Shop sales	2,345	-	2,345	2,433	-	2,433
Fundraising events	16,142	-	16,142	3,270	-	3,270
Other fundraising activities	36,853	-	36,853	30,586	-	30,586
First Ecology	-	571,323	571,323	-	473,266	473,266
	55,340	**571,323**	**626,663**	**36,289**	**473,266**	**509,555**

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £
Dividends receivable from equity shares	15,393	-	15,393	11,778	-	11,778
Interest receivable from investment funds	-	-	-	934	-	934
Interest receivable from bank and deposit accounts	1,939	-	1,939	784	-	784
	17,332	**-**	**17,332**	**13,496**	**-**	**13,496**

6. OTHER INCOME

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £
Government grants	-	-	-	95,265	-	95,265
	-	**-**	**-**	**95,265**	**-**	**95,265**

The income in 2021 represents funding received in respect of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for staff who were furloughed during the year.

7. BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2022 £	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £
Expenditure on raising funds						
Cost of raising funds	186,906	53,832	240,738	167,660	49,829	217,489
Membership recruitment and retention	260,080	27,426	287,506	156,310	30,396	186,706
Merchandising costs	1,713	-	1,713	2,094	-	2,094
Investment management fees	7,915	-	7,915	8,838	-	8,838
First Ecology	447,781	103,911	551,692	343,481	97,742	441,223
	904,395	**185,169**	**1,089,564**	**678,383**	**177,967**	**856,350**
Charitable activities						
More space for nature - nature recovery	447,010	67,585	514,595	204,616	55,880	260,496
Mores space for nature - nature reserves	764,085	102,135	866,220	701,702	96,639	798,341
A movement for nature	545,306	151,835	697,141	339,077	136,012	475,089
Telling Somerset's story	145,309	37,703	183,012	116,707	37,839	154,546
	1,901,710	**359,258**	**2,260,968**	**1,362,102**	**326,370**	**1,688,472**
	2,806,105	**544,427**	**3,350,532**	**2,040,485**	**504,337**	**2,544,822**

Support cost breakdown by activity

	Costs of generating voluntary income £	Membership recruitment and retention £	First Ecology £	More space for nature – nature recovery £	More space for nature – nature reserves £	A movement for nature £	Telling Somerset's story £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Finance	7,558	1,758	20,388	13,570	20,085	21,038	7,397	91,794	90,530
HR/staff support	3,399	791	9,169	6,106	9,035	9,465	3,326	41,291	28,822
Office costs	7,281	1,694	19,638	13,069	19,345	20,268	7,124	88,419	82,541
Property and motor vehicles	4,701	1,093	12,687	8,444	12,499	13,097	4,605	57,126	50,657
Recoverable VAT	(3,155)	-	-	(1,577)	(9,464)	(1,577)	-	(15,773)	(34,638)
Marketing	18,781	18,540	848	564	10,069	47,043	308	96,153	106,758
Information technology	5,811	1,351	15,673	10,432	15,439	16,176	5,687	70,569	62,002
National and regional support	3,612	840	9,743	6,485	9,598	10,056	3,535	43,869	46,136
Insurance	560	130	1,510	1,005	1,488	1,558	548	6,799	5,147
Governance	5,284	1,229	14,255	9,487	14,041	14,711	5,173	64,180	66,382
	53,832	**27,426**	**103,911**	**67,585**	**102,135**	**151,835**	**37,703**	**544,427**	**504,337**

Basis of allocation

Finance	Headcount
HR/staff support	Headcount
Office costs	Headcount
Property and motor vehicles	Headcount
Recoverable VAT	Actual resources expended
Marketing	Actual resources expended
Information technology	Headcount
National and regional support	Headcount
Insurance	Headcount
Governance	Headcount

8. OTHER COST DISCLOSURES

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Depreciation	81,030	65,084
Auditors' remuneration		
Audit fees – current auditor	12,450	14,392
Audit fees – previous auditor	(1,749)	-
Taxation compliance – current auditor	330	1,110
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(35,000)	-

9. STAFF COSTS

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Wages and salaries	1,666,840	1,378,719
Social security costs	149,040	120,687
Pension costs	111,254	92,927
	1,927,134	**1,592,333**

The number of employees whose renumeration exceeded £60,000 was as follows:

	Total 2022	Total 2021
£60,000 – £69,999	1	1
	1	**1**

Total remuneration of key management personnel in the period was £415,228 (2021: £400,325).

The key management personnel of the group and the parent charity comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy CEO, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management, Head of Nature Recovery, Head of Engagement, Head of Communications, Head of Business Development and Operations, Head of People, Culture and Resources and Head of Finance.

The average number of employees during the year, analysed by function, was:

	2022 Number	2021 Number
Charitable activities	58	49
Raising funds	10	9
Governance	1	1
	69	**59**

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year totalled 59 (2021: 50).

10. TRUSTEE EMOLUMENTS

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Reimbursement of Trustees' travel and subsistence costs	969	-
Donations received from Trustees	1,389	1,053

Trustees did not receive any remuneration or benefits in kind during either year.

One Trustee was reimbursed for travel expenses during the year (2021: none).

11. PENSION COSTS

Defined contribution scheme

The Trust contributes 7% of annual salary to employees' current pension schemes, all of which are now defined contribution in nature. The pension charge for the year in respect of these contributions amounted to £111,254 (2021: £92,927).

12. TANGIBLE AND HERITAGE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Nature reserves Freehold (Heritage funds)	Nature reserves Leasehold	Freehold and leasehold property	Plant and equipment	Vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost							
At 1 April 2021	3,128,562	103,946	739,830	398,782	164,024	197,752	4,732,896
Additions	1,143,824	-	395,858	35,820	-	58,505	1,634,007
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	**4,272,386**	**103,946**	**1,135,688**	**434,602**	**164,024**	**256,257**	**6,366,903**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2021	-	103,760	105,922	287,721	115,106	144,174	756,683
Charge for the year	-	2	22,803	20,161	12,234	25,830	81,030
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	**-**	**103,762**	**128,725**	**307,882**	**127,340**	**170,004**	**837,713**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2022	**4,272,386**	**184**	**1,006,963**	**126,720**	**36,684**	**86,253**	**5,529,190**
At 31 March 2021	**3,128,562**	**186**	**633,908**	**111,061**	**48,918**	**53,578**	**3,976,213**

Charity

	Nature reserves Freehold (Heritage funds)	Nature reserves Leasehold	Freehold and leasehold property	Plant and equipment	Vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost							
At 1 April 2021	3,128,562	103,946	739,830	372,942	164,024	151,759	4,661,063
Additions	1,143,824	-	395,858	22,192	-	55,882	1,617,756
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	**4,272,386**	**103,946**	**1,135,688**	**395,134**	**164,024**	**207,641**	**6,278,819**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2021	-	103,760	105,922	270,966	115,106	104,187	699,941
Charge for the year	-	2	22,803	16,923	12,234	22,596	74,558
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	**-**	**103,762**	**128,725**	**287,889**	**127,340**	**126,783**	**774,499**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2022	**4,272,386**	**184**	**1,006,963**	**107,245**	**36,684**	**80,858**	**5,504,320**
At 31 March 2021	**3,128,562**	**186**	**633,908**	**101,976**	**48,918**	**47,572**	**3,961,122**

Heritage fixed assets

Heritage assets are represented as freehold nature reserves above.

A summary of transactions relating to heritage assets over the last five years is as follows:

	2022	2021	2000	2019	2018
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of acquisitions	1,143,824	107,584	500	-	-
Value of donated assets	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying amount of disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds of disposals*	35,000	-	-	-	-
Value of impairment	-	-	-	-	-

*Proceeds of disposals in 2022 represents the sale of land that was donated to the Trust.

13. INVESTMENTS

Group

	Listed securities £	Cash holdings £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Cost				
At 1 April 2021	653,770	23,178	676,948	680,146
Additions	101,599	146,188	247,787	346,321
Disposals	(74,981)	(158,292)	(233,273)	(349,519)
At 31 March 2022	**680,388**	**11,074**	**691,462**	**676,948**
Revaluations				
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2021	231,592	-	231,592	51,933
Net gains /(losses) arising on revaluations in the year	34,344	-	34,344	183,097
Disposals/reverse revaluations	(21,703)	-	(21,703)	(3,438)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2022	**244,233**	**-**	**244,233**	**231,592**
Fair value at 31 March 2022	**924,621**	**11,074**	**935,695**	**908,540**

Charity

	Subsidiary company £	Listed securities £	Cash holdings £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Cost					
At 1 April 2021	3	653,770	23,178	676,951	680,149
Additions	-	101,599	146,188	247,787	346,321
Disposals	-	(74,981)	(158,292)	(233,273)	(349,519)
At 31 March 2022	**3**	**680,388**	**11,074**	**691,465**	**676,951**
Revaluations					
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2021	-	231,592	-	231,592	51,933
Net gains/(losses) arising on revaluations in the year	-	34,344	-	34,344	183,097
Disposals/reverse revaluations	-	(21,703)	-	(21,703)	(3,438)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2022	**-**	**244,233**	**-**	**244,233**	**231,592**
Fair value at 31 March 2022	**3**	**924,621**	**11,074**	**935,698**	**908,543**

At 31 March 2022 the charity had one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activity of SWT (Sales) Limited is that of environmental consultancy work (see note 23).

14. STOCKS

	Group		Trust	
	2022 £	2021 £	2022 £	2021 £
Stocks	1,329	1,690	1,329	1,690
	1,329	**1,690**	**1,329**	**1,690**

15. DEBTORS

	Group		Trust	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Trade debtors	420,513	88,035	365,239	37,429
Other debtors	64,032	25,020	60,113	18,809
Prepayments and accrued income	485,419	365,114	379,930	319,404
Legacies receivable	129,900	207,434	129,900	207,434
Amounts owed by subsidiary company	-	-	192,778	115,071
	1,099,864	**685,603**	**1,127,960**	**698,147**

Other debtors includes £nil (2021: £nil) due after more than one year.

16. CREDITORS

	Group		Trust	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year				
Trade creditors	265,065	155,670	263,007	144,935
Other creditors and accruals	350,912	92,823	345,197	88,113
	615,977	**248,493**	**608,204**	**233,048**

17. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

	Group		Trust	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Provisions				
At 1 April 2021	445,419	600,000	445,419	600,000
Provisions recognised in the year	-	-	-	-
Provisions released in the year	(156,600)	(154,581)	(156,600)	(154,581)
At 31 March 2022	**288,819**	**445,419**	**288,819**	**445,419**

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categorisation of financial instruments

	Group		Trust	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	935,695	908,540	935,698	908,543
	935,695	**908,540**	**935,698**	**908,543**

Item of income, expenditure, gain or losses

	Group				Trust			
	Income £	Expense £	Net gains £	Net losses £	Income £	Expense £	Net gains £	Net losses £
2022								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	15,393	-	34,344	-	15,393	-	34,344	-
	15,393	**-**	**34,344**	**-**	**15,393**	**-**	**34,344**	**-**
2021								
Financial assets measured at fair value through the income and expenditure account	12,712	-	183,097	-	12,712	-	183,097	-
	12,712	**-**	**183,097**	**-**	**12,712**	**-**	**183,097**	**-**

19. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Minimum lease payments on non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	Group		Trust	
	2022 £	2021 £	2022 £	2021 £
Within one year	-	10,847	-	10,847
Due one to five years	-	-	-	-
	-	**10,847**	**-**	**10,847**

20. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Investment gains £	At 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	1,180,022	2,383,759	(2,233,110)	(163,064)	34,344	1,201,951
Total unrestricted funds	**1,180,022**	**2,383,759**	**(2,233,110)**	**(163,064)**	**34,344**	**1,201,951**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,387,315	-	(2)	-	-	1,387,313
Operating freehold	633,103	-	-	373,055	-	1,006,158
Nature reserves development	16,354	-	-	-	-	16,354
Development reserve	1,235,799	237,304	-	90,841	-	1,563,944
Innovation fund	40,113	-	-	(6,571)	-	33,542
Nature reserves fund	200,000	-	-	-	-	200,000
Honeygar	-	-	-	35,000	-	35,000
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	-	-	-	66,096	-	66,096
Total designated funds	**3,512,684**	**237,304**	**(2)**	**558,421**	-	**4,308,407**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature – nature recovery	37,551	2,832,126	(416,858)	(1,539,682)	-	913,137
More space for nature – nature reserves	270,109	310,590	(346,359)	-	-	234,340
A movement for nature	285,582	287,136	(334,007)	-	-	238,711
Telling Somerset's story	-	20,196	(20,196)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**593,242**	**3,450,048**	**(1,117,420)**	**(1,539,682)**	-	**1,386,188**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	1,741,433	-	-	1,144,325	-	2,885,758
Total endowment funds	**1,741,433**	**-**	**-**	**1,144,325**	-	**2,885,758**
Total funds	**7,027,381**	**6,071,111**	**(3,350,532)**	**-**	**34,344**	**9,782,304**

Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds represent the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for a particular purpose and are maintained in accordance with the policy explained in the Trustees' report.

Designated funds

The nature reserve fund represents funds other than endowment funds that the charity has used to purchase nature reserves.

The operating freehold fund represents the value of the Trust's freehold property and main headquarters in Taunton.

The designated nature reserve development fund represents proceeds from the sale of land during 2016-17 which the charity has set aside specifically for re-investment in nature reserves.

The designated development reserve fund represents funds that the charity has set aside for investment in income generation, capital investment and future projects.

The innovation fund represents funds that have been set aside to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the delivery of the Trust's programme of work.

The nature reserves fund represents funds re-allocated from the designated development reserve to mitigate the potential loss of agri-environment income.

The Honeygar fund is the proceeds from the sale of land in 2021-22 which the charity has earmarked for Honeygar.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund represents the cumulative surplus generated through SERC activities which has been earmarked for future investment in SERC activities.

Restricted funds

The restricted income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the unexpended balances of donations, grants and other income, which are to be applied for specific purposes within the charity's objectives:

- More space for nature
  - Nature recovery – improving nature everywhere through a Nature Recovery Network.
  - Nature reserves – manage our nature reserves for conservation purposes.
- A movement for nature – taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.
- Telling Somerset's story – through our online State of Nature platform that informs action and monitors progress.

Nature recovery includes £16,432 from Natural England in respect of the Nature for Climate Peatland Scheme.

21. TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Designated funds		
Operating freehold reserve	373,055	(14,885)
Development reserve	90,841	500,000
Innovation fund	(6,571)	(2,489)
Honeygar	35,000	-
Somerset Environmental Records Centre	66,096	-
Restricted funds		
More space for nature – nature recovery	(1,539,682)	-
More space for nature – nature reserves	-	(108,944)
A movement for nature	-	(29,486)
Endowment funds		
Nature reserves	1,144,325	107,584
Unrestricted funds	(163,064)	(451,780)
	-	-

The designated operating freehold reserve transfer represents the depreciation charged in the year on the Trust's freehold property and main headquarters in Taunton and the purchase of the farmhouse and outbuildings at Honeygar.

The designated development reserve transfer in 2020 represents designated funds expended during the year to support investment in approved projects agreed by Council. In 2021 additional funds were designated by Council to support future investment in the Trust's strategy.

The designated innovation fund transfer represents funds that have been set aside by the charity to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the Trust's programme of work.

The designated Honeygar fund transfer represents the proceeds from the sale of land in the year which has been earmarked to support Honeygar.

The Somerset Environmental Records Centre fund transfer represents the cumulative surplus achieved through activities which has been set aside for future investment in SERC.

The restricted fund and endownment fund transfer represents the transfer of assets purchased during the year through projects and grants.

22. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	249,961	2,393,471	-	2,885,758	5,529,190
Investments	935,695	-	-	-	935,695
Current assets	921,091	1,914,936	1,386,188	-	4,222,215
Current liabilities	(615,977)	-	-	-	(615,977)
Provisions for liabilities	(288,819)	-	-	-	(288,819)
	1,201,951	**4,308,407**	**1,386,188**	**2,885,758**	**9,782,304**

23. SUBSIDIARY COMPANY
SWT (Sales) Limited income and expenditure statement for the year ended March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Turnover	573,188	475,301
Cost of sales	403,265	306,541
Gross profit	**169,923**	**168,760**
Administrative expenses	97,432	77,974
Net profit	**72,491**	**90,786**
Taxation	-	-
Net profit after taxation	**72,491**	**90,786**
Paid under gift aid to Trust	72,491	90,786
	-	-
Profit brought forward	152	152
Retained profit carried forward	**152**	**152**

Turnover includes a charge of £1,865 (2021: £2,036) for services to the Trust.

The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds of SWT (Sales) Limited was:

Assets	197,990	127,956
Liabilities	(197,835)	(127,801)
Funds	**155**	**155**

24. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Trust participated in the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme, a hybrid, multi-employer pension scheme which provides benefits to members on a defined benefit or defined contribution basis. During 2014-15 the Trust received notification that the Section 75 clause in the scheme had been breached due to there no longer being any active members in the defined contribution section of the scheme. Formal notification of the value of the Section 75 debt was received in March 2020 which represented the Trust's only remaining liability under the scheme and this was settled during the year ended 31 March 2021. During the year ended 31 March 2022, the Trust was notified of a potential issue relating to the defined benefit section of the Scheme. A detailed investigation is being undertaken to establish the extent to which this could result in financial liability to participating employers. As it is not possible to reliably estimate the value of any potential liability, no provision has been made for this in the financial statements.

25. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	2,754,923	1,460,894
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	81,030	65,084
(Gains) on investments	(34,344)	(183,097)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(17,332)	(13,496)
(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(35,000)	-
(Decrease) in provision for liabilities	(156,600)	(154,581)
(Decrease) in defined benefit pension liability	-	(220,867)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(414,261)	75,318
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	361	(31)
Increase in creditors	367,484	72,021
Net cash provided by operating activities	**2,546,261**	**1,101,245**

26. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash at bank and in hand	967,220	346,515
Deposit accounts (less than 3 months)	2,153,802	1,802,732
Investment cash holdings	11,074	23,178
	3,132,096	**2,172,425**

27. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 2021
	General £	Designated £	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	1,532,145	196,732	142,369	-	1,871,246
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature – nature recovery	19,079	-	145,328	-	164,407
More space for nature – nature reserves	436,231	-	190,650	-	626,881
A movement for nature	5,000	-	410,105	-	415,105
Telling Somerset's story	124,467	-	2,197	-	126,664
Other trading activities	509,555	-	-	-	509,555
Investments	13,496	-	-	-	13,496
Other income	95,265	-	-	-	95,265
Total	**2,735,238**	**196,732**	**890,649**	**-**	**3,822,619**
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	970,216	-	-	-	970,216
Charitable activities:					
More space for nature – nature recovery	130,585	2	129,909	-	260,496
More space for nature – nature reserves	567,045	-	231,296	-	798,341
A movement for nature	158,553	-	202,670	-	361,223
Telling Somerset's story	152,349	-	2,197	-	154,546
Current service pension cost/(credit)	-	-	-	-	-
Provision for Ash Dieback liability	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**1,978,748**	**2**	**566,072**	**-**	**2,544,822**
Net gains on investments	183,097	-	-	-	183,097
Net income/(expenditure)	**939,587**	**196,730**	**324,577**	**-**	**1,460,894**
Transfers between funds	(451,780)	482,626	(138,430)	107,584	-
Net movement in funds	**487,807**	**679,356**	**186,147**	**107,584**	**1,460,894**
Reconciliation of funds					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2020	692,215	2,833,328	407,095	1,633,849	5,566,487
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2021	**1,180,022**	**3,512,684**	**593,242**	**1,741,433**	**7,027,381**

28. STATEMENT OF FUNDS 2021

	At 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Investment gains £	At 31 March 2021 £
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	692,215	2,735,238	(1,978,748)	(451,780)	183,097	1,180,022
Total unrestricted funds	**692,215**	**2,735,238**	**(1,978,748)**	**(451,780)**	**183,097**	**1,180,022**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,387,317	-	(2)	-	-	1,387,315
Operating freehold	647,988	-	-	(14,885)	-	633,103
Nature reserves development	16,354	-	-	-	-	16,354
Development reserve	539,067	196,732	-	500,000	-	1,235,799
Innovation fund	42,602	-	-	(2,489)	-	40,113
Nature reserves fund	200,000	-	-	-	-	200,000
Total designated funds	**2,833,328**	**196,732**	**(2)**	**(482,626)**	**-**	**3,512,684**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature – nature recovery	22,132	145,328	(129,909)	-	-	37,551
More space for nature – nature reserves	279,610	330,739	(231,296)	(108,944)	-	270,109
A movement for nature	105,353	412,385	(202,670)	(29,486)	-	285,582
Telling Somerset's story	-	2,197	(2,197)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**407,095**	**890,649**	**(566,072)**	**(138,430)**	**-**	**593,242**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	1,633,849	-	-	107,584	-	1,741,433
Total endowment funds	**1,633,849**	**-**	**-**	**107,584**	**-**	**1,741,433**
Total funds	**5,566,487**	**3,822,619**	**(2,544,822)**	**-**	**183,097**	**7,027,381**

29. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS 2021

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	214,362	2,020,418	-	1,741,433	3,976,213
Investments	908,540	-	-	-	908,540
Current assets	751,032	1,492,266	593,242	-	2,836,540
Current liabilities	(248,493)	-	-	-	(248,493)
Provisions for liabilities	(445,419)	-	-	-	(445,419)
	1,180,022	**3,512,684**	**593,242**	**1,741,433**	**7,027,381**

We are also leading by example with clear commitments and a plan to reduce our own environmental impact.

Redshank

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

We would like to thank all our members, donors and grant givers for their generous support which is helping nature to recover across Somerset including all those who wish to remain anonymous.

LEGACIES

Joan Irene Bryan
Ronald Cumper
Anthony John Frederick Lewis Holley
Janet Gwynne Maitland
Marion Dorothy Parsons
Clare Helen Redfarn
Sheila Mary Veronica Thompson
Marjorie Grace Wellard
Paul Williams
David Ralph Wishart

PATRONS

Phillipa Archer
David and Loredana Buchan
Dudley Cheesman
Richard Denton-Cox
John Deverell CBE
Dame Margaret Drabble
Mark and Marnie Franklin
James and Alka Hughes-Hallett
Stanley and Jennifer Johnson
Anne Jones
Julia Manning
Jean Mantle
Rohan and Lily Masson-Taylor
Dr Mark O'Neill
Nigel and Janet Phillips
Caroline Rathbone
Tim and Dede Sanderson
Paul Sheppard and Lucy Dunford
Chris and Maria Thring
Matthew Trimmer
Patrick Thomson
Robert Unwin
Neil and Sarah Williams
Giles Woodward

HONEYGAR PIONEERS

Barbara Cheney
Dame Margaret Drabble
Mark and Marnie Franklin
Professor Michael Sleigh
Patrick Thomson

CORPORATE MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

A C Mole & Sons
Branston Ltd
Brimsmore Gardens (The Gardens Group)
Golledge Electronics Ltd
Homethos
John Fowler Holiday Parks
John Wainwright & Co Ltd
Meddicare
Melhuish and Saunders
Somerset Birdwatching Holidays
Southern Co-op
Taunton and Pickeridge Golf Club
Tepe Oral Hygiene Products Ltd
Travel Chapter Ltd
Vine House Farm
Wessex Water

TRUSTS AND GRANTS

Aggregate Industries
AJH Ashby Will Trust
Annett Trust
Battens Charitable Trust
Biffa Award
Blair Foundation
Community Impact Mitigation Fund
Curry Fund
DEFRA (NRA)
Elmgrant Trust
Environment Agency
Ernest Cook Trust
Ewing and Haines Charitable Trust
Forestry Commission
Foxglove Trust
Friends of Longrun Meadow
FWAG South West
Green Recovery Challenge Fund
Hamamelis Trust
Henry C Hoare Charitable Trust
Interreg 2 Seas
Joseph Strong Frazer Trust
Leonard Laity Stoate Charitable Trust
Linmardon Trust
Mabel Cooper Charitable Trust
Mendip District Council
Mendip Society
Mulberry Charity Committee Donation
Nature for Climate Peatland Discovery Fund
Norman Family Charitable Trust
National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Natural England
Ninesquare Charitable Trust
Orr Mackintosh Foundation
People's Postcode Lottery
Quantock Hills AONB
Quartet Community Foundation
Raby Family Trust
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts
Sedgemoor District Council
Sir John and Lady Heathcoat Amory Charitable Trust
Somerset Community Foundation (HPC Community Fund)
Somerset County Council
Somerset Rivers Authority
Somerset West and Taunton
South Somerset District Council
South West England Dry Stone Wall Association
Spark Somerset
Stephen Clark Charitable Settlement 1965
The Wildlife Trusts
The Woodland Trust
Torr Works Enhancement Fund
Viridor Credits Environmental Company
Wessex Water
Wildflower Society

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS

KEY PEOPLE

Patron
Simon King OBE

President
Stephen Moss

Vice-Presidents
Dudley Cheesman
Roger Martin
Chris Sperring MBE

Directors and Trustees
The directors of the charitable company ("the Trust") are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Trustees on the date of approval of this report, all of whom were members for the whole of the financial year in question unless stated otherwise, were as follows:

Chair
Graeme Mitchell

Vice-Chair
Sarah Nason (resigned 23 November 2021)
Matthew Bell (appointed 23 November 2021)

Treasurer
Richard Atkin

Elected Trustees
Richard Atkin
Matthew Bell
Edward Green
Lorna Harrison
Simon Hicks
Philip Holms
Helen Lawy (resigned 6 November 2021)
Stuart McBride
Graeme Mitchell
Sarah Nason
Holly Purdey
Dr Mark Steer
Melville Trimble (resigned 18 January 2022)

SWT (Sales) Ltd Directors
Malcolm Hutton
Stuart McBride (appointed 8 March 2022)
David Mounsey (resigned 1 July 2022)
Georgia Stokes

Senior Leadership Team
Katie Arber, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Jolyon Chesworth, Head of Engagement and Communities
Simon Clarke, Head of Nature Recovery
Kirby Everett, Head of Marketing Communications
Rachael Fickweiler, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management
Helun Jones, Head of People, Culture and Resources (appointed 20 June 2022)
Kate Matravers-Cox, Head of Finance
Malcolm Ramsay, Head of Business Development and Operations (resigned 29 April 2022)
Georgia Stokes, Chief Executive Officer

ADVISERS

Senior Statutory Auditor
Michelle Ferris, Albert Goodman, Goodwood House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PX

Bankers
Lloyds Bank, 31 Fore Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HN

Solicitors
Clarke Willmott, Blackbrook Gate, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PG

Investment Managers
Rathbone Greenbank Investments, 10 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4NT

Land Agents
Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 1 High Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1QF

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity.
Charity number 238372.
Company number 818162.

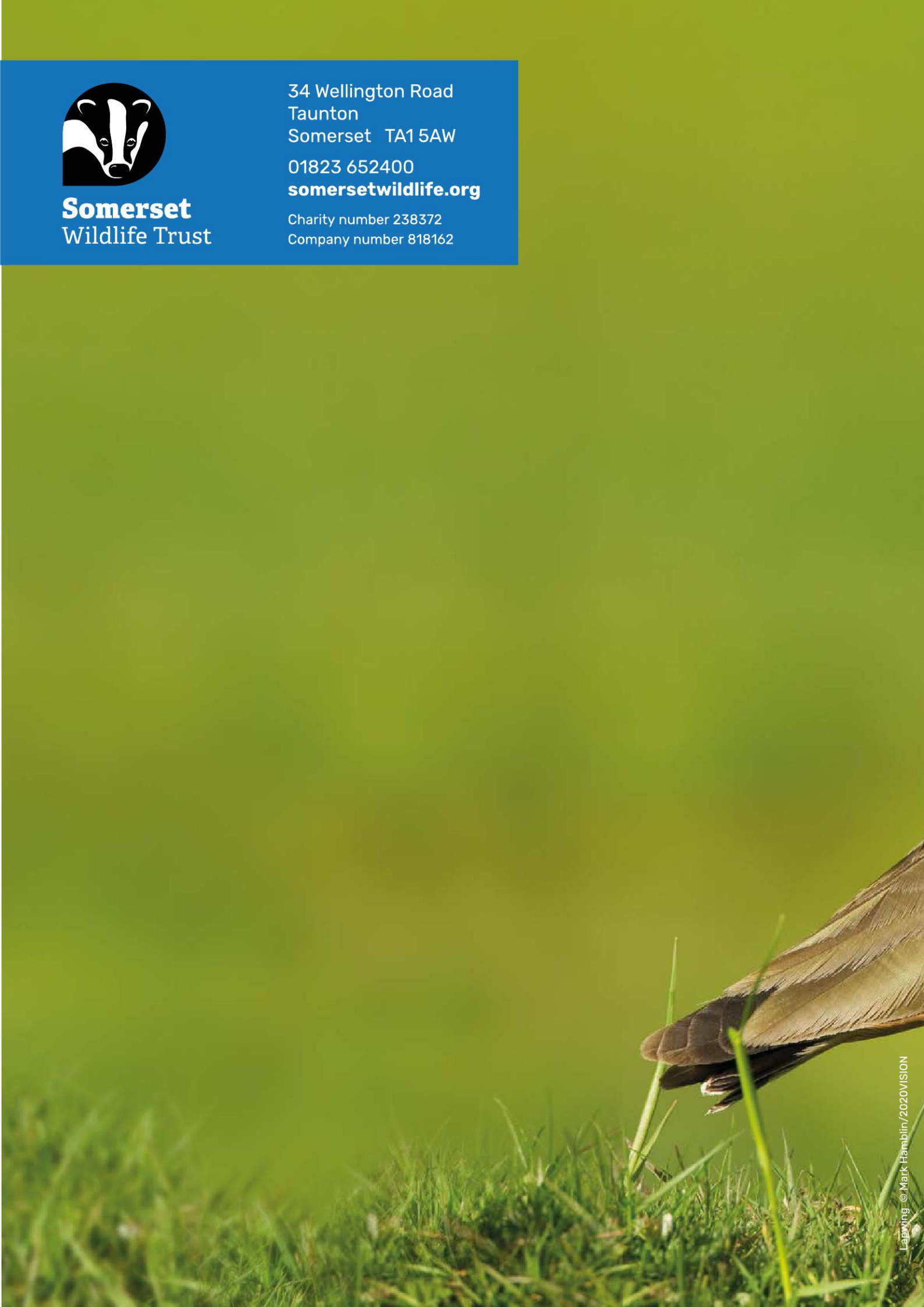
Registered office: 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AW

Somerset
Wildlife Trust

34 Wellington Road
Taunton
Somerset TA1 5AW

01823 652400
somersetwildlife.org

Charity number 238372
Company number 818162



Lapwing © Mark Hamblin/2020VISION

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 238372

Accounts

Somerset Wildlife Trust

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2020-21

CONTENTS

3 WHAT WE DO

4 MESSAGE
FROM GRAEME MITCHELL, CHAIR OF COUNCIL, AND GEORGIA STOKES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

STRATEGIC REPORT:
6 STRATEGY AND ACHIEVEMENTS
6 More space for nature
9 A movement for nature
11 Telling Somerset's story
13 Developing Somerset Wildlife Trust
14 FINANCIAL REVIEW
18 LOOKING AHEAD

20 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

21 STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

23 STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

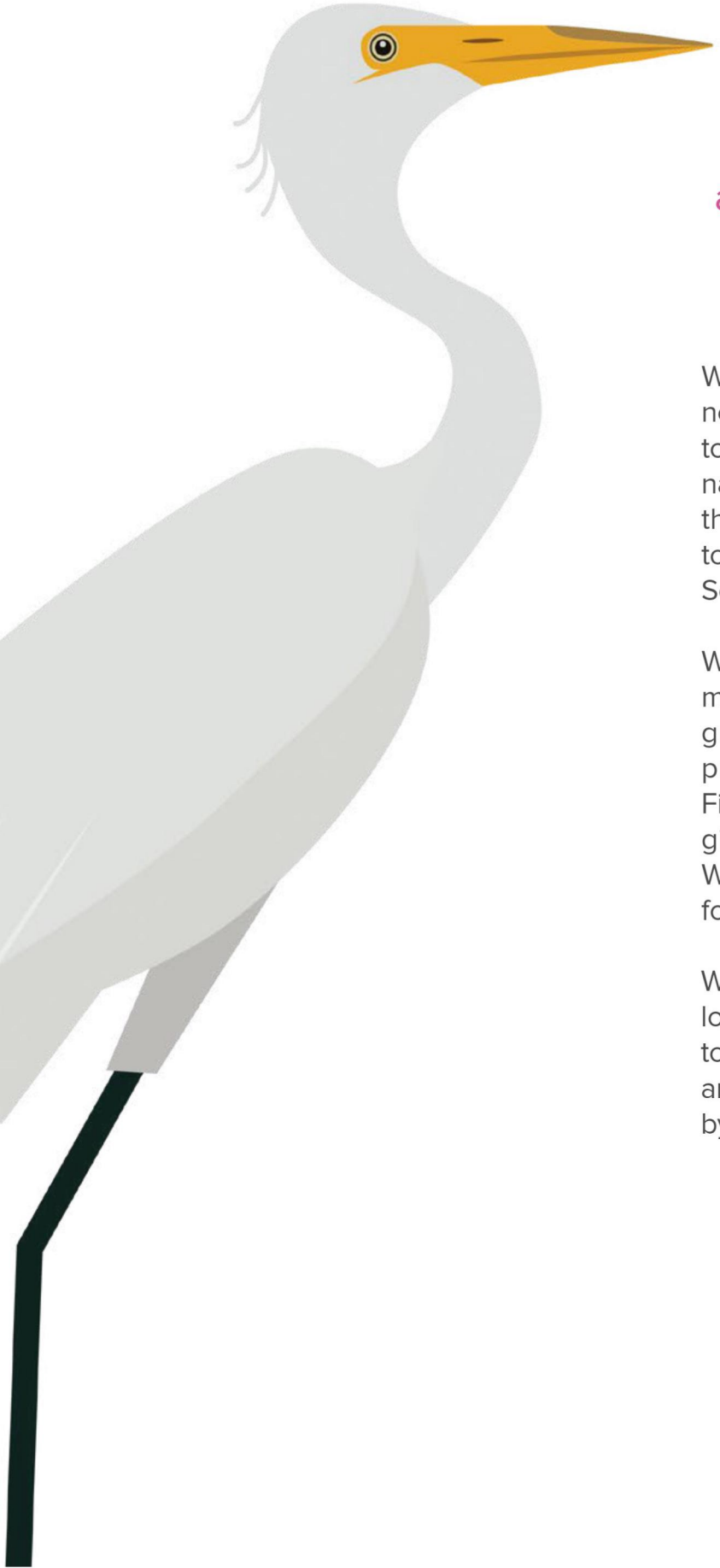
24 INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

27 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
27 Consolidated statement of financial activities
28 Consolidated and Trust balance sheets as at 31 March 2021
29 Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2021
30 Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

46 GIFTS AND DONATIONS

47 KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS

WHAT WE DO



Somerset Wildlife Trust is an independent charity and our vision is of a Somerset-wide Nature Recovery Network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis.

We are working to make the changes needed for nature and people to thrive together by building a movement for nature – Team Wilder – and we will tell the story of nature's recovery in Somerset to inform action and monitor progress – Somerset's State of Nature.

We rely on funding from our members and many supporters, as well as income from grant-giving bodies and companies, and profits from our ecological consultancy, First Ecology. We have many volunteers giving their time to help us and Team Wilder will increase the action being taken for nature right across Somerset.

We are part of a national federation of 46 local Wildlife Trusts which are working together to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030.

MESSAGE

FROM GRAEME MITCHELL, CHAIR OF COUNCIL, AND GEORGIA STOKES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

2020-21 will be remembered as a year of lockdowns and the coronavirus pandemic. These events had a significant impact on our charity and continue to affect our work. It has certainly been a challenging year but also one when many people came to appreciate how important nature is to their own wellbeing and for society. As we start to emerge from the pandemic, the Trust ended 2020-21 stronger and with an ambitious new strategy for the next decade – Wilder Somerset 2030.

By the start of the year, we had taken the hard decision to furlough over a third of our staff, as they were unable to undertake their roles and to ensure our sustainability given an expected substantial loss of income; altogether during the year 41% of our staff were furloughed for periods. Thanks to significant support from the Heritage Emergency Fund, the government's Job Retention Scheme and the exceptional generosity of over 1,300 people to our emergency appeal, all our staff are now back at work.

Working from home has continued to be the norm for now for most staff and we have been without the help of hundreds of volunteers for over a year. Our nature reserves team have had to bring in costly contractors to do jobs normally done with the help of volunteers, and all while undertaking extensive safety work due to Ash Dieback disease.

Visitors to our reserves have increased hugely and, while it is good to see more people exploring green spaces, this has resulted in more wear and tear on paths and reserve infrastructure, and higher than planned maintenance costs. Sadly, the behaviour of some has been damaging to the wildlife present and fly-tipping meant extra work for an already busy team.

We would like to truly thank all our staff and Trustees for their commitment and adaptability over such a very challenging year, including the four people who joined our Trust Council in January as co-opted Trustees. We were overwhelmed by the number and quality of people who expressed an interest in joining Council, and were strengthened by the loyalty and generosity of our many thousands of members and supporters. Thanks to their support, our membership and overall income grew despite being unable to run planned fundraising activities for much of the year, which was an exceptional outcome.

Disruption and uncertainty have been a catalyst for innovation. Moving everything from our 2020 AGM to training and events and even interviews online has made us embrace new technology more quickly than planned and expand our communications digitally. We will continue to transform digitally but intend to resume face-to-face events and larger volunteer work parties when we can.

The year's fundraising success was well beyond our early expectations. The receipt of a very significant unrestricted gift boosted our financial position and successful grant applications have enabled us to begin new projects including to support local teenagers to take action for the environment and their futures.

We held our first ever Youth Summit, which was a truly inspiring day, and began working with the Diocese of Bath and Wells to enable communities to make their churchyards a little wilder. Both initiatives show Team Wilder in action, one of the three pillars of our new strategy. Team Wilder will create a countywide movement for nature over the next decade to help achieve our overarching strategic goal of a Wilder Somerset by 2030. Just 10% of Somerset is currently in good natural or semi-natural condition for nature, and over the next 10 years our goal is to increase this to 30%.

We will be forming more partnerships and working with many more communities, farmers, landowners and organisations as we move ahead. Our work over six decades has slowed the rate at which species have been lost and has protected important habitats in Somerset, but now we must be more radical and urgent in our approach. We will always work to deliver positive outcomes for nature ourselves - managing our nature reserves and developing key projects that protect the natural world – but we need to involve many more people in acting locally for nature to recover.

We already work closely with conservation organisations and landowners, including the National Trust, whose focus, like ours, is to manage their land prioritising nature. Trustees therefore took the decision to end our lease of Black Rock nature reserve in March 2022 when the National Trust will resume its management. Our team is working closely with

theirs to ensure Black Rock continues to support nature's recovery across the Mendip Hills and as part of the wider Somerset Nature Recovery Network.

The Avalon Marshes is a key landscape for Somerset's wildlife and climate resilience. Thanks to the immediate support of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, we now have the chance to extend our landholdings between our important Westhay Moor and Catcott nature reserves, and 'wild' and connect former agricultural land to the wider wetlands. Honeygar Farm was a dairy farm and its 47 hectares, plus another 40 hectares buffering it and our nearby Westhay Heath reserve, will demonstrate how nature can store carbon, improve water quality and provide other 'nature-based solutions', which are good for people and wildlife. We are planning a major fundraising campaign, which we will launch in 2021-22, to buy all 87 hectares before, over the next decade, developing Honeygar for visitors. Given our strategic goals this is an unmissable and significant opportunity for the Trust, which we look forward to telling you more about.

Evidence has always informed our actions and deep knowledge of the county, its habitats and wildlife enables us to support, lead and co-ordinate nature's recovery in Somerset. We plan to tell the story of Somerset's State of Nature as our third strategic goal and use this to monitor progress.

We would like to thank you all for your shared commitment to Somerset and its wildlife. By working together to reverse the spiralling loss of nature and prevent catastrophic climate and ecological breakdown, we will enrich the lives of everyone who lives, works and visits our wonderful county and we will bring nature back.

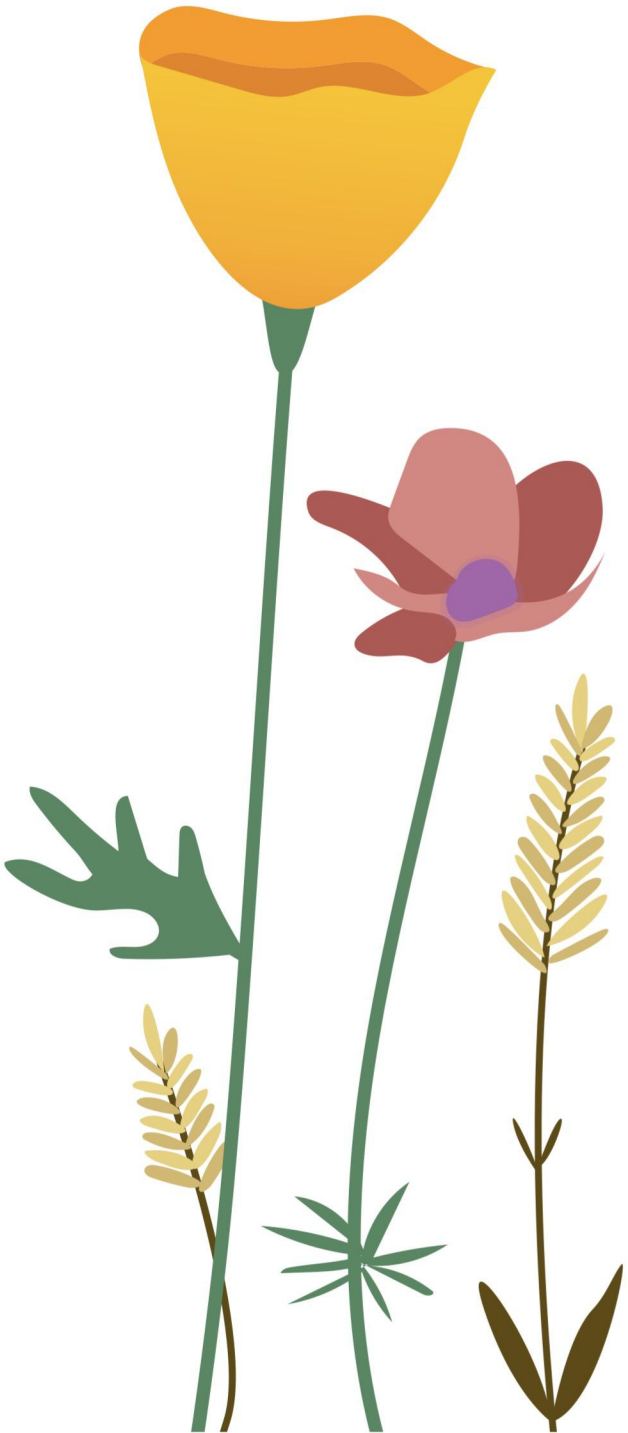
Graeme Mitchell
Chair

Georgia Stokes
Chief Executive Officer

STRATEGY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our vision is of a Somerset-wide Nature Recovery Network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping to reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis. In 2020-21 we continued to work for the changes needed for nature and people to thrive ahead of launching, at the start of 2021-22, our bold new strategy Wilder Somerset 2030.

MORE SPACE FOR NATURE



Creating more space for nature has always been at the heart of our work. After almost 60 years of working on the ground in Somerset, we have an unparalleled knowledge of the county, its habitats and wildlife. Our nature reserves provide important refuges for a wide range of wildlife and core habitats in the wider landscape, but our work must extend well beyond these for nature to thrive.

Currently only 10% of Somerset can be classified as being in good natural or semi-natural condition with species-rich habitats supporting abundant and diverse wildlife, enabling it to move, reproduce and thrive. This figure includes all of Somerset's nature reserves, Local Wildlife Sites and legally designated sites. Our new strategy sets out to ensure at least 30% of land and sea is managed positively for nature by 2030 by working with our peers, partners, communities, farmers and landowners. We need a strong, interconnected network of wild spaces which together will form Somerset's Nature Recovery Network and connect to a national Network.

The report set out on pages 6–19 is a strategic report and Directors' report as required by sections 414A and 415 of the Companies Act 2006 and has been prepared in accordance with Part 15 of this Act and a Trustees' Report as required by the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.

We continued to restore the resilience of our ecosystems at a landscape scale by working on our nature reserves and with others to connect Somerset's natural spaces. In December we completed the purchase and restoration of 11 critical acres of former peat diggings adjacent to our Westhay Moor National Nature Reserve, following a successful appeal in 2019. As a result, we can better control and raise water levels across Westhay, and have more wetland habitat.

In February, thanks to a £55k Biffa Award grant, we started replacing pipework to manage water levels including on Westhay's rare lowland mire. Peat bog like this is vital for species such as the insectivorous sundew and stores large amounts of carbon, a nature-based solution addressing climate change as well as helping nature.

The Avalon Marshes remains a key landscape within Somerset's Nature Recovery Network and we continued to work in partnership with Natural England, the RSPB and others to ensure it supports wildlife and the community. Sky-dancing Marsh Harriers and booming Bittern continue to be a magnet for visitors as were record numbers of Cattle Egret at Catcott over winter.

In collaboration with Somerset County Council, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and partners in Europe, the Adapting the Levels team prepared people living and working on the Levels for the impact of climate change. A report was produced of their findings from drop-in days and workshops in 2019-20 involving local people, Councillors, farmers and businesses. Overwhelming support exists to adopt nature-based solutions as a key part of preparing for expected increased flooding and drought. Funded by Interreg 2 Seas European Regional Development Fund and Somerset Rivers Authority, digital tools, including interactive draft Adaptation Pathways, are being developed to enable the co-creation of an effective climate adaptation plan.

Across our reserves it was a year of additional challenges due to lockdowns and the need to urgently address advancing Ash Dieback. Much of the team's work is seasonal and cyclical but without our committed teams of regular volunteers to assist, plans had to be revised repeatedly to focus on completing essential work to meet agri-environment agreements and health and safety obligations, particularly linked to diseased ash, as well as to deliver funded projects. This included ensuring core habitats remained in good condition and repairing fencing for conservation grazing. With our reserves busier than ever with visitors, unplanned repairs were also needed to maintain reserve infrastructure. We were therefore very pleased to receive support from the Heritage Emergency Fund and an Area of Outstanding National Beauty-led Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant to help us to catch up on the backlog of work.

Thanks to support for our 2020 Dormouse Appeal, connectivity for dormice has been improved through, for example, hedgelaying of a gappy boundary hedge at Babcary Meadows, which will also support future conservation grazing.

Ash Dieback mitigation works were time-consuming and costly, and will continue to be so. Urgent work using specialist contractors, particularly across our Mendip reserves, totalled £155k with higher expenditure planned in 2021-22. Ash Dieback is widespread in Somerset and beyond. We led the sharing of learnings across the Wildlife Trust movement and produced a film with Bath Spa University students to help understanding of this silent killer.

£26k was secured to support this work through grants and an appeal, but the remainder was funded through the £600k provision made by Trustees in 2019-20 for the delivery of a three-year Ash Dieback action plan. Natural regeneration and some planting of native trees is planned but affected woodlands will be very different. Where possible trees are being turned into monoliths to preserve the lichens and ferns on them and to provide deadwood habitat for invertebrates.

Somerset's Local Nature Partnership (LNP), re-established just weeks ahead of the first lockdown and now chaired by our Chief Executive, Georgia Stokes, worked to ensure nature is represented in county plans. Its early focus is on how nature can support the development of: a strong green economy in Somerset; the health and wellbeing of those who live here; the vital food and farming community; and a strong countywide Nature Recovery Network. Representing over 100 diverse organisations from businesses, local government, farming, health, tourism and conservation, the LNP is already proving to be an effective forum for shared decision-making and, on behalf of Somerset County Council, is developing the Natural Environment and Food and Farming workstreams of Somerset's Climate Strategy.

We continued to work with many landowners though much work was delayed until at least the summer following the first lockdown. Thanks to ongoing funding by DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship, the Mendip Hills Facilitation Fund, which includes farmers, quarry companies, National Trust, South West Heritage Trust and the Longleat Estate, continued restoring species-rich grassland networks across Mendip. Three landowners joined the group, which now manages 3,200 hectares in a key area for nature's recovery. Activities are tailored to the group's needs and regenerative farming techniques, agroforestry and silvopasture, grassland management for butterflies and dealing with Ash Dieback were all covered.

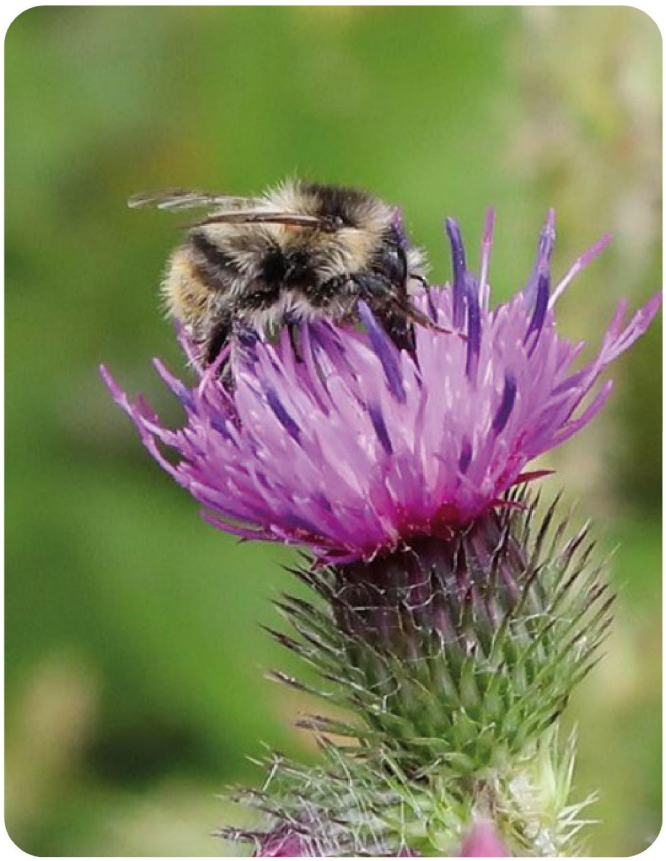
10-year funding from The Torr Works Environmental Enhancement Fund has helped restore ecological networks in Mendip through our Mendip Wildlife Links project, which in its eighth year provided advice to 16 landowners, enabling two to obtain their first Mid-tier Countryside Stewardship grants to create better habitat and connectivity on their farms. Habitat surveys were undertaken for Shepton Mallet Town Council to identify areas with potential for habitat creation and restoration projects, and for Aggregate Industries to support their ongoing land management, which in each case identified unrecorded wildflower grasslands.

We advised Yeo Valley on how best to deliver improvements for nature and connectivity across its 850-hectare Mendip estate and link to the wider Nature Recovery Network, having completed baseline species surveys. We intend to work with more farms and landowners as we implement our new strategy.

Further income from the TWT Aggregate Industries Partnership Fund enabled grassland restoration to continue on Local Wildlife Sites and woodland enhancement work at Cheddar Wood, which will help connect and buffer key habitats in Mendip, through our Mendip Habitats Fit for the Future project. Ground flora and many invertebrates, including Silver-washed Fritillary butterfly, will benefit as will the dormice present in the wood. Habitat enhancements for dormice were also made at Dommett Wood thanks to funding from the Blackdown Hills AONB Challenge Fund.

South Somerset is one of the few remaining strongholds for the Shrill Carder, one of the UK's rarest bumblebees, with good numbers observed at Green Down. We continued to work with Bumblebee Conservation Trust to support Shrill Carder bees, as part of the Back from the Brink project, trialling a rotational late hay-cut to extend the flowering period and nectar availability at Babcary Meadows.

Our ecological consultancy, First Ecology, worked on 112 projects including: implementing measures to secure the long-term future of bat roosts on five sites; producing three biodiversity enhancement strategies, and a further landscape and ecological management plan; acting as ecological clerk of works for 13 projects; and implementing mitigation, compensation and enhancement strategies for reptiles across three sites and for water voles on one site.



A MOVEMENT FOR NATURE

Experiences in nature can inspire, change attitudes, motivate action and ultimately help us to restore our wild places and wildlife, and, as the last year has shown, they are also important to everyone's health and wellbeing. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to experience nature and we need at least one in four people to take action for nature's recovery across Somerset to tip the balance for nature's recovery.

We already have amazing volunteers helping us to manage our nature reserves, run events, work with schools and in our offices or who fundraise for us, though much of this was not possible or was considerably constrained in 2020-21 due to the pandemic. All our externally funded projects were paused for periods, particularly during the first lockdown, with project staff furloughed and projects extended with funders' agreement. When we were able to resume this work, our teams innovated, moving events and training online, and rethinking how to deliver in person while meeting social distancing and government Covid-19 rules.

Over summer 2020 we began to bring engagement staff back from furlough and to recruit for our new Somerset Nature Connections project, a timely initiative to support those vulnerable to mental health issues. This partnership project with Blackdown Hills, Quantock Hills and Mendip Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty aims to provide a 'natural health service' across much of the county. During the first lockdown, news of three-year funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to start this project was received and additional funding has since been secured from Somerset County Council, the Discovery Fund and the HPC Community Impact Mitigation Fund.

Despite the complications Covid-19 has added, by the end of 2020-21, a social media campaign #WildAboutWinter encouraging people to connect with nature during the colder months was completed, activity packs created, and online sessions run. Preparations were made for weekly Nature Connections sessions in 2021-22, for which referrals will be taken from health professionals and directly. Volunteers were recruited and will be trained to provide peer support.

Some volunteers have continued to work for us from their homes, particularly to support fundraising and Somerset Environmental Records Centre, which really helped to maintain momentum during the pandemic. But most were unable to volunteer as usual with their work parties and ecological surveys paused, and Local Area and Watch Group events largely on hold. A long service pin badge scheme was introduced to recognise the vital support volunteers provide and our annual volunteer gathering was held virtually, with four awards made to individuals and groups.

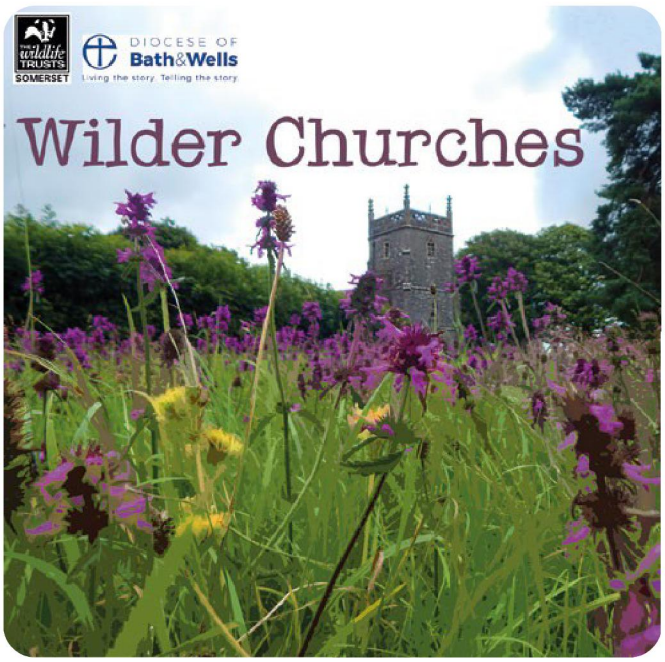
For periods, we were able to have small socially distanced groups of volunteers working with our reserves staff, and some experienced reserves' volunteers were trained to lead their own small groups. But for more than a year, volunteering has been much reduced and so has our ability to utilise the enthusiasm and skills of hundreds of committed volunteers. One new volunteer scheme, Water Guardians, run in partnership with Wessex Water, was piloted to help monitor waterways and report pollution incidents. 34 volunteers were trained as Water Guardians and cover 12 miles of the River Brue catchment plus another 16 miles of the waterways outside the immediate Brue catchment.

Our Somerset's Brilliant Coast project, funded by the HPC Community Impact Mitigation Fund and the National Trust, resumed in August producing rocky shore identification training videos, running Facebook Live sessions and cetacean training webinars. From autumn outdoor events resumed though adapted for social distancing, including mindfulness on Porlock Beach, monthly surveys with the Sea Watch Foundation and, as part of a national Wildlife Trust movement initiative, ShoreSearch surveys to monitor the distribution and abundance of intertidal organisms.

As part of enabling nearby parishes to make stronger links with the coast, our work led to both Minehead and Watchet achieving recognition as Plastic Free Towns and more virtual story walks were developed linked to the coast path. Over the autumn term, our Wild Beach programme of outdoor coastal learning resumed but was then halted once more in January.

Engaging more communities and parishes in taking action for nature is vital for nature's recovery and we made virtual presentations on Somerset's Nature Recovery Network to Town and Parish Council meetings, South Somerset District Council Environmental Champions Network, Berrow Dune Conservation volunteers and others to help them plan local actions that will have the best impact for nature.

Our Mendip Wildlife Links project continued to catalyse local support, engaging and building the knowledge of landowners and inspiring people and organisations, including through online training events on Right Tree, Right Place and Ash Dieback. Wilder Churches, a new initiative by Mendip Wildlife Links, was launched in partnership with the Diocese of Bath and Wells, covering 477 parishes across Somerset as well as the Bath area. Wilder Churches is bringing communities and church leaders together to learn more about their churchyards and how to manage them for wildlife. Somerset Botany Group will undertake any surveys requested, so communities know the plants present and the best action to take. In March the first of a series of online training events attracted over 200 people.



After a decade working with groups in Taunton, it was fantastic to see Taunton Environment Network, of which we are part, go from strength to strength and welcome Wellington Transition and Quantock Eco. Self-organising, its members are taking a range of actions in Taunton and beyond to support nature's recovery.

Nature reserve visitor numbers were far higher than usual, with noticeable increases in first-time visitors, including many more local families and dog walkers, and over summer 2020 those on staycations. From August our Visitor Experience Officer was regularly present at Westhay Moor NNR and manning a new outdoor information point at the Avalon Marshes Centre. Over winter, thanks to Viridor Credits Environmental Company, Westhay's car park was much improved. More cameras were installed enabling wildlife to be shared with those unable to visit on websites and social media channels.

Young people have been under-represented in our work but many want to take action to address the biodiversity and climate crises. Grants from the Ernest Cook Trust Green Influencers Scheme and the Ninesquare Trust funded a new Green Mentor post to help those aged 10 to 14 in their environmental action projects. The Green Influencers Scheme has been created thanks to seed funding from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport forming an #iwill Fund, which is then matched by The Ernest Cook Trust.

In March we held our first Youth Environment Summit, separately funded by #iwill, Somerset County Council and Somerset Community Foundation, where young people from Somerset heard inspiring speakers and began to share their ideas. This work will also help create a peer youth nature network and a youth advisory board to steer our future work.

So much of what we did relied on our digital channels. We launched SWTtv on our website, with six 'channels' to bring nature directly into people's home, including videos for children and families, 'how to create' videos, wildlife webcams and recordings of our training events.

We introduced a live stream from a Barn Owl box in the Blackdown Hills giving an intimate insight into their lives, which was watched by over 50,000 households in its first three weeks. Wild Paths, a programme possible thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which offers entry to a career in conservation for diverse communities did not recruit in 2020. We were really pleased that our year two trainees were able to complete their training and a third cohort will be selected in 2021.

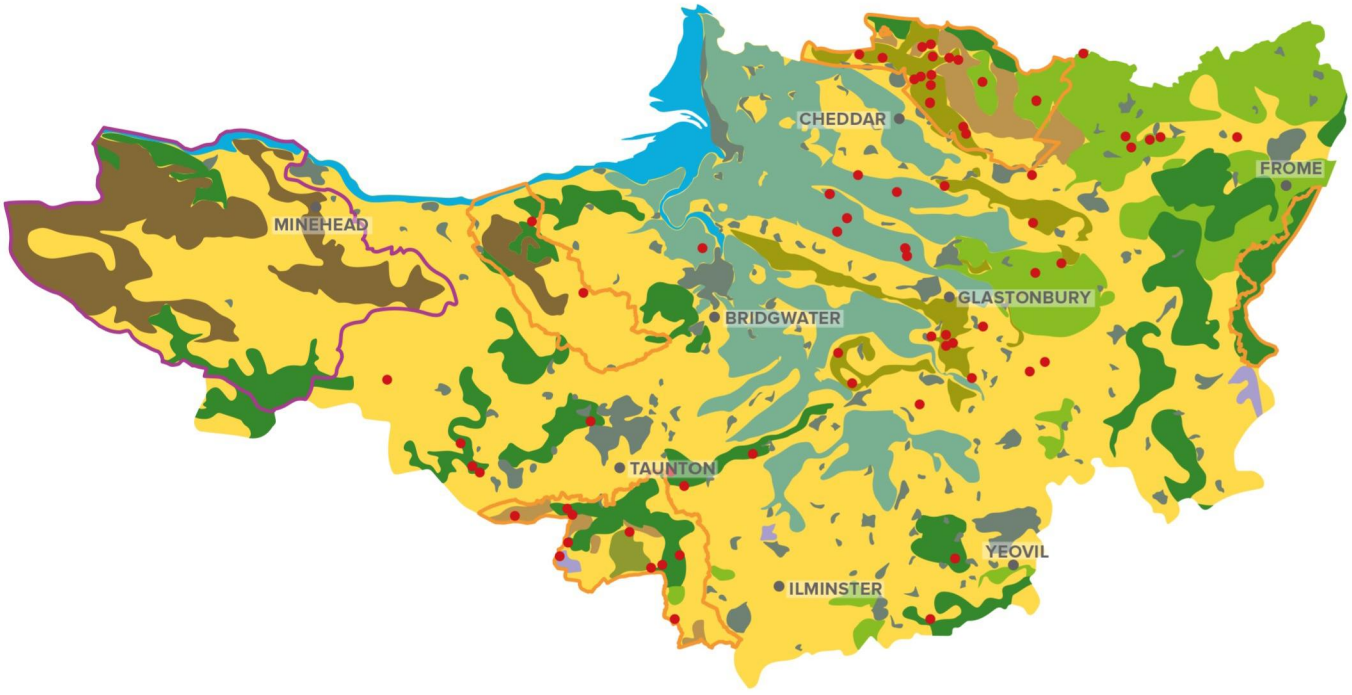
We continued to campaign with Wildlife Trusts across the UK including on taking Action for Insects and on badgers and bovine TB. Over 600 supporters in Somerset signed the Wildlife Trusts' e-petition on the Planning White Paper consultation and sought to ensure proper protection for nature's recovery in future planning legislation.

TELLING SOMERSET'S STORY

It is vital that we understand what is happening to wildlife on a county and local scale in terms of the biodiversity and bioabundance of species present. Without knowing this, and the location and health of habitats, we cannot make the best decisions for nature's recovery or deliver the right natural solutions for climate change and people.

We work closely with, host and support Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) which holds over 2.5 million records of the species and habitats present in Somerset. Most are of protected or rare species and are within higher quality habitats. Specialist groups of recorders continued to supply data to SERC, including through surveying on our reserves, and people shared details of the wildlife in their gardens and elsewhere via the SERC website.

But we need more to contribute so we know more about Somerset's wildlife including the so-called 'common' species, like hedgehogs and blackbirds, so we can track changes and focus our work effectively. In future, we will be running community science initiatives, including the Great Somerset Wildlife Count, which was piloted in the year, and will help more people develop recording and monitoring skills to fill gaps in our knowledge and monitor nature trends through Team Wilder.



Somerset's habitats and our nature reserves

- Woodland
- Upland heath
- Lowland heath
- Neutral grassland
- Limestone grassland
- Purple moor grass and rush pasture
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal habitat
- Urban
- Other land use eg. farming and community
- Somerset Wildlife Trust nature reserves
- Exmoor National Park
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Jointly with SERC, we made significant progress to establish a baseline of Somerset's current State of Nature, which will be developed as a new online platform to monitor progress and inform action by us and others. SERC largely cleared a data backlog and mapped 23 of Somerset's 26 notable protected species, as well as helping us to develop innovative carbon mapping to assess the existing and potential carbon storage of our landholdings and Somerset's habitats. This work is vital for Somerset to plan for climate change and we also began to look at phosphate inputs on the Levels, as part of nature-based solutions to restore ecosystem health.

Our Nature Recovery Network mapping of Somerset's habitats and their connectivity continued to develop and has already proved to be a key tool for Somerset County Council, the Local Nature Partnership, landowners and communities. This important work is influencing policy in Somerset, including through the development of a new Supplementary Planning Document and by feeding into AONB policies around tree planting pressure in the Mendip Hills.

Although the pandemic reduced monitoring, it continued where possible and, for example, wetland bird, breeding wader and riparian mammal surveys were done at Westhay.

2020's survey of the re-introduced Large Blue confirmed that our Green Down reserve in the Polden Hills supports the largest UK colony of this rare butterfly, with over 150,000 eggs estimated to be present.

The extensive citizen science programme of Berrow Dunes, developed as part of our Somerset Brilliant Coast project, was postponed, though limited surveys of freshwater ponds and plants took place thanks to a master's student.

Habitat surveys were undertaken for Shepton Mallet Town Council and Aggregate Industries to identify potential areas to improve for nature. Regular surveys of butterflies, wintering birds and more were carried out for EDF Energy at the mouth of the River Parrett, to inform their ongoing land management.

SERC continued to carry out searches relating to planning applications to ensure development in Somerset considers protected species, like bats, badgers and Great Crested Newts, as well as providing data to landowners and for Neighbourhood and Community Planning. There continued to be a high level of planning-related searches and we responded to over 300 planning applications, many of which were for large residential developments or barn conversions.

DEVELOPING SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

We continued to build our charity and the resources needed to lead and deliver nature's recovery across Somerset. We also developed our climate and environment strategy to ensure our own actions support our aims.

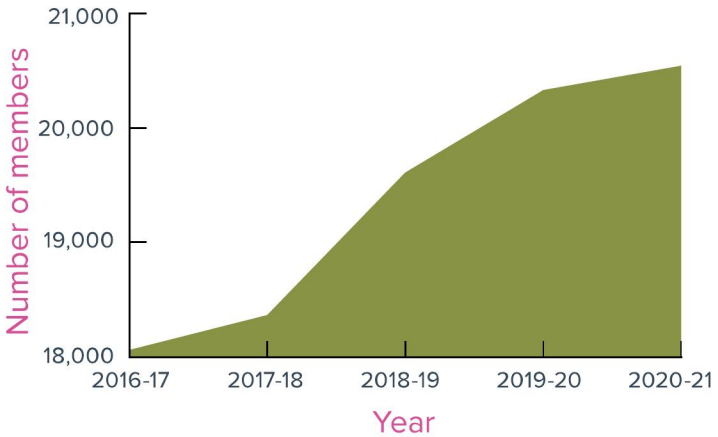
Our supporters continued to be central to our success and never more so given the many uncertainties resulting from the pandemic, as was our ecological consultancy, First Ecology. In 2020-21 fundraising accounted for 70% of our overall income and the combined generosity of the individuals and organisations raised £2.7m (£1.5m: 2019-20).

Fundraising held up much better than expected thanks to particularly strong support from individuals, including members, to our emergency appeal, our Patron scheme and more people fundraising for us, including virtually during the pandemic.

As a membership-based charity, 20% of our income comes from membership, which in 2020-21 was £757k. Our members strengthen our voice when we speak with decision-makers, and take action for wildlife individually and in their communities. Nationally Wildlife Trusts have almost one million members, so our members' voices are amplified in national policy discussions. Overall our member numbers grew slightly to 20,546 (20,333: 2019-20) who represent 3.7% of Somerset's population.

Membership income is one of the foundations of our annual funding; recruiting and retaining members remains a priority. The staff of South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL), mutually owned by eight Wildlife Trusts including Somerset, recruits new members at events and venues across the county, but was unable to do so for over seven months of 2020-21 due to government restrictions. SWWFL is a member of the Institute of Fundraising, which monitors their performance through mystery shopping. Additionally, we seek feedback on SWWFL's recruiters in telephone calls to new members to thank them for their support, which are conducted on its behalf by Quality Telephone Services. We also recruit members via our website and by telephone.

Membership growth



23 legacies were received with a total value of £202k (£214k: 2019-20). More members and non-members informed us that they had included our charity in their wills, which will result in important future funding, though we expect the value of legacies will continue to vary greatly annually.

Grants including from trusts and foundations continue to be vital to fund many aspects of the Trust's work and we thank all our supporters, old and new, for their continuing generosity.

A £218k Heritage Emergency Fund grant helped us to bring furloughed staff back, invest in information technology - including to support remote working - and pay contractors to undertake essential work on our nature reserves that in a normal year would have been done with the help of volunteers. A very generous £500k gift from a Foundation gave us the confidence to develop our ambitious plans to support nature's recovery and was designated by Trustees to support future work.

Protecting and effectively engaging with our donors remains critically important to us and all fundraising, other than face-to-face membership recruitment, is carried out in-house. Learnings are shared amongst the team and the Trust is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and committed to following its Code of Practice, which sets out standards of behaviour that are expected of fundraisers.

We are also registered with the Fundraising Preference Service and received no requests from this service to opt out in the year. We continually update our database including to prevent communications being sent to any known vulnerable people who have been identified. Our website outlines our complaints policy for the public and clearly explains how an individual can complain. No complaints regarding our fundraising were received in the year. We continued to extend our reach particularly through developing our digital knowledge and skills to engage more people in our cause. Like many organisations we embraced new ways to deliver our work digitally particularly by moving events and training online.

We committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and, using a carbon foot-printing tool created by the Wildlife Trust movement, measured our existing carbon footprint to provide a baseline to reduce our carbon emissions across all areas of our operation and land use. This shows that due to our landholdings sequestering carbon, we are comfortably net-negative. We will continue to work to reduce our carbon emissions and increase our carbon sequestration rates.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Despite initial uncertainty the Trust has had an exceptional year from a financial perspective. As a result of a significant £500k donation, additional grant funding and a £183k gain on the value of the Trust's portfolio of investments an overall surplus of £1.46m was recognised in the year (£336k loss: 2019-20).

Overall income increased to £3.8m (£2.8m: 2019-20) primarily due to additional donations and grant funding received in the year. Expenditure fell to £2.5m (£3m: 2019-20). The reduction in expenditure compared to 2019-20 is due to the recognition of two exceptional items of expenditure in the previous year totalling £410k; a significant £600k provision for the removal of unsafe trees due to Ash Dieback disease, which will be expended over a number of years, partially offset by a £190k credit recognised as a result of a reduction in the defined benefit pension scheme liability following formal notification of the Section 75 debt. The Section 75 debt was fully paid in the year.

A surplus of £1.17m (£239k: 2019-20) was recognised on general unrestricted funds after transfers, primarily as a result of increased donations, including a very generous £500k unrestricted donation, and a £218k grant from the Heritage Emergency Fund. In addition, and due to the recovery of the stock market following a significant fall in March 2020, the Trust recognised a £183k gain (£42k loss: 2019-20) in the value of its portfolio of investments.

A surplus of £186k (£110k: 2019-20) was recognised on restricted funds, as a result of funds received during the year for specific purposes as agreed with the funder, which will be expended in future financial years, combined with a delay in planned expenditure due to projects being paused as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Trust recognises that 2020-21 was an exceptional year and has enabled financial reserves depleted in previous years to be replenished. The importance of ongoing financial resilience is also recognised, particularly in the increasingly challenging economic environment and combined with continuing uncertainty and potential risk in relation to future funding from agri-environment schemes and further potential liabilities as a result of Ash Dieback disease. The outturn of 2020-21 has enabled the Trust to plan the delivery of its new Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy and face the challenges ahead in a strong financial position.

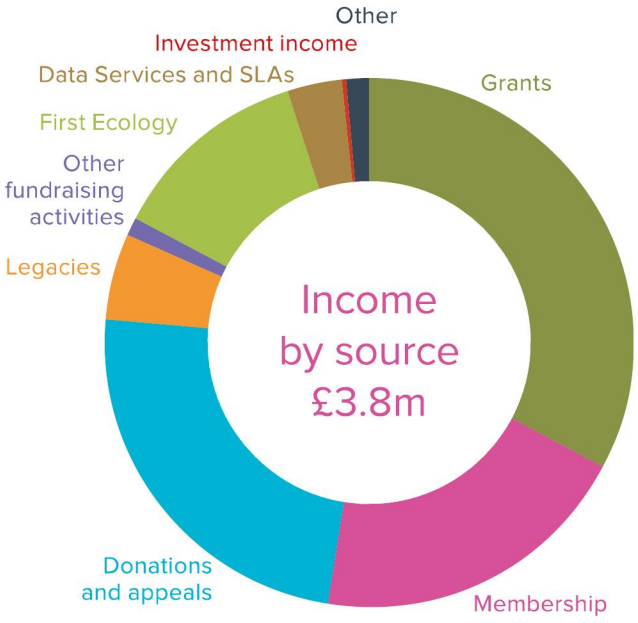
INCOME

Income for the year totalled £3.8m (£2.8m: 2019-20). The £1m increase compared to 2019-20 was primarily due to a very generous £500k donation combined with a £533k increase in grant income, including £95k received through the government's Job Retention Scheme.

Grant income continues to be the largest source of income and grew to £1.3m (£767k: 2019-20), representing 30% of total income. The increase in grant income compared to 2019-20 is mainly due to £190k received in the year for the new three-year Somerset Nature Connections partnership project and the £218k Heritage Emergency Fund grant. A total of £411k (£513k: 2019-20) grants were received through agri-environment schemes, which support the management of our nature reserves and represent 35% of total grant income.

Income from donations and appeals represented the second largest source of income in the year totalling £913k (£265k: 2019-20). This includes a generous £500k donation which has been designated by Trustees and credited to the designated development reserve. A total of £207k was raised from appeals (£152k: 2019-20), including £111k from the emergency appeal.

Membership income grew by £24k. A total of £757k (£733k: 2019-20) was received during the year from individual and corporate members representing the third largest source of income in the year and 20% of total income. An increase in the member numbers was also achieved for the fifth consecutive year.



Income from other trading activities totalled £510k (£578k: 2019-20). The decline in income compared to 2019-20 was mainly due to a reduction in events held as a result of government restrictions and a small 8% reduction in income generated by the Trust's wholly owned subsidiary, trading as First Ecology, as growth plans were put on hold due to the pandemic. First Ecology's income totalled £473k (£515k: 2019-20).

A total of £202k (£214k: 2019-20) legacy income was recognised in the year which has been credited to the designated development reserve for future projects.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre, which is hosted by the Trust, achieved a 11% growth in income which totalled £127k (£115k: 2019-20), primarily from Service Level Agreements and data searches.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure in the year was £2.5m (£3m: 2019-20). This includes £1.6m expenditure on nature conservation in Somerset (£1.5m: 2019-20).

The majority of the Trust's expenditure continues to be represented by staff costs as we rely on the specialist knowledge of our conservation and land management teams, in particular, to fulfil our charitable purposes. Staff costs in 2020-21 totalled £1.6m (£1.6m: 2019-20) representing 63% of total expenditure.

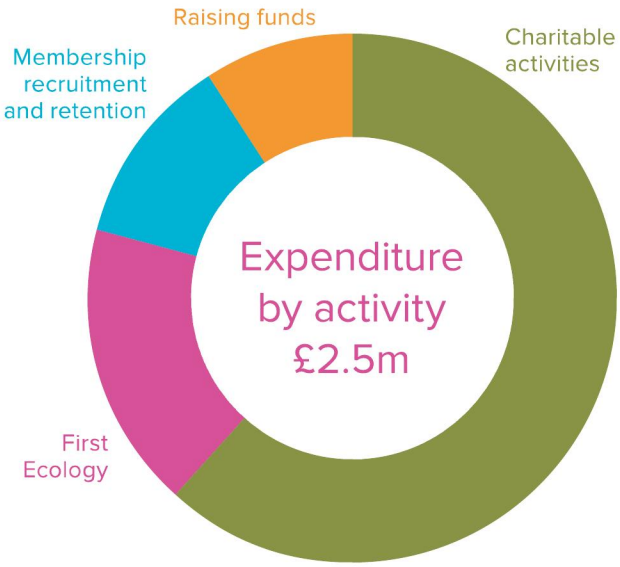
Nature reserve management was the most significant expenditure on charitable activities totalling £798k (£691k: 2019-20) and representing 31% of overall expenditure. Additional contractor costs as a result of the inability to operate volunteer work parties for much of 2020-21 resulted in additional nature reserves expenditure, and was funded by the Heritage Emergency Fund grant. Furthermore, other grant funding enabled improvements at Westhay including the upgrading of the car park plus the start of work to improve water management and habitaton on the reserve.

Expenditure on a movement for nature increased by £36k to £361k (£325k: 2019-20) as a result of the new three-year Somerset Nature Connections Partnership project.

As a result of growth plans being put on hold and a reduction in income, First Ecology expenditure reduced by 10% to £441k (£487k: 2019-20). First Ecology's net profit of £91k (£93k: 2019-20) has been Gift Aided to the Trust.

The cost of raising funds and membership recruitment and retention totalled £518k (£614k: 2019-20); a reduction of £96k compared to 2019-20 primarily due to membership recruitment being put on hold due to government restrictions.

Support costs totalled £504k (£533k: 2019-20) representing 20% of overall expenditure.



FUNDS OF THE CHARITY

Charity funds increased to £7m at the end of the year (£5.6m: 2019-20) as a result of an overall £1.17m increase in unrestricted and designated funds, a £186k increase in restricted funds and a £108k increase in endowment funds.

Overall unrestricted funds increased by £1.17m. This includes a £488k increase in general unrestricted funds and a £679k increase in designated funds. Designated funds include £2m of tangible and heritage fixed assets, of which £1.4m are nature reserves and £648k is the Trust's headquarters in Taunton, and £1.49m which has been set aside by the Trust for specific purposes in future years. A breakdown of designated funds is included in note 21.

The £186k increase in restricted funds represents a combination of income received in the year, including from grants, which will be expended in future financial years and a delay in planned expenditure due to projects being paused as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Restricted funds are funds which the Trust has a legal obligation to use only for the specific purpose for which they were donated. These funds cannot therefore be used to fund the general operations of the Trust outside those specific purposes.

The £108k increase in endowment funds represents an increase in heritage assets following the purchase of 11 acres of land adjacent to Westhay nature reserve.

FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

The Trust has a policy of holding reserves of funds to:

- Enable it to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to further the aims of the Trust when no other source of income is available.
- Provide adequate working capital to carry out projects for which funds have been granted by external bodies, but for which those funds are payable only after expenditure has been incurred.
- Provide a reserve to cover contractual obligations and short-term payment of essential costs, such as staff salaries, in the event of an unanticipated shortfall in funds and/or fluctuations in income.
- Meet any legal obligation on the Trust to meet any future costs.

FINANCIAL RESERVES HOLDINGS

Total reserves at the end of the year amounted to £7m (£5.6m: 2019-20), although a significant proportion of this total is represented by tangible and heritage fixed assets, leaving available financial reserves of £2.46m (£1.27m: 2019-20). This includes £1.49m which has been designated by Trustees for specific purposes leaving £966k in the income fund.

Total reserves	£7,027,381
Less:	
Restricted funds	(£593,242)
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	(£3,976,213)
Total available reserves	**£2,457,926**

The Trust's £2.46m reserves consist of £966k in the income fund and £1.49m which has been designated by Trustees for specific purposes. In accordance with the financial reserves policy, the Trust aims to hold four months planned expenditure in the income fund which equates to a target of £944k. The Trust's existing reserves held in the income fund are £22k above the target and equate to just over four months planned expenditure.

Total available reserves	£2,457,926
Designated funds	(£1,492,266)
Income fund	**£965,660**
Income fund target	**£944,000**

The careful management of cash flow is crucial to ensuring that there is sufficient cash to deliver the Trust's planned programme of works as grant income is often payable in arrears. The Trust aims to hold two months planned expenditure which equates to approximately £472k in unrestricted cash.

The Trustees have designated £1.49m for specific purposes to support the management of nature reserves, future land purchase, innovation opportunities and strategic investment to support the delivery of charitable activities as outlined in note 21. The Trust designates all legacy receipts to the designated development reserve on receipt to support future strategic investment in the Trust's charitable objectives.

INVESTMENTS

The value of the Trust's investment portfolio at the end of the year increased to £909k (£732k: 2019-20) and generated income of £13k (£17k: 2019-20). The Trust recognised a £183k gain (£42k loss: 2019-20) arising from revaluations in the year.

The investment portfolio is managed to provide the Trust with a range of sound marketable investments providing a balance of regular income and opportunity for capital growth. This requires a balanced portfolio consisting of investment grade fixed interest stocks or funds of fixed interest stocks and equities.

An ethical investment policy has been adopted to ensure that the investment portfolio consists of stocks consistent with the Trust's obligation to further its charitable activities, whilst ensuring that its investments do not conflict with its aims and objectives. The Trust's ethical investment policy seeks to encourage investment in companies with strong sustainability policies and practices that respect and protect wildlife, communities and their wider environment.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees are responsible for the Trust's system of risk management which is designed to safeguard the Trust's assets, maintain proper accounting records and ensure that any information disseminated is accurate and reliable. However, such a system can only be designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve the Trust's objectives.

Based on an agreed Risk Policy, all key organisational risks are identified and managed through a Risk Register which is reviewed annually by Trustees. A risk-based approach is being embedded in all of the organisation's planning and decision-making so that any identified major risks are anticipated and planned for in a structured way.

The Trustees have examined all the areas of the Trust's operations and work and have considered the identified risks arising. In the opinion of the Trustees, the Trust has established processes and systems which should allow the risks identified by them to be mitigated to an acceptable level in its day-to-day operations and to support working practices, and in particular, during and emerging from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Trustees have identified the current principal risks as:

- Additional financial liabilities resulting from Ash Dieback disease on our nature reserves.
- Increased competition for charitable funding as a result of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy and personal giving.
- Transition to the new government agri-environment Environmental Land Management Scheme leading to a potential reduction in income.

The Trust also compiles and shares The Wildlife Trusts' benchmarks on governance, finances and other issues to support risk management.

LOOKING AHEAD

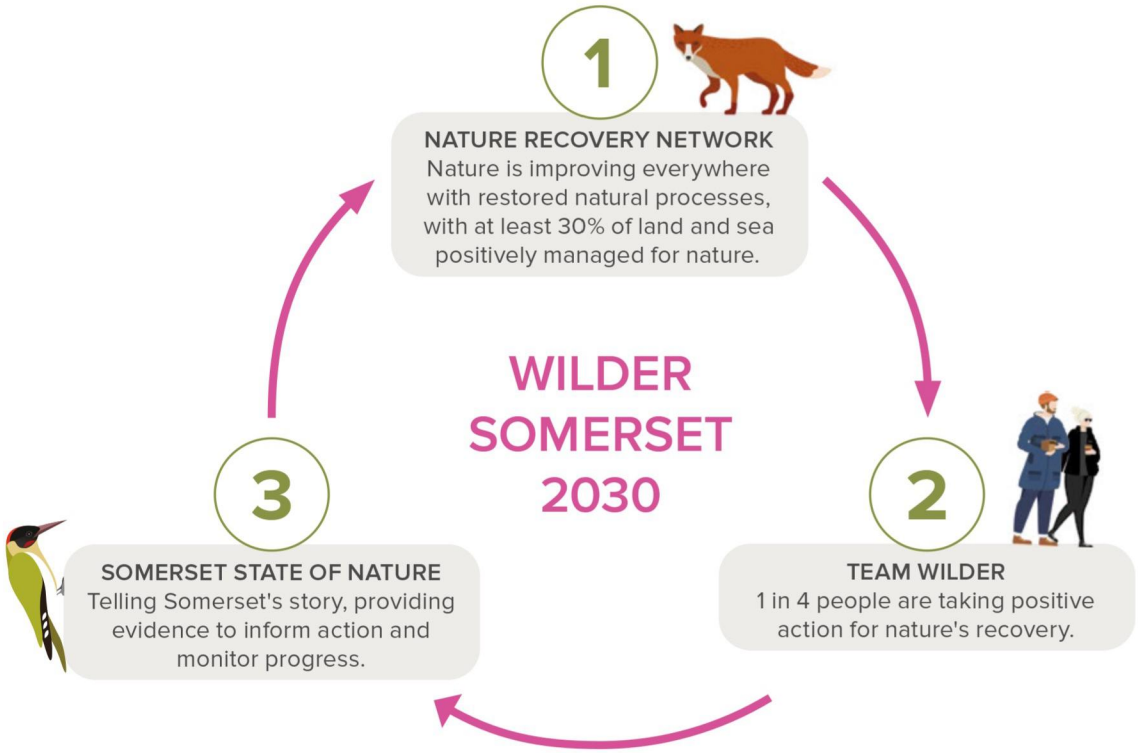
Our new and ambitious 10-year strategy launched at the start of 2021-22 sets out to create a Wilder Somerset by 2030. Our vision is a Somerset-wide Nature Recovery Network creating more space for wildlife, benefiting everyone and playing its part in helping us reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the climate crisis. We can only achieve this by working together and all taking action to help nature recover.

We will always manage nature reserves, develop projects that protect and restore the natural world, and fight for change in the wider social and political arena. Going forwards supporting others to put nature first will be a much higher priority – at home, in their communities, schools, places of worship, at work, and on their farms and landholdings. We will look to co-ordinate and lead nature's recovery in Somerset through the Local Nature Partnership including peatland restoration.

We have set three strategic goals. First, we need more space across Somerset for nature, with at least 30% of land and sea being managed positively for nature. We are seeking for nature to be improving everywhere with restored natural processes, connected and managed through a Nature Recovery Network.

Tripling the amount of land managed for nature will be a significant challenge, but one we can deliver over the next decade by working with many more people and organisations to improve and connect habitats and restore the resilience of our ecosystems. We will continue to also work on Somerset's coastal and marine environment.

In May 2021 Esmée Fairbairn Foundation bought Honeygar Farm, 46.5 hectares of grazed dairy farmland backing onto the River Brue and its associated farm buildings, which it will hold for 22 months while we fundraise to buy it from them. Honeygar is perfectly situated to strengthen nature connectivity within the Avalon Marshes landscape being between our existing nature reserves. In May 2021 34.5 hectares of land bordering Honeygar plus a further 5.5 hectares buffering its nearby Westhay Heath reserve were bought at auction. All will contribute significantly to Somerset's Nature Recovery Network and offers us new opportunities to transform agricultural land of low value for biodiversity into something good for wildlife.



We will wild the land to develop our approach to nature-based solutions, seeking to trial and deliver benefits such as carbon storage and natural flood management, which are critical issues for Somerset, while monitoring change so we can show the clear benefits for wildlife. This will be a groundbreaking project for Somerset and the internationally important Avalon Marshes, and a major fundraising campaign is being planned.

Goal two is to develop a countywide movement for wildlife, so everyone can experience nature, with at least one in four people taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset to create a social 'tipping point' where the majority will follow. We are calling our new movement Team Wilder and will be supporting communities, young people, businesses and groups to take an active role in nature's recovery.

We are already working with groups through our funded projects and have begun developing the practical resources and training to help many more people take action locally. We will identify what interventions would make the biggest impact for nature. We will share our knowledge and skills, and connect communities so they can share their learnings, creating a powerful peer-to-peer Team Wilder network.

Telling the story of nature's recovery in Somerset is our third goal. We will continue to build our knowledge of the health, distribution and location of habitats and species, and to work closely with and support SERC in developing an online State of Nature platform. This will over time enable us to track our progress to our 30% target.

Community science initiatives, including our own Great Somerset Wildlife Count, will be developed to help us gather more species records. We will use drone technology to map habitats and gather data.

To help deliver our Wilder Somerset 2030 strategy, we will establish advisory groups on each key aim including experts from outside the Trust to learn from and help to shape our thinking.

We start 2021-22 with an improved financial position thanks to a far stronger performance in 2020-21 than expected, which is in large part due to the amazing loyalty and generosity of our supporters and grant givers, plus the success of First Ecology. Planning how to grow First Ecology profitably by providing high quality ecological and environmental services which deliver for nature, and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, will be another important focus.

We plan to invest in new staff posts to help implement our strategy, maintain tight cost control and work to grow fundraising income to support our plans, and mitigate the risks of Ash Dieback and continuing uncertainty about the new Environmental Land Management Scheme.

A £445k (£600k: 2020) provision has been recognised for the removal of unsafe trees due to Ash Dieback disease. The provision is based on a third party report commissioned by the Trust in 2019-20 which provided an indicative cost to deal with this issue over a number of years. Although mitigation work continues as planned, the progression and impact of the disease cannot be quantified and the cost associated with Ash Dieback remains uncertain hence a further third party arboricultural report is planned in 2022-23.

To help us to interact with many more people and organisations, we will be moving to a new database in 2021-22, which will initially support fundraising and membership, but will over time be rolled out to all staff. We will continue to develop our digital knowledge and experience, while reverting to more face-to-face meetings and events.

Looking forward, we will need to continue to build our charity, be clear in our priorities and ensure our own actions support our aims. By bringing people together as Team Wilder, our growing membership, supporters, partners and with the national Wildlife Trust movement, we will together create a Wilder Somerset.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

CHARITABLE PURPOSE

Somerset Wildlife Trust is set up to achieve three charitable objects:

1. For the benefit of the public, to advance, promote and further the conservation, maintenance, protection and enjoyment of wildlife and its habitats, including places of botanical, geographical, zoological, archaeological or scientific interest and places of natural beauty;
2. To advance the education of the public in the principles of biodiversity conservation and of sustainable development;
3. To promote research in all branches of ecology and geology.

The Trust delivers its charitable purposes through its strategic objectives as described in this report.

The Trust measures its success by:

- The Senior Leadership Team and Trust Council monitoring progress towards charitable goals and their achievement through quarterly reviews of the implementation of the annual and long-term delivery plan
- Monitoring the work plan for key work areas, including membership, fundraising and wider income generation
- Setting objectives for all staff which link to the delivery plan and reviewing progress regularly at one to one and annual review meetings
- Qualitative feedback from Trustees, members, supporters, volunteers and partners
- Continuing to develop successful relationships with partner organisations and funders
- Hosting Somerset Environmental Records Centre, which collects and provides data on species and habitats across Somerset, and using this data to monitor Somerset's State of Nature
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints received

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The Trust's public benefit is enshrined in its charitable objectives and activities – providing multiple benefits for the public which are wide-ranging and long-lasting.

Nature reserves

The Trust's nature reserves, located throughout Somerset are used extensively by the public for quiet recreation; many have access on clearly marked paths along with information and interpretation for visitors.

Education and engagement

The Trust delivers a broad engagement programme, promoting life-long learning and inspiring people of all ages, including children and young people, to enjoy and benefit from contact with the natural world, enhancing their health and wellbeing.

Restoring nature at landscape-level

The Trust's habitat management and restoration work help to create biodiverse habitats which provide essential ecosystem services for the public, such as flood risk management, carbon storage, pollination, pollution control, improved health and wellbeing, and aesthetic beauty. Government and businesses are now recognising the essential role that nature plays in supporting the economy, not least through the provision of these public goods and services.

Land management advice for nature

Through providing advice and assistance to farmers and landowners to manage their land for the benefit of wildlife the Trust helps to support the rural economy, the countryside and landscapes that are enjoyed and valued by the wider public.

Research

Evidence and advice provided by the Trust to local authorities, landowners and communities helps to ensure that decisions on policies such as land management, development, and health and wellbeing take full account of the public benefit of wildlife and a healthy environment.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURE

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its articles of association.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (registered charity number 207238) along with 46 other local Wildlife Trust members throughout the UK which are collectively known as The Wildlife Trusts.

Somerset Wildlife Trust is also a partner in the South West Wildlife Trusts, an independent charity formed by seven of the eight Wildlife Trusts located in the South West of England and the Isles of Scilly to increase the effectiveness of the Wildlife Trusts in the South West.

Somerset Wildlife Trust has one wholly owned subsidiary, **SWT (Sales) Limited**. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activities of SWT (Sales) Limited are that of overseeing the environmental consultancy, First Ecology.

First Ecology provides ecological consultancy, protected species services, planning support and arboricultural services to a wide range of clients. It is based at the Trust's Callow Rock Offices. First Ecology trades under SWT (Sales) Ltd, a company limited by shares and registered in England No. 1317396.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) was established in 1986 and is hosted by the Somerset Wildlife Trust at the Trust's office in Taunton. The core work of SERC is to gather, manage and supply biological and geological data and hold the county list of sites recognised for their natural value. Data gathered by SERC is used to build up a comprehensive picture of the biodiversity and geodiversity of Somerset, and help to monitor the state of the natural environment. SERC is a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres and has close links to the National Biodiversity Network, and the National Federation of Biological Recorders.

South West Wildlife Fundraising Limited (SWWFL) is an Associate trading subsidiary (set up for mutual trading) and jointly owned by eight Wildlife Trusts, including Somerset Wildlife Trust, to help secure regular financial support through memberships recruited face to face. SWWFL provides membership recruitment services for Somerset, Avon, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire and as clients now also to Herefordshire and Gwent Wildlife Trusts.

GOVERNANCE

Council

Members elected to serve on Council have a dual role as a Trustee of the Charity and a Director of the company. There can be no fewer than 10 and no more than 15 Trustees. All Trustees are volunteers, give freely of their time and have no beneficial interest in the group or charity. Trustees are elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting and serve for a term of five years. Each Trustee can serve for two consecutive terms of office and then must stand down for a year until they become eligible to stand again.

The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are elected by Council following the AGM and serve one-year terms. No Trustee can hold the position of Chair, Vice-Chair or Treasurer for more than five consecutive years though this can be extended in exceptional circumstances for a year.

To ensure that Council is equipped to carry out its responsibilities it carries out skills analysis of existing members before new ones are appointed. In addition, each new Trustee receives a full induction into the work and administration of the charity. Trustees receive regular updates on the work of the Trust and any training deemed necessary to enable members to carry out their responsibilities.

At the Trust AGM in November 2020, two Trustees were re-elected.

As part of ongoing good governance, a review of our Articles of Association is being undertaken to bring them up to date and to incorporate new guidelines from the Charity Commission.

Council is assisted by three committees:

Finance and Resources Committee: scrutiny of accounts, oversight of investments and financial controls, policy development, advice on business risk and resource management and income generation;

Health and Safety Committee: oversight on all health and safety matters in the Trust.

Risk Management Committee: advising on the Trust's risk appetite and risk tolerance, reviewing and monitoring current and potential business risks.

In addition, the chairs of all committees meet with the Chair of Council and the Chief Executive once a year to review governance performance.

Transactions involving council members and related parties

During 2020-21 the Trust received a total of £1,053 (2020: £675) donations and membership from Trustees.

Strategy and policy setting

Council is responsible for furthering the objectives of the Trust as set out in the Articles of Association. The focus of Council's work is on setting and reviewing the strategic direction for the Trust, on monitoring its delivery of agreed targets and to ensure that the income and expenditure of the Trust and its property and assets are managed appropriately. Following the appointment of Georgia Stokes as the Trust's new Chief Executive Officer in April 2019, and consultation with members, the public and all key stakeholders, the Trust has developed and launched a new 10-year strategy 'Wilder Somerset 2030'.

Staffing

Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer and supports the appointment process for members of the Senior Leadership Team. In practice, this translates into giving the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team clear strategic objectives for the Trust which have demonstrable outcomes for wildlife in the county, and ensuring that the Trust's financial affairs are managed appropriately.

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Chair of Trustees. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day to day running of the Trust and has delegated powers of authority approved by the Council. The Chief Executive Officer delegates decision making powers through the Senior Leadership Team into the organisation.

During the year the Trust employed 50 full-time equivalent staff (2020: 49), three of which worked for SERC and nine for First Ecology. The majority of the Trust's staff are usually based at its headquarters in Taunton with others based at Ford Farm, the Avalon Marshes Centre and Callow Rock. The staff are organised into functional teams, such as reserves, and also work in cross-functional teams, such as for delivering major projects. As a result of coronavirus and social distancing measures introduced in March 2020, all Trust offices have remained largely closed throughout the year and staff have mainly worked remotely from home. Additionally, a total of 24 staff (41%) were furloughed through the government's Job Retention Scheme. The decision to place staff on this scheme was taken based on whether they were able to continue delivering their role in lockdown conditions and/or as a direct result of loss of income resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Complaints

The Trust treats all complaints seriously. In the year 2020-21 the Trust received 1 complaint (4: 2020). Complaints were responded to within 7 days. Complaints are individually reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer and relevant senior staff and monitored by Trustees as part of a system for continuous improvement.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Somerset Wildlife Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards including Financial Reporting Standard 102; the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the income and expenditure of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Trustees' Report, including the Strategic Report, was approved by the Trustees on 20 July 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST

Qualified opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Somerset Wildlife Trust (the 'charitable parent company') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Balance Sheet, the Consolidated Statement of Cashflows and notes to the consolidated financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the charity's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the basis for qualified opinion section of our report, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and charitable parent company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the group's income and expenditure for the period then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for qualified opinion

The Trust has recognised a provision of £445k (2020: £600k) for the removal of unsafe trees following a technical report commissioned to estimate the financial impact of Ash Dieback disease on the Trust's nature reserves.

Due to significant uncertainties regarding the long term costs of managing the disease we were unable to satisfy ourselves that the provision is a reliable estimate of the total costs of managing the impact of the disease on the Trust's reserves at the balance sheet date. Consequently we were unable to determine whether any adjustments to this amount were necessary.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- The Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- The Trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the group's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The Trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements

or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:
- the information given in the Trustees' report (incorporating the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' report (incorporating the strategic report and the directors' report) have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and charitable parent company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' report (incorporating the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us;
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of our audit.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and charitable parent company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the group or charitable parent company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Identifying and assessing potential risks of material misstatement due to irregularities

We considered the following when identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement due to irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations:

- the legal and regulatory framework in which the group operates
- the nature of the sector in which the group operates
- the control environment and controls established to mitigate such risks
- the results of our enquiries of management about their identification and assessment of risks of irregularities
- discussions with the audit engagement team about where fraud might occur
- the incentives for fraud.

Laws and regulations which are considered to be significant to the group include those relating to the requirements of financial reporting framework FRS 102, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, UK tax legislation, employment law and health and safety. In addition we consider other laws and regulation which may not directly impact the financial statements but may impact on the operation of the group.

As a result of these procedures we concluded, in accordance with International Auditing Standards, that a risk in relation to the potential for management override of controls existed.

Audit responses to risks identified

We undertook audit procedures to respond to the risks identified, and designed our audit testing to respond to these risks. The additional procedures we undertook included the following:

- gaining an understanding of the group's procedures for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations
- testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments
- considering whether accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias
- considering whether any transactions arose outside the normal course of business
- making enquiries of management
- corroborating our enquiries through review of Board Minutes and correspondence.

We also communicated relevant laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indicators of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Alexandra Shore FCA CTA
Senior Staturory Auditor
For and on behalf of A C Mole & Sons
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
Stafford House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Taunton
Somerset TA1 2PX

20 July 2021

A C Mole & Sons is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(INCLUDING CONSOLIDATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds General £	Unrestricted funds Designated £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	1,532,145	196,732	142,369	-	1,871,246	1,212,643
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature – nature recovery	3	19,079	-	145,328	-	164,407	147,083
More space for nature – nature reserves	3	436,231	-	190,650	-	626,881	558,869
A movement for nature	3	5,000	-	410,105	-	415,105	117,901
Telling Somerset's story	3	124,467	-	2,197	-	126,664	114,884
Other trading activities (including First Ecology)	4	509,555	-	-	-	509,555	578,282
Investments	5	13,496	-	-	-	13,496	21,820
Other income	6	95,265	-	-	-	95,265	-
Total		**2,735,238**	**196,732**	**890,649**	**-**	**3,822,619**	**2,751,482**
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds (including First Ecology)	7	970,216	-	-	-	970,216	1,107,106
Charitable activities:							
More space for nature – nature recovery	7	130,585	2	129,909	-	260,496	364,171
More space for nature – nature reserves	7	567,045	-	231,296	-	798,341	690,500
A movement for nature	7	158,553	-	202,670	-	361,223	324,645
Telling Somerset's story	7	152,349	-	2,197	-	154,546	149,244
Current service pension cost/(credit)	8	-	-	-	-	-	(189,824)
Provision for Ash Dieback liability	18	-	-	-	-	-	600,000
Total		**1,978,748**	**2**	**566,072**	**-**	**2,544,822**	**3,045,842**
Net gain/(loss) on investments		183,097	-	-	-	183,097	(41,948)
Net income/(expenditure)		**939,587**	**196,730**	**324,577**	**-**	**1,460,894**	**(336,308)**
Transfers between funds	22	(451,780)	482,626	(138,430)	107,584	-	-
Net movement in funds		**487,807**	**679,356**	**186,147**	**107,584**	**1,460,894**	**(336,308)**
Reconciliation of funds							
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2020		692,215	2,833,328	407,095	1,633,849	5,566,487	5,902,795
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2021		**1,180,022**	**3,512,684**	**593,242**	**1,741,433**	**7,027,381**	**5,566,487**

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above. The notes on pages 30 to 45 form part of these financial statements.

CONSOLIDATED AND TRUST BALANCE SHEETS

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Group 2021 £	Group 2020 £	Trust 2021 £	Trust 2020 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13	847,651	864,433	832,560	852,910
Heritage assets	13	3,128,562	3,020,978	3,128,562	3,020,978
Investments	14	908,540	732,079	908,543	732,082
		4,884,753	**4,617,490**	**4,869,665**	**4,605,970**
Current assets					
Stock	15	1,690	1,659	1,690	1,659
Debtors	16	685,603	760,921	698,147	762,576
Deposit accounts		1,802,732	596,951	1,802,732	596,951
Cash at bank and in hand		346,515	586,805	333,459	581,801
		2,836,540	**1,946,336**	**2,836,028**	**1,942,987**
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	248,493	176,472	233,048	161,758
Net current assets		**2,588,047**	**1,769,864**	**2,602,980**	**1,781,229**
Total assets less current liabilities		**7,472,800**	**6,387,354**	**7,472,645**	**6,387,199**
Provisions for liabilities	18	445,419	600,000	445,419	600,000
Total assets excluding pension liability		**7,027,381**	**5,787,354**	**7,027,226**	**5,787,199**
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	12	-	220,867	-	220,867
Total net assets		**7,027,381**	**5,566,487**	**7,027,226**	**5,566,332**
The funds of the charity					
Endowment funds		1,741,433	1,633,849	1,741,433	1,633,849
Restricted funds		593,242	407,095	593,242	407,095
Designated funds		3,512,684	2,833,328	3,512,684	2,833,328
Unrestricted funds		1,180,022	692,215	1,179,867	692,060
Total charity funds	**23**	**7,027,381**	**5,566,487**	**7,027,226**	**5,566,332**

The notes on pages 30 to 45 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 27 to 45 were approved by the Trustees on 20 July 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

Graeme Mitchell
Chair

Richard Atkin
Treasurer

Somerset Wildlife Trust
Registered company number 818162

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	25	1,101,245	225,234
Cash flows from investing activities			
Dividends, interest and rental income		13,496	21,820
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		-	6,322
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(155,886)	(83,759)
Proceeds from sale of investments		139,039	113,403
Purchase of investments		(150,978)	(79,563)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(154,329)**	**(21,777)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**946,916**	**203,457**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		1,225,509	1,022,052
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	**26**	**2,172,425**	**1,225,509**

The notes on pages 30 to 45 form part of these financial statements.

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Charitable company status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and does not have any share capital. The liability of the guarantors, who are the members, is limited to £1 per guarantor. At 31 March 2021 the charity had 20,546 members. The company is registered in England & Wales. The registered office address is 34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5AW. On behalf of the members, the Council controls the company.

(b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102) 2019 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention with the exception of listed investments which are included at their fair value.

The Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

(c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

(d) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiary SWT (Sales) Limited on a line-by-line basis. A separate Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account for the charity has not been presented because the Trust has taken advantage of the exemption afforded by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006. The surplus in the year for the charity was £1,460,894 (2019-20: £336,308 deficit). Note 24 gives full details of the results of the subsidiary undertaking for the year to 31 March 2021.

(e) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds
Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Certain unrestricted funds have been designated by the Trustees for specific purposes.

Designated funds
Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Council for a future purpose.

Restricted funds
Restricted funds are funds that are used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

Endowment funds
The nature reserves endowment fund represents amounts received specifically for, and expended on, the purchase of nature reserves.

(f) Income

All income is included in the SOFA when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income for works that has been completed but has not yet been received is included as accrued income.

Legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the Trust that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Unless restricted, legacies are credited to the designated development reserve on receipt.

Grants are included in the SOFA in the year they are receivable and when any performance conditions attached to the grant have been met. Grants received in respect of the purchase of specific nature reserves are credited to the nature reserves endowment fund.

Government grants are included within other income and are recognised where there is entitlement, when receipt is considered probable and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from investments and from rental income is included in the SOFA in the year it is receivable.

The total income receivable in respect of membership is included as income from membership in note 2. Income from life membership is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

Gifts in kind are included in the SOFA at their estimated current value in the year in which they are receivable.

Trading income is included in the SOFA in the year in which it is receivable.

(g) Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Where an employee works in more than one department, their costs are allocated on the basis of time worked in each department. Certain overhead costs, such as relevant insurance premiums, are allocated on the basis of staff numbers, while others are allocated on an actual usage basis.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

(h) Tangible and heritage fixed assets and depreciation

Heritage assets are assets of historical or scientific importance that are held to advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of the charity and through public access contribute to

the nation's culture and education at either a national or local level. Freehold nature reserves are included in heritage fixed assets at their acquisition costs and they are not revalued or depreciated. The charity aims to preserve and enhance its nature reserves, which are not held for their resale potential. The market value of the reserves is of no practical relevance to the charity's activities. No depreciation is provided because the reserves have an indefinite life.

The costs of leasehold nature reserves are amortised over the period of the lease.

All other tangible fixed assets are held at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided on all other tangible fixed assets as follows:

Freehold property: 2% on a straight line basis
Computers: on a straight line basis over 3 years
Plant and equipment: 15% on written down value
Motor vehicles: 25% on written down value
Office equipment, furniture and fittings: 15% on written down value

(i) Investments

Listed Investments are stated at fair value which equates to market value at the balance sheet date. The SOFA includes all net gains and losses arising on revaluations and disposals throughout the year. The investment in the subsidiary is stated at cost.

(j) Stock

Stock consists of publications for distribution to members and purchased goods for resale. Stock is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

(k) Cash and equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

(l) Financial instruments

The Trust only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value, with the exception of listed investments as noted above.

(m) Pension costs

The Trust participates in The Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme, a hybrid, multi-employer pension scheme which provides benefits to members on a defined benefit or a defined contribution basis.

The majority of employees are members of a defined contribution pension scheme.

Defined contribution scheme
Pension contributions in relation to defined contribution schemes are recognised as an expense in the statement of financial activities as incurred. The Trust contributes 7% of gross annual salary for participating employees.

Defined benefit scheme
The Trust settled the remaining Section 75 debt advised by the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme in the year.

(n) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the SOFA as incurred.

(o) Volunteer support

The Trust receives support from a wide variety of volunteers. It is not practical to place a value on the time volunteered by all these persons, due to the variety of duties performed, the differences in time spent, and the sheer number of volunteers who kindly donated their time.

(p) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

The Trustees are of the opinion that apart from the Ash Dieback provision there are no other estimates or assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

The Trust has a liability to manage the impact of Ash Dieback on its nature reserves. Consultants have been engaged to try to estimate the financial impact of this obligation, and a provision has been recognised within the accounts. Due to the many assumptions which will impact this estimate, including the rate of progression of the disease, actual costs could be materially different from these estimates. Further details are included in note 18.

(q) Provisions

The Trust recognises a provision where it has a liability which is of uncertain timing or amount. Movements in provisions are recognised in the SOFA in the period in which they occur. Provisions are discounted where the time impact of money is material.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2020 £
Membership[1]	756,831	-	756,831	733,114	-	733,114
Donations and appeals	775,314	137,369	912,683	96,359	168,911	265,270
Legacies	196,732	5,000	201,732	214,259	-	214,259
	1,728,877	**142,369**	**1,871,246**	**1,043,732**	**168,911**	**1,212,643**

[1] Membership includes corporate membership £7,417 (2020: £21,336).

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2020 £
More space for nature – nature recovery						
Natural England	-	12,732	12,732	-	5,938	5,938
Statutory body grants	-	30,715	30,715	-	14,615	14,615
Other grants	-	101,881	101,881	-	101,385	101,385
Consultancy fees	19,079	-	19,079	25,145	-	25,145
	19,079	**145,328**	**164,407**	**25,145**	**121,938**	**147,083**
More space for nature – nature reserves						
DEFRA	411,269	-	411,269	510,112	2,500	512,612
Statutory body grants	-	4,150	4,150	-	7,724	7,724
Landfill tax credit scheme	-	65,422	65,422	-	-	-
Other grants	-	121,078	121,078	-	6,633	6,633
Grazing licences and property lettings	14,506	-	14,505	20,076	-	20,076
Wood and firewood sales	10,456	-	10,456	11,824	-	11,824
	436,231	**190,650**	**626,881**	**542,012**	**16,857**	**558,869**
A movement for nature						
Education provision	-	-	-	180	-	180
Statutory body grants	5,000	120,478	125,478	-	52,399	52,399
Other grants	-	289,627	289,627	-	65,322	65,322
	5,000	**410,105**	**415,105**	**180**	**117,721**	**117,901**
Telling Somerset's story						
Statutory body grants	-	200	200	-	300	300
Other grants	-	1,997	1,997	-	-	-
Service level agreements	78,861	-	78,861	76,602	-	76,602
Data services	43,336	-	43,336	37,982	-	37,982
Sales income	2,270	-	2,270	-	-	-
	124,467	**2,197**	**126,664**	**114,584**	**300**	**114,884**
	584,777	**748,280**	**1,333,057**	**681,921**	**256,816**	**938,737**

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Trust £	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 24) £	Total 2021 £	Trust £	SWT (Sales) Ltd (see note 24) £	Total 2020 £
Shop sales	2,433	-	2,433	2,905	-	2,905
Fundraising events	3,270	-	3,270	25,234	-	25,234
Other fundraising activities	30,586	-	30,586	35,067	-	35,067
First Ecology	-	473,266	473,266	-	515,076	515,076
	36,289	**473,266**	**509,555**	**63,206**	**515,076**	**578,282**

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2020 £
Dividends receivable from equity shares	11,778	-	11,778	16,640	-	16,640
Interest receivable from investment funds	934	-	934	836	-	836
Interest receivable from bank and deposit accounts	784	-	784	4,344	-	4,344
	13,496	**-**	**13,496**	**21,820**	**-**	**21,820**

6. OTHER INCOME

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2020 £
Government grants	95,265	-	95,265	-	-	-
	95,265	**-**	**95,265**	**-**	**-**	**-**

7. BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2021 £	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	Total 2020 £
Expenditure on raising funds						
Cost of raising funds	167,660	49,829	217,489	175,456	53,772	229,228
Membership recruitment and retention	251,521	49,051	300,572	332,157	51,530	383,687
Merchandising costs	2,094	-	2,094	2,362	-	2,362
Investment management fees	8,838	-	8,838	5,236	-	5,236
First Ecology	343,481	97,742	441,223	388,032	98,561	486,593
	773,594	**196,622**	**970,216**	**903,243**	**203,863**	**1,107,106**
Charitable activities						
More space for nature - nature recovery	204,616	55,880	260,496	284,211	79,960	364,171
Mores space for nature - nature reserves	701,702	96,639	798,341	584,602	105,898	690,500
A movement for nature	243,866	117,357	361,223	219,630	105,015	324,645
Telling Somerset's story	116,707	37,839	154,546	110,800	38,444	149,244
	1,266,891	**307,715**	**1,574,606**	**1,199,243**	**329,317**	**1,528,560**
	2,040,485	**504,337**	**2,544,822**	**2,102,486**	**533,180**	**2,635,666**

Support cost breakdown by activity

	Costs of generating voluntary income £	Membership recruitment and retention £	First Ecology £	More space for nature – nature recovery £	More space for nature – nature reserves £	A movement for nature £	Telling Somerset's story £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Finance	8,758	6,128	19,929	11,923	21,299	14,777	7,716	90,530	106,159
HR/staff support	2,787	1,952	6,346	3,796	6,782	4,705	2,454	28,822	40,727
Office costs	7,986	5,589	18,170	10,872	19,420	13,472	7,032	82,541	69,498
Property and motor vehicles	4,904	3,428	11,151	6,671	11,917	8,268	4,318	50,657	53,472
Recoverable VAT	(12,123)	-	-	(2,598)	(17,319)	(2,598)	-	(34,638)	(17,272)
Marketing	20,135	19,792	2,594	1,552	12,270	49,410	1,005	106,758	98,250
Information technology	5,998	4,197	13,649	8,167	14,588	10,119	5,284	62,002	54,737
National and regional support	4,464	3,123	10,157	6,076	10,854	7,530	3,932	46,136	52,940
Insurance	498	348	1,133	678	1,211	840	439	5,147	3,447
Governance	6,422	4,494	14,613	8,743	15,617	1,0834	5,659	66,382	71,222
	49,829	**49,051**	**97,742**	**55,880**	**96,639**	**117,357**	**37,839**	**504,337**	**533,180**

Basis of allocation

Finance	Headcount
HR/staff support	Headcount
Office costs	Headcount
Property and motor vehicles	Headcount
Recoverable VAT	Actual resources expended
Marketing	Actual resources expended
Information technology	Headcount
National and regional support	Headcount
Insurance	Headcount
Governance	Headcount

8. EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

During the previous financial year, the Trust received confirmation of the liability arising from triggering the Section 75 debt in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme. As a result the pension liability had been over-provided for. To correct the liability a credit of £189,824 was recognised in the prior period. The Trustees consider this credit is material by virtue of its nature and amount and it has therefore been disclosed separately on the face of the statement of financial activities.

During the previous financial year, the Trust recognised a £600k provision in respect of Ash Dieback as explained in note 18.

9. OTHER COST DISCLOSURES

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Depreciation	65,084	62,164
Auditors' remuneration		
Audit fees	14,392	11,850
Taxation compliance	1,110	2,082
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	954

10. STAFF COSTS

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Wages and salaries	1,378,719	1,367,654
Social security costs	120,687	115,173
Pension costs	92,927	69,211
	1,592,333	**1,552,038**

The number of employees whose renumeration exceeded £60,000 was as follows:

	Total 2021	Total 2020
£60,000 – £69,999	1	1
	1	**1**

Total remuneration of key management personnel in the period was £400,325 (2020: £301,677).

The key management personnel of the group and the parent charity comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy CEO, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management, Head of Nature Recovery, Head of Engagement and Community Programmes, Head of Communications and Corporate Relations, Head of Business Development and Operations, and Head of Finance.

During the year the Trust made settlement payments of £nil (2020: £24,485).

The average number of employees during the year, analysed by function, was:

	2021 Number	2020 Number
Charitable activities	49	53
Raising funds	9	8
Governance	1	1
	59	**62**

The average number of full-time equivalent employees during the year totalled 50 (2020: 49).

11. TRUSTEE EMOLUMENTS

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Reimbursement of Trustees' travel and subsistence costs	-	326
Donations received from Trustees	1,053	675

Trustees did not receive any remuneration or benefits in kind during either year.

No Trustees were reimbursed for travel expenses during the year (2020: two).

12. PENSION COSTS

The Trust participated in the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme, a hybrid, multi-employer pension scheme which provides benefits to members on a defined benefit or a defined contribution basis.

Defined benefit scheme

The scheme is closed to new members.

During 2014-15 the Trust received notification that that Section 75 clause in the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme had been breached due to there no longer being any active members in the defined contribution section of the scheme. In March 2020 the Trust received formal notification of the value of the Section 75 debt. Accordingly, at the previous year end, the liability recognised was the value of the Section 75 debt, which was the Trust's only remaining liability under the scheme. During the current year, this debt was settled.

Prior to receiving this notification the Trust was unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the defined benefit section of the scheme. Accordingly, as permitted under FRS 102, the Trust previously accounted for the defined benefit scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme and recognised a liability for the present value of the contributions payable by the Trust under the agreed Recovery Plan for the scheme.

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
At 1 April 2020	220,867	460,700
Cash contributions in the year	-	(62,338)
Section 75 debt cash payments	(220,867)	
Finance cost:		
Unwinding of interest	-	13,831
Movement in discount rate	-	(1,502)
Section 75 debt adjustment	-	(189,824)
At March 2021	**-**	**220,867**
Discount rate (IBoxx 15 year Sterling Corporates AA rated bond yield)	-	2.35%

Information regarding the Wildlife Trusts Pension Scheme (as a whole) is disclosed below:

The latest valuation was carried out as at 1 April 2016 on a Statutory Funding Objective Basis. The assumptions that have the most significant effect on the results of the valuation are those relating to the discount rates, the rate of increase in pensions and the life expectancy of pensioners.

	Total 2021	Total 2020
Discount rate pre-retirement	-	4.45%
Discount rate post-retirement	-	2.2%
Price inflation (RPI)	-	3%
Price inflation (CPI)	-	2.2%

Post retirement mortality assumptions are based on S2PA tables projected by each member's year of birth. As at the valuation date the total value of Scheme's deficit was £5.9m.

Defined contribution scheme

The Trust contributes 7% of annual salary to employees' current pension schemes, all of which are now defined contribution in nature. The pension charge for the year in respect of these contributions amounted to £92,927 (2020: £69,487).

13. TANGIBLE AND HERITAGE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Nature reserves Freehold	Nature reserves Leasehold	Freehold and leasehold property	Plant and equipment	Vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost							
At 1 April 2020	3,020,978	103,946	739,830	391,700	164,024	157,254	4,577,732
Additions	107,584	-	-	7,082	-	41,220	155,886
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	(722)	(722)
At 31 March 2021	**3,128,562**	**103,946**	**739,830**	**398,782**	**164,024**	**197,752**	**4,732,896**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2020	-	103,758	91,037	268,958	98,799	129,769	692,321
Charge for the year	-	2	14,885	18,763	16,307	15,127	65,084
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	(722)	(722)
At 31 March 2021	**-**	**103,760**	**105,922**	**287,721**	**115,106**	**144,174**	**756,683**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2021	**3,128,562**	**186**	**633,908**	**111,061**	**48,918**	**53,578**	**3,976,213**
At 31 March 2020	**3,020,978**	**188**	**648,793**	**122,742**	**65,225**	**27,485**	**3,885,411**

Charity

	Nature reserves Freehold	Nature reserves Leasehold	Freehold and leasehold property	Plant and equipment	Vehicles	Office equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost							
At 1 April 2020	3,020,478	103,946	739,830	369,486	164,024	115,237	4,513,501
Additions	107,584	-	-	3,456	-	37,244	148,284
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	(722)	(722)
At 31 March 2021	**3,128,562**	**103,946**	**739,830**	**372,942**	**164,024**	**151,759**	**4,661,063**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2020	-	103,758	91,037	253,274	98,799	92,745	639,613
Charge for the year	-	2	14,885	17,692	16,307	12,164	61,050
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	(722)	(722)
At 31 March 2021	**-**	**103,760**	**105,922**	**270,966**	**115,106**	**104,187**	**699,941**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2021	**3,128,562**	**186**	**633,908**	**101,976**	**48,918**	**47,572**	**3,961,122**
At 31 March 2020	**3,020,978**	**188**	**648,793**	**116,212**	**65,225**	**22,492**	**3,873,888**

Heritage fixed assets

Heritage assets are represented as freehold nature reserves above.

A summary of transactions relating to heritage assets over the last five years is as follows:

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of acquisitions	107,584	500	-	-	14,709
Value of donated assets	-	-	-	-	-
Carrying amount of disposals	-	-	-	-	54,938
Proceeds of disposals	-	-	-	-	120,709
Value of impairment	-	-	-	-	-

14. INVESTMENTS

Group

	Listed securities £	Cash holdings £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Cost				
At 1 April 2020	638,393	41,753	680,146	667,463
Additions	150,978	195,343	346,321	203,971
Disposals	(135,601)	(213,918)	(349,519)	(191,288)
At 31 March 2021	**653,770**	**23,178**	**676,948**	**680,146**
Revaluations				
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2020	51,933	-	51,933	112,644
Net gains /(losses) arising on revaluations in the year	183,097	-	183,097	(41,948)
Disposals/reverse revaluations	(3,438)	-	(3,438)	(18,763)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2021	**231,592**	**-**	**231,592**	**51,933**
Fair value at 31 March 2021	**885,362**	**23,178**	**908,540**	**732,079**

Charity

	Subsidiary company £	Listed securities £	Cash holdings £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Cost					
At 1 April 2020	3	638,393	41,753	680,149	667,466
Additions	-	150,978	195,343	346,321	203,971
Disposals	-	(135,601)	(213,918)	(349,519)	(191,288)
At 31 March 2021	**3**	**653,770**	**23,178**	**676,951**	**680,149**
Revaluations					
Unrealised gains at 1 April 2020	-	51,933	-	51,933	112,644
Net gains/(losses) arising on revaluations in the year	-	183,097	-	183,097	(41,948)
Disposals/reverse revaluations	-	(3,438)	-	(3438)	(18,763)
Unrealised gains at 31 March 2021	**-**	**231,592**	**-**	**231,592**	**51,933**
Fair value at 31 March 2021	**3**	**885,362**	**23,178**	**908,543**	**732,082**

At 31 March 2021 the charity had one wholly owned subsidiary, SWT (Sales) Limited. The charity owns 100% of the company's ordinary share capital. The principal activity of SWT (Sales) Limited is that of environmental consultancy work (see note 24).

15. STOCKS

	Group		Trust	
	2021 £	2020 £	2021 £	2020 £
Stocks	1,690	1,659	1,690	1,659
	1,690	**1,659**	**1,690**	**1,659**

16. DEBTORS

	Group		Trust	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Trade debtors	88,035	133,178	37,429	27,204
Other debtors	25,020	13,685	18,809	10,969
Prepayments and accrued income	365,114	335,462	319,404	278,350
Legacies receivable	207,434	278,596	207,434	278,596
Amounts owed by subsidiary company	-	-	115,071	167,457
	685,603	**760,921**	**698,147**	**762,576**

Other debtors includes £nil (2020: £nil) due after more than one year.

17. CREDITORS

	Group		Trust	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year				
Trade creditors	155,670	86,981	144,935	82,195
Other creditors and accruals	92,823	89,491	88,113	79,563
	248,493	**176,472**	**233,048**	**161,758**

18. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

During 2019-20 the progression of Ash Dieback disease on the Trust's nature reserves became apparent. A specialist report was commissioned during the year, and as a result, a provision of £600k was recognised in the year for the estimated future cost of removing dangerous trees.

The £600k was based on costs from a report received from a third party arborist which provides an indicative range of costs to deal with the issue. This range includes a number of assumptions including the rate of progression of the disease and the costs of dealing with it. As a result actual costs could be different from those estimated. In addition, the report focusses on high use and high value areas. Further areas of Trust woodland which require management may be identified in due course.

	Group		Trust	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Provisions				
At 1 April 2020	600,000	-	600,000	-
Provisions recognised in the year	-	600,000	-	600,000
Provisions released in the year	(154,581)	-	(154,581)	-
At 31 March 2021	**445,419**	**600,000**	**445,419**	**600,000**

19. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Minimum lease payments on non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	Group		Trust	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Within one year	10,847	18,488	10,847	18,488
Due one to five years	-	15,057	-	15,057
	10,847	**33,545**	**10,847**	**33,545**

20. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

The following transactions took place after the balance sheet date but prior to the approval of the financial statements. These are all non-adjusting post balance sheet events in and in accordance with FRS 102 are therefore disclosed here:

Additional land purchases

The Trust was successful in bidding at auction for two parcels of land with a total cost of £544k. The purchases were both completed in July 2021.

The Trust intends to acquire Honeygar Farm over the next two financial years, a 46.5 hectare farm with a total cost of £959k.

21. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Investment gains	At 31 March 2021
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	692,215	2,735,238	(1,978,748)	(451,780)	183,097	1,180,022
Total unrestricted funds	**692,215**	**2,735,238**	**(1,978,748)**	**(451,780)**	**183,097**	**1,180,022**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,387,317	-	(2)	-	-	1,387,315
Operating freehold	647,988	-	-	(14,885)	-	633,103
Nature reserves development	16,354	-	-	-	-	16,354
Development reserve	539,067	196,732	-	500,000	-	1,235,799
Innovation fund	42,602	-	-	(2,489)	-	40,113
Nature reserves fund	200,000	-	-	-	-	200,000
Total designated funds	**2,833,328**	**196,732**	**(2)**	**482,626**	**-**	**3,512,684**
Restricted funds						
More space for nature – nature recovery	22,132	145,328	(129,909)	-	-	37,551
More space for nature – nature reserves	279,610	330,739	(231,296)	(108,944)	-	270,109
A movement for nature	105,353	412,385	(202,670)	(29,486)	-	285,582
Telling Somerset's story	-	2,197	(2,197)	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	**407,095**	**890,649**	**(566,072)**	**(138,430)**	**-**	**593,242**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	1,633,849	-	-	107,584	-	1,741,433
Total endowment funds	**1,633,849**	**-**	**-**	**107,584**	**-**	**1,741,433**
Total funds	**5,566,487**	**3,822,619**	**(2,544,822)**	**-**	**183,097**	**7,027,381**

Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds represent the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for a particular purpose and are maintained in accordance with the policy explained in the Trustees' report.

Designated funds

The nature reserve fund represents funds other than endowment funds that the charity has used to purchase nature reserves.

The operating freehold fund represents the value of the Trust's freehold property and main headquarters in Taunton.

The designated nature reserve development fund represents proceeds from the sale of land during 2016-17 which the charity has set aside specifically for re-investment in nature reserves.

The designated development reserve fund represents funds that the charity has set aside for investment in income generation, capital investment and future projects.

The innovation fund represents funds that have been set aside to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the delivery of the Trust's programme of work.

The nature reserves fund represents funds re-allocated from the designated development reserve to mitigate the potential loss of agri-environment income.

Restricted funds

The restricted income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the unexpended balances of donations, grants and other income, which are to be applied for specific purposes within the charity's objectives:

- More space for nature
  - Nature recovery – improving nature everywhere through a Nature Recovery Network.
  - Nature reserves – manage our nature reserves for conservation purposes.
- A movement for nature – taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.
- Telling Somerset's story – through our online State of Nature platform that informs action and monitors progress.

22. TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Designated funds		
Nature reserves	-	500
Operating freehold reserve	(14,885)	(14,725)
Development reserve	500,000	(1,069,782)
Innovation fund	(2,489)	(272)
Ash Dieback fund	-	600,000
Nature reserves fund	-	200,000
Restricted funds		
More space for nature – nature reserves	(108,944)	-
A movement for nature	(29,486)	-
Endowment funds		
Nature reserves	107,584	-
Unrestricted funds	(451,780)	284,279
	-	-

The designated nature reserves transfer in 2020 represents legal fees associated with the future land purchase.

The designated operating freehold reserve transfer represents the depreciation charged in the year on the Trust's freehold property and main headquarters in Taunton.

The designated development reserve transfer in 2020 represents designated funds expended during the year to support investment in approved projects agreed by Council. In 2021, a significant £500k donation was received which has been designated by Council to support future investment in the Trust's strategy.

The designated innovation fund transfer represents funds that have been set aside by the charity to support strategically important initiatives that will enhance the Trust's programme of work.

The designated Ash Dieback fund transfer in 2020 represents funds re-allocated from the designated development reserve specifically for the removal of dangerous trees as a result of Ash Dieback disease.

The designated nature reserves fund transfer represents funds that have been re-allocated from the designated development reserve to mitigate the loss of agri-environment scheme income as existing Schemes come to an end.

The restricted fund and endowment fund transfer represents the transfer of assets purchased during the year through projects and grants.

23. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	214,362	2,020,418	-	1,741,433	3,976,213
Investments	908,540	-	-	-	908,540
Current assets	751,032	1,492,266	593,242	-	2,836,540
Current liabilities	(248,493)	-	-	-	(248,493)
Provisions for liabilities	(445,419)	-	-	-	(445,419)
	1,180,022	**3,512,684**	**593,242**	**1,741,433**	**7,027,381**

24. SUBSIDIARY COMPANY

SWT (Sales) Limited income and expenditure statement for the year ended March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Turnover	475,301	527,825
Cost of sales	306,541	336,783
Gross profit	**168,760**	**191,042**
Administrative expenses	77,974	96,188
Interest payable	-	1,665
	90,786	**93,189**
Net profit	**90,786**	**93,189**
Taxation	-	-
Net profit after taxation	**90,786**	**93,189**
Paid under gift aid to Trust	90,786	93,189
	-	-
Profit brought forward	152	152
Retained profit carried forward	**152**	**152**

Turnover includes a charge of £2,036 (2020: £12,748) for services to the Trust.

The aggregate of the assets, liabilities and funds of SWT (Sales) Limited was:

Assets	127,956	182,327
Liabilities	(127,801)	(182,172)
Funds	**155**	**155**

25. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	1,460,894	(336,308)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	65,084	62,164
(Gains)/losses on investments	(183,097)	41,948
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(13,496)	(21,820)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	954
(Decrease)/increase in provision for liabilities	(154,581)	600,000
(Decrease) in defined benefit pension liability	(220,867)	(239,833)
Decrease in debtors	75,318	82,006
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	(31)	354
Increase in creditors	72,021	35,769
Net cash provided by operating activities	**1,101,245**	**225,234**

26. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash at bank and in hand	346,515	586,805
Deposit accounts (less than 3 months)	1,825,910	638,704
	2,172,425	**1,225,509**

27. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds 2020
	General £	Designated £	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	829,473	214,259	168,911	-	1,212,643
Charitable activities:					
Inspiring people and communities	180	-	58,072	-	58,252
Rebuilding ecological networks	139,729	-	124,451	-	264,180
Standing up for nature	-	-	57,436	-	57,436
Nature reserves	542,012	-	16,857	-	558,869
Other trading activities	578,282	-	-	-	578,282
Investments	21,820	-	-	-	21,820
Total	**2,111,496**	**214,259**	**425,727**	**-**	**2,751,482**
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	1,100,928	5,315	-	-	1,106,243
Charitable activities:					
Inspiring people and communities	189,533	8,135	57,165	-	254,833
Rebuilding ecological networks	347,739	-	118,061	-	465,800
Standing up for nature	59,431	-	58,858	-	118,289
Nature reserves	607,044	1,925	81,532	-	690,501
Current service pension cost/(credit)	(189,824)	-	-	-	(189,824)
Provision for Ash Dieback liability	-	600,000	-	-	600,000
Total	**2,114,851**	**615,375**	**315,616**	**-**	**3,045,842**
Net gains on investments	(41,948)	-	-	-	(41,948)
Net income/(expenditure)	**(45,303)**	**(401,116)**	**110,111**	**-**	**(336,308)**
Transfers between funds	284,279	(284,279)	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	**238,976**	**(685,395)**	**110,111**	**-**	**(336,308)**
Reconciliation of funds					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2019	453,239	3,518,723	296,984	1,633,849	5,902,795
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2020	**692,215**	**2,833,328**	**407,095**	**1,633,849**	**5,566,487**

28. STATEMENT OF FUNDS 2020

	At 1 April 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Investment gains £	At 31 March 2020 £
Unrestricted funds						
Income fund	453,239	2,111,496	(2,114,851)	284,279	(41,948)	692,215
Total unrestricted funds	**453,239**	**2,111,496**	**(2,114,851)**	**284,279**	**(41,948)**	**692,215**
Designated funds						
Nature reserves	1,386,819	-	(2)	500	-	1,387,317
Operating freehold	662,713	-	-	(14,725)	-	647,988
Nature reserves development	16,354	-	-	-	-	16,354
Development reserve	1,404,648	214,259	(10,058)	(1,069,782)	-	539,067
Innovation fund	48,189	-	(5,315)	(272)	-	42,602
Ash Dieback fund	-	-	(600,000)	600,000	-	-
Nature reserves fund	-	-	-	200,000	-	200,000
Total designated funds	**3,518,723**	**214,259**	**(615,375)**	**(284,279)**	-	**2,833,328**
Restricted funds						
Inspiring people and communities	47,109	61,170	(57,165)	-	-	51,114
Rebuilding ecological networks	66,133	130,460	(118,061)	(7,560)	-	70,972
Standing up for nature	7,064	57,436	(58,858)	-	-	5,642
Nature reserves	176,678	176,661	(81,532)	7,560	-	279,367
Total restricted funds	**296,984**	**425,727**	**(315,616)**	**-**	-	**407,095**
Endowment funds						
Nature reserves	1,633,849	-	-	-	-	1,633,849
Total endowment funds	**1,633,849**	**-**	**-**	**-**	-	**1,633,849**
Total funds	**5,902,795**	**2,751,482**	**(3,045,842)**	**-**	**(41,948)**	**5,566,487**

29. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS 2020

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	Total funds £
Tangible and heritage fixed assets	216,257	2,035,305	-	1,633,849	3,885,411
Investments	732,079	-	-	-	732,079
Current assets	141,218	1,398,023	407,095	-	1,946,336
Current liabilities	(176,472)	-	-	-	(176,472)
Provisions for liabilities	-	(600,000)	-	-	(600,000)
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	(220,867)	-	-	-	(220,867)
	692,215	**2,833,328**	**407,095**	**1,633,849**	**5,566,487**

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

We would like to thank all our members, donors and grant givers for their generous support which is helping nature to recover across Somerset.

LEGACIES

Joyce Andrews
Katharine Balmforth
Margaret Burr
Paul James Chadwick
Jasmin Chilcott
Tim Flew
Michael and Rosemary Gaitskell
Muriel Horrell
David Richard Hutcherson
John Keylock
Janet Gwynne Maitland
John McGeoch
Katharine Elizabeth Muller
Marion Parsons
Elizabeth Ann Pugh
Donald Rimmer
Michael Alan Rockett
Sheila Sawyer
Derek Strong
Larry Owen Trerise
Malcolm John Tucker
Patricia Willcox
Marion Zurick

PATRONS

Phillipa Archer
David and Loredana Buchan
Dudley Cheesman
Richard Denton-Cox
John Deverell CBE
Margaret Drabble
Jacob Evergarden
James and Alka Hughes-Hallett
Stanley and Jennifer Johnson
Julia Manning
Jean Mantle
Rohan and Lily Masson-Taylor
Mark O'Neill
Caroline Rathbone
Tim and Dede Sanderson
Paul Sheppard and Lucy Dunford
Patricia Stainton and Robin Levien
Chris and Maria Thring
Patrick Thomson
Matt Trimmer
Robert Unwin
Neil and Sarah Williams
Giles Woodward
Plus those who wish to remain anonymous

CORPORATE MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

A C Mole & Sons
Brimsmore Gardens (The Gardens Group)
Ecclesiatical Insurance Ltd
EDF Energy
Golledge Electronics Ltd
Habitat Aid Ltd
Holiday Inn Express Bridgwater
Homethos
John Fowler Holiday Parks
John Wainwright & Co Ltd
Somerset Birdwatching Holidays
Stonewater
Suez Recycling
Tepe Oral Hygiene Products Ltd
Travel Chapter Ltd
Wessex Water

TRUSTS AND GRANTS

Biffa Award
Blackdown Hills AONB
Blair Foundation
Bristol Avon Rivers Trust
Community Impact Mitigation Fund
Co-op Local Community Fund
Devon County Council
Discovery Fund
Environment Agency
Ernest Cook Trust – Green Influencers Scheme
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Ewing and Haines Charitable Trust
Exmoor National Park
Forestry Commission
Foxglove Trust
Frazer Trust
Green Scythe Community Fair
Hinkley Point C Community Fund
#IWill Fund – with funding from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport
National Lottery Heritage Fund – Heritage Emergency Fund
Interreg 2 Seas European Development Fund
Linley Shaw Foundation
Mendip Hills AONB
National Lottery Community Fund
National Trust
Natural England
Ninesquare Charitable Trust
People's Postcode Lottery
Public Health Somerset
Quantock Hills AONB
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts
Sir John and Lady Heathcoat Amory's Charitable Trust
St James's Place Charitable Foundation
Somerset Archaeology History Society
Somerset Community Foundation
Somerset County Council
Somerset Rivers Authority
South Somerset District Council
Somerset West and Taunton
Somerset Youth Parliament
Stephen Clark Charitable Settlement 1965
Tesco Bags of Help
Thatchers Foundation
Torr Works Environmental Enhancement Fund
TWT Aggregate Industries Partnership Fund
Verdon Smith Family Charitable Trust
Wates Family Enterprise Trust
Viridor Credits Environmental Company

KEY PEOPLE AND ADVISERS

KEY PEOPLE

Patron
Simon King OBE

President
Stephen Moss

Vice-Presidents
Dudley Cheesman
Ralph Clark
Roger Martin
Chris Sperring MBE

Directors and Trustees
The directors of the charitable company ("the Trust") are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Trustees on the date of approval of this report, all of whom were members for the whole of the financial year in question unless stated otherwise, were as follows:

Chair
Graeme Mitchell

Vice-Chair
Sarah Nason

Treasurer
Richard Atkin

Elected Trustees
Richard Atkin
Matthew Bell
Professor Valerie Brown (resigned 19 January 2021)
Simon Hicks
Philip Holms
Helen Lawy
Graeme Mitchell
Sarah Nason
Dr Mark Steer
Melville Trimble

Co-opted Trustees
Edward Green (appointed 19 January 2021)
Lorna Harrison (appointed 19 January 2021)
Stuart McBride (appointed 19 January 2021)
Holly Purdey (appointed 19 January 2021)

SWT (Sales) Ltd Directors
Richard Atkin (resigned 9 December 2020)
Malcolm Hutton (appointed 21 July 2020)
David Mounsey
Georgia Stokes

Senior Leadership Team
Katie Arber, Director of Fundraising and Marketing/Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Jolyon Chesworth, Head of Engagement and Community Programmes
Simon Clarke, Head of Nature Recovery
Kirby Everett, Head of Communications and Corporate Relations
Rachael Fickweiler, Head of Nature Reserves and Land Management
Kate Matravers-Cox, Head of Finance
Malcolm Ramsay, Head of Business Development and Operations
Georgia Stokes, Chief Executive Officer

ADVISERS

Senior Statutory Auditor
Alexandra Shore FCA CTA, A C Mole & Sons, Stafford House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PX

Bankers
Lloyds Bank, 31 Fore Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HN

Solicitors
Clarke Willmott, Blackbrook Gate, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PG

Investment Managers
Rathbone Greenbank Investments, 10 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4NT

Land Agents
Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 1 High Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1QF

Somerset Wildlife Trust is a registered charity
Charity number 238372
Company number 818162

Registered office
34 Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AW

Somerset Wildlife Trust

34 Wellington Road
Taunton
Somerset TA1 5AW

01823 652400

www.somersetwildlife.org

Charity number 238372
Company number 818162