



Herefordshire
Wildlife Trust



Recruitment Booklet Hereford ~ River City Project

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust: our story so far..

This is an exciting, if challenging, time for all Wildlife Trusts. We know that whilst the connection of people to the natural world has strengthened, wildlife is declining, and we are seeing a joint biodiversity and climate crisis. The political and legislative context in which we work is also changing fast with uncertainty and pressure being placed on nature by the new government.

We now face a critical tipping point in reversing the fortunes of our wildlife, ecosystems and communities, and it is clear that all three are inextricably intertwined. We know that we can secure a thriving world for future generations that offers a stable climate, clean water, abundant food, health and happiness. But to do that, working together to restore and protect Herefordshire's nature is vital.

Herefordshire is a beautiful rural county in the Marches, the borderland with Wales, increasingly appreciated as a tourism destination with great outdoor recreational opportunities and known for its cider, beef and wonderful landscapes. People are moving to our countryside, looking for a high quality of life and local communities are working hard to sustain and adapt farming and land management as climate challenges increasingly impact.

Our central plain is largely productive arable land, but it is surrounded on all sides by upland fringe and commons and there are significant hilly enclaves, notable for their woodland cover and wood pasture interspersed with wildflower meadows. Notably, the county has the internationally protected Rivers Teme, Lugg and Wye which remain a focal point for the county's life and landscapes.

Following our very first land acquisition to protect and care for this wonderful place over sixty years ago, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust has grown in size, expertise, impact and support. Today, we manage over 600 hectares of Herefordshire's landscape for nature, across 58 nature reserves and have grown to a membership of over 8,000 and 400 active volunteers.

Guided by the Lawton Review (2010), which concluded that wildlife needs bigger, better and more connected places to live, we deliver nature recovery at a landscape scale, focusing on key corridors – the Rivers Wye and Lugg; Hereford City, Woolhope Dome and The Doward, delivering this work with a wide range of partners.

Our offices are located at Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum, in the centre of the county on the main A49 between Hereford and Leominster and we are also working hard to develop a number of “flagship” nature reserves to improve access and connect people to nature, enabling people to then contribute to and become action takers for nature.

More recently we have also expanded our commercial operations with charity shops in Ledbury and Hereford, a gift shop at Queenswood Country Park and now also run the café here too.

Looking ahead, we are working hard to be bolder - collaborating at a regional and national scale to recover nature; take tangible action for nature through campaigning and advocacy, with a focus on rivers and working to diversify our income, be that through green finance, philanthropy, or services for landowners.



Butterfly orchid (c) Paul Lloyd

Recent highlights

Restoring Herefordshire's Rivers

Through our Wye Adapt to Climate Change project, (funded by The National Lottery Community Fund Climate Action Fund,) we have been working with landowners to alter land management to make the land more nature-friendly and sustainable in the face of increasingly extreme weather events. This year, as well as providing advice, we have supported the implementation of practical actions including: tree planting, installing leaky dams to slow the flow of streams, hedgerow planting and management, fencing off watercourses from livestock, restoring meadows, creating ponds and scrapes.

Restoring Bartonsham Meadows

Our project to restore a mosaic of habitats at Bartonsham Meadows in Hereford continued this year, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

In the areas that we are restoring to floodplain meadow, we now have a management regime in place with regular cutting and grazing. This has allowed us to spread wildflower seeds into areas where the weed species like docks and thistles have now reduced after two years of this management. Volunteers have also planted 150 plugs of sneezewort, great burnet, pepper saxifrage and narrow leaved water dropwort - characteristic species of floodplain meadows.

Other areas of the site are being left to regenerate into a mix of scrub and grassland. We have now fenced these areas to allow light grazing and protect from disturbance.

Local Wildlife Sites

The Local Wildlife Sites project is funded by Herefordshire Council and delivered by our Nature Recovery Officer, Toby Fountain.

This year we developed new criteria for designating Local Wildlife Sites specific to butterflies and for traditional orchard habitat and mire/ heath habitats.

Surveys and management reports were completed for 22 Local Wildlife Sites, with a combined area of 425ha. This includes 14 new sites (375ha).

Lugg Meadows - species recovery

Our work at Lugg Meadows focused, this year, on restoring populations of two key species: narrow-leaved water-dropwort (*Oenanthe silaifolia*) and mousetail (*Myosurus minimus*). As well as directly planting thousands of small plug plants of these species into the meadow, we have also altered and improved aspects of the site management which will benefit a huge range of species. This includes completing the infrastructure that will allow the reserve to be grazed by cattle; opening historic drainage channels and improving the hay cutting regime. This project has been made possible by funding from Natural England through its flagship Species Recovery Programme.

Severn Treescapes

The Treescapes programme began in 2022 and is a partnership between the Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts. It is creating a 60-mile corridor of enhanced tree cover from the Lower Wye to the Wyre Forest, assisting landowners to access funding for tree planting. Last year we planted 16 hectares of new woodland in Herefordshire and pipelined a further 85 hectares of woodland planting through other schemes. We are continuing to plan and plant new woodland sites throughout Herefordshire and have several in the late planning phases to be planted in the next couple of months.

Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum

Ensuring that everyone can enjoy all that Queenswood has to offer, this year we have introduced new ways for people with limited mobility to explore the country park and arboretum. These include two electric mobility scooters ("Trampers"), a swing for wheelchair users, automatic doors on the café and visitor centre and a "map for all" that can be read by sight and touch thanks to its braille lettering.

Hereford ~ River City: restoring our waterways and reconnecting communities to their rivers

We want to establish Hereford as a 'river city'; where nature thrives within the network of waterways and surrounding wetland areas which are enjoyed by all.

Context

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust has held a long-term goal to be more involved in conservation within Hereford city, reaching more city residents.

The city faces familiar challenges: infrastructure and housing development; flooding; disconnected habitats; communities disconnected from nature and facing barriers to accessing blue/ green spaces.

We oversee a long-running project in the city, The Yazor Brooks Restoration project, have recently completed a Species Recovery project at Lugg Meadows and are part-way through another Heritage Fund supported project, Restoring Bartonsham Meadows. Through these projects we have built knowledge and experience and grown a committed community of volunteers and supporters. This gives us a fantastic starting point for this next, bigger project: Hereford ~ River City.

The key ecological issues that the project seeks to tackle include:

- Poor water quality: River Wye classified as 'unfavourable – declining'
- Streams are canalised, clogged and culverted
- Lack of habitat corridors and refuge areas through the city
- Increasing invasive non-native species
- Floodplain meadows impacted by pollution and extreme weather

While for communities, problems include:

- Brooks are (mostly) no longer seen as places to explore, play and connect with nature
- Risk of recent and past histories of the city's waterways being lost
- Barriers to accessing green and blue spaces in the city
- People disconnected from their local natural environment; little sense of belonging – impacts on health and wellbeing



Hereford ~ River City: restoring our waterways and reconnecting communities to their rivers

Development Phase, beginning spring/ summer 2026

Recovering nature

We will train volunteers for the work needed during the development phase (such as ecological survey training and health and safety), and contract external trainers if needed.

With volunteer groups we will undertake habitat and river naturalness surveys along the three brooks to identify monitoring locations, where interventions could improve the habitat, areas that need to be cleared, sources of pollution, man-made blockages, locations for wildlife refuges and where we need to tackle Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).

We will meet landowners who have already confirmed their involvement (Herefordshire Council, Heineken and Connectus), and any potential new landowners, to agree the locations for habitat restoration interventions identified above through the volunteer work, and finalise outstanding landowner agreements for these.

We will create detailed plans for the planned interventions and habitat creation work to be undertaken during the delivery phase. This will include five wetland wildlife zones, brook re-naturalisations, pond restoration at Bartonsham. We will survey the trees along the brooks to identify veteran trees and write management plans for their conservation.

Ecological monitoring of the identified/agreed locations will then begin, to record baseline and ongoing data.

Regular practical volunteer work activities will begin, to prepare the three brooks for the larger interventions in the delivery phase. This will involve clearing scrub/debris, litter picking and starting to tackle INNS. At Bartonsham Meadows and Lugg Meadows, we will research and design the habitat and infrastructure improvements to happen in the Delivery Phase and start to involve volunteers in ongoing habitat management.

Uncovering history and connecting people to nature

We will send out an initial press release then chart the project's progress, share research and news and promote ways to get involved via weekly social media posts, blogs and monthly email newsletters.

We will deliver a programme of meetings, workshops and events to reach out to the local community - groups and individuals who supported this initial application as well as new potential audiences and stakeholders - running at least 10 project outreach events and 20 individual meetings with key community or organisational leaders.

We will meet with our partners Herefordshire Lore to schedule and plan the research work and oral history interviews then find potential interviewees and recruit and train volunteers to support.

We will reach out to all primary, secondary and special schools in Hereford to meet as many students and teachers as possible. Through meetings, activities and assemblies we will codesign the delivery programme for schools.



Hereford ~ River City: restoring our waterways and reconnecting communities to their rivers

We will collaborate with organisations and groups including Herefordshire Mind to co-design a delivery programme of activities that connects communities with nature and improves participants' mental health and wellbeing.

We will develop a programme of WildPlay activities, collaborating with external groups and organisations and the Trust's WildPlay Ranger team, to codesign and deliver 10 pilot sessions and plan the delivery phase programme.

We will reach out to arts organisations and colleges to explore the key themes emerging from the historical research and community engagement and begin to codesign a programme of participatory activities which respond to these themes.

In the latter five months we will share 'teaser' updates on our social media channels and website from the stories we uncover from oral histories and habitat surveying and conservation.

We will decide on locations and installations needed for the wetland wildlife zones and secure any permissions needed.

Project management

In the first three months we will recruit and complete inductions for new staff members including essential training (safeguarding, data protection, health and safety).

We will set up processes for volunteer recruitment, administration and communication then begin to recruit and induct volunteers.

Throughout the development phase we will hold monthly Project Team meetings to monitor progress against project plan, discuss opportunities for support and collaboration within the team and to raise any issues.

We will hold quarterly Steering Group meetings to evaluate progress against the project plan and planned outcomes including an interim review halfway through the development phase.

The Project Manager will submit quarterly reports and claims to the Heritage Fund and other funders as required.

During the last four months of the development phase, the Project Manager will finalise a detailed project plan and budget for the delivery phase and collect all other required supporting evidence. This may require liaising with landowners.

Sources of match funding for the delivery phase will be identified and applications submitted by the Trust's Fundraising Manager, working with the Project Manager.



Hereford ~ River City: restoring our waterways and reconnecting communities to their rivers

The Project Team

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust will employ a Project Manager, Nature Recovery Officer and Community Officer to deliver the project.

Herefordshire Lore are partners in the project and will lead on collecting oral histories and historical research.

We will have a project steering group which will include project staff, senior staff at Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, representatives from Herefordshire Lore, representatives from Herefordshire Wildlife Trust's City branch/ Yazor Brooks project.

The project team will also have the support of core Herefordshire Wildlife Trust for areas such as communications and volunteering.

The project team will work closely with Herefordshire Council as much of the practical work will take place on Council owned land

We worked with many other organisations in the development of the project and hope to continue to work with them including, but not limited to, Herefordshire Mind, Herefordshire College of Art, Herefordshire Museum Service, Waterworks Museum, and more!

Delivery Phase

We will develop a further application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Delivery Phase of the Project as part of the Development Phase.

Using money raised by National Lottery players,
The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports
projects that connect people and communities with
the UK's heritage.

Hereford ~ River City is made possible with
The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



