

Annual Review 2023/2024

Looking back over the past year and reflecting on what has been achieved, it is clear that we need to start by saying a big THANK YOU to all our staff, volunteers, members and supporters. Together, everyone has helped enable us to achieve an enormous amount for wildlife, our local habitats and people.

From a successful fundraising campaign to buy a new nature reserve to first records, from restored habitats to newly created ones and from new associations with communities to encouraging a new generation of wildlife enthusiasts, this is a selection of just some of the highlights in the 2023/2024 financial year.



Supported by over 23,500 members



Assisted by over 1,110 active volunteers

Nature's Recovery

During the year, we've made some great strides to ensure nature has a place to thrive on our nature reserves and in the wider countryside. Wild places across Hertfordshire and Middlesex have provided a year of exciting wildlife sightings, recordings and discoveries.

Feathered friends

- A male Bittern was booming at Amwell trying to attract a mate, following over 20 years of work to create and manage their reedbed habitat.
- Following our collaboration with St Albans Cathedral to install a nesting tray in 2022, three Peregrine Falcon chicks fledged in 2023. A webcam on the tray went live in April 2023 with over 378,000 views.
- At Hilfield Park Reservoir, two Black-necked Grebe chicks fledged at what is the only nesting site in southern Britain.



Fabulous flora

- Scarce Tufted-sedge is now the focus of a species recovery scheme. It's critically endangered and only found at one site in Hertfordshire in the whole of the UK.
- Meadow Saxifrage, a nationally scarce plant, has been found at our newest nature reserve, Archers Green.
- The rare Adder's-tongue Fern is doing well at Hexton Chalk Pit.

Intriguing invertebrates

- Lesser Bloody-nosed Beetle was found at Aldbury Nowers for the first time since 1991.
- The spider *Dictyna pusilla* was found at King's Meads. It is a new record for Hertfordshire and is one of the 31 spider species of principal importance in England.
- A survey found that Panshanger Park is internationally important for the diversity of saproxylic beetles, dependent on its dead and decaying woody habitats. Hertfordshire's first Dragonfly Hotspot was created at the Park in partnership with the British Dragonfly Society and there are now 19 species breeding regularly.



Magnificent mammals

- Water Vole reintroductions have gone from strength to strength, thanks to collaborations with the River Ver Society and the River Beane Association. They are now on 7km of the River Ver, a 150% increase on the previous year, and on 3.2km of the River Beane, following their reintroduction in 2022.
- 300 Hazel trees have been planted at Balls Wood to increase the habitat for Dormice.

More space for nature

- We bought Archers Green Nature Reserve, following a successful £500,000 fundraising campaign, which will now be grazed to allow a diverse range of plants and animals to flourish.
- A major project created over 600m of new wetland habitats at Hilfield Park Reservoir in collaboration with the site owners and funders, Affinity Water.
- 16.5km of the rivers Mimram and Ash were surveyed to assess their potential as a Chalk River Biobank, and we started a new citizen science project to monitor the health of our chalk rivers.



Wilder Communities

We all have a part to play in building a wilder Hertfordshire and Middlesex – here's how people-power helped nature's recovery over the past year.

Engaging and inspiring

- Nextdoor Nature projects in Watford and Dacorum, focused on working in the wider community, have proved hugely successful in broadening the reach of the Trust.
- We launched our new Wilder Schools programme, training 15 volunteers to advise on school grounds and wildlife.
- Our Panshanger Park project in partnership with Tarmac led to the planting of 17,000 trees by the community to create the new 'Queen's Wood'.
- In July, hundreds of visitors enjoyed Wildfest in Cassiobury Park which brought together conservation groups that work for wildlife across the area.



Standing up for nature

Creating a vibrant and sustainable future for wildlife means putting nature's recovery at the heart of local decision-making.

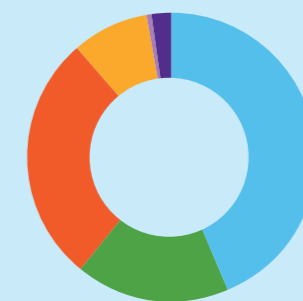
- We ran the highest profile campaign in the history of the Trust to protect Broadwater Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest from a development proposal from Hillingdon Council which would devastate the wildlife value. The fight continues – see page 4.
- Reviewed planning and infrastructure proposals, including local plans, minerals plans and neighbourhood plans.
- Regular discussion with local and national politicians to inform policy and decision-making so it is the best it can be for wildlife, and contributing to the national campaign for the General Election to ask people to 'vote for nature'.



Financial summary

Our Strategy sets out the need to create more space for nature and to inspire more people to take action for habitat and species recovery. This action is urgently needed but as the scale of the nature crisis has grown, so have our costs and it is costing us more each day to deliver our work. While our unrestricted income in the last year, thanks in most part to our membership, was around £1.6m, we ended the year with a deficit of around £240,000. Our major appeal in 2024 will be focussing on asking our supporters to help us to continue to support our local wildlife and wild spaces.

The Year In Numbers



Income:
TOTAL £2,859k

£1,252k
Membership Subscriptions

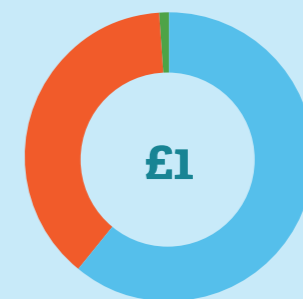
£790k
Donations, Gifts & Grants

£22k
Fundraising Activities

£494k
Fees & Contracts

£244k
Legacies

£57k
Investment & other income



£1

Expenditure:
TOTAL £2,831k
For every £1 the Trust spends...

61p
Conservation & Nature Reserves

38p
Raising Funds

1p
Governance

We are very grateful to all our members, donors, grant funders and other supporters over the year.

The financial information above has been taken from the draft accounts for the year. Full details of the Trust's finances can be found at bit.ly/43JWrTt

