

Herefordshire
Wildlife Trust



A 2020 Vision for Wildlife

Wilder
FUTURE





Our Vision

Herefordshire revived as a county with thriving wildlife - with nature reserves and wild spaces at the heart of an expanding and effective Nature Recovery Network.

Space for nature across our farmed landscape and extending into our towns and villages

Healthy, naturally functioning rivers and floodplains - providing clean water, mitigating flooding and alive with wildlife.

Flowery meadows and commons buzzing with life, natural woodlands alive with birdsong, ancient trees properly venerated, and road verges, hedgerows and village greens managed for wildlife.

Wild spaces accessible with 10 minutes of every home for everyone to enjoy and appreciate.

A Green economy – with Herefordshire ahead of the curve on promoting and installing green technologies and promoting green tourism.

Herefordshire seen as a vibrant 'green county' - attracting new young families for the quality of life and the countryside experience.

A strong partnership of organisations and communities across Herefordshire collaborating to address the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

The Time for Change

2019 marked a turning point in the widespread acceptance of our environmental emergency and climate crisis. The declines have now reached such a catastrophic scale that their consequences are impacting on people and communities across the country - through flooding, pollution and poor living environments. Against the odds, Britain has become one of the most nature depleted countries in the world and we, and our children, are being deprived of the contact with nature and the outdoors that is so essential for a long, healthy and happy life.

We've lost so much already. Once common species have become scarce, scarce species rare and rare species are going extinct. Britain has lost 133 species since the 16th century, and nearly 1,200 more are now under threat. That is 15% of the total and this extinction will accelerate if we don't take drastic action. Habitats are under siege from all sides through agricultural intensification, relentless uncoordinated development, major infrastructure projects and climate change. Pollution threatens our wildlife and habitats, the quality of our water and air and the health of our rivers and seas.

You might not have noticed the pervasive or insidious changes that crept up on us slowly or subtly. Or you might have forgotten the flocks of lapwings and curlews in the fields and water meadows of your youth. If you haven't been walking in the countryside for a while, you may not realise that the green fields are lush ryegrass silage fields, supporting little wildlife, rather than the buzzing flowery hay meadows of the past. Our younger generation may never even have experienced these treasures, here in Herefordshire.

The Wildlife Trust and other conservation bodies have been highlighting the plight of wildlife and warning of the impacts of this loss of habitats and species for decades. We have been doing our best to conserve them in our Nature Reserves, protected areas and across wider landscapes. We have been trying to engage a new generation of youngsters with nature. But this has not been enough, and now society has finally woken up to the full extent of the challenges facing us. This is brilliant and we are excited for what it may mean for wildlife. In 2020, everyone must recognise that there is an ecological crisis happening alongside the climate emergency and realise that if we act now, we can make a difference.

We have a clear vision to place nature's recovery at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency - for wildlife itself, for the natural services it provides and for our own wellbeing and prosperity. The right policies by government and corporations, combined with the actions of individuals, can make changes that will address and even reverse losses. This needs wide support to enact political and corporate change. Each of us must play our part, whether in our professional capacity or in our personal lives. Together we can tip the balance and start to put things right.

We must be wildly ambitious to recover populations of our rare and scarce species, restore the quality and resilience of our habitats and expand, create and connect places for wildlife. We know how to do this. We just need the political will, the resources and the right action in the right places. So, we need to act at all levels in our society, from global to local.

As a Nation

As a nation, we need to move away from the principle of economic growth at all costs to a sustainable future where wildlife and people can thrive together.

We call on Government to:

- take decisive action to address climate change – reducing emissions to net zero by 2040 or earlier, with decisive action now and significant improvements by 2030;
- strengthen legal environmental protection measures for habitats, species and the quality of our air, rivers and seas, beyond those currently set by European policies;
- pass a strong and ambitious Environment Act with legally binding targets requiring all Government departments and sectors to restore nature and natural capital;
- revolutionise agriculture support mechanisms to enforce sustainable agriculture that works with, rather than against, nature: protecting and enhancing our ecosystem services to alleviate flooding, maintain resilient soils and improve water quality; supporting rewilding; and including measures to restore a resilient and well-connected natural landscape;
- set better design standards and targets for built development and infrastructure to achieve carbon neutrality, generate more renewable energy and achieve strong biodiversity net gain measures that truly put back more than they take away;
- create, or revive, a strong independent environmental watchdog organisation, with the teeth and resources to effect change.



As a County

As a county, we can't wait for national policy to set a new direction - we need to take action now. Herefordshire Council has set a good example with its ambitious target to become carbon neutral within 10 years.

We call on Herefordshire Council, its staff and our Councillors, the statutory agencies and all organisations with influence over land use in the county to:

- formally recognise the current ecological crisis occurring alongside the climate emergency;
- formally recognise the value of our natural environment to ecosystem services, our economy and to our quality of life and wellbeing;
- work together, through the Local Nature Partnership and with other organisations to deliver the county target to address the ecological crisis and to reach carbon neutrality by 2030/31;
- apply strong local environmental sustainability standards to all built development - adopting and maintaining a net biodiversity gain policy;
- create Nature Recovery Networks with wildlife friendly green spaces in our cities and towns;
- stop building new roads and redeploy the funds to create sustainable transport systems;
- support new approaches to agriculture to reduce and reverse environmental damage and make more space for nature;
- restore natural water catchments and floodplains and the quality of our rivers and streams;
- double the amount of tree cover in Herefordshire by 2030;
- take decisive enforcement action against everyone deliberately flouting environmental laws and regulations;
- gather new data on the extent and quality of wildlife sites and species and make the information freely available through the Biological Records Centre to support our actions;
- form a Green Business Network to support actions for climate change and the ecological crisis;
- look for and support innovative business solutions to our environmental challenges;
- promote our economy through sustainable tourism with nature at its heart.

As a Community

At a local and a personal level, to quote Tolkien and Greta Thunberg: no one is too small to make a difference. We all have our part to play.

We call on each and every one of you to:

- be a voice for nature - support our calls for action, speak up for nature at home and at work, challenge those in power;
- be a force for nature – volunteer for the Wildlife Trust, or in your local community – wherever you can make a difference;
- persuade your local Town and Parish Councils and community organisations to do their bit for wildlife;
- lead by example – adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, consume ethically, rewild your garden, reduce your carbon footprint, reduce your use of plastic;
- get closer to nature – get out and see the wildlife, whether on our Nature Reserves or on your doorstep. Take your young folk along with you!
- join the Trust – become a member, persuade your friends and acquaintances to join, support our appeals and campaigns, volunteer, help us raise funds.



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