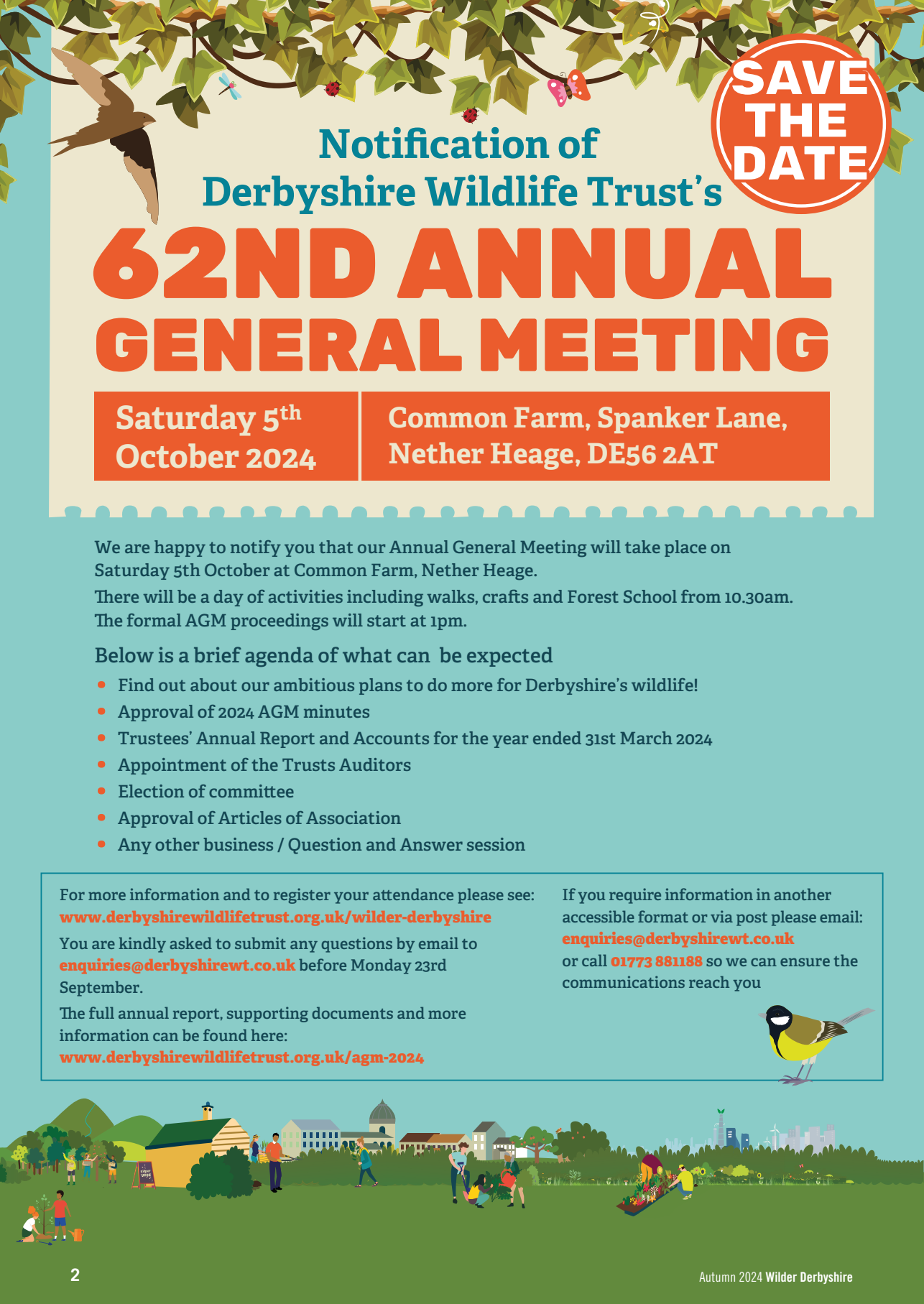




DERBYSHIRE



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust



SAVE THE DATE

Notification of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's

62ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 5th October 2024

Common Farm, Spanker Lane, Nether Heage, DE56 2AT

We are happy to notify you that our Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 5th October at Common Farm, Nether Heage. There will be a day of activities including walks, crafts and Forest School from 10.30am. The formal AGM proceedings will start at 1pm.

Below is a brief agenda of what can be expected

- Find out about our ambitious plans to do more for Derbyshire's wildlife!
- Approval of 2024 AGM minutes
- Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024
- Appointment of the Trusts Auditors
- Election of committee
- Approval of Articles of Association
- Any other business / Question and Answer session

For more information and to register your attendance please see: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-derbyshire

You are kindly asked to submit any questions by email to enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk before Monday 23rd September.

The full annual report, supporting documents and more information can be found here: www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/agm-2024

If you require information in another accessible format or via post please email: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk or call 01773 881188 so we can ensure the communications reach you



Jo Smith
Chief Executive Officer

Join the Conversation

- Like us on Facebook /DerbyshireWildlifeTrust
- Follow us on X @DerbysWildlife
- Follow us on Instagram @derbyshirewildlifetrust
- Follow us on YouTube /derbyshirewt
- @DerbyshireWildlifeTrust

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
Best Places to Work 2024



www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

WELCOME

In 2020 we set out a bold strategy to reconnect landscapes and people and see nature start to recover. Thanks to your support we have since substantially increased the amount of wild space in Derbyshire and encouraged hundreds of farmers, landowners and communities to act for wildlife.

Whilst methods and approaches have evolved since our last strategy update, our core mission remains the same. We are committed to working with individuals, businesses, landowners and community groups to enhance nature connectivity and advocate passionately on behalf of nature.

We are already witnessing the positive impacts of our nature-based solutions and rewilding efforts, and we are eager to see these benefits grow over the next five years. Initiatives like the reintroduction of beavers at Willington and the rewilding of Allestree Park are transforming our landscapes, creating diverse and dynamic accessible wild spaces that support a myriad of wildlife.

In this issue of Wilder Derbyshire you can read more about the progress we have made for nature over the last four years and hear about some of the people who have made it possible, as well as share in the success that your support has enabled.

Much has been achieved but there is lots more to do and the next 5 years are critical. With a new government in place we must continue to fight for nature and begin to combat the key issues of river pollution, nature loss, climate change, access to nature and sustainable food production.

We will be launching our exciting new five-year strategy soon. You can hear more about our plans at our AGM on October 5th at Common Farm, alongside lots of walks, talks and family activities. I hope to see you there.

As always, thank you for your support and let's keep restoring, rewilding and reconnecting Derbyshire, together.

To Smith

Chief Executive Officer

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SPOTTED

Share your images with us
www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/record-sighting

Little Egret – Ogston Reservoir

Photo: June 2024 © Stephen James



Glow Worm – Cromford Canal

Photo: April 2024 © Christina Kennedy



Mute Swan – Willington Wetlands

Photo: October 2023 © Rob Bendelow

Ashy Mining Bee – Belper

Photo: June 2024 © Dave Evans



Jelly Ear – Lea Wood

Photo: December 2023 © Jordan Holmes



Do you remember Vigo?



Vigo © Ashley James

DNA analysis of feathers has once again identified the famed bearded vulture 'Flysch-Vigo,' four years after she went missing and 1200 km from her last known location in the UK.

During the 2020 lockdown, one of the rarest and largest raptors in Europe visited the Peak District, sparking the curiosity of thousands. This was far from the bearded vulture's usual habitat, as the species typically inhabits mountainous terrains in Europe, mainly in the Alps and the Pyrenees.

Nicknamed 'Vigo' at the time, this bearded vulture represented only the second-ever confirmed sighting of the species in the UK. With no tags or rings, many speculated about the vulture's identity and origin. Ultimately, feathers collected at a preening site in the Peak District told her story. Sent to Pro Bartgeier in Switzerland for DNA analysis, the feathers confirmed that 'Vigo' was actually 'Flysch', a female hatched on 6 July 2019 in a wild nest in Haute-Savoie, high up in the French Alps. She is the offspring of a wild-hatched father and a zoo-reared mother named Zufall, who was released into the wild in 2006.

Following her long four-month stay in the UK, Flysch-Vigo went 'missing' after she was last spotted in October 2020, flying south over the sea from the coast of the UK. No one knew if she had returned to the mainland or made it back to the Alps – until recently.

Flysch-Vigo reappeared during the 2023 reintroduction period when an almost adult bearded vulture visited the release site of Pro Bartgeier close to Melchsee-Frutt in the Swiss Alps, where bearded vultures are still being released for conservation purposes.

We are absolutely thrilled to hear that Vigo has been rediscovered again. When this magnificent bird decided to spend the summer of 2020 in the Peak District, it was fascinating to monitor her, and she brought a lot of joy to tens of thousands of people.

She has given everyone a glimpse of what a wilder future could look like if we help nature's recovery.

The fact that she's appeared on the other side of the continent shows how connected the natural world is. Only by creating more bigger, better and connected habitats for wildlife will we be able to halt the alarming decline in species loss and encourage more species to return here.



Willington Circular

Nestled on the edge of Willington village, a rich wetland habitat that has been quietly reclaimed as a haven for wildlife is now even easier for people to visit and enjoy.

Thanks to £65,000 of funding from the Veolia Environmental Trust through the Landfill Communities Fund, with contributions from Transforming the Trent Valley, Mansfield Building Society Charitable Trust and Willington Parish Council, we have been able to improve 1250m of existing trackway, create a further 250m of new path and install a bridge over the boundary brook.

The new pathway links through to the Trent and Mersey canal, creating a circular 5-mile walk, with improved interpretation signage, waymarkers and an additional raised viewing platform, allowing visitors unhindered access to the surrounding countryside for the first time in over 20 years.



Research has proven that spending time outdoors in nature is great for our physical and mental health, so making our sites more accessible, creating more opportunities for visitors to enjoy their wild surroundings and connect with the wonderful nature that calls this landscape home, is really important to us.

Home to Derbyshire's first beavers in 800 years, tranquil open waters, wafting reed bed grasses, and the occasional rare bird flying overhead for patient birdwatchers are just some of the wildlife that inspires people to visit this incredible landscape time and time again.

Thank you Nick!



Nick Brown retired in August after working with the Trust for over 45 years, making him the longest serving staff member of any Wildlife Trust in the UK.

During this time, Nick has had an enormous impact both on the Trust and in raising the profile of Derbyshire's wildlife.

Nick was one of only two members of staff when he began work as Development Officer in 1979. Over the years he has edited and developed our newsletter, set up local groups, led an 11-strong education team and

initiated and edited 'Wildlife Gardening, a Practical Handbook', which sold over 50,000 copies.

Nick helped to run the Trust's first (and still largest) major appeal which funded the conversion of Matlock Bath railway station into the Whistlestop Discovery Centre and the purchase of Rose End Meadows Reserve at Cromford. He set up both the Derby Cathedral Peregrine Project and the Derbyshire Swift Project. Since 2009, Nick has worked part time dealing with thousands of wildlife queries and so much more.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Nick for his massive contribution and to wish him the very best in the future. There's no doubt he will continue with his voluntary work. Wildlife is in his DNA!

A species abundant future for Wild Peak

Our ambitious plan to halt and reverse declining native species abundance across the Peak District has been awarded £1.69 million from the government's Species Survival Fund.

Despite being a destination for many, thanks to its beautiful vistas, miles of walking trails and open spaces to enjoy, parts of this protected landscape are in poor ecological health with key habitats missing.

The Wild Peak Programme has been awarded this funding to transform habitats into wildlife-rich spaces across the Peak District by facilitating natural regeneration and kickstarting natural processes.

The fund will also allow us to support people to take positive actions for nature and deliver habitat intervention in the Wild Peak through community grants of up to £3,000.

We are developing resources to engage local schools with nature recovery and train participants on how to conduct surveys in local green spaces, and we're creating a programme of talks and visits for community groups.

It will enable us to continue delivering our strategy for a nature-based economy in the Peak District, through some exciting green finance projects. We are running webinars and workshops with a focus on green finance and support for landowners to develop a system where they can get paid for providing important ecosystem services.



Thornhill © Kayleigh Wright

OUR HIGHLIGHTS

2023 - 2024



FUNDING BOOST FOR ALLESTREE PARK COMMUNITY REWILDING

The UK's largest urban rewilding project received a funding boost of £1.1m from the National Lottery Community Fund. Community Rewilding at Allestree Park has seen overwhelming support from residents, park users and people across Derby and

beyond. Since rewilding began, this much-loved Park has become even richer for nature. The funding will support community engagement, wellbeing, citizen science, species reintroduction and nature recovery workstreams.

COMMON FARM, A NEW SPACE FOR NATURE

Over 2,000 members of the public backed our appeal to purchase this 83-acre site in Nether Heage. The retired farmland will now be rewilded and become a significant site for nature's recovery. We hope to attract kestrels, woodpeckers and warblers, bumblebees and butterflies, and summer flowers to its meadows. Residents and visitors will be able to continue to come and enjoy the area, and to see it become richer for nature in the years to come.



© Alex Rogers



EARLY TALENT

Through our early-talent programme we are supporting a wider range of people to start or develop careers working for nature. This year, the Trust welcomed two new apprentices and thirteen trainees. Nature's recovery matters to everyone, but historically the environment sector has had a poor record of supporting opportunities for underrepresented communities to work for nature. Changing this is a continuing priority for the Trust.

WILD ABOUT SHIPLEY

Over 1,000 people joined our Wild About Shipley event in Shipley Park in September, coming together to celebrate nature, enjoy music and entertainment, and take part in a range of wildlife activities.



LANDSCAPE SCALE PROGRAMMES

We've secured additional funding from Defra and Natural England for two of our landscape-scale programmes, to continue the work on the Derwent Living Forest and to accelerate our work to create a Wild Peak in the Peak District.



SPECIES RECORDS REACH NEW LEVELS

Hosted at DWT, the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre reached 2.5 million species sightings records. These sightings records are a vital data source, informing priorities for nature's recovery, our advice to landowners and managers, and our response to planning for new developments across the county.



© Jon Hawkins

HIGHLIGHTS 2020-24

Since launching our strategy in 2020 we have:

Increased the space for nature in Derbyshire by over 5800ha. This was achieved through partnerships and our land advice services, as well as through the purchase of sites at Thornhill Carr, Rose End Meadows, Wild Whittington and Common Farm, and the expansion of the Willington Wetlands reserve.

Across the county, we now assess that **8.5% of land is managed for nature**, double the space at the start of 2020.



Brought Beavers back to Derbyshire. The Willington Wetlands beavers were released in September 2021. Since then, they have been busy reengineering the 46-hectare site, helping to create diverse and dynamic wetland with enormous benefits to wildlife, including otters, water voles, kingfishers, egrets, frogs, toads, dragonflies and fish,

as well as locking up carbon. The most exciting addition is the regular booming of bitterns, which are now being recorded regularly during the breeding season for the first time ever in Derbyshire. The beavers have even been working hard on their own population, with four kits born so far on the site.



© Chris Johnson

Helped more people than ever before to benefit from nature connections and to take action to support nature's recovery. Since 2020, over 40,000 people have taken part in nature connection and wellbeing activities. Through innovative work we have demonstrated the health benefits of nature-based interventions and been part of pioneering Green Social Prescribing work. We have developed 14 new wilder community initiatives including supporting community action, training and development, and habitat improvement through the Derwent Connections, Next Door Nature and Learning Through Nature programmes.



Evolved as an organisation to become more agile and inclusive. Through our traineeship and apprenticeship programmes we have helped over 40 people start their conservation careers. Through our work on inclusion and supporting emerging talent we have improved our diversity and increased staff satisfaction. In 2024 the Trust was named as one of the top 100 places to work in the UK, one of only three charities to receive this accolade.



Increased our income to over £4m a year. This extra revenue means we have more resources to support nature's recovery. Income growth has included a step change in our success with grant making bodies, growth in our consultancy services, innovation in green finance and the incredible support that we've had from the residents and businesses of Derbyshire.





GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Ben Carter – Director of Development

In the run up to the election thousands of nature backers, like you, took action to make it clear that nature was a top priority that cannot be ignored. Activities included contacting MPs and candidates, taking part in Nature Forums, or joining over 60,000 others at the Restore Nature Now march in London.

The results of the general election were heralded as a momentous shift. The national change in government has been reflected here in Derbyshire, with 9 out of 11 seats changing hands and all constituencies now held by Labour.

Labour has previously stated that they recognised the climate and nature crisis as the greatest long-term global challenge we face and they have made some key pledges, such as promoting regenerative farming,

ending the use of bee-killing pesticides, and improving people's access to green space.

But whoever is in government, we know from hard experience that real change will only come if we continue to give nature a voice, by calling for strong measures on the key issues: river pollution, nature loss, climate change, access to nature and sustainable food production. It is our responsibility to ensure that these promises transcend political rhetoric and lead to concrete actions.



Restore Nature Now © Chris Johnstone



Restore Nature Now © Clare Ward



Restore Nature Now © Chris Johnstone

You can get involved right now by backing one of these actions, or by starting your own.

Contact marketing@derbyshirewt.co.uk to find out more:

The River Derwent Charter: call on our leaders to make our rivers healthy for people and nature. The charter includes 10 pledges covering planning, pollution, monitoring and nature restoration.

MP Nature Forums: We are facilitating nature forums between local groups and our MPs to support the delivery of local nature priorities. Let us know if you would like to take part.

Join Team Wilder: take action now for wildlife by creating local wild-spaces, potting plants, letting gardens grow wild, and campaigning for change.





Large herbivores – SHAPING THE LANDSCAPE

© Roscatography

Rachel Bennett – Deputy Director of Wilder Landscapes

Animals have been shaping our landscapes for thousands of years, but some species are more important than others. We call these ecosystem engineers. In the relatively recent past, large herbivores such as aurochs, elk, beavers, wild horse, wild boar, red deer and bison roamed Derbyshire’s landscape. Whilst their grazing may have only been the normal feeding time for these creatures, their actions were fundamental to the development of diverse and dynamic habitats within a complex, healthy and functioning ecosystem.

Grazing by large herbivores remains the most natural and effective way of managing vegetation, shaping the landscape in ways that human interventions and machinery simply cannot replicate.

Walk This Way

Whilst foraging in the landscape, large animals make holes with their hooves and flatten areas, creating microhabitats, which are incredibly important for a whole host of

insects. This action also creates patches of bare ground where plants can set seed – a key part of a dynamic system.

Natural Grazing

Even as our county has lost many of its large herbivorous species over time, its wonderful landscapes and wildlife have also come under increasing threat from pollution, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and our changing climate.

In order to enable nature to adapt to climate change and create healthier, happier, and more prosperous communities, we desperately need more wilder, more natural and resilient areas to help nature recover.

That’s why we are working with our partners and funders to secure more space for nature, develop nature-based solutions and let nature take the lead through rewilding to put these lost processes back.

Restoring Natural Processes

Reinstating the actions of our lost wild herbivores is one of the ways we can do this, either utilising domestic livestock or reintroducing keystone species, to manage a site for wildlife, whether it be grassland, woodland, wetland or scrub. Different types of livestock, together with wild species, all contribute to creating and maintaining wildlife rich landscapes. Where we’ve lost species locally, such as beavers, wild boar or horses, we can reintroduce them. And where they’ve disappeared globally, we can reintroduce substitute species; we can’t reintroduce the aurochs, but we can graze with cattle.

These animals browse brambles and trees to create a mosaic of habitats; dung and graze grass and vegetation to different heights which creates habitats for invertebrates; encourage wildflowers to grow providing pollen and nectar for invertebrates; increase food availability for birds and ultimately lead to more diversity in the nature. They can even affect the amount of carbon being stored in the plants and soil and reduce the risk of wildfires by reducing the flammable vegetation present on land.



© Jon Hawkins

Putting a certain type of herbivore onto a site without first considering that the ecological benefits can be really damaging. Cows may suit one area, whereas pigs may be better elsewhere. Only introducing the same animals at the same time of year, on the same cycle is simply not complex or dynamic enough to work towards creating resilient ecosystems and landscapes. The number and type of herbivores needed may fluctuate, responding to the availability of food, and finally, the timing of grazing will be unique to each site and each year, responding to annual variation in weather and vegetation growth seasons.

A Twist In The Tale

We own and manage several sites where herbivores have been grazing and managing the land for nature for many years, but there is more to do here. We continue to explore even better ways of reinstating natural processes to build more resilient landscapes.

It’s exciting to review the benefits of different large herbivores and the importance of their various attributes in building a more diverse and resilient landscape here in Derbyshire.



© Luke Massey 2020VISION

Whilst the benefits of large herbivores are critical to maintaining open habitats, their presence must also be carefully considered to prevent potential damage to habitats. Each herbivore behaves slightly different and shapes the land in different ways which will determine which species can thrive in that space.





Wellbeck Road Health Centre

A NATURE & WELLBEING SURGERY

Emma Dickinson-Wood – Team Leader Wild Wellbeing

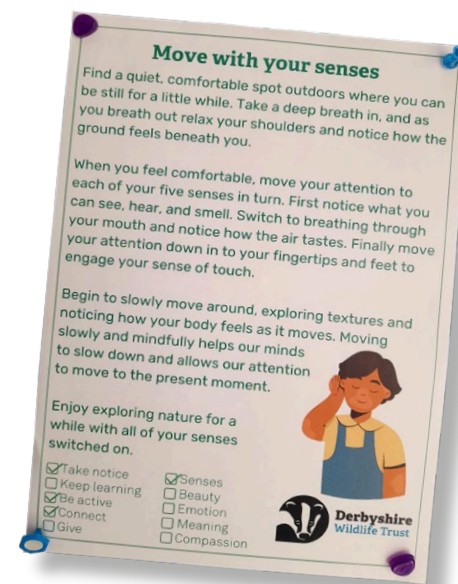
The wild wellbeing team’s aim is to embed nature into people’s everyday lives. We believe it should be accessible to all and we encourage everyone to get a daily dose. Just like taking vitamins, vitamin ‘N’ (for nature) should become a daily practice, to get us all that boost to our wellbeing we know that it provides.

It’s the moments, not the minutes, spent connecting with nature that really make the difference. For example seeing beauty in a flower outside a GP surgery, noticing the majestic-looking moss on a wall that you walk past or looking at the sky out of a window and taking notice of how it changes every day.

We really see the benefit of increasing nature’s presence in healthcare settings and taking nature to where people are. Nature is a credible tool that we all have

access to. Whether someone has poor mental health or someone needs a boost to their wellbeing, nature can help us all.

One example of how this approach is working in practice is via a project codesigned with Dr Frances Fermer, a volunteer who we are working in collaboration with on how a GP practice could become a ‘Nature and Wellbeing Surgery’. This is a practice that recognises and promotes the wellbeing of its patients through a connection to nature.



To achieve this we are using a notice board to display posters which demonstrate how to connect with nature in easy and accessible ways, the benefits of spending time in nature and links to find more activities. They detail the 5 ways to wellbeing: connect, give, take notice, learn and be active. Local green spaces, nature reserves and local walks are highlighted. Local green providers who provide activities and opportunities that take place in an outdoor setting or that are connected to nature in some way are also shown and these can be for self referrals or via a referral.



Our first practice at Wellbeck Road Health Centre have volunteers from the patient focus group who have taken on a volunteer role to manage the notice boards. Dave and Ann are excited and enthusiastic to support the project and its development.

The board can be applied to any healthcare setting and we hope that this project becomes a conversation starter between patients, GPs, link workers and social prescribers. Patients can enquire about attending places or groups. Everyone can do the nature connection activities and find inspiration and opportunities for how they can spend more time with nature.

Wellbeck Road Health centre are also promoting nature and wellbeing via facebook and their website.



If you would like to see this project at your GP surgery or healthcare setting, please contact:

Emma Dickinson-Wood at ewood@derbyshirewt.co.uk to find out more.

References: Richard Louv Vitamin ‘N’

DIVE INTO DERBYSHIRE'S RIVERS



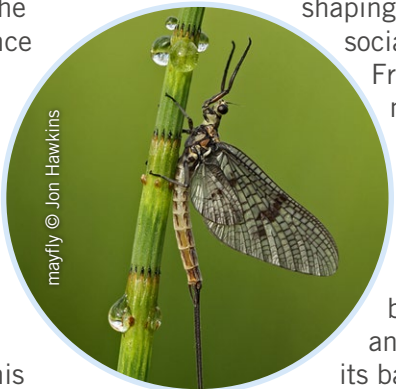
clipper © Andy Rouse

Kerry Price – Digital Officer

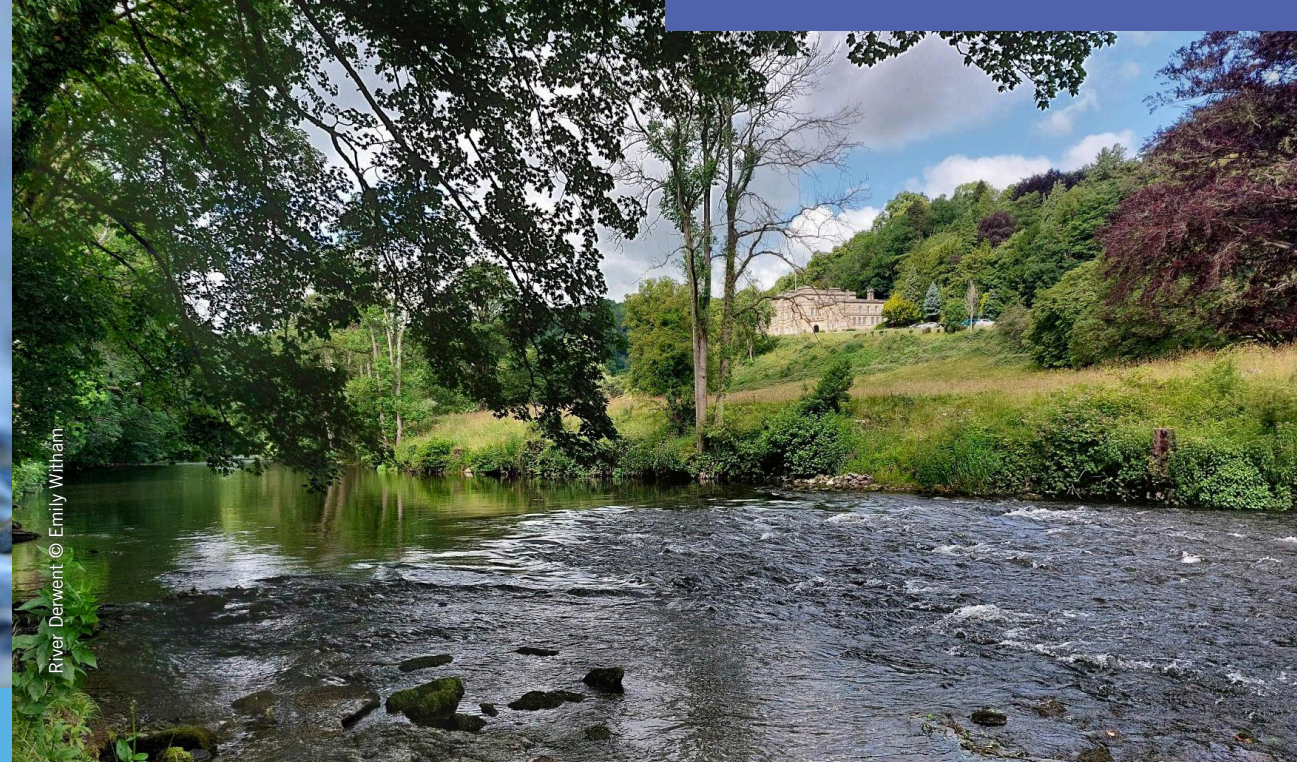
Look down on the Derwent Valley from Curbar Edge, skip across the stepping stones of Dovedale, or walk by the banks of the Trent and you can see how rivers influence our relationship with the county we live in. Rivers are more than just watercourses threading their way through the terrain; they are a lifeline for the natural world and the communities that have grown alongside them. Weaving a tapestry of life into our landscape, creating habitats and dynamic environments, supporting life for many forms of plants and wildlife.

The ecological significance of the River Derwent in Derbyshire cannot be overstated. Its waters nurture a diverse range of species, from the elusive otter to the striking kingfisher and an abundance of invertebrates that form the bedrock of the aquatic food chain. When the riverbanks are lush with native vegetation, they provide shelter and sustenance for countless creatures. Willows, alders, and reeds create a mosaic of habitats crucial for nesting birds, spawning fish, and various mammals. The health of this ecosystem is intertwined with the health of the river, and any imbalance can ripple through the entire web of life it supports.

The Derwent's importance extends beyond its ecological contributions. It is a cornerstone for our local communities, shaping the cultural and social fabric of our region. From the historical mills of the Industrial Revolution to modern recreational activities, the river is a source of inspiration and livelihood, with anglers, bird watchers, kayakers, and walkers all drawn to its banks. The river fosters a sense of place and identity, connecting us to our environment and each other.



mayfly © Jon Hawkins



River Derwent © Emily Witham

However, when we look under the surface, all is not well. After centuries of man-made disturbances, pollution and over-abstraction, the rivers of Derbyshire are no exception to the issues faced by rivers across the country. But amidst these challenges, there is hope and a growing movement towards restoration and conservation, as in recent years there has been growing recognition of the need to protect our rivers.

Restoring natural habitats along the riverbanks is a crucial step. Reforestation projects and the creation of buffer zones can help stabilise the banks, reduce erosion, and provide vital habitats for wildlife. Our wetland restoration work helps to enhance biodiversity and improve water quality by acting as a natural filters. Work has already started to remove invasive species and plant native vegetation to enhance habitats for wildlife. We want to increase the monitoring of water quality, and work with local farmers to promote sustainable land-use practices that reduce runoff and pollution.

Community engagement is vital. Educating the public about the river's importance and involving them in conservation efforts can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. Local groups and volunteers are crucial in monitoring the river's health, organising clean-up drives, and advocating for policies that protect the river. In short, we need your help.

To save nature and ourselves, we need to do things differently. The healing power of rivers should not be underestimated. Through collaborative efforts with government agencies, businesses, and other environmental organisations, we advocate for stronger policies and protections for our rivers, working to ensure that our rivers remain healthy and vibrant for future generations.

Want to help your local river? Keep an eye out for some new actions this month.



If you want to find out more about rivers and the work we are doing to restore and protect them, view our website here:

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/rivers



Have you thought about volunteering at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust?



Danielle Brown – Head of Community Action

Volunteering can be beneficial, not just for you, but your community and wildlife too. It's a great place to meet new friends, learn new skills or even advance your career. If you are limited for time, or restricted to when you can volunteer, we are working towards ensuring everyone has the opportunity to volunteer at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

There is a range of opportunities to choose to be involved in from supporting our nature tots groups to more practical conservation, and if volunteering outdoors isn't for you, we have a range of office or home based opportunities for you to choose from.

We spoke to some of our volunteers, and this is what they had to say about their experiences volunteering with us:



Dave and Ann

DAVE AND ANN – WELLBECK ROAD NATURE AND WELLBEING PROJECT VOLUNTEERS

When asked why he volunteers, Dave said, "For three reasons: number one, it's all about giving back and, secondly, I think Derbyshire Wildlife Trust do an amazing job with their work. **Finally, it is all about sharing nature with people, it is one of the most important things you can do.**"

Anne added, "And it is also far better than looking at a screen; you can actually touch something that's real!"

PETE AMBROSE – PRACTICAL VOLUNTEER

"I started volunteering for the Wildlife Trust because I wanted to do more to slow down global warming and the damage to nature that is taking place. We get to work in some amazing parts of the Peak District and get to see all sorts of trees, plants and flowers that I never knew about before. I have met some great people, learnt some new skills and **I can see the difference made by my contributions to the areas where I work.**"

ANN WADESON – AQUEDUCT COTTAGE HOST VOLUNTEER

"I love volunteering at Aqueduct Cottage, greeting and helping our visitors make the most out of their day spent in our beautiful Lea Wood countryside. It's a wonderful environment. I'm with lovely, enthusiastic people and I feel like I'm doing my bit. It's good for me and it would be good for anyone. **Volunteering. It's a win, win.**"

DR FRAN FERMER – NATURE AND WELLBEING PROJECT VOLUNTEER

"I am helping to set up a project to create links between Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and GP Surgeries to promote wellbeing through nature. **This volunteering role enables me to link two of my passions – the wellbeing of people and my love of nature.**"



Thank you to all our volunteers, you are all amazing!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

TAKE ACTION FOR NATURE

LEARN NEW SKILLS

MEET NICE PEOPLE

DRINK TEA

EAT BISCUITS



HILARY DOWSON – NATURE TOTS VOLUNTEER

"I mainly work with Nature Tots at Carsington, which is a group for preschool-aged children, held once a fortnight, come rain, come shine. It encourages outdoor play in a natural environment and it is wonderful to watch the children grow in confidence as they become more familiar with us and their surroundings. I also help with school party visits when I can and activities during the school holidays for families, such as owl pellet dissection and bat walks. It is difficult to identify one highlight of my role, but it has to be the children!"

VOLUNTEER WITH DERBYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Keep your eyes peeled on our opportunities as these are regularly updated. Search opportunities:



THE wonderful world of FUNGI

Alex, Director of People & Culture, and Ben, Nature Recovery Assistant, share their passion for fungi and identify some of their favourites.

ALEX'S STORY:

I found my love of mushrooms only a few years ago, the connection between the natural world and mycelium amazed me! I started noticing the lush green fairy rings in fields and parks that were being fed by the mycelium under the ground and where some mushrooms would surely sprout at some point throughout the year. I found it amazing that there is a whole network under our feet.

I tend to spend a lot of time outside, but I didn't always notice what's around me.

I guarantee if you start mushroom spotting you won't be able to stop seeing them (and not just in autumn!) I think there's a common misconception that you only find mushrooms in the autumn time but you can spot them all year round. I'm really surprised at how many new mushrooms I keep spotting in a short radius from my house.

Here are some of my favourite autumn fungi to look out for:



Amethyst deceiver – *Laccaria amethystina*

A beautiful small purple mushroom that is found growing in leaf litter. I've spotted this under various deciduous trees, and it particularly likes beech trees. I love its vibrant colour.

Shaggy inkcap – *Coprinus comatus*

The inkcap family are fun as they can go from a fully formed mushroom to a puddle of ink in a few hours. The shaggy inkcap likes grasslands and meadows and is edible, although you must catch them fast, but if you aren't quick enough maybe you could practice some calligraphy?!



Snowy waxcap – *Cuphophyllus pratensis*

There are many wonderful waxcaps to see in autumn! They get their name from being fairly wet and slimy. Unfortunately, these mushrooms are under environmental pressures as their grassland habitats are under threat, although if you are lucky you may find them on your lawn!

Birch polypore – *Fomitopsis betulina*

This bracket fungus grows on birch trees and is large and distinctive. If you are ever stuck in the woods in need of a plaster, you can cut a strip from the underside of this mushroom, which will provide an antifungal, antiseptic and self-sticking plaster.



Ben's Story

My first real introduction to fungi was through a harebrained money-making scheme I concocted with a friend at university in 2019. We were going to hire a shipping container and use it to grow prized gourmet mushrooms, which we would sell to restaurants to pay off our student loans and live happily ever after. Unsurprisingly this proved to be completely unfeasible, but through my early experimentation with cultivating oyster mushrooms I discovered an entire taxonomic kingdom that is so full of mystery and wonder that I remain thoroughly obsessed to this day.

Fungi are utterly alien to us in many ways. They are fully decentralised organisms, formed from a complex network of single-cell-thick threads known as mycelium. Mycelia live beneath the ground, within decaying organic matter and almost everywhere else you can

imagine. The mushrooms that we see are the fruiting bodies of their mycelium, and exist solely for the purpose of producing reproductive spores. Mushrooms come in a near limitless number of shapes and sizes, and many of the species found in Britain are an absolute wonder to behold. Some favourites of mine are the parrot waxcap, dryad's saddle and the world-famous fly agaric, as well as many other species with equally whimsical names.

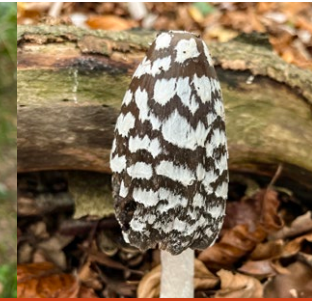
Hunting for mushrooms – as a forager, naturalist, or both – is as addictive as it is rewarding. Fungi are incredibly picky about when and where they produce mushrooms, with most species requiring highly specific habitat types, associating with just one or two species of tree, and remaining stubbornly inactive until the temperature, rainfall and humidity are



Wrinkled peach – an aptly named mushroom that grows on dead elm wood. It has sadly become rare following the loss of most of our elms to Dutch elm disease.



Boletus radicans – an unusual species with pores that instantly bruise blue when touched.



Magpie inkcap (*Coprinopsis picacea*) – a stunningly patterned species that only lasts for a couple of days before enzymes within the mushroom dissolve it into black ink.



Turkey tail (*Trametes versicolor*) – surrounded by sulphur tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*).



just right. When fruiting bodies appear, they form in as little as twenty-four hours and last only a week or so before vanishing. Because of this, the aspiring mycologist must develop a deep connection with the natural world if they have any hope of reliably finding these hidden gems. In my experience there are few things more satisfying than identifying a likely habitat for chanterelles in spring, and then returning in autumn to find the woodland floor carpeted with beautiful golden mushrooms!

It must be noted at this point that picking mushrooms to eat requires a high level of skill and confidence. Some species are harmless, delicious and easy to identify, but many others range from inedible to seriously toxic. That being said, there is absolutely nothing to fear from wild mushrooms if you are not eating them. Mushroom toxins are only effective when ingested, so even poisonous species can be observed and appreciated in total safety provided that handling them is kept to a minimum. My favourite tool for this is a dentist's mirror, which can be used to observe the underside of a poisonous, rare or delicate mushroom without touching it.

Sadly, fungi are chronically understudied and under-recorded. Often, we simply don't know

enough about them to know how they are coping with the pressures of human-driven changes to their environment, although it is safe to assume that many species are not doing well. Because of this, identifying and recording wild mushrooms has never been more important. The good news is that you don't have to be a mycologist or an experienced amateur to do this, although I will warn you that it is a slippery slope towards a new obsession! Equipped with a camera, a guidebook and the help of online identification groups, anyone can contribute to the conservation of our amazing native fungi.



Fly agaric (*Ammanita muscaria*) – undoubtedly the most recognisable mushroom in the world.



Porcelain fungus (*Oudemansiella mucida*) – a truly stunning species that mainly grows on beech trees in Autumn.



Common puffball (*Lycoperdon perlatum*) – another aptly named and rather whimsical species which has evolved to eject clouds of spores when raindrops land on its outer surface.

Wilder LEARNING



Diane Gould – Wilder Engagement Manager

Inspiring a love and care for nature is the driving force behind Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's engagement work. Over the past decade, we've steadily expanded our formal training programs to share our expertise and passion with others. Our accredited training courses have empowered individuals to acquire new skills, launch careers in conservation, integrate outdoor learning into their teaching, and create new groups to connect young people of all ages with the wonders of nature.

Being accredited with three awarding bodies, we can now offer a broad range of training to complement the wide range of careers and opportunities within conservation. Over the last 18 months, we have been fortunate to be able to develop our training offer and provide funded courses through our National Lottery Heritage Fund projects, Learning

Through Nature and Transforming the Trent Valley. As these projects draw to a close, we are reflecting on the impact the courses have had, and we're looking forward to working with many new trainees in the future.

Here's what a few of our learners have to say:



Jo and Cassie on a Forest School training session

Course: Forest School Leader (Level 3) – AIM Qualifications
Learners: Cassie Loake and Jo Selby, The Royal School for the Deaf Derby

We found the training therapeutic, positive and calming. Being outdoors brings you a sense of yourself. Our tutor was very understanding of individual needs and made each of us comfortable in the training process.

Being surrounded by nature had such a calming effect on us and the children; it is so refreshing being outdoors. It is what we believe education should be and a very humble experience that we shall remember fondly.

We will be able to offer the children interesting, varied practical sensory experiences suited to their style. As we have lost one of our 'senses', the others are heightened and being outdoors promotes their wellbeing and makes them happier when back in school classrooms where they must listen and concentrate.

Course: Hedge laying, coppicing and woodland management courses

Learners: Di Milner, Rangemore Playing Fields Committee

Princes Wood was previously hidden from the locals as it's off the main street. The courses that we've had with Simon at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust have enabled locals to find the wood and add to it. Everyone has gained skills but also friends too. It's been brilliant.



Hedge laying on a woodland management course



Learners on an Early Years course

Course: Inspiring a Nature Connection for the Early Years (Level 1) – AIM Qualifications

Learners: Mary, Rosehill Infant and Nursery School, Derby

It's wonderful to see the children's confidence improve and their love for nature grow. I look forward to the sessions and so do the children.

The children in our nursery love Nature Tots sessions. They come to find me in the playground to show me leaves and flowers. I am personally so happy to be doing this course; it feels like my true calling.

Course: Leading a Project for Positive Change (Level 3) – Leadership Skills Foundation

Learners: Woodlands Allestree, Year 12 students

The course was a perfect mix of classroom learning and practical activities. The group organised litter-picking sessions around the park. Not only did they clean up the place, but they felt good about reducing pollution and protecting wildlife. Plus, it was a great way to bond with their classmates and feel part of the community. The group worked on different projects to boost biodiversity, like removing invasive species from Allestree Park. The students loved getting out of the classroom and working in the park, and it made them feel like they were making a real difference.

- Matt Ross Yr 12 Teacher, Woodlands Allestree



Woodlands students pulling balsam at Allestree park



Find out more: <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderlearning>

Get in touch: trainingenquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk





Common Farm © Kerry Price

MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE:

What's happening at COMMON FARM?



Ellie Field – Landscape Recovery Manager

In March 2024, thanks to the generous support of many donations, we were thrilled to announce that we had successfully completed the purchase of our newest space for nature, Common Farm in Nether Heage.

Until recently, this 83-acre site was used as a mixed livestock farm. Despite its history, and the grasslands currently being low in species diversity, the land hasn't experienced heavy intensive farming, meaning there is real potential to see nature's recovery. A neighbouring copse of native woodland and numerous hedgerows offer an excellent foundation for the delivery of nature-based solutions that will benefit both wildlife and people simultaneously. Additionally, the land is an exciting addition to our efforts to build a nature recovery network in the Derwent Valley, linking our reserves at Crich Chase Meadows and Wyver Lane.

We are going to use our rewilding principles to guide our decision-making at Common Farm, and this, as with any site, starts with a thorough understanding of the current state of the land. If you've visited the

site over the spring and summer months, you may well have bumped into one of our brilliant surveyors who have been out gathering crucial information about the land and its existing wildlife. This has included soil testing, plant and habitat surveys, pollinator studies, bird and bat surveys, and even looking at camera footage for any large mammals passing through. This helps us understand what's already there and what might be missing.

Through these surveys and members of the community letting us know what they've seen, we have had some remarkable sights including beautiful views of a red kite and kestrels and the exciting news that a pair of curlews nested there this spring. Curlews are on the European red list, meaning that they face a high risk of extinction, and it was therefore a very exciting time for the team!

COMMON FARM



Red Kite © Jon Hawkins

Looking to the future of the site, we hope to see the development of a healthy ecosystem at Common Farm to support both wildlife and people. Our goal is to allow natural processes to guide the development of this complex, self-willed ecosystem. While this requires some flexibility in the changes we might observe, the data gathered by our team over the past few months enables us to predict future developments and determine how best to support them.

We expect to see the existing hedgerows expand, providing additional cover and food sources for many different species. The bordering woodland can provide a seed source, contributing to the natural regeneration of woody habitats. To mimic natural processes as closely as possible, we

will be using mixed grazing approaches to create an element of push and pull on the site between the herbivores and the plants. This will help improve the open grassland areas by stirring up the soil and encouraging more wildflowers and other plants to grow. These diverse mosaic habitats would help to support a wider range of species, in addition to helping us to deliver key nature-based solutions, such as carbon capture and holding water in the landscape to reduce impacts of flooding for communities downstream. We are excited to work with and support the local community as we embark upon this adventure towards a wilder and more resilient Derwent Valley for everyone!



Curlew © Damian Waters



Common Farm © Kerry Price

EARLY TALENT & TRAINEES



Donna Nook © Lisa Witham

Flavia Ojok – Head of Talent & Inclusion

The environment sector is experiencing a shortage of green jobs and a need for more environmental courses and skills. In turn, this is putting nature recovery initiatives at serious risk of delays and at times even halting the work. The issue stems from not having developed a robust and agile sector that reflects our society, leverages diversity, and fosters inclusivity within the profession, which is essential for attracting people from all backgrounds who want to be a part of nature's recovery.

When we look to the data for our organisation, this rang true. Our 2019 baseline diversity survey highlighted that we lacked representation in the following demographic groups: LGBTQ+, those from lower socio-economic background, those aged 16–24 and ethnic minority groups. As a forward-thinking organisation, we are committed to addressing this. We aim to be inclusive, ambitious, and innovative, investing in people, culture, and early talent to find solutions to the problems faced by both our sector and ourselves.

Here, we are focussing on our investment in 'Early Talent'. We define Early Talent either as career starters with no paid employment in the sector, or career changers with no experience in a specific role within the sector. This definition encompasses lifelong learning, including upskilling, and developing new skills. In our organisation, this takes the form of work experience, graduate roles, apprenticeships, traineeships, placements, and internship opportunities. All participants are valued team members and are paid a real living wage.



© Flavia Ojok

Since the launch of our Early Talent initiatives, we have seen **44 participants** take part. This is a huge achievement for us and represents a quarter of our workforce. Of those who have completed the programme, **80% progressed into employment within the sector or into further/higher education on courses related to the sector.**

Whilst early talent participants have been successful in gaining roles within our organisation, the impact of our programme has also been felt across the wider sector, with them successfully moving on to roles in organisations such as Natural England, National Trust, environmental consultancies, Environment Agency, and Woodlands Trust, just to name a few. **20% have progressed into employment in a field outside the sector and will continue to be citizen scientists.** We have also seen demographic data changes within our organisation, with **representation in the 16-29 age range, lower socio-economic and sexual orientation having increased on average by 23%.**

We know the programme has positively impacted all participants who have taken part. 100% of Early Talent participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

"The skills I developed and the training I received during the placement will assist me in my future career."

"Overall, this was an effective learning experience which aided in the progression of my development of my knowledge and skills."

Remarks on completion include:

"Overall, I have really enjoyed my traineeship ... they provide needed routes into the environmental sector for young people. I felt valued within the team and was given opportunities to grow, I can also see how much my fellow trainees have grown..."

"I think it is huge for the sector to finally have on the job training opportunities like this. I hope that DWT and other Trusts will continue to offer more and more paid traineeships. I would never have been able to get this level of training and skills without this opportunity."

For us, investing in people and seeing positive outcomes for them is a tremendous asset. This work has also supported us in proactively building a culture around inclusive leadership. We found that people felt encouraged to share their stories about neurodiversity, mental health recovery, or addiction, leading to a cultural shift. In our last engagement survey, **83% of staff said they felt that DWT is an inclusive place to work and 83% said they felt that DWT lives its values**, compared to a score of 62% and 55% in 2021.

We knew doing this work would support us to build a robust organisation capable of delivering our mission effectively and innovatively, with an inclusive, future-focused and agile approach. We are strongly positioned for long-term success in achieving nature's recovery together. We will continue to build a truly talented workforce directly connected to the places and communities we serve, ensuring more people than ever will have an active role in restoring our green and blue spaces.



Kingfisher
© Mya Bambrick

Offer © Andy Rouse 2020VISION

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to all of you who completed our members survey early this year. We're delighted to share with you some key insights, including how you feel about our work and what you'd like to hear more about.

We love hearing from you, so look out for our annual survey coming out early 2025, or contact us anytime at enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk!

Key Takeaways

- 85%** of you feel your membership has a positive effect on wildlife
- 84%** of you feel you are kept up to date about the work of the trust
- 96%** of you joined to support wildlife conservation
- 90%** of you feel your membership pack is just right
- 72%** receive our weekly emails and rate them 8/10 (sign up on our website if you want to receive them too!)

You told us you want to hear more about:

- 78%** Our work for cleaner, better rivers and waterways
- 75%** Our rewilding work
- 75%** Hopeful information such as the recovery of species / species reintroductions
- 68%** Our work for forests and woodlands

Watch this space!

Working in Partnership

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust rely on corporate members to provide membership fees and sponsorship, working with us to adapt their sites for nature's benefit and access to employees to promote our work. We are grateful for the support we receive from our current members.

Benefits of Investing in Nature:



We are proud to be working in partnership with:

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
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If your business would like to get involved, please get in touch on: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk





Amy Trewick

My Wildlife

From little acorns might oaks grow – the power of community organising

Amy Trewick is Chair of her local Parish Council and the founder of her local community nature group in Swanwick. Amy and her friends have achieved great things for nature through their projects and initiatives to make things better for wildlife. Here she talks about her journey, from her first wildlife encounters to community organising for change.

What first sparked your interest in nature and wildlife?

I was fortunate to spend most of my childhood with my amazing grandma, who is a fountain of knowledge. She would take me on long country walks near her home in Pentrich and point out the skylarks, or we would go blackberry-picking during the summer holidays.

My grandparents always nurtured any interests we'd show, so it was from there that Grandma would then take me birdwatching regularly. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust had an influence on me, as Wyver Lane was our favourite place to go. I made lots of happy memories there.

To have fallen in love with nature and found solace in it, I was then heartbroken when learning about the biodiversity crisis. I had been aware of climate change and loss of wildlife abroad (such as tigers), but I hadn't been aware it was happening on our doorsteps. It was that, studying Wildlife Conservation at Nottingham Trent University and reading *Silent Earth* by Dave Goulson that awakened me to the urgency of the situation and led to me deciding I wanted to dedicate myself to doing whatever I could to save the creatures I'd fallen in love with.

I started a community group in Swanwick where I live. The ambition for our group is to be on the frontline and on the ground for wildlife in our immediate area, encouraging everyone to do their part for nature. We recently launched a network of groups called the Amber Valley Nature Network, where we can share ideas, learn from each other and amplify each other's voices – creating a positive ripple effect.



What advice would you give to anyone who is looking to take action to benefit wildlife in their community?

My advice would be to be brave and jump in! I didn't have a grand plan when I started; I mainly started by creating a Facebook group for people in the village to post their wildlife sightings and musings, and to raise awareness of the biodiversity crisis. It was through this that I met like-minded people who also wanted to do more for nature.

I'd encourage you to speak to other local groups and organisations, including Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. They can give you advice on any of the more complex areas, like how to get funding.

But my biggest piece of advice is to embrace it and have fun. Find the joy in the struggle – biodiversity loss is sad, but finding like-minded people who want to help is the most uplifting experience. I'd have said prior to this I was an anxious person and an introvert, but it has really brought me out of my shell. There is a role for everyone, and a wide range of skillsets needed. Just having a willingness to want to help means you're most of the way there.

What have been the highlights of your own community organising journey?

From getting to know people and building friendships, to meeting with other community groups in the village (such as the church and working with them on a new mowing regime in the graveyard, which has revealed unusual plants which have been hiding there the whole time, like pignut and harebells!), planting and managing our own meadow at the playing fields, and planting the troughs within the village with wildflowers.

Things have quickly escalated since we started just over two years ago. We managed to fundraise to buy an area of woodland in our village so it could remain in the public domain. I never imagined we would achieve something like this, and it's now an incredible asset to engage the community with nature. We named the woodland



“Rookery Wood” as it was always known as “the Rookery” by the locals.

But the greatest and most unexpected achievement is the connection with the community. We talk about landscapes and habitats being fragmented, but so are our communities. Reconnecting those relationships turns out to be a vital element to reconnecting our landscapes as well.

What would you like to accomplish next?

I want to keep working with people and communities. The more you delve into the biodiversity crisis, the more you realise it's intertwined with social, economic and political issues.

But I'd say the ultimate hurdle is psychology. What we need is to empower people, build confidence, and ultimately set a foundation of kindness and friendships. It is only by people working together that we can bring change.

By building strength in people and communities, I see this extending to influencing policy makers and decision makers as well. We all have a part to play, in spreading those positive ripples.



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

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After providing for your loved ones, please remember the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. When you are ready, we are here to talk.

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