

A Wilder Wiltshire: Our Strategy to 2030



Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
Strategy 2023-2030

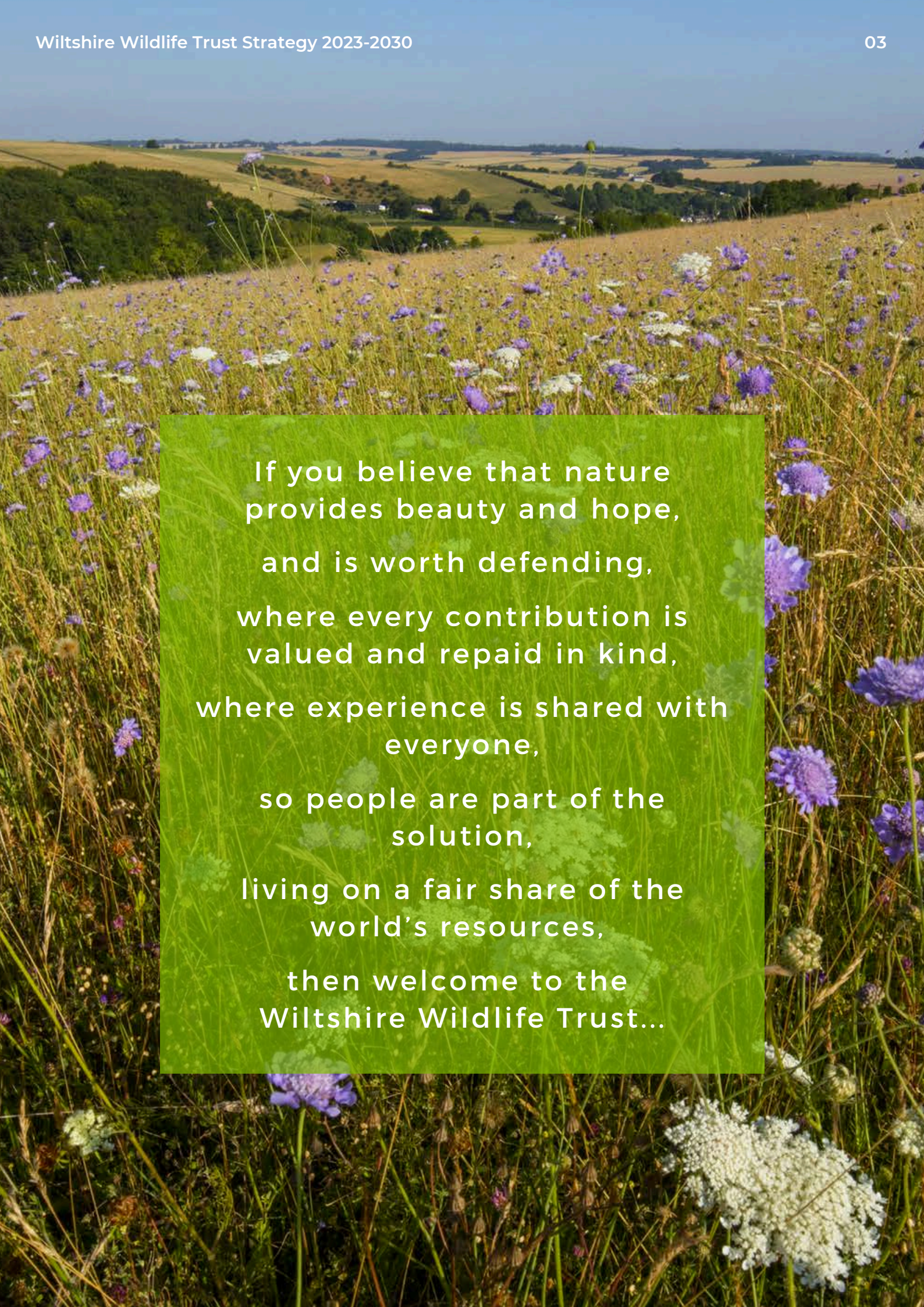
Revised Spring 2025





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If you believe that nature
provides beauty and hope,
and is worth defending,
where every contribution is
valued and repaid in kind,
where experience is shared with
everyone,
so people are part of the
solution,
living on a fair share of the
world's resources,
then welcome to the
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust...

1. Introduction to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust



40+

nature reserves

15,000+

members

2000+

volunteers

Our Vision is a future where wildlife and people flourish in harmony.

Our Purpose is providing leadership and driving nature's recovery. We are committed to connecting all generations with nature and empowering them to take meaningful action for nature and the climate.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is part of The Wildlife Trusts: a Federation of 46 local independent charities working across the UK to create a wilder future, in a powerful network for innovation and advocacy. Nationally, the trusts manage 2,300 nature reserves and have over 900,000 members.

Founded in 1962, today Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is the leading charity in Wiltshire and Swindon working to achieve nature's recovery and connect people with nature.



The Trust has over 40 nature reserves covering over 1,200 hectares (c. 2,900 acres), protecting some of Wiltshire's most important meadows, downland, woods, fen and other valuable wildlife habitats. Most of our nature reserves have open public access, allowing people to benefit from nature through enhanced wellbeing and learning opportunities.

The Trust is supported by a growing community of more than 15,000 members and 2,000 volunteers, and employs nearly 100 full-time equivalent staff. Partnership is our watchword, and our Strategy commits us to collaborating with farmers and strategic partners to achieve nature's recovery in the wider landscape beyond our own reserves.

We have two nature centres with cafés, where people can come and enjoy spectacular wildlife views. We also have two Care Farms, supporting children and young people with special educational needs through therapeutic nature-based activities.

Our conservation grazing operation keeps our precious grassland reserves healthy and species-rich, and operates from three farm hubs at Blakehill, Lower Moor and Coombe Bissett Down.

Our Area

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's work covers the unitary authority boundaries of Swindon and Wiltshire.

Wiltshire is a farming county: 80% of the land is farmed, with significant opportunities for farmers and landowners to lead nature's recovery at scale. There is an active network of farmer clusters across the county, keen to explore the opportunities for nature-friendly farming.

Swindon is the fastest growing town in Europe, with a diverse population. Wiltshire is also home to rapidly expanding market towns such as Chippenham, Trowbridge and Melksham. It is therefore vital that new housing developments achieve a net gain in biodiversity, and that green infrastructure is created to ensure everyone is within 15 minutes' walk of natural greenspace.

Two thirds of Wiltshire lies on chalk. It is home to half the UK's surviving species-rich chalk grassland, some 18,000 hectares (c. 44,500 acres), helping to make it one of the best places in the UK for butterflies. The Wiltshire and Hampshire Avon, with its sparkling chalk-stream headwaters, is one of the most biodiverse river systems in the UK. Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is a founding member of the Wiltshire Chalk Partnership, which aims to create at least 2000 hectares (c. 5000 acres) of new habitat to connect and enhance Wiltshire's ecologically and culturally significant chalk landscape.

Wiltshire is also rich in ancient woodland, including one of our newest acquisitions, Great Wood in the Braydon Forest.



2. A vision for Wiltshire

We face an ecological and climate emergency and an epidemic of mental ill-health. We want to see the abundance of nature restored and experienced by people in ways that enhance their lives and wellbeing. We want to ensure every person can build a lasting connection with nature.

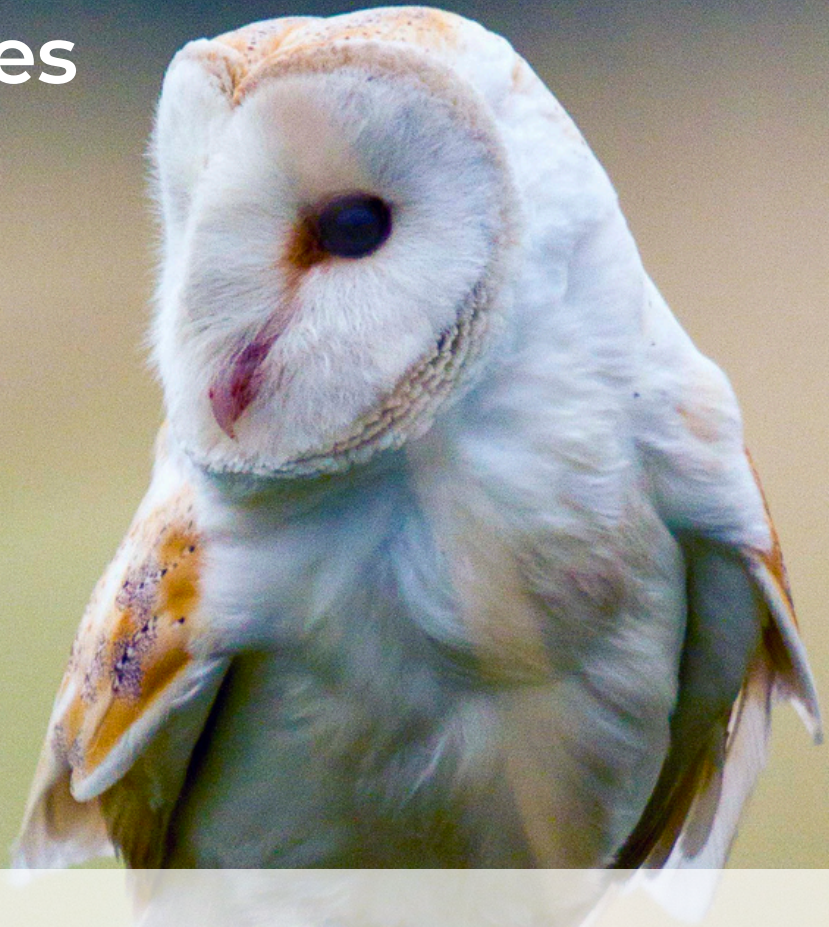
By 2030, we will turn the corner on nature's longstanding decline and lay strong foundations for our vision for 2050, in which nature has been restored at scale to enrich everyone's daily lives.

By 2050, Wiltshire's soundscape in spring and summer will be alive with the calls of farmland birds and the hum of insects, signaling that nature's abundance has been restored across the county. Nature-friendly farming will be the norm in Wiltshire's farmed landscape, balancing the needs of climate-resilient food production and nature's recovery, whilst supporting the livelihoods and wellbeing of Wiltshire's farming communities.

Wiltshire's internationally important chalk streams will have the protection they deserve, and restoration and connection of our precious chalk downland, floodplain meadows and ancient woodland will be happening at scale.

Everyone, everywhere in Wiltshire and Swindon will be able to connect with nature in their daily lives, supporting their mental health and wellbeing and securing a strong mandate for nature's sustained recovery.

3. Guiding beliefs and values



We have a core belief that nature is intrinsically valuable and is fundamental to everyone's wellbeing.

Our core values, shared by everyone at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust – staff, volunteers and members alike – define the character, commitment and culture of the Trust and will help to ensure that we succeed in achieving our vision.

We will:

- Act with integrity
- Be objective, evidence based and professional
- Collaborate with a wide range of partners who share our vision and values
- Embrace innovation and learn from others
- Respect everyone, listen to their views and value each other's skills and backgrounds
- Be responsive to the views of our members, supporters and the wider community
- Value, develop and invest in our staff and volunteers

4. Goals

We have set ourselves two goals for what we want to see by 2030:

1. Nature Recovery in Wiltshire and Swindon
2. Connecting People with Nature



Goal 1: Nature Recovery

By 2030, nature will be in recovery in Wiltshire and Swindon, with habitats, species and natural processes being restored at scale

To achieve this, we need:

Target 1.1 30% of land in positive management for nature

Target 1.2 Species abundance and diversity increasing

Target 1.3 Natural processes being restored

Target 1.4 Nature-based solutions being used to address the climate and water emergencies



We will do this through:

- Hosting a new Local Nature Partnership for Wiltshire and Swindon, and developing an ambitious shared plan for nature's recovery and access to nature
- Developing a new Land Advice Service, in collaboration with local nature-friendly farming ambassadors, and supporting Farmer Clusters across Wiltshire to find profitable pathways to nature-friendly farming at scale
- Developing a learning hub at Great Chalfield where farmers and landholders can learn how to access new markets for environmental services as part of a regenerative farming system
- Identifying strategic opportunities to enhance our reserves network to be 'bigger, better and more joined up', protecting Wiltshire's critical species and habitats and working with partners to improve connectivity and restore nature at landscape scale
- Working with land managers and partners across the county to increase population sizes and range for critical species for Wiltshire, focussing on species which indicate and rely on landscape connectivity, health and natural function
- Restoring the globally important River Wylde chalk stream, leading a Landscape Recovery partnership with the Wylde Valley Farmers and Wessex Rivers Trust to reconnect a 20km stretch to its floodplain
- Ensuring that the restoration of natural processes, and the part they can play in nature's recovery, is a concept that is widely understood and communicated throughout Wiltshire's land managers
- Working with partners to scope, develop and deliver projects that contribute towards the restoration of natural processes; from rewilding, to grazing regimes, to floodplain restoration, to the promotion of keystone species
- Creating wilder urban areas through green infrastructure, including new nature parks and places where people can easily access nature

Goal 2: Connecting People with Nature

By 2030, people will be taking action for nature and benefitting from nature in their lives

To achieve this, we need:

- Target 2.1** 1 in 4 people taking meaningful action to drive nature's recovery locally and nationally
- Target 2.2** Health and wellbeing of people improved through their engagement in and with nature
- Target 2.3** Opportunities for all children and young people to nurture a lasting interest in nature
- Target 2.4** Nature and climate at the heart of decision-making locally and nationally



We will do this through:

- Empowering more individuals and communities to take informed and meaningful action for nature by providing information, sharing good practice, encouraging collaboration and offering inspiration
- Expanding on existing projects including Nextdoor Nature and our Wildlife Watch initiatives to broaden our reach across the county
- Empowering supporters through the Team Wilder approach so everyone in Wiltshire and Swindon has the opportunity to take action for nature
- Creating and publicising more volunteering opportunities so more people can engage in our work, including expansion of our Young Ambassador's programme
- Advocating the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment and offering people opportunities to have greater engagement with nature and green exercise
- Engaging with every school in Wiltshire and offering opportunities for students to learn about the natural world and discover the joy being in nature brings
- Being inclusive and creating opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to experience nature through our alternative education provision and community engagement programme
- Developing the use of our nature centres and visitor experience at our key reserves to engage visitors and inspire them to take action

5. Development of the Trust



To enable the Trust to achieve these goals and meet our targets, we need to develop new ways of working and secure the resources and support to drive change.

We have identified five areas for development:

1. People and Governance
2. Finance, Fundraising and Risk
3. Communications and Digital
4. Facilities
5. Ethical and Environmental Standards

1. People

a. External

Through the Team Wilder approach, we will inspire community organising and mobilising, especially amongst young people. We will invest in our volunteer groups to skill, develop and retain leaders for the future.

We will build upon our citizen science projects like Nurturing Nature and Water Guardians to engage and support the people of Wiltshire to take meaningful action for nature.

Measures of success - We will see:

- An increase in the number of volunteers, with volunteer Leaders and Reserve Wardens who take on additional responsibilities to support our staff team
- Volunteer groups across the county
- Increased diversity of volunteer groups
- An increase in activity mapped on Team Wilder

b. Internal

We will invest in a highly skilled and diverse staff network and build a movement-wide learning culture. This includes sharing skills between Wildlife Trusts and Partners across the Federation. We will review our Governance structure. We will also review and strengthen the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion strategy (EDI).

Measures of success - We will see:

- Annual reporting of EDI
- An increase in the number of applications to roles
- Reduced staff turnover and sickness
- Increased staff satisfaction in annual surveys
- Successful completion of a Governance review

2. Finance, Fundraising and Risk

a. Protect and maintain our income and assets

In the challenging economic climate, we must ensure we are practising good financial management and strong governance to protect and preserve income and current assets and manage our risk.

Business plans for Fundraising, Wiltshire Swindon Biological Record Centre (WSBRC), conservation grazing, the visitor centres and cafés will ensure adequate sources of funding are in place.

A review will be undertaken to assess the return from fixed assets against alternative investment opportunities to deliver impact and income for our Strategy.

Measures of success - We will see:

- Growth in unrestricted income to enable delivery of our strategy
- An improvement in full cost recovery to build organisational resilience

b. Deliver a step change in the scale and diversity of funding for nature's recovery

We will actively seek project and unrestricted funding and work with partners to maximise returns and embrace new funding mechanisms. Digital fundraising will be developed and a review of the membership model and member recruitment resources undertaken.

We will explore green finance opportunities, and work with developers and other statutory and voluntary bodies to address Biodiversity Net Gain, Carbon Offsetting and Nutrient Neutrality. We will ensure income sourced meets our ethical standards and values.

We will support the growth of Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy (WWCE) and develop new Strategy-driven diversification of income streams.

Measures of success - We will see an increase in:

- Income from new opportunities
- Average donation value
- Membership volumes
- Average membership value



3. Communications and Digital

a. Increase advocacy and campaigning

With our strong reputation, we will speak with a bold and confident voice, further increasing our impact and influence. We will update our engagement strategy to support and engage external stakeholders, reach new audiences and empower groups to take action and stand up for wildlife. We will increase our digital reach and engagement and embrace new channels.

Measures of success - We will see an increase in:

- Engagement with local and national policy makers and decision makers
- Media coverage - radio interviews & articles published
- Campaign participants
- Followers on social channels
- People engaging with digital communications

b. Increase supporter engagement and communication

Through Team Wilder, Watch Groups, Wellbeing activities and our Young Ambassador programme, we will extend our message across Wiltshire so that one in four people take action. Market segmentation, positioning and targeting will be key areas of development, alongside an ambitious programme of engagement events and utilisation of our nature centres. Keeping our strong and readily recognisable local visual identity, we will ensure we present consistent, clear and accessible branding with increased alignment to the wider wildlife trust movement.

Measures of success - We will see an increase in:

- New supporters and donors
- Emails opened/response rates and mailing distribution
- People pledging to take action for the environment
- New groups established
- Event attendance
- Increased engagement through our website and social media
- A refreshed bold brand

c. Improve internal processes and systems

We will undergo a 'root and branch' digital transformation across all areas of the Trust. Systems will be transferred to cloud-based options to promote efficiency and cost effectiveness.

- Full use of the Access CRM database for members, donors and supporters
- Digitise reserve management plans, increase use of spatial data and GIS technology
- Use and develop Team Kinetic as a dedicated volunteer database
- WSBRC will make greater use of citizen science - species and habitat data collection
- Review of the accounting package, including the automation of purchasing processes

Measures of success - We will see:

- An increase in citizen science records
- The database adoption completed successfully and to time
- Enhanced understanding of our donors and supporters
- Greater clarity for our staff and volunteers around our reserve management
- Improved volunteer experience

4. Facilities

We will review our estate portfolio and conduct a properties review. We will develop a business case for engagement hubs to support our growing ambition to connect 1 in 4 people across the county to our work. We will assess our estate facilities to ensure they meet the needs of our staff, volunteers and supporters. We will explore ways to make existing facilities more energy efficient and explore options for newer technologies, including EV Charging in our car parks.

Measures of success - We will see:

- Rolling 3-year plan for our buildings and maintenance
- Business plan for our Estate facilities
- Engagement Hubs at key reserves





5. Ethical and Environmental Standards

a. Our reserves have a clear purpose and plans for climate change adaptation

Our conservation efforts will be guided by robust data from expanded surveying and monitoring across Wiltshire. This will enable us to develop site-specific management plans and adapt our strategies to the challenges of climate change.

It is critical that our land acquisition strategy focusses on:

- Increasing the resilience of our existing sites by making them bigger and buffered
- Increasing the resilience of the landscape through connectivity
- Acting on opportunities to manage land in partnership that delivers meaningful outcomes for nature's recovery

We will improve visitor engagement and access infrastructure enhancement to support the EDI strategy. We will conduct customer satisfaction surveys and mystery shopper opportunities.

Measures of success - We will see an increase in:

- The number of records
- Reserve size and connectivity
- Land influenced
- Enhanced visitor experience

b. Organic principles and animal welfare

We will produce an Ethical Procurement framework and maintain high Health and Safety standards to ensure full compliance. We will work to organic principles in our farm and estate operations.

Measures of success - We will see:

- Application of an Ethical Procurement Framework
- Independent verification that our farm and estate operations meet high animal welfare and environmental standards
- Less recorded on the COSHH register

c. Carbon reduction

We will review and extend our Carbon Reduction Strategy and Action Plan to cover energy, travel, general policies, resources, purchasing and land management.

We are committed to achieving net carbon zero by 2030 and being net carbon positive by 2050. Changes in behaviour and purchasing will be informed by this and embedded across the Trust.

Measures of success - We will see:

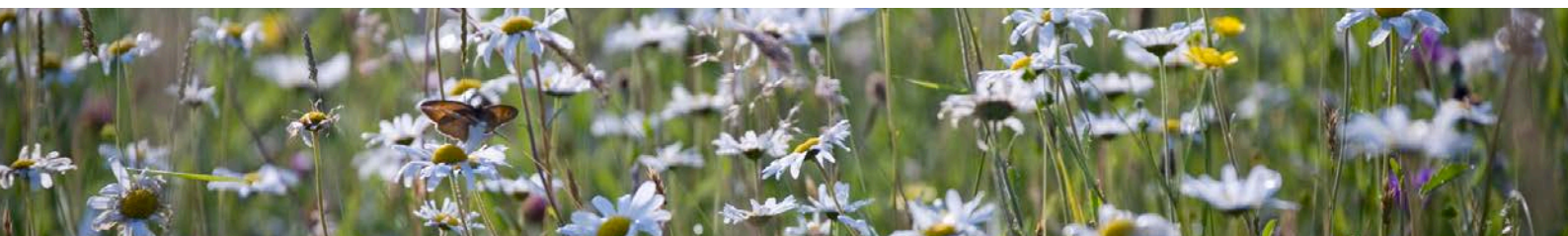
- Improved greenhouse gas inventory calculations
- An increase in overall carbon captured and stored

d. Food standards

We will review our food standards at events and cafes to develop an action plan that will improve sustainability, provenance and nutrition. We will review our levers for raising awareness of children's food and the link to mental health through education and wellbeing programmes.

Measures of success - We will see:

- Improved sustainability, provenance and nutrition in our café and at events
- Awareness raised around children's food



6. Measuring our impact

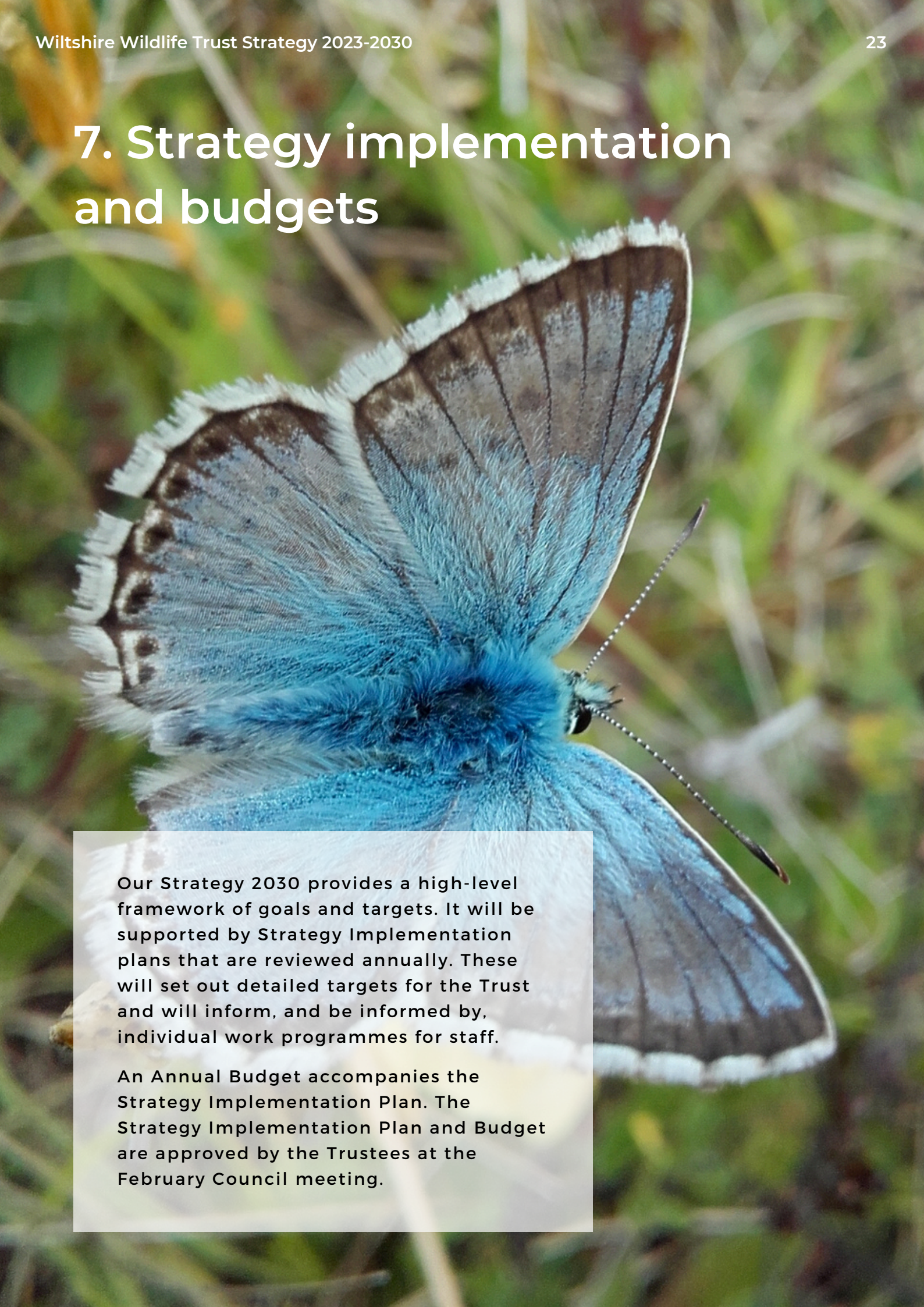


To set a robust baseline for measuring our impact, we will publish a Wiltshire and Swindon State of Nature report in 2025, building on the work of the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Record Centre (WSBRC) and pooling data with strategic partners. We will monitor our progress against Key Impact Measures for our two goals and share the outcomes through our annual Impact Report which is sent to all members. We will adopt

a learning culture in which we continuously evaluate the impact of our work and learn from successes and failures, keeping our Strategy Implementation Plan under active review.

We will contribute to the work being carried out nationally by The Wildlife Trusts to evaluate the collective impact of the federation, and challenge ourselves to keep up with best practice approaches to measuring impact.

7. Strategy implementation and budgets



Our Strategy 2030 provides a high-level framework of goals and targets. It will be supported by Strategy Implementation plans that are reviewed annually. These will set out detailed targets for the Trust and will inform, and be informed by, individual work programmes for staff.

An Annual Budget accompanies the Strategy Implementation Plan. The Strategy Implementation Plan and Budget are approved by the Trustees at the February Council meeting.

Images

Marsh fritillary and Orchid, WWT
Snake's head fritillary at Clattinger Farm, Stephen Davis
Coombe Bissett Down, WWT
Grebes, Mark Cooper
Green Lane Wood, Owain Shaw
Water vole, Steve Deeley
Langford Lakes, Barry Craske
Barn owl, Russell Savory, Wildlife Trusts
Lower Moor Farm sunrise, Ryan Tabor
Eurasian otter, WWT
Coombe Bissett Down sheep, Louise Hartgill
Corporate group volunteering, WWT
Family fun day, Mathew Roberts
Roe deer, Donald Sutherland
Lapwings over Langford, Paul Green
Dragonfly Cafe at Lower Moor Farm, Savannah Brown
Bay Meadows nature reserve, WWT
Blakehill wildflowers, Stephen Davis
Great Crested Newt
Chalkhill Blue, Steve Smailes

