

3 Year Strategic Plan 2023-2026

‘Wilder Herefordshire’ – our plan to put Nature into Recovery by 2030

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Executive Summary

Wilder Herefordshire – More Nature Everywhere

Our ambition for nature is bigger and bolder than ever before. To achieve our long-term goal of nature being in recovery we want to see 30% of the land across Herefordshire well managed for nature by 2030.

‘Wilder Herefordshire’ will build on the ambition and achievements of our work to date to continue the journey to our new 2030 goal and beyond.

Vision: A Wilder Herefordshire: More Nature Everywhere

Mission: To lead local action for nature’s recovery

Strategic Goals:

- Putting Nature in recovery
- Taking action for nature
- Sustaining our future

Strategy shifts

- Deliver nature recovery at scale through deeper collaborations, advice and services
- Enable a greater depth and diversity of people taking action and campaigning boldly
- Grow and diversify our income through providing services, advice and experiences

What has changed since 2020?

With a new “global biodiversity framework” agreed at the recent [UN meeting on biodiversity](#) agreeing to protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030 and this ambition likewise being reflected in the UK government’s, [EIP 2023](#) there is hope that we can take the urgent steps needed to properly protect and restore nature.

A goal of 30% represents a highly ambitious step-change for HWT. This new goal reflects a change in approach to nature conservation; an understanding that putting all of nature into recovery involves common as well as rare species, and wider landscapes as well as protected pockets of land.

The nature and climate emergencies have challenged our previous approach of measuring success based only on ‘land rich in wildlife’. We now need to focus on managing land sympathetically for nature at scale, with core areas rich in wildlife. Management should be targeted at restoring and reconnecting habitats and all species across the landscape. This changes the lens by which we should view success.

In recent years, the vision of rewilding has developed, and our focus is to help reinstate and restore functioning ecosystems over larger landscape scales than traditional conservation management. Our aim is to scope and identify rewilding location(s) to gradually move up a scale of wildness along the continuum from ‘intensively managed’ towards a more nature-led approach, maximising both biodiversity and bio-abundance. This is why we have called our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan ‘Wilder Herefordshire’.

The future is about protecting and restoring nature at scale.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), other global institutions and the UK government are calling for a 30/30 target. We are aligning our approach with The Wildlife Trust's national strategy calling for 30% of land and sea to be better managed for nature by 2030 with people taking direct action for nature.

Our own Nature Recovery Network (NRN) plan will need to set out our 30/30 ambition for a connected system of places important for wild plants and animals. Initial NRN mapping across the county shows that habitats could be improved, expanded or connected to address wildlife decline and other environmental benefits much more significantly. In time this work will need to become part of a visibly wilder landscape in order to support nature's recovery. This will require us to lead both land management and cultural change across our county, working of course, in partnership with farmers and landowners, communities and council.

The vision is achievable if everyone works together, and this is where inspiring people to take direct action for nature comes in. Across our county, we want to see 30% of gardens dedicated to wildlife, farmers enhancing 30% of their land for wildlife, and parish councils enhancing 30% of their public spaces for wildlife. Achieving this will involve many partners but we believe it is possible, especially given the transformation of agriculture to include a payment system for producing environmental benefits. The current groundswell of direct local community action for nature and climate gives even more confidence that nature really does matter.

How to Achieve More Nature Everywhere

Our 'Wilder Herefordshire' plan for 2023- 2026 sets one simple overarching aim: to create more nature everywhere. To do this, we need to inspire people to take action, work with and through farmers and landowners and do all we can to recover wilder landscapes.

Our strategic plan is set out with three main goals:

- Putting Nature in Recovery
- Taking action for nature
- Sustaining our future

The rest of this document will set out the context and background for our new plan. We will then detail the three main goals and the objectives identified to deliver each goal. We will illustrate our new organisational values and behaviours which will help us to achieve our goal of more nature everywhere.

Finally, we will set out in more detail our financial targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be monitored to measure progress.

Our vision for 2030

By 2030 Herefordshire will have started to look and sound very different. There will be more natural processes creating wilder, connected landscapes, with thriving and diverse wildlife.

We will have delivered new nature recovery projects, directly influenced landowners to do more for nature, and we will have established wilder corridors in the Lugg Valley, Wilder Marches and the

Woolhope Dome with our partners. Our nature reserves will be rich in wildlife spilling out into the countryside that surrounds them, connecting pockets of wildlife and rebuilding habitats.

We will have inspired people to act for nature, established a thriving nature action network and worked with partners across the spectrum of farming, government, business and communities to join up action and nature. We will be a resilient, financially robust charity delivering measurable impact, underpinned by sound values and an inclusive workplace for all staff and volunteers. We will live our brand and tell captivating and compelling stories which make people want to support us.

Introduction

As the world aims to tackle the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change the political, economic, environmental, social and technological factors affecting our relationship with nature are changing fast. At both the global and national level, action remains insufficient, but with a new “global biodiversity framework” agreed at the recent [UN meeting on biodiversity](#), there is hope that we can take the urgent steps needed to properly protect and restore nature.

To achieve nature’s recovery, it is no longer enough to just think about slowing the loss of the natural world and protecting what remains of our wildlife. We need to stop and reverse the decline if we are to restore biodiversity, stabilise the climate, ensure food security and protect the health and wellbeing of billions of people.

Fortunately, we are part of a national movement of Wildlife Trusts and [The Wildlife Trusts’ 2030 strategy](#), aims to do just that and make a powerful contribution by harnessing our movement’s local action to achieve a collective impact through campaigning for change to begin nature’s recovery.

Therefore, our new strategic direction for 2023-26 will:

- ensure we are aligned with [The Wildlife Trusts’ 2030 strategy](#)
- respond to a fast-changing external environment
- sustain our financial growth and increase our impact

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is firmly rooted in our local community, supported by and accountable to our members. This gives us a strong connection to landowners, farmers, businesses, schools, our local authority, and many other individuals and organisations who are also working hard to deliver real change on the ground. We’re looking forward to continuing to learn about, collaborate and support this wider effort for nature and our communities to the best of our ability.

The Environmental Context

The scale of social, economic and environmental change has been unprecedented. This is mirrored by a general rise in environmental awareness, now ranked as the third most important concern for voters.

A climate emergency has been declared in over 30 countries. Escalating biodiversity extinctions and ecosystem breakdown are recognised as real; between now and 2050, 1 million species are listed as

being at risk from extinction. Globally, species populations and abundance of birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles and insects have collapsed by an extraordinary 68% since 1970.

The world has warmed 1°C since pre-industrial times and we are seeing the impacts on wildlife, from severe damage to habitats from extreme weather, changes in wildlife distribution, and species lifecycles becoming out of sync. The impact of failing to secure nature's recovery is beginning to bite across the world – wildfires, floods, melting glaciers and unprecedented heat. A recent UN report said that 'we can no longer afford to cast nature aside'. Locally, species abundance has notably declined and habitats are being lost at an extraordinary scale.

Sadly, this picture is reflected throughout the UK and locally across the whole of Herefordshire. Despite our best efforts to influence change, urgent action is needed to turn the tide.

On a positive note, more farmland is now being managed in an environmentally friendly way than in recent years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the need to tackle these interlinked issues as a matter of urgency. Successive pandemic lockdowns have highlighted the importance of connection with nature for positive health and wellbeing. Increasing societal awareness of the importance of nature and the environment is creating increased local community action and opportunities to harness support for our vital work. People are actively seeking out opportunities to do their bit to take local action for nature, whether physically on their doorstep, volunteering or actively engaging in campaigning. We are aware of many self-led 'Wild' nature groups and new, hyper local nature charities, that have started in the past five years, an engagement opportunity we must harness as a priority.

Locally, concern about our rivers has dominated environmental discussion. In the last six months, HWT have positioned ourselves as a more important player in this debate, organising with partners locally, regionally and nationally.

The Societal and Economic Context

Anecdotal evidence suggests a sense of helplessness and, in young people, eco-anxiety linked to climate change. People are worried about the scale of destruction of nature and wildlife attributed to housing and infrastructure development, the economic growth agenda, the health crisis, and the demands of agriculture.

British politics over last five years has been largely dominated by Brexit and a breakdown of trust in government, politicians, lawyers and other decision makers. We have fought hard to secure a better future for the environment and agriculture in a new legislative framework outside of EU jurisdiction. This fight continues #Defend Nature and work to ensure the best possible implementation of ELMs.

There have been some wins. Local authorities now have a duty to set out plans for Local Nature Recovery Strategies and biodiversity net gain requirements supported by a plan setting out how nature will recover locally. The HWT team have been involved in developing initial Nature Recovery Network maps for our county and we are well placed to ensure the local authority delivers its responsibilities.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will soon be mandatory in planning for development. BNG aims to leave the environment and biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development. Costs are calculated for compensation in units. Biodiversity offsetting is a mechanism intended to compensate or mitigate the unavoidable environmental impact caused by development projects. Arrangements normally include agreement between developers, landowners and planning authorities. Whilst the scale of development across our county is low in relative terms, we can expect funds to become available for habitat creation. This presents an opportunity to test biodiversity offsetting and the BNG approach at scale, potentially on land adjacent to nature reserves.

Looking ahead, nationally, efforts must now be placed on influencing the next government with an expected 2024 November election.

Locally, rural areas and communities have felt overlooked, unheard & undervalued by their representatives. Many felt there was a city centric approach to almost everything - which didn't reflect the rural power house that underpins the county in many ways. The electoral outcome reflects this concern and the view that the previous administration had failed to deliver the basics – potholes, road and traffic issues, children services.

The Conservation Context

The approach to nature conservation across the UK has evolved at pace in recent years. Conservationists and government are committed to a landscape-scale approach to conservation, captured in the Lawton Principles of more, bigger, better and joined. This approach to conservation seeks to create coherent and resilient ecological networks. HWT has adopted these principles into our plans.

Rewilding continues to pique the interest and gain traction, with many rewilding groups now established to champion the approach. A rewilding approach to agriculture is also developing, with The Knepp Estate as a pioneering project. Knepp uses grazing animals as the drivers of habitat creation and works to restore natural water courses. The estate is a working example of how relaxing the management on agriculturally poor land can actually produce more nature and profit. Turtle doves, nightingales, many other bird species and insects have bounced back. At over 3,500 acres in size, Knepp has built a sustainable income as a nature-based visitor attraction. They also sell organic beef, pork and other products off the estate. Knepp has shown this can be a low-cost method of ecological restoration.

The Wildlife Trusts federation, of which we are a member, has recognised the nature and climate emergencies and the nature-people disconnect as the big three interconnected issues to tackle in its new strategy. It is, therefore, with some urgency that we need to play our part in supporting the national mission alongside our ambition to put nature into recovery locally.

We will do that by taking a nature-based solutions approach to land management – enhancing and working with natural habitats at scale to help mitigate the ecological and climate emergencies including securing water and soil security and restoring ecological abundance. The Wildlife Trusts are calling for 30% of nature to be restored by 2030 across the UK. To achieve this, a partnership

approach will be essential between landowners, developers, businesses, national and local government, NGOs and local communities.

Enabling people to take action will be central to the success of national and local plans. Local Wildlife Trusts will play a fundamental role in organising local groups especially, to take local action for nature.

What have we achieved since 2020?

Our staff and volunteers should be immensely proud of all they have achieved to secure a better future for wildlife, including through our partners and community. Our members should be proud of what their support has helped us to achieve.

Some highlights

Leadership and partnerships

- Strong and developing board
- Good relationship with partners & funders e.g. Severn Waste, EA etc.
- Well networked across all work areas, good advocacy links

Finances, Systems and Services

- Good financial stability
- Increasingly good systems e.g. Xledger, Breathe HR, Ihasco training portal
- Successful farm advice work, enabling us to launch a land advisory service
- Growing retail business
- We now monitor our carbon footprint and work towards being carbon neutral by 2030

Advocacy

- 2020 vision of a Wilder Herefordshire
- Strong partnership influencing
- Developing work on rivers

Land Management

- An additional 7 nature reserves
- Landscape scale conservation work in the Lugg Living Landscape
- Wetland and river corridor improvements

Education and outreach

- Strong work with young children
- Growing volunteers – 300-500 and volunteer warden network
- Supported volunteering and wellbeing work
- Sustaining branch network during difficult times

Membership and Communications

- Membership recruitment and penetration growing 4,500 to 6,500

- Good public profile
- Improved use of social media, website

A Wilder Herefordshire: More Nature Everywhere

Our 2023-2026 strategic plan, aims to create more nature everywhere. We aim to bring about nature's recovery through local action – enabling individuals, communities, local governments, farmers and businesses to act for nature. We aim for 30% of land across our county to be well-managed for nature by 2030.

For our county, 30% of land equates to 218,000 ha hectares. HWT reserves currently represent less than 1% of the county (550ha) with our wider countryside work having reached an additional few percent in the last five years.

Over the 2023-2026 strategic plan period we will make a concerted effort to deliver more advice, influence more land going into positive management, and undertake more project work in the wider countryside. Our ambition is to directly influence 10% of the rural land mass within the county through wider countryside conservation projects and advice services that deliver positive outcomes for nature.

We will take a strategic partnership approach (e.g. our Chief Executive now Chairs the Local Nature Partnership, we are playing a more active role in the Wye Catchment Partnership, and continue our role on the Nutrient Management Board) and partner with other key organisations to influence 'on the ground' action that supports nature's recovery e.g. Farm Herefordshire, Herefordshire Meadows; Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust; Plantlife and Herefordshire Council. Additionally, we will offer pragmatic and sensible advice to landowners and farmers through our developing consultancy service, based on our recent years of developing expertise and values of trust and integrity in all we do.

Early in the strategic plan period we will complete a scoping exercise to identify partners and deliver landscape recovery projects in: 1) the Lugg Wetlands Corridor, 2) Wilder Marches and 3) Wilder Woolhope. This scoping exercise will help us understand what could be possible to recover nature at scale on land under our ownership or in partnership with others in these areas. An average rewilding project in the UK is around 1,000ha in size (£10Million + investment) to put ambitions in context.

A critical enabler of achieving our 30% by 2030 ambition is policy and regulatory change. Organising biodiversity net gain, nutrient neutrality and ELMs contributions will be key. We will continue to contribute to national advocacy and lobby key decision makers in partnership with TWT to ensure we get the policy and regulatory change that nature needs.

What do we aim for by 2026?

Nature in Recovery. We will have delivered conservation projects over 500ha and directly influenced landowners to do more for nature over 10% of Herefordshire's land and be developing our capabilities to deliver at scale. We will have created a species recovery programme (e.g. Curlew, pine marten, Water Crowfoot, White Clawed Crayfish, Eel, Salmon, Silver washed fritillary) aligned to our reserve and landscape plans. We will explore species reintroductions to suitable habitats.

By restoring nature, we will be tackling multiple environmental challenges like climate change, diffuse pollution, water quality, flood risk, food, soils and biodiversity loss. We will form 2-3 new

strategic research partnerships (e.g. Cardiff, Gloucester, Worcester Universities, WWT, Vincent Wildlife Trust, Herefordshire Biological Records Centre) to help demonstrate how restoring nature can deliver multiple environmental benefits and help tackle the climate and nature emergency. Farmers and landowners will seek out our wildlife friendly land management expertise as they transition into the new world of sustainable agriculture and we will develop 5-10 Farm Champions. We will also align our “Treescapes” learning through recovering of woodland into our developing offer.

Recovering our rivers will take many years (10-20), but we will influence the strategy required to achieve that at the catchment, regional and national level in the run-up to the general election and in the several years beyond.

Housing and infrastructure will be working for nature’s recovery, not against it, and decision making on every level will prioritise nature. To make this real we will develop a corporate partnership with Border Oak <https://www.borderoak.com/>. We will of course continue to object to inappropriate planning and environmental projects such as the Herefordshire Bypass, Intensive Poultry Units and untested Anaerobic Digesters.

Taking Action. Crucially, people will be connected with and taking direct action for nature. Our Take Action programme and Nature Action Network will be inspiring new environmental warriors and reaching ever more diverse audiences. People across the county will be enjoying our outstanding reserves and visitor centre and – through our innovative campaigns - will understand more about the value nature holds and the importance of defending it. Healthy nature is good for us, our mental and physical health and well-being. Nature will be accessible to all.

Through our communications we will tell captivating and compelling stories about wildlife and the natural world. We will have engaged newer, broader more diverse audiences, and engage them through innovative campaigns and events.

By the end of this plan, local businesses will further understand that the long-term prosperity of their business and the wider economy is dependent on healthy functioning nature and natural processes. Investing in nature will be the norm, not an inconvenience. Our developing consultancy work, will both act as a source of sustainable income to HWT and engage positively with landowners, businesses and organisations as a source for trusted advice.

Sustaining our Future. Our proposition is bold but achievable, and it must be underpinned by sound business planning and our ability to fund our ambition. Some activities will continue to be business as usual while others will be scaled back, new or significantly scaled up.

We will invest in our financial systems, IT, fundraising capabilities, shops, café and advice services. We will also plan for our capital infrastructure, ensuring our staff to have the resources they need to deliver our bold ambitions. We will invest further in Queenswood, aligning visitor centre and café, creating an inspiring visitor experience, and ensuring financial sustainability.

The fundraising horizon for the years ahead looks challenging, and we expect grant funding to emphasize environment, community action, health and innovation. The growth of ‘green finance solutions’, and the bedding in of the new Environment Land Management scheme also provides opportunities we are exploring.

We will develop legacy and major donor giving while building strategic corporate relationships and contribute to novel funding opportunities like habitat banking and the net gain offer with our regional partners. We hope to achieve further growth in our membership in order to secure our financial future, and to strengthen HWT as a force for change; with more supporters and members come more voices and new volunteers ready to act for nature.

Finally, we will play our part in acting for climate change, taking every opportunity to actively reduce our own carbon footprint while also taking the opportunities that we have to demonstrate the role nature can play in combatting the climate emergency.

HWT's Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals and Values

To set a clear direction of travel and framework for action in the next three years, we have refreshed our vision, mission and strategic goals.

Vision: **'More Nature Everywhere'**

Mission: **To lead local action for nature's recovery**

Strategic Goals:

- **Nature in Recovery**
- **Taking action for nature**
- **Sustaining our future**

A suite of measurable objectives have been identified to deliver each of these strategic goals. **See operational plan.**

Values

We are bold	<i>We speak up for local nature and are determined to transform our ambitions into reality</i>
We are passionate champions for nature	<i>We put nature at the heart of everything we do</i>
We are guided by science	<i>We look to science to help us solve the difficult problems and build our understanding of the natural world</i>
We are committed to collaboration	<i>We work together with others to deliver change</i>
We act with integrity	<i>We are professional, transparent and objective in all that we do</i>
We are rooted	<i>We are connected with our communities, inspiring action and supporting inclusion through strong relationships</i>

Our Strategic Goals - Overview

We have three strategic goals: *Putting Nature in Recovery*, *Taking Action for Nature* and *Sustaining our Future*. These goals will guide our work over the coming 3 years. Each has its own set of objectives. Beneath these sit our activities which are described in the sections below. Throughout this document, we have indicated whether listed activities are ‘business as usual’, ‘scaled up’ or ‘new activity’ relative to our work to date. A further key element of our strategic plan will be our organisational values and behaviours which will drive *how we work* as well as *what we do*. External communication of our strategic plan will mostly focus on the two outward facing goals, *Putting Nature in Recovery* and *Taking Action for Nature*. The third goal, *Sustaining our Future*, will drive developments across our fundraising, facilities, finance, people and volunteer management. All these elements of our third goal are critical to our success.

Vision	<i>More Nature Everywhere</i>		
Mission	To lead local action for nature’s recovery		
Goals	Nature in Recovery	Taking Action for Nature	Sustaining our Future
Objectives	1. Manage our nature reserves to ensure they are rich in wildlife and strategically focus our landholdings	1. Connect People to Nature	1. Embed effective governance and business planning
	2. Work in partnership to create more, bigger, wilder connected habitats	2. Support local groups and businesses to take action for nature	2. Continue to grow and diversify funding streams to grow unrestricted income, whilst also continuing to grow restricted funding
	3. Demonstrate how restoring nature can deliver multiple environmental benefits, and help tackle the climate and nature emergencies	3. Develop a bolder campaigning voice and deliver proactive advocacy	3. Develop an inclusive workplace for all staff and volunteers

	4. Promote sustainable land use and challenge harmful practices and infrastructure that threaten nature's recovery		4. Reduce our carbon footprint and embed sustainability practices
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Strategic Goal 1: Put Nature into Recovery

Overview of the goal area...

We want to see 30% of the land across Herefordshire well managed for nature by 2030, to achieve our long-term goal of nature being in recovery. This means protecting and restoring wildlife within our nature reserves, our crown jewels, across the county. As of April 2023 we manage 60 nature reserves covering 550ha of land.

Our nature reserves are critically important to support nature's recovery in our area, but they represent less than 1% of the land area of the county. We must therefore also undertake considerable amounts of work in the wider landscape, beyond our nature reserves, to restore and create habitats that support more wildlife.

To support nature's recovery, we will employ a range of land management approaches on our own nature reserves and through our work with other landowners across the county. This will include conventional habitat or sometimes species-focussed management, positive wildlife management to create habitats and support wildlife on agricultural land, all the way through to nature-led management, such as rewilding (see definitions in Appendix A). We will work to monitor the effectiveness of each approach we take and we will modify the conservation management prescriptions accordingly, to ensure we give nature the best chance to recover.

Beyond our nature reserves, we want to create bigger, wilder, connected landscapes and networks where wildlife can thrive, and will do this by undertaking a range of conservation projects and partnerships, and through our new Land Advice Service.

We will deliver landscape recovery projects in the Lugg Valley, Wilder Marches and the Woolhope Dome and scope out the feasibility of a larger-scale rewilding project, and target new funding sources such as Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality to facilitate private investment in our conservation projects. We will generate high quality evidence about the multiple environmental benefits delivered by our nature reserves and wider countryside conservation projects, which are helping to tackle the climate and nature emergency. Finally, we will continue our strong wildlife advocacy and challenge river pollution, housing and infrastructure that threatens nature's recovery in Herefordshire.

To achieve our 30 by 30 ambition and to guide our work that supports nature's recovery, we are developing our own Nature Recovery Network. This is a map, which prioritises areas across the county, showing where HWT will aim to implement our range of land management approaches. Our NRN will set out a vision for a joined-up system of places important for wildlife, which in time we aim to become part of a visibly wilder landscape, and will support nature's recovery. Examples of the work from another trust, BBOWT's [here](#), and their publicly available StoryMap [here](#).

Our NRN will identify the areas that are most important for us to focus efforts on protecting and restoring nature. It will represent a combination of the existing places where wildlife is more abundant, such as HWT's nature reserves, and places where habitats need to be restored or created in order to expand and connect the remaining fragments so that nature can recover. The network will also be designed to promote connectivity for species to live, feed and breed. It will allow plants, animals, seeds and spores to move more easily from place to place, enable natural processes such as

pollination and seed dispersal to happen between these places, and nutrient and water cycles to work effectively. It will help the natural world adapt to a changing climate and other pressures on the environment. Natural places where wildlife is abundant and where such ecological processes work well are vitally important for both the biodiversity they sustain and the benefits they provide to society.

HWT's NRN will be used as an internal, strategic decision-support tool to guide where we prioritise our conservation activities over our next strategic plan period from 2023 – 2026. Taking a big picture view of the county, the NRN is designed to support us in identifying key areas across the county where we wish to prioritise our conservation efforts, such as where best to:

- acquire new nature reserves (e.g., to protect high value habitats, and to restore or rewild land for new schemes like biodiversity offsetting),
- develop new landscape scale conservation projects, and
- target our Land Advice Service activities in agricultural landscapes

Our NRN is not just about HWT leading conservation activity. It is about working with landowners of all kinds, especially farmers and developers, with local communities and local authority, to restore wildlife at landscape scale.

Our four objectives underpinning our goal, Putting Nature in Recovery, have strong connections to our internal NRN, as this shows spatially where we will focus our efforts over the next 3 years to:

1. Ensure our nature reserves are rich in wildlife and strategically focus our landholdings
2. Work in partnership to create more, bigger, wilder connected habitats
3. Demonstrate how restoring nature can deliver multiple environmental benefits, and help tackle the climate and nature emergencies
4. Promote sustainable land use and challenge harmful practices and infrastructure that threatens nature's recovery

1. Ensure our nature reserves are rich in wildlife and strategically focus our landholding

Objective explained

The ongoing management of our nature reserves by our Reserves Management team and many volunteers, to ensure that they remain havens for wildlife, is a fundamental part of HWT's activities. We will continue to assess opportunities to acquire additional land to help protect threatened wildlife in line with HWT's Reserves Acquisition Strategy and Policy, however, unless our operational capacity increases, acquisition will be limited. This will likely include opportunities to acquire land that is of high biodiversity value for protection, or acquisition of low-grade agricultural land to restore through for example, biodiversity offsetting schemes.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

Across our reserve network we will employ different land management approaches. It will mostly be utilising conventional habitat and sometimes species-focussed management, especially where there are restrictions (e.g., site designations) to the management prescriptions we can deploy. We will also seek to utilize nature-led management, such as rewilding (see definitions in Appendix A), where this is appropriate. The choice of management approach will always be rigorously assessed to ensure the best outcomes for wildlife can be achieved for a site and its surrounding landscape.

The affects of climate change are already being felt locally, with observations of changes in wildlife distribution, species life cycles becoming out of sync, and damage to habitats occurring from excessive flooding or prolonged dry spells. Our reserve management will need to adapt to address the affects of climate change, therefore we will be revising reserve management plans to incorporate potential climate change adaptations necessary for wildlife.

Whilst all priority habitats are important for ongoing management within our nature reserves, we will focus on what is special to Herefordshire – rivers, floodplain meadows, wooded valleys, traditional orchards and uplands – picking a smaller number of priorities as the focus of our attention for management and any proactive reserve acquisition over the strategic planning period.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan 2023 –26

Activities	Scale of change
Manage our existing reserve network	Business as usual
Focus our existing reserve network to help protect and restore wildlife, and develop resilience to the affects of climate change, in line with Reserves Acquisition/Divestment Policy (e.g., acquisition of high biodiversity value land for protection, or acquisition of low-grade agricultural land to restore, such as through biodiversity off-setting scheme)	New activity
Review of our nature reserve landholdings to evaluate continued opportunities to achieve our conservation and business objectives	New activity
Where appropriate, apply rewilding management approach, allowing natural processes to affect habitat outcomes on some reserves	New activity
Revise reserve management plans to incorporate potential climate change adaptations necessary for wildlife	Scaled up activity

2. Work in partnership to create more, bigger, wilder, connected habitats

Objective explained

Beyond our nature reserves, we want to create bigger, wilder, connected landscapes and networks where wildlife can thrive. To determine the conservation work we do beyond our nature reserves, we will be guided by our own Nature Recovery Network, currently being finalised with the support of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

Our work within the core and recovery NRN zones aims to enhance opportunities for wildlife, and ensure our NRN is thriving and abundant in wildlife. We will do this by providing targeted wildlife friendly land management advice to farmers and landowners, and undertaking landscape-scale habitat restoration projects that can deliver multiple benefits (e.g., to benefit wildlife, mitigate climate change, provide flood defence, and help draw down carbon). The nature-based solutions we

implement will deliver multiple benefits to wildlife and the environment, and will help create more resilient landscapes within the three counties.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

The NRN wider landscape zone is currently highly ecologically fragmented. We want wildlife to thrive here too, to support nature's recovery across the county. Our work in the wider landscape will not be limited to rare or threatened species, but also will benefit common species too. To do this we will undertake habitat restoration and creation projects in urban areas and on agricultural land, and deliver a wildlife-friendly management to farmers (70% of the county's area is farmland) and landowners across the county through our Land Advice Service. We will scale-up our partnership work with landowners and council, implementing new projects, creating corridors and stepping stones for wildlife (e.g., river corridors, road verge restorations, hedgerow planting projects). We will also work with partners to influence activities that create positive outcomes for nature (e.g., through Local Nature Partnership, Wye Catchment Partnership and Nutrient Management Board).

We want to demonstrate how rewilding could help create wilder and more connected landscapes. Over the next strategic plan period we will complete a scoping exercise to identify a potential rewilding project at scale and progress towards realising this vision. If this happens, it is likely to be in partnership with others. An average rewilding project in the UK is around 1,000ha in size, we estimate this would cost around £10+ million to buy outright. The feasibility needs to be tested.

As of this November, biodiversity net gain, and therefore delivery of biodiversity offsets, will be made mandatory under the new Environment Bill. Developers will need to formally mitigate their impacts by minimising impacts on site and delivering off site biodiversity offsets to leave biodiversity in a better state than its pre-development condition. We will aim to work with developers seeking to achieve biodiversity net gain, and other companies seeking to invest in nature-based solutions (e.g., to facilitate natural flood management, or to sequester carbon using nature-based solutions). By working with these new funding sources, we will facilitate landscape-scale private investment in natural capital within our Living Landscapes and new projects areas across the NRN.

As much of this work in the wider landscape is new or scaled-up activity it will need to be supported by new income streams (e.g., project funding, paid-for services, or other private funds for natural capital improvements).

Whilst all priority habitats are important for management across the Nature Recovery Network, Herefordshire's special habitats - rivers, floodplain meadows, wooded valleys, traditional orchards and uplands will be prioritised for our attention for wider countryside conservation work over the strategic planning period. There is further work to do to finalise the data of our NRN, which will provide additional focus in due course.

Where we acquire sites or develop wider countryside conservation projects that are not wildlife rich, then we will undertake:

- Restoration of all priority habitats (e.g., not limited to the list above)
- Creation of rewilded habitat (e.g., conversion from agricultural land to wildlife rich rewilded habitat)
- Restoration or creation of ecologically relevant features within a site / landscape, such as site complexity features (e.g., ponds, hedges, and scrub), wildlife corridors (e.g., hedgerows, wildflower strips, scrub), and floodplain features (e.g., rivers bank work, scrapes, ponds)

The following species will be prioritised in our work across the NRN, based on their role creating functioning and resilient ecosystems:

- Key species which indicate landscape linkage (e.g., bats, dormice, and water voles)
- Key species which show the health of farmed landscapes (e.g., farmland birds, and invertebrates that support a range of ecosystem services such as pest control, pollination, and soil health)
- Key ecological engineers which promote functioning systems (e.g., beavers)
- Key persecuted species of advocacy focus (e.g., badgers)

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan 2023 –26

Activities	Scale of change
Undertake landscape-scale habitat restoration projects and partnerships in our Living Landscapes and new projects areas across the NRN that can deliver multiple benefits (e.g., for wildlife and climate change mitigation)	Scaled up activity
Facilitate landscape-scale private investment in natural capital within our Living Landscapes and new projects areas across the NRN	New activity
Provide targeted wildlife friendly land management advice to farmers and landowners through our Land Advice Service	New activity
Undertake habitat restoration and creation projects in urban areas and on agricultural land	Business as usual
Work with partners and influence nature restoration activities to create positive outcomes for nature	Scaled up activity
Implement new projects creating corridors and stepping stones for wildlife (e.g., road verge, hedgerow projects)	Scaled up activity
Complete scoping of potential rewilding project at scale and progress towards realising this vision.	New activity

3. Demonstrate how restoring nature can deliver multiple environmental benefits, and help tackle the climate and nature emergencies

Objective explained

Our conservation work has a range of benefits for local wildlife. We are working to improve our demonstration of this work through a defined programme of monitoring and evaluation, and in telling a coherent story in our external communications. This will enable us to provide high quality evidence about the condition of species and habitats on our nature reserves and through our wider countryside projects, through our monitoring programme led by the reserves team with the support of many dedicated volunteers.

Beyond the benefits to wildlife, our work has many additional environmental benefits. By restoring nature, we can improve water and soil quality, improve local air quality, provide flood defence, help draw down carbon, and create improved recreational value for the public.

On the flip side, the loss of nature in the UK has contributed to multiple system failures, contributing to local issues such as poor water and soil quality, and global issues such as the climate and nature emergencies. There is an urgent need for society to gain a better understanding of the cost of our impact on the world's rapidly diminishing natural resources, and the benefits that HWT are delivering by undertaking our local conservation work.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

Over the next three years we will generate evidence that demonstrates how restoring nature, including implementing nature-based solutions, can deliver multiple environmental benefits and help tackle the climate and nature emergencies. We will do this primarily by providing high quality evidence about the multiple environmental benefits delivered by our nature reserves and wider countryside conservation projects.

We will communicate, engagingly and effectively, the multiple benefits of HWT’s nature-based solutions in helping tackle the climate and nature emergencies to our membership audience and social media following. We will collaborate with researchers to test and gather evidence about the multiple benefits (e.g., natural capital assets and flows of ecosystem services) of our conservation projects, and we will share evidence of the benefits of HWT’s conservation work with conservation practitioners and researchers in our region, and where relevant around the UK.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan 2023 –26

Activities	Scale of change
Provide high quality evidence about the condition of species and habitats, and the multiple environmental benefits delivered by our nature reserves and wider countryside conservation projects	Scaled up
Communicate the multiple benefits of HWT’s nature-based solutions in helping tackle the climate and nature emergencies, using social media and print media	Scaled up
Collaborate with researchers to test and gather evidence about the multiple benefits (e.g., natural capital assets and flows of ecosystem services) delivered by our nature reserves and wider countryside conservation projects	New activity
Share evidence of the benefits of HWT’s conservation work with conservation practitioners and researchers	Scaled up

4. Promote sustainable land use and challenge harmful practices and infrastructure that threatens nature’s recovery

Objective explained

Environmental and development pressures in our county are significant and growing and these directly threaten nature’s recovery. Intensive livestock production combined with transition to potatoes and maize are the greatest farming pressures. Housing development and road building are also significant threats to nature.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

We will strategically tackle these through a number of activities. This includes reviewing, commenting and objecting to development plans and proposals that threaten wildlife-rich areas and species. We will undertake strategic engagement with and advocacy of large infrastructure and other developments (e.g major road building, AD units, new settlements), and work to secure positive changes to development plans and support new green infrastructure. Our communication and campaigns will be more targeted and impactful in confronting the nature and climate emergencies (see section 2.3).

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan 23-26

Activities	Scale of change
Align farm advice, demonstration projects, collaborations with Farm Herefordshire and advocacy efforts to develop a Herefordshire network of nature friendly farmers who promote sustainable land use and the best possible implementation of ELMs for Herefordshire	New Activity
Screen and strategically respond to development plans and proposals that threaten wildlife rich areas, habitats and species or which can be improved to deliver more for wildlife	Business as usual
Strategic engagement and advocacy around large infrastructure and other developments	Business as usual

Put Nature into Recovery - Key Performance Indicators

Objective	Key Performance Indicator (cumulative over 5 years)
1. Ensure our nature reserves are rich in wildlife, and strategically focus our land holding	<p>1: 95% of habitats within nature reserves are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition (to be reported in 2023 and 2026, and then coinciding with the final year of each Strategic Plan (i.e., every 3 years)</p> <p>2: Key species populations on reserves are stable or increasing (e.g., butterfly and bird populations; one group to be reported each year)</p> <p>3.Example narrative case studies: conservation report results, annual monitoring results, examples of project outcomes on reserves</p>
2. Work in partnership to create more, bigger, wilder connected habitats	<p>4: 3,000ha of wildlife friendly land management advice delivered across the Nature Recovery Network</p> <p>5: 500ha of land put into positive wildlife management as a result of HWT support</p> <p>6: 30,000ha of wider countryside conservation projects delivering positive outcomes for nature</p>

	<p>7: Strategic influence of 3 partnerships to drive action for nature’s recovery across the 3 counties (e.g., our work on Local Nature Partnerships, Catchment Partnerships, Farm Herefordshire)</p> <p>Example narrative case studies: Living Landscape projects, land management advice delivered, biodiversity offsets schemes developed (ready for delivery in next five years); positive wildlife outcomes of our wider countryside projects</p>
<p>3. Demonstrate how restoring nature can deliver multiple environmental benefits, and help tackle the climate and nature emergencies</p>	<p>8: Assess 10 key nature reserves to illustrate their natural capital assets and ecosystem services</p> <p>9: Develop 3 new strategic research partnerships, to test and gather evidence about the multiple benefits delivered by our nature reserves and wider countryside conservation projects</p> <p>Narrative: examples of the natural capital assets and ecosystem services protected and enhanced through our protection and restoration efforts</p>
<p>4. Promote sustainable land use and challenge harmful practices that threatens nature’s recovery</p>	<p>10: 50 % of planning applications responded to by HWT have been withdrawn, refused or amended with improved considerations for wildlife</p> <p>Narrative: examples of planning applications refused or amended, infrastructure challenges, etc</p>

Strategic Goal 2: Taking Action for Nature

Overview of the goal area...

If we are to achieve our ambitious goals for nature we need to ensure that people living and working across the county are equipped with the skills, tools and inspiration to act for nature. Creating positive changes for nature in our region is a complex ambition and the action of individuals and communities is critical to ensuring that we can deliver the impact on the scale required for nature's recovery.

We recognise that more young people than ever before are aware of the climate emergency and are switched on to protecting the natural world. We will therefore help inspire and empower the next generation of conservationists that recognise and relate to the *think global, act local* philosophy.

We have four objectives which underpin our goal to enable this and future generations to act to benefit nature. Within each of these objectives, activities have been described which will enable us to facilitate opportunities to inspire people to take personal and collective action:

1. Connect people from diverse backgrounds with nature
2. Support people to take action for nature
3. Develop a bolder campaigning voice and deliver proactive advocacy

1. Connect people from diverse backgrounds with nature

Objective explained

A connection to nature is crucial in encouraging people to act for wildlife. Deepening personal connection to wildlife promotes pro-conservation behaviours, so our ambition is to create more pathways to encourage individual and community connections to wildlife than we have ever delivered before.

In order to spark the first curiosity about the natural world, or by helping people to learn more about it, we will deliver inspirational education activities and engagement opportunities that will promote a connection to nature. We will inform and educate people about the positive role that HWT is taking to protect nature to garner a greater following of people inspired by local wildlife.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

We aim to grow our supporter network by engaging new and diverse audiences. To do this, we will help people to recognise the positive impact and enrichment that nature has on our health, our wellbeing, our culture and other aspects of our lives. By making nature accessible and meaningful we will increase its relevance to broad and diverse audiences and therefore promote connection and pro-conservation behaviours.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan 22-23

Activities	Scale of change
Deliver high quality and inspiring events and learning experiences to engage a broader and more diverse audience	Scaled up activity
Develop high quality experiences to enable more young people to engage with wildlife and act for nature	Scaled up activity
Provide information & engagement opportunities for visitors across our reserves, focussing on our “flagship” reserves and visitor centre	Focusing activity
Promote the positive impact nature has on people’s lives and wellbeing	Business as usual
Provide opportunities for real, relatable experiences of nature using a variety of platforms to promote connection in diverse audiences	Scaled up activity
Promote the positive impact that nature has on society and community	Business as usual

2. Support people to take action for nature

Objective explained

Volunteers underpin much of our capacity to be able to deliver our work and therefore we will continue to ensure that they are equipped with the skills required to make a positive impact. We recognise that there is a huge personal benefit from a volunteering experience, including life and social skill development and we will ensure to continue to support all volunteers to promote these gains.

We will also develop our use of community organising methodologies, developing clear pathways to action that will support us to deliver our pinnacle goal of putting nature in recovery.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

To deliver improvements for wildlife in the wider landscape we will create opportunities to promote the skills and learning of local people so that they can take the necessary local action to protect wildlife. We will deliver activity where people live in order to illustrate how simple actions can have a big impact on local scale, involving both rural and urban audiences. We will establish a nature action network to bring people together, learn and act. This network will support people to monitor wildlife, take practical action to recover nature and influence those with power and ownership of the wider landscape. Over the years our supporters have helped us achieve huge gains for wildlife. We will now enable them to take greater personal and collective action to create greater impact for nature.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Provide resources and support to people and groups to take action for their own local patch for nature	Scaled up activity
Organise local people where it is strategic against the NRN - to monitor wildlife, take practical action to recover nature and influence those with power and ownership of the wider landscape for positive nature outcomes	Scaled up activity
Develop a nature action network to support groups, branches and civil society organisations take action for nature and share best practice	New activity
Organise our supporters to take more action for wildlife with strategic interventions e.g. local elections; key developments and decisions	Scaled up activity

3. Be Bold – develop a bolder campaigning voice and deliver proactive advocacy

Objective explained

Our campaigning will educate and inspire a broad and diverse audiences to make informed choices and commitments to protecting wildlife

We will also take people into action via campaigns where it is strategic

Adding people power to our campaigning, advocacy and comms will improve our impact

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

Grow 1-2 new bold campaigns that align with the interests of our members, partners and conservation priorities.

For each campaign identify and build relationships with key partners, influencers and change makers.

Develop an integrated approach to policy, advocacy, comms, campaigns and action.

We plan to use existing and evolving methods of communication, including innovative use of digital platforms, to reach new audiences. We will include clear calls to action and concise messages to support audiences to take-action for nature, whether writing to an MP, signing a petition, or creating wildlife-friendly gardens. We will ask for feedback and engagement from our supporters and encourage two-way dialogue. Finally, we will use inspirational communications to educate and raise awareness of our own organisation and expertise.

With a change of government on the horizon and a new administration locally, our advocacy work with local decision makers is crucial to ensure that nature has a voice in local policy, planning decision making, environmental markets and the implementation of ELMs to shift to regenerative farming. We must also continue to ensure that our region is represented in national policy and regulation and to further increase our impact on nature’s recovery we will ensure that we work in conservation partnerships across our region.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Engage with local key decision makers on plans and policies to restore nature	Business as usual
Engage with county and strategic conservation partnerships	Business as usual
Engagement with national and regional environmental policies, plans and regulations	Business as usual
Develop 1-2 new bold campaigns a year that align with the interests of our members, partners and conservation priorities.	New activity
Promote our positive impact for wildlife and share our expert narrative	Focused activity
Increase our influence and reach through significant growth in our permissions-based email database and social media following	Scaled up activity
Deliver clear and concise messages to the general public about how local action to restore nature is helping tackle the climate and nature emergencies (Links to Goal 1 objective 3).	Focused activity
Drive programme of two-way communication to generate action from our audiences	Scaled up activity
Use evolving technologies and effective methods to involve and support new and diverse audiences	Scaled up activity

Taking Action for Nature - Key Performance Indicators

Objective	Key Performance Indicator
1. Connect people with nature	<p>11: 80% of participants of HWT led activity and visitors to our visitor centre report an increased connection to nature. (Sample based analysis)</p> <p>12: 80% of participants of our programmes report an increased in their wellbeing; motivation to recover nature; take action to recover nature</p> <p>Example narrative case studies: work delivered and qualitative evidence of impact from participants, e.g. impact on wellbeing; impact on community/social outcomes; increased diversity of participants.</p>
2. Support people to take action for nature	13: 90% of local groups and communities agree that our take action work inspires and creates further positive action for wildlife

	<p>14: 80% of active HWT volunteers have adequate and excellent resources to deliver action</p> <p>Example narrative case studies: volunteer training on reserves or visitor centres; activity in towns and cities aimed at increasing local action; local people utilising HWT resources to promote wildlife in gardens, community spaces, schools.</p>
<p>4. Be Bold – develop a bolder campaigning voice and deliver proactive advocacy</p>	<p>15.1: Grow print, online and radio media coverage by 50% from a 2021-2022 baseline</p> <p>15.2: Grow social media engagement by 25% by 2026</p> <p>16: One in 8 people across our county will take positive action for nature each year by 2026; One in 4 by 2030</p>
	<p>17: 80% Key decision makers identified are acting for wildlife when called upon</p> <p>18: 10% of nature recovery KPIs are achieved through support of taking action efforts</p> <p>19: Example narrative case studies: working with local authority for nature’s recovery; working with key decision makers that result in a positive gain for wildlife; lobbying campaigns and attempts to influence</p>

Strategic Goal 3: Sustaining our Future

Overview of the goal area...

If HWT is to deliver its ambitions for wildlife across the coming years it is critical that our finances, people and infrastructure are resilient to the challenges we face within our operating environment. We must prepare ourselves for unforeseen circumstances and ensure that we can be flexible as the future unfolds.

We have five objectives which underpin our goal of building organisational resilience, under each of which we have identified specific activities that we will be striving to deliver.

1. Embed effective governance and business planning
2. Continue to grow and diversify funding streams to grow unrestricted income, whilst also continuing to grow restricted funding
3. Develop a values-led, inclusive workplace for all staff and volunteers
4. HWT’s estate has a clear and deliverable infrastructure investment plan
5. Reduce our carbon footprint and embed sustainability practices

1. Embed effective governance and business planning

Objective explained

It is critical to our success that decision making continues to be evidence based and subject to high levels of scrutiny and challenge. Embedding this in our organisation culture means ensuring we have skills at all levels and information flowing in a way that facilitates accountability.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

We will continue to assess Trustee skills and recruit to the fill gaps, while operating robust systems of internal reporting and information sharing. As we launch new ventures, or expand our landholding, we will ensure that financial plans are in place which demonstrate long term sustainability and – where appropriate - profitability. For our existing commercial ventures – notably Queenswood visitor centre – we will prepare revised business plans and deliver against these to ensure they are self-sustaining and can generate surplus funds. This plan will reflect the unique strengths of the centre and recognise the role they play in delivering our wider aims for connecting visitors to nature as well as generating income.

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Recruit Trustees to fill skills gaps and ensure dynamism at board level	Business as usual
Embed structured Trustee scrutiny of performance against Charity Commission, Data Protection and all other relevant regulations	Business as usual
Embed rigorous business planning to support our strategic goals and ensure that all commercial activities are profit making	Scaled up activity
Underpin new activities with sustainable business plans	Scaled up activity
Ensure all land purchases have 30-year sustainable funding plans	Scaled up activity
Develop pipeline of strategic projects which inspire people and organisations to donate and support our goals	Scaled up activity

Success criteria

2. Continue to grow and diversify funding streams to grow unrestricted income, whilst also continuing to grow restricted income

Objective explained

In order to deliver the ambitions of this strategic plan we need to grow our income and do so in a rapidly changing fundraising environment.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

First, we plan changes to our membership income generation, targeting in membership increases. We will work to increase the awareness of our work across the population of our county and develop engagement through developing our social media presence and refreshing our communications. We will convert online engagement into membership, donations, volunteering and

community action. Face-to-face fundraising will remain part of our portfolio but we will seek to mitigate the risk of relying on this income stream, through diversification into other income growth areas.

We will maintain our trust and grant fundraising efforts to support a strategic project pipeline (see previous objective) and enhance our monitoring and reporting systems. We will build a sustainable major giving and legacy programmes through our new focus on philanthropy, including developing more efficient prospect research, engagement and stewardship mechanisms.

Alongside these traditional fundraising streams, we intend to launch a land advice service, expand retail, run our visitor centre café and explore environmental markets. Over the next 3 years we hope to launch at least one other potential new commercial prospect for HWT and are exploring e.g. eco-tourism, green burials and other mission-aligned opportunities.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Launch profitable mission-aligned land advice service	New activity
Appropriately expand our retail operation	Scaled up activity
Grow a successful experiences and events “business”	Scaled up activity
Grow membership by optimising all recruitment channels and increasing support from existing members	Scaled up activity
Ensure alignment of trust and grant fundraising programme with strategic project pipeline	Scaled up activity
Enhance and build sustainable major giving and legacy programmes, increasing percentage of fundraised income from these sources	Scaled up activity
Investigate opportunities for commercial income diversification such as green burials, weddings, wildlife gardening and ecotourism	New activity
Develop and grow our knowledge of new finance opportunities, particularly biodiversity offsets for developers	New activity

Success criteria

3.Develop a values-led, inclusive workplace for all staff and volunteers

Objective explained

It is imperative that we invest in our people, as it is only through our people that we will achieve our objectives. A priority focus needs to be on the development of our people, by which we mean both our paid employee team and our invaluable volunteer workforce. We must also develop our approach and action to EDI.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

For our paid employees, we will implement a holistic employee learning and development programme:

- Stage 1 – Leading self (for all Employees)
- Stage 2 – Leading others (for Line Managers)
- Stage 3 – Leading the organisation (for Management Team)

We will focus on enabling our employees to bring their best self to work in order to do their best work. Best work will be enabled by a holistic, agile, and people-centric approach to employee engagement, performance, and learning.

We will review how we attract candidates through our employer branding, plan for the future and explore active succession plans for key roles.

We aim to develop a more values-driven culture, embedded through our new HWT values and behaviours and linked to all ways of working.

Our volunteers are critical to our success in achieving our goals. We are always mindful of the role volunteers have and will continue to play in HWT’s triumphs. We will use our new volunteer strategy to deliver a more inclusive and innovative volunteer and trainee experience.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Implement development programme for all employees, managers and Management Team	Scaled up activity
Implement employee engagement plan including a wellbeing strategy, benefits package, enhanced feedback mechanisms	Scaled up activity
Deliver a radical new approach to our Volunteer Development Strategy	New activity
Have robust talent mapping and active succession plans in place for all employees and key volunteer roles	New activity
Develop our recruitment experience & employer branding to attract diverse talent	New activity
Develop an Equity, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) plan	New activity

4.HWT’s estate has a clear and deliverable infrastructure investment plan

Objective explained

Define what we would like HWT’s estate to look like in the future. Does the estate meet our goals as a Charity in terms of nature recovery, taking action for nature and its sustainability (financial and wider)? Develop a plan to realise this infrastructure investment.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Biennial review of ICT infrastructure and resource against organisational needs to identify improvements.	New activity
Enhance resilience of ICT infrastructure	Scaled up activity
Deliver fleet management	Scaled up activity
Deliver compliance with Health and Safety regulations	Business as usual

5.Reduce our carbon footprint and embed sustainability practices

Objective explained

As a wildlife organisation, care for the environment and nature is central to what we do. It must also play a leading role in how we do it. HWT has a history of investing in sustainability technology and energy sources, and we aim to build on this history.

Overview of strategy, tactics, activities

We will be adding increased rigour to our sustainability work – by seeking independent evaluation of our efforts and agreeing concrete targets for improvement. We will have completed our initial carbon footprinting exercise before the Strategic Plan is launched and will use this to identify key areas for improvement that will be set out in a clear Carbon Action Plan.

Partners required

Plan of approach

Power analysis

Delivery plan

Activities	Scale of change
Engage in rigorous assessment of our carbon footprint and implement plans to reduce this	New activity
Lead our employees, volunteers, members and others in promoting sustainable choices through our communications activity	Scaled up activity

Secure our future - Key Performance Indicators

Our key performance indicators for this goal are:

Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Embed effective governance and business planning	18. Board receives regular reporting on projects, finances and risk 19. Both visitor centres deliver profitability in line with business plans
Act decisively to grow and sustain membership and develop new sustainable income streams	20. Grow income to £2million per year by 2026 21. 100% increase in Major Donor Income 22. Corporate giving grows to £20k per annum by 2025-2026 23. Grant income averages at least £400-500K for each year of the plan 24. Increase in confirmed legacy pledges 25. 8500 members by 2026
Develop a values-led, inclusive workplace for all	26. Measurable staff satisfaction in annual survey
Build fit for purpose infrastructure to support flexible working	27. By 2026 all core ICT infrastructure will be less than five years old 28. HWT Fleet replaced in line with fleet management plan
Reduce our carbon footprint and embed sustainability practices	29. Measurable decline in carbon footprint, achieving goal set out in assessment

For further details see the full 2021-26 Business Plan.

Appendix A: Definitions

Community. A community is a group of people who share something in common. Communities can be defined as a sense of place, identity, affinity. For example, where people live, something that people like to do and do together, or shared experiences. There is no size limit (at either end of the scale) to community, but it needs to depend on a mutual engagement of an interest and result in a learning partnership.

Key Decision Makers. People who have the authority to make strategic decisions. An example of key decision makers we work with include elected officials such as Members of Parliament or Council Members, or directors or heads of department empowered to make strategic decisions within a public or private organisation.

Nature. All elements of the biological and physical world, which includes wildlife, soil, air, and water, and the larger systems within which they interact (e.g., habitats, ecosystems, landscapes, and local and regional climate).

Nature Recovery Network (NRN). HWT's NRN is a spatial map that identifies areas that are most important for HWT to focus its effort on protecting and restoring nature. It represents a combination of the existing places where wildlife is more abundant, such as HWT's nature reserves, our crown jewels that already protect wildlife; plus, places where habitats need to be restored or created in order to expand and connect the remaining fragments so that nature can recover. It will extend across our county, including rural and urban areas. The network is designed to promote connectivity for species to live, feed and breed. It will allow plants, animals, seeds and spores to move more easily from place to place, enable natural processes such as pollination and seed dispersal to happen between these places, and nutrient and water cycles to work effectively. It will help the natural world to adapt to a changing climate and other pressures on the environment. Natural places where wildlife is abundant and where such ecological processes work well are vitally important for both the biodiversity they sustain and the benefits they provide to society.

Positive wildlife management of land beyond nature reserves. Refers to management of land (e.g., agricultural land, and semi-natural habitats), which restores, enhances or creates habitats that will support a greater diversity and abundance of wildlife. For example: hedgerow restoration, which will support a diversity of wildlife; arable reversion to support species rich grassland; modifying cropped area management to include winter stubbles, which will support winter survival of many seed-eating birds, mammals, and insects.

Rewilding. Rewilding is a continuum of conservation management intervention, which helps restore or create functioning ecosystems. At one end, there is intensive, targeted management to maintain a specific feature (e.g., species or habitat). At the other end is a more natural system where ecosystems are controlled / largely controlled by natural ecological processes with more unpredictable outcomes. HWT will work on projects and in areas at various points along that continuum. Our aim for rewilding will be to reinstate and restore natural processes over larger scales than traditional conservation management, so a location can gradually move up a scale of wildness along the continuum towards a more nature-led approach. This will reduce fragmentation and maximise both biodiversity and bio-abundance. There are places and locations where rewilding would be inappropriate; for example, on protected sites which are already managed for a particular species or habitat or have stipulations on how features are managed, and/or sites which are too small for natural processes to function effectively.

Wellbeing. In its literal sense, wellbeing can be defined as 'the state of being comfortable, happy or healthy'. Wellbeing is a broader concept than the 'moment to moment'. For example it can also include other things such as how satisfied people are with their lives as a whole, or their sense of purpose. For the context of this document, we will use the New Economics Foundation definition: how people feel and how they function on a personal and social level and how they evaluate their lives as a whole.

Wildlife. All native and naturalised species, including both plants and animals.

Appendix B – Key Performance Indicator Summary Table

Nature is in Recovery	1. Ensure our nature reserves are rich in wildlife, and strategically review our landholding	<p>1: 95% of habitats within nature reserves are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition (to be reported 2023 and 2026, and then coinciding with the final year of each Strategic Plan (i.e., every 3years))</p> <p>2: Key species populations on reserves are stable or increasing (e.g., butterfly and bird populations; one group to be reported each year)</p> <p>3: 100% of our reserves have up to date management plans</p> <p>Example narrative case studies: conservation report results, annual monitoring results, examples of project outcomes on reserves</p>
	2. Create bigger, wilder, connected landscapes where wildlife can thrive	<p>4: Wildlife friendly land management advice delivered across the Nature Recovery Network to at least 75 landowners</p> <p>5: 500ha of land put into positive wildlife management as a result of HWT support</p> <p>6: We will deliver 5 countryside conservation projects within the county delivering positive outcomes for nature</p> <p>7: Participation on at least 4 strategic partnerships groups to drive action for nature’s recovery across the county (e.g., Local Nature Partnerships, Catchment Partnerships)</p> <p>Example narrative case studies: Living Landscape projects, land management advice delivered, biodiversity offsets schemes developed (ready for delivery in next five years); positive wildlife outcomes of our wider countryside projects (e.g. Hedgerow Havens outcome measures)</p>
	Demonstrate how restoring nature can deliver multiple environmental benefits, and help tackle the	<p>8: Assess 3 key nature reserves to illustrate their natural capital assets and ecosystem services</p> <p>9: Develop 1-2 new strategic research partnerships, to test and gather evidence about the multiple benefits delivered by our nature reserves and wider countryside conservation projects</p>

	climate and nature emergencies	Narrative: examples of the natural capital assets and ecosystem services protected and enhanced through our protection and restoration efforts
	Challenge housing and infrastructure that threatens nature's recovery	10: 50 % of planning applications responded to by HWT have been withdrawn, refused or amended with improved considerations for wildlife Narrative: examples of planning applications refused or amended, infrastructure challenges
Taking Action for nature	1. Reconnect people with nature	11: 80% of participants of HWT led activity and visitors to our Centres report an increased connection to nature. (Sample based analysis) 12: 80% of participants of our programmes report an increased in their wellbeing Example narrative case studies: work delivered and qualitative evidence of impact from participants; e.g., impact on wellbeing, impact on community/social outcomes, increased diversity of participants
	2. Engage and support diverse local communities to act for nature	13: 90% of local groups and communities agree that our engagement inspires and creates further positive action for wildlife 14: 80% of active HWT volunteers have adequate and excellent resources to deliver action Example narrative case studies: volunteer training on reserves or visitor centres; activity in towns and cities aimed at increasing local action; local people utilising HWT resources to promote wildlife in gardens, community spaces, schools
	3. Use transformational communications and campaigns to confront the nature and climate emergencies	15.1: Grow print, online and radio media coverage by 50% from a 2022-23 baseline 15.2: Grow social media engagement by 25% by 2026 16: One in four people across the county will take positive action for nature by 2026
	4. Assert our position that decision making on every level to prioritise nature	17: 80% Key decision makers identified are acting for wildlife when called upon Example narrative case studies: working with local authorities for nature's recovery; working with key decision makers that result in a positive gain for wildlife; lobbying campaigns and attempts to influence.

Sustaining our future	Embed effective governance and business planning	18. Board receives regular reporting on projects, finances and risk 19. Both visitor centres deliver profitability in line with business plans
	Act decisively to grow membership and develop new sustainable income streams	20. Grow income to £2million per year by 2026 21. 100% increase in Major Donor Income 22. Corporate giving grows to £20k per annum by 2025-2026 23. Grant income averages at least £400-500K for each year of the plan 24. Increase in confirmed legacy pledges 25. 8500 members by 2026 Other narrative reporting against business plan: major donor income, legacy income, consultancy income.
	Develop a values-led, inclusive workplace for all	26. Measurable staff satisfaction in annual survey
	Build fit for purpose infrastructure to support flexible working	27. By 2026 all core ICT infrastructure will be less than five years old 28. HWT Fleet replaced in line with fleet management plan
	Reduce our carbon footprint and embed sustainability practices	29. Measurable decline in carbon footprint, achieving goal set out in assessment

Appendix C – Theory of Change – HWT has borrowed BBOWT’s Theory of Change

We are calling for 30% of land to be well-managed for nature by 2030

