



Avon Wildlife Trust

GROW WILDER FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY
2024-2029



TARGETS



1. Over **20,000 annual visitors** coming to site to learn, engage, and connect with nature, serving a diverse demographic of people.
2. A total of **16,000 volunteer hours** committed annually with Grow Wilder.
3. **100 days of education courses** attended per year, for people in and around the Bristol community.
4. Monitoring and demonstrating a **net gain of biodiversity** across the Grow Wilder site resulting from how the land is managed.
5. Take all reasonable steps to improve Grow Wilder **carbon footprint by 2030**.
6. Further **increase the social return on investment** for the site from £6,7million to £10million by 2030.
7. Develop and focus commercial activity aiming to be **cost neutral by 2030**.



STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This ambitious strategy will see Grow Wilder develop and mature over the next 5 years into Avon Wildlife Trust's primary visitor hub serving the Bristol region and recognised nationally for its work.

Following Bristol City Council's announcement of an ecological emergency in February 2020, this strategy aims to ensure Grow Wilder can develop into an effective catalyst for the urgent activity that needs to take place as part of the Bristol One City Ecological Emergency Strategy and the critical priorities of The Wildlife Trusts' emerging 10-year strategy.

In 2012, Grow Wilder (formerly Feed Bristol) was set up as a response to the negative environmental, ecological and social impacts of modern food growing systems. Since then the site has expanded activities to become a deeply valued urban wildlife site, community hub and education centre, taking on a further 5 acres of partial brownfield land from BCC, with potential to increase food production.

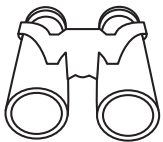
Building on the successes of previous years of operations, the desire is to:

- Review existing and upscale most profitable commercial activities
- Review and potentially upscale the wildflower plant nursery
- Increase the impact of the site within Bristol as a crucial wildlife information and skills centre
- Recognize the site as an organizational asset and resource
- Review land-partner model and explore future develop opportunities
- Provide infrastructure to adequately support staff wellbeing and site activities, including the recently acquired 5 acres and visitor accessibility

OUR MISSION & OUR VISION



Our mission is to bring about urgent action for the restoration of wildlife by educating, upskilling and empowering people, communities and businesses to bring about positive change through wildlife-friendly gardening and sustainable food growing.



Our vision is to establish Grow Wilder as a place to engage and inspire people, communities and businesses to actively support nature's recovery. Through demonstration, learning and events, Grow Wilder will be a hub from which we will seek to connect people with nature, equipping them with the skills, confidence and knowledge to restore and conserve natural habitats of all sizes across the Bristol area and further afield.



IMPACT PRIORITIES

We want to...

1

Educate and inspire social change by enabling 1 in 4 people to take action for nature while providing them with the skills and knowledge to bring about effective change, with a focus on wildlife-friendly gardening, sustainable food growing, and nature-based solutions.

2

Help nature's recovery through managed habitats on the Grow Wilder site and through supporting people to take action for wildlife in their own communities. Grow Wilder will directly work towards The Wildlife Trusts' and the Bristol One City goal of 30% of land being managed for wildlife by 2030.

3

Improve social inclusion and diversity by breaking down barriers that prevent people from experiencing the benefits of nature and getting involved in action for wildlife.

4

Influence strategy and policy in Bristol and nationally by demonstrating on site what can be achieved for wildlife in an urban setting and beyond.

Activities on the site will also contribute to people's wellbeing and employability by designing and delivery connection with nature sessions, teaching and passing on skills and providing practical experience.

ENABLING PRIORITIES

We want to...

5

Create a **new hub** with a small café and refreshments server, retail area, multi-purpose space for education and site hire, and improved staff facilities; allowing Grow Wilder to support more visitors on site and provide a high-quality visitor experience.

6

Manage existing and newly acquired areas of land to provide **demonstrations** of wildlife-friendly gardening, sustainable food growing and nature-based solutions; supported by coherent and well-informed **interpretation and wildlife trails** that are fun, inclusive and encourage visitors from all backgrounds and communities to stay, play, learn and return. To **inspire the next generation** to take action for nature through youth leadership and volunteering programmes and explore educational opportunities such as work-based funded traineeships.

7

Strive for **financial stability** by developing a business model that is cost-neutral whilst recognising the social-value, (valued at £6.7 in 2014) and how Grow Wilder is and can be a trust asset and resource. Existing and potential income streams will be explored and maximised. Investment in the site will enable higher revenues and further opportunities through site hire and private events such as welly-weddings. Dedicating areas to nature based solutions such as carbon credits and bio-diversity net gain will contribute to the 30 by 30 target as well as raise revenue for the Trust. Commercial activities that are not cost effective will be discontinued.

8

Build a strong, active group of **volunteers**, who are well-trained, self-starting and able to support the site and engage with visitors throughout the calendar year, ensuring they are fully supported and celebrated by providing core staff leadership and well designed internal support processes to provide leadership.

9

Develop Grow Wilder as a **shared staff facility and hub**, recognizing this as such through site investment and overhead reliefs, improving facilities and compliance and reducing carbon footprint and energy usage through upgrading buildings.