Annual Review 2015/16





Welcome to your review of the year from April 2015 – March 2016. Thanks to vital support from our members, this has been one of the busiest ever years at the Trust! We celebrated our 35th anniversary as well as Bristol's Green Capital year, and it was also the first year of putting our new five-year plan into action: *Our Vision 2015- 2020**

In this first year of our vision, we have made good progress. One year on and we have inspiring, landscape-scale projects up and running in all five of our key strategic areas. New projects launched this year have enabled us to connect with thousands of people across the region to create conservation corridors so the wildlife we love can thrive.

B-Lines – our ambitious project to help bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects – was launched in March 2015 in partnership with Buglife. Working with farmers and landowners we advise on how they can manage their land for the benefit of pollinators. As a result, landscape-scale, wildflower-rich conservation corridors are being created from the Cotswolds to the Mendips, giving our pollinators secure sources of food and shelter.

My Wild City championed Bristol's year as European Green Capital, and encouraged people in Bristol to take action for wildlife in their own communities. Connecting people to their local wildlife is a key focus of our Vision 2015-2020: My Wild City engages urban communities with the value of nature and supports them to enjoy and reconnect with nature for their own wellbeing.

You may already know that Avon Wildlife Trust was the UK's very first Urban Trust. As part of our 35th anniversary celebrations we delivered a **'Nature Rich Cities'** strand within the Festival of the Future City (part of the Bristol 2015 Summit) to explore the value of nature and wildlife in an urban setting. As a result of this event, we have joined with four other Urban Wildlife Trusts to share and develop our expertise in urban conservation with communities across the UK.

Our role as a significant champion for nature in the region is also increasing. Since its formation in 2012 Avon Wildlife Trust has been a

leading force in the development of the **West of England Nature Partnership**. This year saw the production of ecosystem-service maps (which identify key services provided to humans by crucial natural resources like water and trees) to help inform future planning decisions. We are using these maps to influence policy-makers to understand the value of nature and its importance to human health and wellbeing. We will continue to advise on the benefits of increasing green infrastructure in development, plus the need for increased investment in the ecological networks that provide us with clean air, clean water, flood defences etc.

This year we also celebrated three and a half years of transformative leadership from CEO Dr. Bevis Watts. Sadly we bid him farewell in April but warmly welcomed his successor lan Barrett, former England Director (South) at Sustrans.

Together with our committed members, our fabulous volunteers and our inspiring partners, we look forward to building on the tangible successes of this past year to engage and inspire even more people to champion and care for the wildlife on our doorstep.

Our generous supporters protect the future for wildlife and help nature to recover on a grand scale, every day. If you are not already part of our exceptional community, please join us today. With very best wishes.

lan Barrett

Chief Executive

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Rosamund Kidman Cox Chair, Board of Trustees

Join us for our Annual General Meeting

Avon Wildlife Trust's Annual General Meeting (AGM) is on 1 November 2016 at the Guildhall in Bath. Members are invited to the formal business meeting from 7.30pm. Prior to the AGM there will be an exhibition space and donations bar from 5.30pm with presentations starting at 6.30pm.

Presentations are from leading environmentalist Chris Baines on Bath's rivers and wildlife; CEO of Buglife Matt Shardlow, on our B-Lines partnership; and CEO of Avon Wildlife Trust Ian Barrett, on our new vision for Bath and the surrounding countryside.

- 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 2016.
- 2. To elect Trustees (for further details please see the website or contact the office).
- 3. To re-appoint Mr Simon King as President of the Trust (recommended by the Board of Trustees).

By order of the Board of Trustees Note: under the Companies Act 2006 the serving Auditors, Messrs Hollingdale Pooley, are deemed re-appointed and continue in office.

Please visit **avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/AGM2016** to book your place at the AGM. Please contact **mail@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk** to request a copy of the *Annual Review* or the full *Audited Accounts* and Trustees' *Annual Report*.



* You can download a copy of the Vision 2015-2020 document from our website at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/who-we-are/ publications

Highlights of the year

Securing wildlife

Inspiring people



- We joined Bristol's year as European Green Capital 2015 as a Programme Partner, which was also the Trust's 35th anniversary.
- We delivered **My Wild City**, inspiring people to work together to make Bristol into a nature reserve, through a wildlife corridor network.



- We delivered landmark achievements including our **new reserve** in the Avon Gorge and establishing a partnership to restore coastal flood plain and grazing marsh.
- We demonstrated the importance of connectivity in our **B-Lines** work, by creating wildlife-rich corridors across the landscape.



- We completed our three-year **Communities and Nature** Programme, in which we worked with 15,000 people.
- We launched **Natural Estates**, which will involve 7,100 young people in improving green spaces on housing estates across Avon and Gloucestershire.



- We launched the new Grow Leader training course at **Feed Bristol**, on ecological land management and food growing.
- We worked with Banksy's team to provide reeds and rushes for **Dismaland in** Weston-super-Mare. A fabulous way of promoting our land-management activities!

Protecting Wildlife for the Future

our impact

Securing wildlife

Creating ecological networks through landscape-scale habitat management and enhancement

Our Vision 2020 identifies five priority areas for landscape-scale conservation. In the Gordano Valley 'invisible fencing' has been installed at our Walton Common nature reserve to enable grazing cattle to help restore this SSSI grassland, which has diminished by 30% in in the past 50 years. In the Avon Gorge and Downs work is continuing on the newly created nature reserve- Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock. Wild flowers have been planted, and the Bristol Whales welcomed! On the North Somerset Levels and Moors we secured funding through Wessex Water's Partner's Programme for landscape-scale habitat restoration, and in the Chew Valley, we have extended our B-Lines work, providing advice and training to landowners to create and restore habitat. We secured a Biffa Award grant to progress the B-Line route, which will link the limestone grasslands of the Mendip Hills with those of the Cotswolds. Another success has been My Wild City, which aims to make Bristol a nature-rich city by working with communities , to create green corridors so that wildlife can move easily around the city.



The UK hedgehog population is in crisis. Avon Wildlife Trust is working with urban communities to create 'hedgehog highways', helping them to feed and breed more successfully.

Sir John Lawton, Making Space for Nature

"We need a step-change in our approach to wildlife conservation, from trying to hang on to what we have, to one of large-scale habitat

Other achievements



Throughout the year, rain or shine, our dedicated volunteers helped us to carry out a wide range of maintenance and management tasks across our nature reserves. This included providing aftercare to 3,000 new native trees which were planted at Prior's Wood in 2014/15, thinning the former tree nurseries established here by the Tyntesfield Estate in the 1980s and restoring 80 hectares of species-rich grassland across Avon



Although Portbury Wharf nature reserve ceased to be managed by the Trust on 31 December 2015 (when North Somerset Council took over the reserve) we can celebrate the eight years of the Trust's management and the significant habitat restoration which has resulted in the fabulous reserve today. Portbury Wharf provides a critical link from the Severn Estuary to the Gordano Valley's wetlands.



restoration and recreation."

Our pioneering eco-maps for My Wild City form a blueprint to show how wildlife can be brought back to every city. The maps identify areas in each neighbourhood where there are opportunities to improve woodland and grassland habitat for wildlife. The maps are free to download at avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/mywildcity and allow people to zoom right down to their own street and garden level.



Works at Blakes Pools by the Environment Agency raised the sea wall that protects Kingston Seymour and Congresbury along the river Yeo. We have been restoring the pools in this beautiful isolated wetland for breeding birds. At Bathampton Meadow, we worked with Kier Construction to improve the flood-storage capacity of the site to help protect the city of Bath. Both sites are now well used by migrant birds.

Championing the value of nature by working in partnership for a sustainable society



As a founding member of the West of England Partnership (WENP), AWT is working with it closely. We have mapped the West of England to identify the key ecological networks, including rivers, woods and wetlands. This information is being used to guide development and feed into the State of Environment Report.

We are also working to include this evidence, plus the B-Lines and State of Environment maps, within the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), which has been under consultation by the four unitary authorities. We aim for areas of ecological restoration to be identified in the plan. Through the WENP we are also central to discussions on the development of the Natural Capital Trust (NCT), which will allocate funding to offset new development in the West of England. In addition we are working to influence the health and wellbeing agenda, and we delivered a successful event through WENP as part of Bristol's 2015's Healthy Cities Week. This brought together senior health professionals to explore the links between health and regular access to nature.

85,000 new homes are to be built across the West of England, so we are advising developers where key ecological sites exist, to protect local wildlife-rich areas.

avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Inspiring peopl

Working with communities to take local action for nature's recovery

A key focus of our Vision 2020 is to inspire people about nature's value to their everyday lives and the communities in which they live. Our hugely successful Communities and Nature Project worked with over 15,000 people in the past three years. From Easton to Dundry we got people outdoors noticing and enjoying the nature on their doorstep. In January, we were delighted to be awarded funding for the Natural Estates project. We will support 7,000 young people to improve green spaces on housing estates, and give them skills for employment. My Wild City worked with Burges Salmon to deliver garden transformations to over 30 houses in Easton and is supporting local groups with wildlife management advice. The Trust also secured a contract from Bristol 2015 to deliver My Wild City classroom sessions in 116 primary schools across Bristol. With Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock nature reserve now open, we continue to encourage volunteer and community engagement through open days and supporting local volunteers to nurture the site for wildlife. We delivered wildlife workshops and education to over 10,000 children at Folly Farm, Feed Bristol and schools across the region.



Fewer than 10% of UK children play in natural areas. Almost 40% have not played outside by themselves in the past six months. *YouGov Poll Oct 2015*

Other achievements



Feed Bristol, the Trust's wildlife-friendly food-growing project which works with disadvantaged groups and delivers outdoor education, held a high-profile Seed Swap event in March attended by 500 people, and a green woodworking sculpture day. It has also involved the local community with its recently launched **wildflower nursery**, which has grown more than 20,000 native plants including over 160 different species.



A **Citizen science survey** to monitor the decline of the hedgehog was launched, encouraging people to report sightings, this data has already been used to deliver **hedgehog workshops** in schools. We also produced a city-wide hedgehog and **swift strategy** together with other local conservation organisations. We are working with O'Brien Roofing to provide free installation of swift boxes for homes with nearby swift colonies.



The **Wild Schools Film Challenge 2015** involved more than 1000 pupils from 30 schools, and 32 films were submitted for the competition. In partnership with Rolls Royce, we held an award ceremony for the winning schools, with around 120 children and parents attending. Film making kit boxes are available for all schools in the Avon area to borrow. Contact: **schools@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk**



The **Festival of Nature** in June 2015 had a My Wild City theme. Over 2,015 free wildlife garden starter kits, including wildflower plug plants and bird seed, were given away to be planted across Bristol and beyond. On the schools day, we hosted 250 school children at our wildlife workshops, where they learnt about obstacles that face hedgehogs in our towns and countryside.

Celebrating our volunteers, who give generously of time, expertise and commitment



"No one will protect what they don't care about and no one will care about what they haven't experienced" **Sir David Attenborough**

Over the year we were given almost **8,500 days of volunteer time** – that's 362 volunteers supporting the trust every month! These amazing people contribute across everything the Trust does: from practical action on nature reserves to working with children and disadvantaged communities, as well as help in the office, giving talks, assisting at events and distributing magazines.

Our Local Group volunteers raise funds and organise events in their local areas. Bennett's Patch and White's Paddock local group was represented for the first time at the annual Local Group Conference, and we hope that more new groups such as this emerge, with a focus on local practical projects.

To find out more about volunteering visit avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/ volunteer or contact Claire at volunteer@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Over 300 volunteers support the Trust every month! On our reserves, developing the B-Lines, in the office and through our local groups. We couldn't do it without you. *Thank you*!

Protecting Wildlife for the Future

Financial Review

Total funds for the AWT Group has decreased by £9k (£24k in 2014/15). Unrestricted income continued to be a challenge but the year finished with a surplus of £146k due to legacies receivable.

Restricted income of £514k was below expenditure of £669k in the year resulting in a reduction in restricted funds of £155k

Key financial factors

• Donations and legacies income increased from £730k to £776k a 6% increase for the year. Of this the membership subscription income increased by 6.5% to £537k from £504k, representing 31% of unrestricted income in the year. Grants and donations were down from £162k to £38k but legacies increased from £57k to £201k.

Membership income is key to the stability of the organisation, when other income streams can be both fluctuating and unpredictable in timing and value.

- Income from Charitable Activities remained steady at £1,049k compared to £1,055k in the previous year. Continued progress was made in establishing more of the Trust's nature reserves in long-term management agreements
- Contributions to overheads continued from our conservation and community projects.

Income from learning activity was increased in 2015/16 at £136k (2014/15 £59k) and included secondment of a member of the team to Bristol 2015. School visits to Folly Farm and Portbury Wharf as well as learning projects delivered both in schools and on nature reserves continued. Ecological consultancy income decreased to £66k (2014/15 £157k) because these activities merged into WildService from 1 October 2015.

- Expenditure Folly Farm Centre Limited trading expenditure increased slightly to £348k from £338k. Expenditure on raising funds increased from £286k to £341k in the year, reflecting the increased activity, and expenditure on charitable activities remained steady at £1,585k compared to £1,580k in the previous year
- Folly Farm Centre Limited had a busy year increasing sales from £412k to £457k and generating a profit of £45k (£12k in 2014/15). The increase in sales of 11% (2014/15 16%) was due to growth in both the wedding and education sectors. Cost of sales increased to £121k (£113k in 2014/15) and overheads increased by 1% to £291k (£288k in 2014/15) as a

result of cost savings on premises costs and general overheads. Rent paid to AWT was £40k All operational areas of the business continue to be developed with a view to achieving a balance of activities throughout the year and a broad income base. The Directors are confident that further growth can be achieved,

and feedback from the Centre's customers has continued to be extremely positive, with many repeat bookings and delivering high-quality learning activities and courses in close partnership with Avon Wildlife Trust, its parent company.

Consolidated statement of financial activities

Unrestricted

Restricted

for the year ended 31 March 2016

- WildService is the ecological consultancy joint venture with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and has generated a contribution of £7,648.
- Balance Sheet The Trust continues to have a strong overall asset position. Heritage assets at the year-end were £5.7m (£5.8m at 31 March 2015). The net current asset position of the group has strengthened to £815k at 31 March 2016 (£683k at 31 March 2015).
- Restricted Funds The Trust has many restricted funds as shown in Notes 15 and 16. These funds represent either revenue funding for ongoing projects, appeal funds or fixed assets held by the Trust. At 31 March 2016 the value of these funds was £5.7m (£5.9m at 31 March 2015). The deficit on the Folly Farm Development Project remains at £170k at 31 March 2016. The Trustees will prioritise the clearing of this deficit in the medium term.
- Cash Flow The receipt of legacies and donations continues to support cash flow

Financial Reserves

Total

funds

Total

funds

The Group's free unrestricted reserves decreased to £425k at 31 March 2016, from £448k at 31 March 2015 (see Note 16). A new designated fund was established for opportunities and development of the Trust's strategy. 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 and based upon the 2016/17 budget, this requirement would be £425k.

Independent auditors' report

We have audited the Financial Statements of Avon Wildlife Trust for the year ended 31 March 2016, which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group Balance Sheet, the Parent Balance Sheet, and the related Notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102)(effective 1 January 2015).

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND AUDITOR As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also Directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the Financial Statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view We have been appointed auditors under the Companies Act 2006 and section 151 of the Charities Act 2011, and report to you in accordance with those Acts. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors

SCOPE OF THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the Financial Statements sufficient to give reasonable

Consolidated balance sheet

funds funds 2015 2016 **Income and endowments** from: Donations and legacies 775,767 729,619 775,767 Charitable activities 535,131 514,115 1,049,246 1,054,641 Other trading activities Folly Farm Centre Limited trading 423,903 423,903 382,654 Fundraising including local groups 4,629 4,629 6,481 Other income 4,751 4,751 7,639 Tota 1,744,181 514,115 2,258,296 2,181,034 Expenditure on: Raising funds 347,681 347,681 338,470 Folly Farm Centre Limited trading General fundraising 341,626 341,626 286,149 916,740 668,952 1,580,826 Charitable activities 1,585,692 Other expenditure 1,606,047 668,952 2.274.999 2,205,445 Total 138,134 (154,837) (16,703) (24,411) Net Income / (expenditure) Transfers between funds Net contribution from Associated Company 7.648 7,648 145,782 (154,837) (9,055) (24,411) Net movement in funds **Reconciliation of funds:**

	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	38,876	50,896
Heritage assets	5,727,140	5,828,120
Investments	-	-
Total fixed assets	5,766,016	5,879,016
Current assets		
Stocks	1,543	15,700
Debtors	547,650	529,185
Cash at bank and in hand	643,634	545,710
Total current assets	1,192,827	1,090,595
Liabilities		
Creditors:		
Amounts falling due within one year	378,301	407,140
Net current assets	814,526	683,455
Creditors:		
Amounts falling due after one year	61,220	71,699
Provisions	44,738	7,133
Total net assets	6,474,584	6,483,639
The funds of the charity		
Unrestricted funds - designated	193,000	
Unrestricted funds - general	537,365	584,583
Unrestricted funds - investments	221,505	,505
onrestricted runus - investments		-
	730,365	584,583
Restricted funds	5,744,219	5,899,056
Total funds	6.474.584	6,483,639

assurance that those Statements are free from material mis-statements, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of:

- whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Trustees; and
- the overall presentation of the Financial Statements.

In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify any material inconsistencies with the audited Financial Statements. If we become aware of any apparent material mis-statements or inconsistencies, we consider the implications for our Report.

OPINION ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In our opinion the Financial Statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Group's and the parent company's affairs as at 31 March 2016 and of the Group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015); and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

OPINION ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

In our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report for the financial year for which the Financial Statements are prepared is consistent with the Financial Statements.

MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY **EXCEPTION**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the Financial Statements of the parent charitable company are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.
- PHILIP BARRY FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

HOLLINGDALE POOLEY, Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor Bramford House, 23 Westfield Park, Clifton, Bristol BS6 6LT

Income and **expenditure** was as follows:



Note

2015

2016

These Summary Financial Statements are extracted from the full Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2016, which were approved by the Trustees on 8 September 2016. Copies will be filed with the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies

The Summary Financial Statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial position of the Trust. Copies of the Financial Statements can be downloaded from avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or obtained from Avon Wildlife Trust, 32 Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol BS8 1DR.

Thank you to all our supporters

The work of the Trust would simply not be possible without public support.

Total funds brought forward

Total funds carried forward

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, who lease offices at a



584,583 5.899.056 6.483.639 6.508.050

6,483,639

730,365 5,744,219 6,474,584

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. A regular fundraiser is Jan Barkworth, who opens her garden each year to raise funds for us. 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 business members Rolls Royce, Wessex Water, HAB Housing, Burleigh Portishead, Chorus IT and Sharp Business Systems.

AWT Local Groups (various) Ernest Kleinwort Trust Rolls-Royce plc RSWT SDRC Basil Brown Charitable Trust Garfield Weston Foundation Sobell Trust Biffaward Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Partnership **Big Lottery Fund** Bristol City Council Kew Gardens Council Triodos Bank Linbury Trust Bristol Naturalists Society Medlock Charitable Trust Bristol Green Capital Challenge Fund Natural England Nature Picture Library Bristol Water plc Viridor Credits Buglife North Somerset Council Cory Environmental Trust People's Postcode Lottery Wessex Water Duchy of Cornwall Persimmon Homes plc Quartet Community Foundation Ecotricity Woodland Trust Environment Agency

South Gloucestershire Verdon Smith Family Charitable Settlement Vine House Farm Environmental Company Western Power Distribution

Avon Wildlife Trust, 32 Jacobs Wells Road, Bristol BS8 1DR

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Protecting Wildlife for the Future