

**Quarterly update from CEO, Jamie Audsley and Chair of Trustees,
Alison Mclean, for Volunteers and Local Branch Group Committees**

Tuesday 10th June, 2025

We have now entered the third year of our three year strategy - [Wilder Herefordshire, More Nature Everywhere](#).

Successes so far include:

- Nature recovery at scale – we are now working to influence over 15,000ha (big goal is 50,000ha managed or protected for nature) via landscape recovery work and advice to landowners and managers
- Our action to recover our rivers, along with many others, has seen joint investment from Welsh Gov for a new Catchment Management Plan, £150K and £1M from Westminster for Research Fund - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-welsh-government-unite-in-1m-fund-to-transform-river-wye>
- Growth in our income, which has now passed £2.4M, in line with our business plan

Challenges:

- Government policy e.g. nature friendly farming schemes for farmers paused
- [Planning and Infrastructure Bill](#) threatens to remove many of the protections for nature
- Unrestricted income growth - money we can use for any reason aligned to our charitable purpose has been slower than hoped for and combined with rising costs has seen a small reduction in staff roles including the loss of Fundraising Officer and Events & Volunteer Coordinator.

Financial Summary (*figures subject to audit*):

- At the beginning of 2024-25, we had agreed a very ambitious budget for the year, aiming to grow total income by more than 40% compared to 2023-24, and to have a surplus on our unrestricted funds of about £23 000, compared with an actual deficit (planned) in 2023-24 of £123 000.
- Income for the year (24-25) stands at £2,395,347. This represents an increase of 39% against 2023/24.
- The management accounts show that we grew total income by 38.6%, indicating that we achieved most of what we had set out to do.
- We also managed costs effectively, and the accounts show a surplus on our unrestricted fund of about £37,000.

So where are we focusing?

- Key - bigger, better, more joined up - nature corridors including Lugg Valley Wetlands and Wilder Woolhope
- Focusing on action where we can have a genuine impact e.g. opposition to proposed Lugg Meadows development

- Working hard on key income segments as per our income generating strategy

Update on the first half of 2025 (annual year) against the three key "pillars" of the Trust's strategy

Nature recovery...

- We welcomed two new full-time members of staff to our Reserves Team, Luke Osman and Rosie Wilson following the retirement of Trevor Hulme and Paul Ratcliffe and also Lewis Goldwater leaving the Trust.
- *Severn Treescapes*, *Water Environment Investment Fund* and *Wye Adapt to Climate Change* projects all continue and have all delivered fantastic and tangible successes. Check out the following links for more detail:
<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/news/wye-adapt-climate-change-case-study> ;
<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/news/funding-natural-flood-management-along-herefordshires-yazor-brook>
- Project development pipeline is working well with good collaboration between teams and submission of grants of £200K+, partnering with Shropshire; Radnorshire; Worcestershire and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts. This has secured an extension of the Severn Treescapes project and we await to hear the result of other grant applications.
- We continue collaboration with Herefordshire Council to develop the county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- The pause on SFI applications announced by DEFRA provides further difficulty in encouraging farmers to transition to nature friendly farming. The Trust has also decided to pause our own Farm Advice Service for the period ahead, taking stock of our best way forward and this has sadly led to us making our Farm Advisor Rebecca redundant.
- We are making progress on our planned nature reserve divestment (see: [Nature Reserves - an update on our strategy | Herefordshire Wildlife Trust](#) for details). We have completed the sale of Rookhill Coppice and are now working with our solicitors to progress the sale of Romers Wood and Motlins Hole, Upper Swingley Coppice and Merivale Wood and continue to explore options for a long-term lease of Pool Ellocks.
- Work and priorities on our nature reserves are being reviewed by a new working group of the board of trustees to support our next steps.
- Ongoing Implementation of H&S "active monitoring" is being used to drive continuous improvement

Nature Action...

Recently we have been focusing on developing a clear offer for young people, schools, colleges, youth groups and universities to engage with HWT, connect with nature and take action. Specifically, we have:

- Completed a Youth Listening Project with young people across the county
- Announced our first Young Nature Champion Award winners
<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/news/herefordshire-wildlife-trust-and-howard-bulmer-charitable-trust-announce-winners-howard-bulmer>
- Established a Young Rangers team at Bartonsham Meadows
- Delivered two great projects with students at Hereford College of Art

- Trialled Green Young Minds sessions
- Established a Youth Forum for the Trust

In addition, we are improving our member and volunteer welcome, increased our “Discovery Days” enabling members to better get to know the Trust, refreshed our journey into membership and established a Volunteer Voice forum to better listen to and involve our volunteers across the Trust’s work.

Sustaining our future...

Fundraising

- January Sale membership recruitment exceeded our target of 50 new members, achieving 84 new members (54 new memberships). The Trust’s membership continues to grow and is now above 8,000 members!
- Corporate Members, Appeals and Major Donors continue to be our focus for development and we raised over £20,000 through the Big Give’s Green Match Fund (contributing to our Nature Recovery Fund appeal) in the first quarter of 25-26

Commercial

- Our shops and café continue to trade well, making over £65,000 of profit for the Trust in 24-25
- Venue Hire bookings have risen during the start of the year leading to a good level of 'Business on the books' and warm leads.

Improving accessibility at Queenswood

- The delivery of the ‘Accessible Queenswood’ project has commenced with the arrival of our first ‘Tramper’ (mobility scooter), installation of a Wheelchair Swing and braille signage to support visually impaired visitors. Over the next few weeks, accessible doors will be installed in the café and visitor centre.