

Avon
Wildlife Trust



Annual Review 2014-15



ANDY JONES

Welcome

This has been one of the busiest years the Trust has seen, with many significant achievements in pursuit of our two strategic goals for 2014/15 – to secure wildlife and to inspire people – and has embraced a multitude of activities, from practical conservation to advising, campaigning and community engagement.

'Our Vision 2015-2020' sets out our goals for the next five years. We want to enable nature to 'recover on a grand scale', moving away from the traditional approach of wildlife conservation – trying to protect what we have left – towards more ambitious, large-scale habitat creation and restoration for the benefit of wildlife and people. Given the scale and pace of loss of nature and wild spaces, this will be a huge challenge, especially in our

region, which has one of the fastest-growing human populations in the UK. This is why we must step up our response and find new ways of working to increase our impact.

The past year has seen the laying of important foundations towards the realisation of that vision and some early progress towards it.



BARBARA EURPIDOU

Highlights of the year



RACHEL SCOPES

Securing wildlife

- We created our new nature reserve in the Avon Gorge and acquired a lease on a new reserve in the Gordano Valley – Middle Hill Common – bringing the total number of reserves we care for to 37.
- We started work with Natural England to improve the habitat for wetland birds across a large area of the Gordano Valley.
- We carried out extensive woodland conservation work at Prior's Wood over the winter, felling the diseased larch plantation and replanting with 3,000 native broadleaved trees.
- We took a prominent role in the West of England Nature Partnership (WENP), which identified its first Nature Improvement Area along the coast of the Severn Estuary.
- We were a key partner in launching the Greater Bristol Pollinator Strategy and worked with Buglife to launch the West of England B-Lines project to help pollinators.

Inspiring people

- Our active volunteers nearly doubled to 1,538, with an average of 425 people volunteering with us each month.
- Our Communities and Nature project enabled vulnerable groups to access nature, and we engaged more than 10,000 children in learning activities.
- More than 1,000 people were involved in the creation of, or funding, our new nature reserve in the Avon Gorge, which includes a volunteer cabin designed with the support of Kevin McCloud's HAB Housing and Hugh Strange Architects. The project attracted the Trust's best-ever response to a public appeal, raising over £40,000 in donations.
- We launched our major campaign My Wild City, engaging communities across Bristol in creating, restoring and connecting wildlife habitats to turn Bristol itself into a nature reserve.
- We continued Feed Bristol, our innovative community food-growing initiative, securing future funding, and created a Wellbeing Garden at Folly Farm Centre.



Join us for our Annual Meeting and AGM

Thursday, 22 October, 5:30–8:00pm, Redgrave Theatre, Clifton, BS8 3LE

Come and be inspired by our efforts to turn the city into a nature reserve. Hear what we have achieved during Bristol's year as European Green Capital and how we are supporting a range of communities and organisations in transforming Bristol for the benefit of wildlife and people. Speakers will include a representative of the BBC, which the Trust has helped to create a wildlife demonstration garden at its HQ on Whiteladies Road.

Members are invited to register for a place at www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/awtannualmeeting. Arrive from 5.30pm for a 6pm start to enjoy My Wild City Showcase, an inspiring presentation that shows how a city can become a nature reserve, and how you can help achieve this. The formal business follows at 7.30pm for the following purposes:

1. To receive the Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Audited Annual Accounts, together with the Auditors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015.
2. To elect Trustees (for further details go to the website or contact the office).
3. To re-appoint Mr Simon King as President of the Trust (recommended by the Board of Trustees).

Tickets for My Wild City showcase are £3, but AWT members can attend the AGM for free from 7.30pm.

By order of the Board of Trustees

Note: under the Companies Act 2006 the serving Auditors, Messrs Hollingdale Pooley, are deemed reappointed and continue in office.

The Trust's *Annual Review* is on the website 28 days before the event and on request along with full Audited Accounts and Trustees' *Annual Report*.

Any member not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee or company director and interested in becoming a trustee should contact Jane Davis, Director of Finance and Resources, on 0117 917 7270 to arrange a meeting. Formal written proposal of any candidate must be delivered to the Trust office at 32 Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol, BS5 1DR, no later than 14 October 2015.

Candidates are required to provide verification of identity and a declaration of suitability and personal interests.

Please contact mail@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk to request a copy of the *Annual Review* or the full Audited Accounts and Trustees' *Annual Report*, or a proxy form for a person to attend, speak and vote on a member's behalf.



BRISTOL
2015 EUROPEAN
GREEN CAPITAL



Securing wildlife

STEVE NICHOLLS



Working for wildlife: practical action to protect wildlife, promote conservation and improve understanding

Our landmark project to create a **new nature reserve** in the Avon Gorge, Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock, progressed rapidly. More than 1,000 people helped make it happen through volunteering or fundraising, including planting almost 4,000 trees in just over two months, culminating in the reserve being ready to open in April 2015.

The brownfield site has been transformed into an inspiring nature reserve, connecting up wildlife habitat in the Avon Gorge – a key part of the Trust's wider vision to create wildlife corridors across Bristol. It represents a great asset for the city for years to come, as well as an opportunity to engage with more people and to champion habitat creation and restoration.

The **raised water level project** on Weston Moor got under way in a joint project with Natural England to improve the habitat for wetland birds across a large area of the Gordano Valley. By installing two tilting weir structures on a better central ditch, we will be able to control the water levels seasonally to suit both overwintering and breeding birds. Two breeding pairs of lapwings have now been recorded for the first time in many years.

We carried out extensive **woodland conservation work at Prior's Wood** over the winter, felling the diseased larch plantation, replanting with 3,000 native broadleaved trees and completing the clearance of 11 hectares of invasive rhododendrons.

The **Grassland Restoration Team** delivered grassland management advice and practical help to 37 landowners. And Avon Wildlife Trust Ecological Consultancy provided a comprehensive range of ecological services to benefit wildlife and clients.

A **record number of survey volunteers** worked on projects across our reserves, including mapping all the badger setts, mapping water vole activity and recording butterfly activity.

We were pleased to see larger numbers of great crested newts and to discover water voles on a site where they had not previously been recorded. Our **dormouse survey at Goblin Combe** in November (part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme) turned up a record 16 dormice in 50 monitoring boxes, where in previous years we have found just a few. We worked with the adjacent Goblin Combe Environment Centre to put new boxes across the woodland and link up our survey areas.

We carried out **ride management work** at Brown's Folly (maintaining feeding corridors for bats and light for ground flora) and at Weston Big Wood (widening the central ride to restore open habitat favoured by butterflies), with support from the English Woodland Grant Scheme and our Wildlife Action Group volunteers.

Volunteers and contractors carried out significant habitat management work at Portbury Wharf over winter, including connecting the pools adjacent to the South Pools hide to create a larger water body that is more appealing to waders.

At Purn Hill and Hellenge Hill, the Weston-super-Mare volunteer group **cleared bramble and gorse thickets** to enable rare rockroses and Somerset hair grass to thrive.

We continued our key role in the West of England Nature Partnership (WENP), which identified its **first Nature Improvement Area**, along the coast of the Severn Estuary. The aim is to improve the area for the benefit of wildlife and people by creating wildlife corridors between existing wildlife sites – rural and urban – enabling wildlife to move across the wider landscape.

In partnership with Buglife, we launched the **West of England B-Lines project**. This ambitious new plan to help pollinating insects will create wide strips of wildflower-rich grasslands, linking existing wildlife areas to create a network of insect pathways across the landscape. The Trust joined with partners to launch the **Greater Bristol Pollinator Strategy**, a key component of the **Get Bristol Buzzing** initiative, which will link up and build on the many successful projects already under way relating to pollinator conservation.

Securing wildlife

We joined the Wildlife Trusts and RSPB in campaigning for a new **Nature and Wellbeing Act, setting out seven key policies to make positive change for people and the environment, and for this to be included in the manifestos of all major political parties in election year.**

In March, we jointly hosted a Nature and Wellbeing Summit in Bristol, bringing together key practitioners, researchers and decision-makers to discuss the value of nature in our society, with a specific focus on landscape-scale conservation and nature-based solutions for health and wellbeing.

We continued to engage with Bristol City Council following planning application approval for the **Metrobus** to mitigate the scheme's significant impact on the environment, and we

engaged with relevant parties over a number of new housing developments.

We made a formal representation on **National Grid's Hinkley Point C** planning application, reiterating the potential damage to Portbury Wharf reserve.

We continued our advocacy against the **badger cull**.

And we joined the Wildlife Trusts in calling for a full review of protection for environmentally important **grasslands**.

For latest news or to sign up for our regular e-news visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

***Standing up for wildlife:
campaigning on wildlife-related issues***



Inspiring people



*Engaging the community:
involving people of all ages and
walks of life with wildlife*

More than 1,000 people of all ages and mixed abilities from across Bristol were involved in the creation of our new nature reserve in the Avon Gorge, Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock. The site includes a specially designed volunteer cabin, which will be used regularly for educational and community events. The new reserve provides a great opportunity to champion the importance of creating new homes for wildlife in the region and to encourage people to do so where they live.

In celebration of Bristol European Green Capital 2015, we launched our central campaign **My Wild City**, engaging communities across Bristol in creating, restoring and connecting wildlife habitats with the aspiration of turning our entire city into a nature reserve. We published maps of the

city as it had never been seen before, showing where wildlife habitat could be connected or created to help turn Bristol into a nature reserve. We also began work on creating a number of demonstration sites, including one in partnership with the BBC at Broadcasting House.

Despite disruption by the Metrobus development, we continued **Feed Bristol**, our innovative community wildlife-friendly food-growing initiative. Since the project began in 2012, it has helped more than 8,000 disadvantaged people and 70 organisations access nature through wildlife-friendly food-growing. A five-year business plan demonstrated the huge impact the project has had on the local community and enabled us to secure significant funding for its future.

Through our Wellbeing Garden project, we created a new wildlife-friendly food-growing site at Folly Farm Centre, involving volunteers, visiting businesses and community groups.



Inspiring people



*Communicating with our audiences:
Raising awareness of our work and
influencing decision-makers*

More than 250 people attended our Annual Meeting in September 2014, which included the premiere of *Wild Avon*, a film produced by Trust Vice Chair and award-winning wildlife film-maker Steve Nicholls to celebrate our local wildlife and promote the Trust's work.

We maintained our role in the Bristol Natural History Consortium and took part in its biggest **Festival of Nature** yet, with more than 16,000 people attending the main Bristol Harbourside weekend. We offered activities including a wildlife obstacle course and the chance to see live baby eels and their release, as well as communicating about our latest projects and showing the *Wild Avon* film on the giant screen in Millennium Square.

We continued to have a strong **media profile** across Avon and beyond, with television, radio, newspaper and magazine coverage, while our presence on **social media** grew. We launched our **new website**, which was well received, and changed our magazine schedule to fit better with the times when we need to communicate with members.

Copies of the *Wild Avon* film can be hired from the trust office – please contact mail@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or call 0117 917 7271

Other key impacts

- Our **Communities and Nature** project continued to enable vulnerable groups and young people in less advantaged areas of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare to access nature.
- Our **Wild Schools** programme delivered outdoor learning to more than 10,000 schoolchildren.
- We engaged schoolchildren in innovative projects such as our award-winning **Trout and About**, **Spawn to be Wild** and **Wild Schools Film Challenge**.
- We welcomed more than half of all Bristol primary schools to our **Folly Farm Centre** for day and residential trips.
- We grew our **membership** and recruited our first five **business members**.
- We launched a successful **Butterfly Appeal** to raise money towards the costs of improving our sites to support long-term butterfly survival.
- We ran a **kids' holiday club** at Feed Bristol in Stapleton and planned more for Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock over the summer.
- Our active volunteers nearly doubled to 1,538, with an average of 425 people volunteering with us each month.

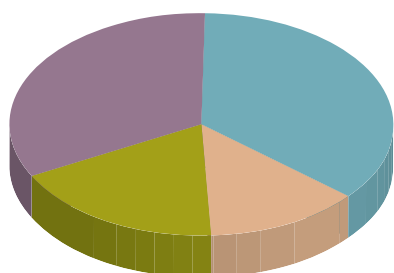
Financial Review 2014-15

Consolidated statement of financial activities For the Year ended 31 March 2015

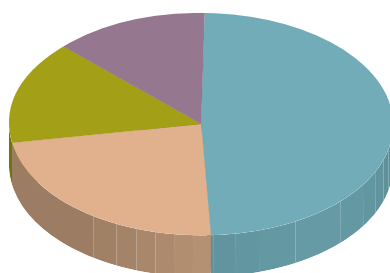
	Total funds 2015 £	Total funds 2014 £
Incoming resources		
GENERATED FUNDS		
Voluntary income:		
Income from subscriptions, donations and legacies	729,619	851,172
Activities for generating funds:		
Folly Farm Centre Limited trading income	382,654	322,994
Local Groups income	6,481	7,199
Tractor Appeal	-	-
CHARITABLE ACTIVITY		
Conservation	706,905	781,204
Community	268,750	325,100
Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve	78,986	95,954
OTHER INCOMING RESOURCES		
	7,639	401
Total incoming resources	2,181,034	2,384,024
Resources expended		
COST OF GENERATING FUNDS		
Membership expenditure	180,323	111,718
Development and promotion	73,527	101,016
Fundraising costs	32,299	28,872
Folly Farm Centre Limited trading costs	338,470	329,339
CHARITABLE ACTIVITY		
Conservation	992,594	829,066
Community	414,684	451,296
Folly Farm Centre development	78,401	85,016
Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve	85,551	88,611
Local Groups expenditure	3,861	7,589
GOVERNANCE COSTS		
	5,735	13,773
OTHER OUTGOING RESOURCES		
	-	-
Total resources expended	2,205,445	2,046,296
Net incoming resources	(24,411)	337,728
Balance brought forward at 1 April 2013	6,508,050	6,170,322
Balance carried forward at 31 March 2014	6,483,639	6,508,050

Income and expenditure was as follows:

Income



Expenditure



	Income	Expenditure
Conservation Programmes	36%	49%
Community Programmes	13%	23%
Folly Farm Centre Limited	18%	15%
Fundraising & Development	33%	13%

The AWT Group has had a challenging year financially in 2014/15. The unrestricted income (money not allocated for specific projects) was particularly difficult, but the year finished with a small surplus of £26k. Restricted income of £654k was exceeded by expenditure of £704k, resulting in a reduction in restricted funds of £50k. This resulted in an overall decrease in total funds of £24k.

Key financial factors in 2014/15 were:

- **Voluntary income** – decreased from £851k to £730k. Membership subscription income remained fairly constant at £504k but donations were lower at £163k compared to £226k in the previous year. Membership income is key to the stability of the organisation, when other income streams can be both fluctuating and unpredictable in timing and value.
- **Folly Farm Centre Limited** – A profit of £12k was reported for 2014/15, a significant improvement on the loss in 2013/14 of £27k. Turnover for the year was £412k, which is an increase of 16% on the previous financial year and was due to strong growth in both the conference and education sectors. Rent paid to the Trust was £40k.
- **Conservation** – Income from conservation charitable activity was down by 9% compared to the previous year. However, continued progress was made in establishing more of the Trust's nature reserves in long-term management agreements, and contributions to overheads continued from the Living Landscapes projects. The Trust's Ecological Consultancy continues to grow and generated income of £157k – a significant increase on the previous year (2013/14 £121k).
- **Community** – Income from learning activity and community projects was down during 2014/15 at £73k (2013/14 £110k), but school visits to Folly Farm and Portbury Wharf and learning projects delivered both in schools and on nature reserves continued. Contributions to overhead costs continued through major projects such as Feed Bristol and Communities and Nature.
- **Restricted Funds** – At 31 March 2015 the value of these funds was £5.5m (£5.6m at 31 March 2014). The deficit on the Folly Farm Development project remains £170k at 31 March 2015 (£170k at 31 March 2014).
- **Balance Sheet** – The Trust continues to have a strong overall asset position. Heritage assets at the year-end were £5.8m (£5.9m at 31 March 2014). The net current asset position has strengthened slightly to £676k at 31 March 2015 (£635k at 31 March 2014).

Financial Reserves

The Group's free unrestricted reserves increased slightly to £448k at 31 March 2015, from £439k at 31 March 2014.

During the year the Trustees reviewed the reserves and decided that unrestricted (or free) reserves should aim to be maintained at three months' cover of Revenue and Core expenditure rather than a fixed-target value (£350k in 2013/14), and based upon the 2015/16 budget, this requirement would be £348k.

Financial Review 2014-15

Consolidated Balance Sheet

	Group 2015	Group 2014
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	50,896	48,606
Heritage fixed assets	5,828,120	5,918,159
	5,879,016	5,966,765
Current assets		
Stock	15,700	9,013
Debtors	529,185	530,704
Cash at bank and in hand	545,710	432,167
	1,090,595	971,884
Creditors		
CREDITORS: Amounts due within one year	407,140	298,781
Provisions	7,133	38,000
Net current assets	676,322	635,103
CREDITORS – Amounts due after one year	71,699	93,818
Net assets	6,483,639	6,508,050
Funds		
Unrestricted Funds - Designated	362,814	362,814
Unrestricted Funds - Tangible Fixed Assets	136,345	119,267
Unrestricted Funds - Net Current Assets	448,238	439,304
	947,397	921,385
Restricted Funds - Tangible Fixed Assets	5,379,857	5,484,679
Restricted Funds - Net Current Assets	156,385	101,986
Total Funds	6,483,639	6,508,050

Independent auditor's statement

We have examined the summary Financial Statements contained in the Annual Review for the year ended 31 March 2015, which comprises the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities and The Consolidated Balance Sheet.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and the auditor

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summary financial statement in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the charities SORP.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement within the *Annual Review 2015* with the full annual statements and the Trustees' *Annual Report*.

We also read the other information contained in the *Annual Review 2015* and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements of material inconsistencies with the summary financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 issued by the Auditing Practices Board. Our report on the charity's full annual financial statement describes the basis of our opinion on those financial statements and on the Trustees' *Annual Report*.

Opinion

In our opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' *Annual Report* of Avon Wildlife Trust for the year ended 31 March 2015.

We have not considered the effects of any events between the date on which we signed our report on the full annual financial statements and the date of this statement.

Philip Barry, Senior Statutory Auditor
Hollingdale Pooley, Chartered Accountants
August 2015

Note

These summary Financial Statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Trust. For further information the full Annual Accounts, the Auditor's report on these Accounts, and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Avon Wildlife Trust, 32 Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol, BS8 1DR.

The Financial statements are extracted from the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015. The full financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 17th September 2015 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and Registrar of Companies.



Thank you to all our supporters



Volunteers

We received 9,534 (2014: 8,488) days of volunteer time over the past year. This is especially appreciated as we understand the many demands on people's time. The 1,538 volunteers who were active in 2014/15 were crucial to the success of the Trust's work, covering conservation, education, community and office activities. Voluntary work ranges from providing specialist expertise, hands-on scrub bashing and magazine distribution to taking photographs.

We are also grateful to the Trust's Local Group volunteers, who raise funds and organise events.

In financial terms, volunteer time equates to the value of approximately £476k. This means that the Trust benefits from increased capacity and impact of approximately 60 per cent.

Volunteers play such an important role. Without them we would achieve a fraction of what we do to protect wildlife and inspire people.

The Trust values this support and where possible provides training, structured work experience and opportunities for volunteers to develop their careers.

Alec French Architects
The Astley Trust
AWT Local Groups (various)
Basil Brown Charitable Trust
Biffaward
Big Lottery Fund
Bristol City Council
Bristol City Council's One Tree Per Child
Bristol Naturalists Society
Bristol Green Capital Challenge Fund
Bristol Water plc
Buglife
Cobalt Trust
Cod Steaks
Cory Environmental Trust
Douglas Arter Foundation
Duchy of Cornwall
Ecotricity

Environment Agency
Ernest Cook Trust
Ernest Kleinwort Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Eunomia Research & Consulting
Five Miles Charitable Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation
Grant Thornton
Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Partnership
HAB Housing
Hugh Strange Architects
J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust
Lalonde Trust
Life Cycle UK
Linbury Trust
Lloyds Bank
Natural England
Nature Picture Library

North Somerset Council
ONEPOST
Persimmon Homes plc
Quartet Community Foundation
Rolls-Royce plc
RSWT SDRC
SITA Trust
Sobell Trust
South Gloucestershire Council
Toyota Fund for a Better Tomorrow
Triodos Bank
University of Bristol Botanic Garden
Verdon Smith Family Charitable Settlement
Vine House Farm
Viridor Credits Environmental Company
Western Power Distribution
Wooden Spoon
Woodland Trust

Financial and in-kind support

We are grateful to all our supporters from Lottery funders, charitable trusts, businesses, councils and the Trust's own local groups, as well as those who offer support through expertise or services. This includes Bristol City Council, which lease offices at a token peppercorn rent, allowing the Trust to spend more on conservation, learning and community projects.

Members continue to be our single biggest source of revenue through subscriptions, donations, appeals and fundraising events. Particular thanks go to our major donors for the Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock reserve, Timothy Bennett and Peter and Patricia White.

It is also always touching, however sad the news, to receive gifts in memoriam and legacies. During the last year, we received nine gifts in memoriam and bequests from Norman Cook, Margaret Gunning, Margaret Irish, Gladys Horner and Naomi Grant.

Our thanks also go to our new business members Rolls Royce, Wessex Water, HAB Housing, Burleigh Portishead and Chorus IT.

Thank you for all your support



Everything the Trust achieves is only possible due to our members, supporters and volunteers. Thank you to all those who have helped to deliver some extraordinary achievements for both wildlife and people in the past year. Please take time to explore Our Vision 2015-2020 and help us to continue to deliver on its important aims.

Dr Bevis Watts
Chief Executive

Rosamund Kidman Cox
Chair, Board of Trustees

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Avon