



**Avon**  
Wildlife Trust

# Strategy 2030

Securing nature's recovery across our region



# Foreword

Nature is key to our health, happiness, and success, yet it is under incredible pressure as we continue to face the ecological and climate emergencies together.

At the halfway point of our ten-year strategy, whilst the challenge remains severe, there is much that brings hope as we double-down on our efforts towards nature's recovery locally and at scale.

We see, support, and celebrate more people taking action for nature in their neighbourhoods and with their communities.

These cumulative and interconnected actions are bringing huge benefits for people and wildlife across our cities, countryside, and coast. **Nature is for everyone**, so our priority is to ensure that access to nature is a right, not a privilege.

We're working with more farmers, landowners and land managers in our region to work at landscape scale, providing advice, support, and a pathway to transforming outcomes for species and habitats.

We're calling for nature and development in harmony, to ensure a sustainable future for our communities with nature-positive growth. We see nature as the solution that can fix a range of interconnected issues that we face.

To ensure that the future is flourishing for nature and people, we will listen to the hopes and experiences of a wide range of voices within communities to help shape our plans for nature's recovery.

We will create more opportunities for young people to influence and get involved in our work, and more opportunities to platform individuals and groups from across our region.

As the first ever urban Wildlife Trust, Avon Wildlife Trust has a long track record of standing up for nature and for communities, and we're incredibly proud of the impact we've made over the last 45 years.

We see ourselves as having a critical and central role, being bold and influential in our contemporary approaches to accelerating nature's recovery which is essential for the future.

With the support of our members, communities, and partners, we're energised and ready to deliver our refocused strategy.

**Join us on this journey.**



Leah McNally  
Chief Executive



Lara Burch  
Chair

# Leading nature's recovery

Avon Wildlife Trust is the longest established charity working towards nature's recovery across Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Our strong track record of creating, restoring, and protecting valuable habitats for nature puts us at the forefront of tackling the challenges of the ecological and climate emergencies.

We were established in 1980, and connecting people with nature remains one of our key priorities. We draw on our vast experience of listening to and supporting communities to take local action for nature.

Our region has an amazing array of different habitats, and we are working across them all. From our urban roots to the breathtaking Levels and Moors, through magical woodlands and precious grasslands, our dedicated teams work purposefully to secure a thriving future for nature and people.

Ebdon Farm © Keeley Mitson



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# Who we are

## We're determined

Nature is facing huge challenges, but we have the skills, tenacity, and experience to help it recover and thrive.

## We get things done

Nature's recovery takes bold and decisive action. Our ability to work locally and at a landscape scale enables us to make an immediate and effective impact.

## We're collaborative

Nature connects us all. We work to bring like-minded people together, co-creating solutions that help nature and people flourish.



# Strategy 2030 at a glance



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## Purpose

To secure nature's recovery across our region – in urban, rural, and coastal areas

## Vision

Nature as the solution, a flourishing future for wildlife and people together

## Mission

To lead the way in nature's recovery at scale, co-creating solutions that transform outcomes for nature.  
To nurture a lifelong connection with nature, inspiring everyone to take positive action in their community.

## Goals

### Mobilise

We will develop a movement where everyone feels inspired to take meaningful action for nature in their neighbourhoods.

### Transform

We will take bold, joined-up action at a landscape scale, escalating our efforts to secure nature's recovery.

### Influence

We will advocate for nature at the heart of decision making and demonstrate best practice for nature-positive growth.



Hazel dormouse © Ian Pratt

# MOBILISE

## GOAL 1

We will develop a movement where everyone feels inspired to take meaningful action for nature in their neighbourhoods.

As the first urban Wildlife Trust, we are leaders in engagement and community organising for nature within our cities, helping to sustain vital green corridors and connecting people with nature within urban areas.

Our work is at the heart of the community, both urban and rural, working side-by-side with local people, listening to the challenges and aspirations and co-creating action plans for local nature recovery.

We have made a step change in how we work with communities moving from traditional engagement to taking a highly collaborative community organising approach. The cumulative effect of individuals taking positive action in their communities will continue to create a movement for change.

To feel connected to nature, we must be able to experience it in our neighbourhoods, and we need equal access. Our message is clear; nature is for everyone.

We will share stories to inspire others and to encourage connection between people and wildlife.



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Image © Oliver Edwards Photography

**Dr Mya-Rose Craig**

*Founder of Black2Nature,  
author of 'Birdgirl', and  
Ambassador  
for The Wildlife Trusts*



Everyone across all our communities should have equal access to green spaces and nature. This is key to building a society that is connected with nature, can use it to benefit mental health and wellbeing, and ensuring nature is relevant in all our lives



# WE WILL:

Amplify and support individuals and groups that are taking action for nature, providing resources, guidance, inspiration, and advocacy to help them succeed.

Take a focus on young people and enable them to go further towards making a difference in their neighbourhoods.

Create more nature-rich places and co-create opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, and identities to connect with nature, especially within an urban setting.

Develop and strengthen our cross-sector partnerships, to promote the co-benefits of nature and ensure equal access for all.

Ensure that we are not only relevant to but also representative of all communities as part of our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

GOAL 1



© Kelly Bray



# MOBILISE case study - Wildlife Champions

Our 'Wildlife Champions' programme supports local changemakers to take action for nature in their community.

An initial two-year pilot, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, saw Wildlife Champions **making space for nature**, in predominantly urban areas, across 11 postcodes in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire.

The resulting groundswell of positive action brought communities together **to connect with nature and with each other** in their local cherished green spaces.

Our individual Wildlife Champions helped shape the programme, by identifying the priorities within their communities and the co-benefits of improved wellbeing, and physical and mental health.



The vision for the programme is to establish and support Wildlife Champions in **every postcode across the region**, to boost nature's recovery at the grassroots level. With further funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, the vision is a step closer as the next cohorts of Wildlife Champions step up for nature.

# TRANSFORM

## GOAL 2

We will take bold, joined-up action at a landscape scale, escalating our efforts to secure nature's recovery.

The international target of 30% of land and sea managed for wildlife by 2030 is challenging, but we will significantly contribute to this across our region. We have more than 45 years of experience to draw upon as leaders in transforming landscapes for nature.

We have successfully grown our landscape recovery work, providing support and advice to farmers, landowners, and land managers.

Our work is informed by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the West of England, ensuring we can focus on priority areas for habitat connectivity.

Working collaboratively with our farming partners, we have coordinated groups for peer-to-peer learning and have shared our expertise wherever it is needed.

We will continue to improve our nature reserves, using them as demonstration sites to inspire and educate people including other landowners. Our approach to land acquisition will focus on making the biggest impact for species, habitat connectivity, and connecting people with nature.



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Image © The Wildlife Trusts

**Rhiane Fatinikun MBE**  
*Founder of Black Girls Hike  
and Ambassador  
for The Wildlife Trusts*

“Connecting with nature reminds us that we're part of something bigger. It has the power to bring people together, deepen our appreciation for the world that sustains us, and it calls on us to protect it. Nature doesn't see us in colour, all the binary things we use to divide ourselves don't exist, in nature, we just belong.”

# WE WILL:

Monitor, manage and enhance our nature reserves portfolio to high standards ensuring they remain exemplars whilst looking for ways to connect them with the wider landscape.

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Continue to influence the management of more land, through acquisition or advice, for nature to thrive, ensuring greater and wider coverage across our counties, including locations that are accessible to people.

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Develop and deliver major demonstration projects that will act as 'beacons for nature's recovery'.

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Continue to build and work with our networks, to create a joined-up approach to landscape-scale recovery, advising farmers, community groups and partners, helping to make gains for nature.

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Prioritise working to increase the chances for returning species to thrive.

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GOAL 2

Priors Wood © Stuart McCarthy-Thompson



# TRANSFORM case study - Ebdon Farm

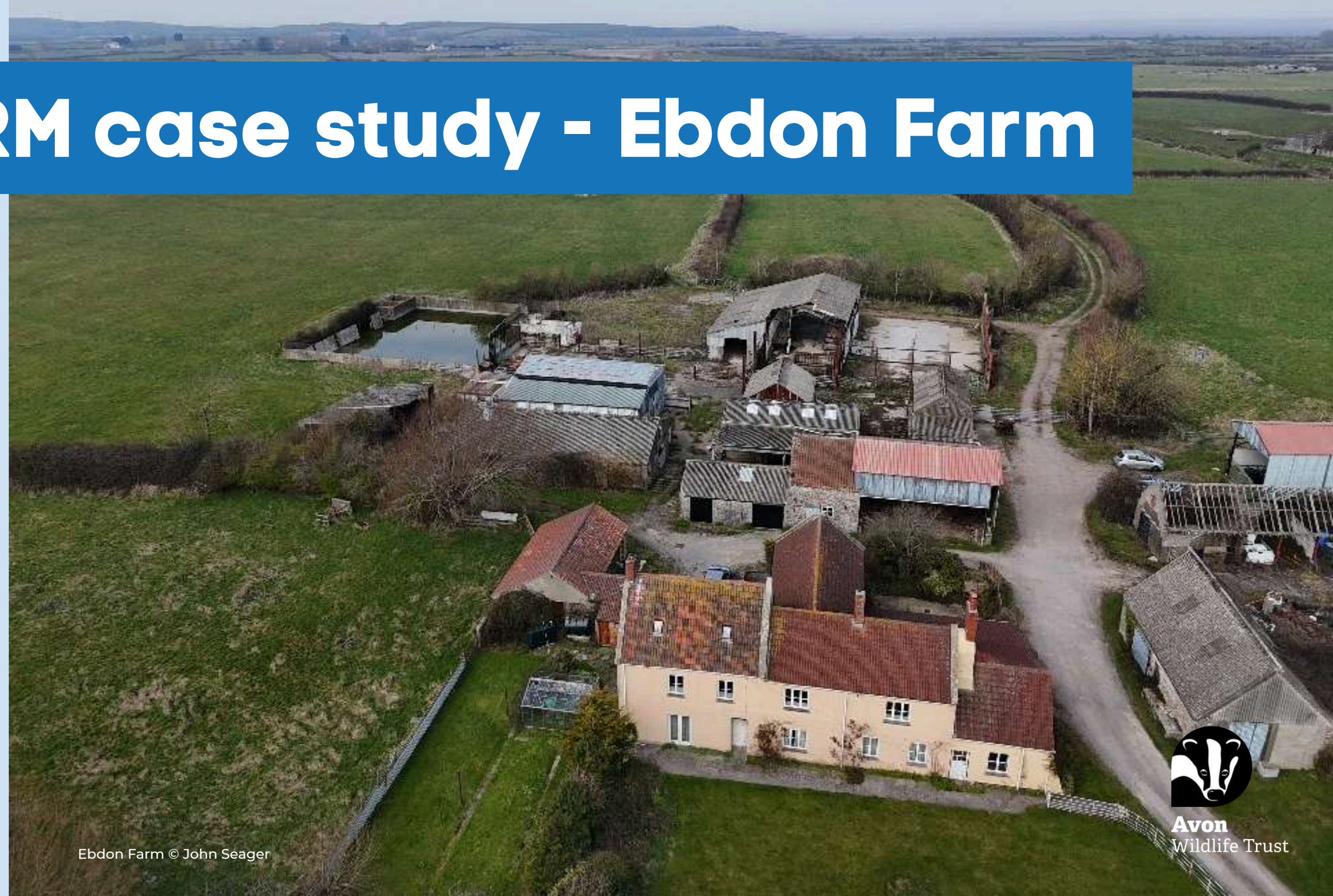
Our Ebdon Farm project is bold and exciting, as we turn a former 44-hectare dairy farm into a haven for biodiversity by **letting nature take the lead**.

An innovative project on a landscape scale, Ebdon Farm brings opportunities for surrounding communities to engage with nature and **co-create the vision for future facilities on-site**.

Avon Wildlife Trust will investigate how the site functions, to inform the best ways to create and improve habitats that help nature flourish.

At its coastal location, Ebdon Farm is a steppingstone for wildlife and will **improve connectivity across the wider landscape**.

As sea levels rise, intertidal areas feel the squeeze, high tide roosts will provide respite for wading birds and wildfowl as we bring wildlife back to create a growing spectacle for visitors.



Ebdon Farm © John Seager



Avon Wildlife Trust has acquired Ebdon Farm with support from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and has secured an initial development grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. With a donation from long-standing supporter Peter Lord CBE, co-founder of award-winning Aardman Animations, we will raise further support.

# INFLUENCE

## GOAL 3

We will advocate for nature at the heart of decision making and demonstrate best practice for nature-positive growth.

Focusing on 'nature and' rather than 'nature or', we will advocate for nature at the heart of decision making, focusing on the co-benefits to the economy, health and wellbeing, climate resilience, and sustainable economic development.

Our strength comes from our ability to adapt in an everchanging ecological, financial, and political landscape, spearheaded by an experienced and dedicated team of staff and volunteers.

We are members of the West of England Nature Partnership and combine our expertise and knowledge to deliver more for nature in our region.

We know that nature is the solution to many of the issues caused by our changing climate, and we will demonstrate this through cross-sector partnerships, actions and communications, making natural climate solutions the norm rather than a theoretical approach.

We will advocate for systems change, with policy makers and elected officials, to ensure that nature and people can thrive.



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Image © Andrew Crowley

**Liz Bonnin**

*Broadcaster, biologist,  
and President of  
The Wildlife Trusts*

“The scale of our nature and climate crises can feel overwhelming, but we already have all the solutions we need to solve them. Hope comes from the innovators and leaders across all sectors in society who are connecting the dots, and collaborating to place nature at the heart of decision making - and sharing their powerful, positive stories speeds up the ripple effect of change. When we act to create a nature-positive future, people and planet can thrive.”

# WE WILL:

Showcase the impact of our work strengthening the importance of access to nature, climate adaptation and building climate resilience. We will be relevant to existing and new audiences through online communications, while innovating and offering a range of accessible formats.

Create opportunities for landowners, businesses and corporates to support and buy into nature-based solutions, demonstrating wellbeing benefits and growth and nature in harmony.

Grasp opportunities to innovate through consultancy, academic research and sustainable tourism.

Advocate for 'systems change' through working with stakeholders, including Local Authorities and influential figureheads. Where nature is under threat, we will support communities to call for change.

Explore opportunities for high quality environmental credits, as nature markets develop, ensuring nature is valued.

GOAL 3



© Stuart McCarthy-Thompson



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# INFLUENCE case study - North Somerset

## Levels and Moors

The North Somerset Levels and Moors is an extensive area covering around **8,000 hectares of low-lying land or floodplain** next to the Severn Estuary and bordered by the Mendip Hills.

This beautiful area is also a **nationally significant area for lowland peatland**. In good condition, peatlands have a net cooling effect on climate, reduce flood risk, and support biodiversity.

Healthy peatlands can **reduce flood risk by slowing the flow of water from the uplands**, and by providing floodplain storage in the lowlands. They also provide important nesting and feeding grounds for many wading birds, as well as important habitats for **rare insects, amphibians and plants**.

However, when peatlands are drained and start to degrade, such as those on the North Somerset Levels and Moors, all these benefits are lost, and they move from being a carbon store to a carbon emitter.



North Somerset Levels and Moors © Frankie Clinch



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Alongside the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) Southwest, we've been delivering Somerset Moor Futures – a Defra-funded pilot project involving **creation of Moors Associations** to bring farmers together to improve the sustainability of local peatlands. By founding Moors Associations, we have been able to engage with 80% of landowners within our target areas, which has led to an additional 43 hectares of land being managed at a higher water table level.

Our Wilder Waterways project has also provided recent wetland advice to landowners across Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest.

# Key enablers



## Building financial resilience

We will continue to diversify and grow our income to enable us to deliver our charitable objects.

## Supporting and enabling our dedicated staff and volunteer teams

We will continue to invest in our staff and our organisational systems, and diversify our paid traineeship opportunities and volunteering programmes.

## Measuring our impact and performance

We will evaluate our work and performance through developing a set of measures and recording our progress through evidence.



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# Spotlight on FOLLY FARM

Nestled in the 101-hectare Folly Farm nature reserve, Folly Farm Centre is Avon Wildlife Trust's **wedding, conference, education, and event venue**. The Centre is located between Bristol and Bath and welcomes more than 4,500 wedding guests, over 100 conferences, and 3,000 students each year.

Folly Farm Centre is a trading subsidiary of Avon Wildlife Trust, with all profits being donated to our ongoing conservation work. This pioneering relationship provides wedding and conference guests with high-quality hospitality and the opportunity to experience nature close to urban locations, while providing additional income for the charity.

The Centre focuses on sustainability, including biomass heating, solar energy, and rainwater harvesting.



Nurturing a lifelong connection with nature is part of our mission and is often kindled at an early age. Our outdoor learning programmes at Folly Farm provide a memorable experience with a residential element. This provides a special opportunity for students to connect with nature over several days and even at night.

We have more than 40 years of experience in leading and supporting high quality outdoor learning experiences, from early years to higher education.



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# Spotlight on GROW WILDER

Grow Wilder is Avon Wildlife Trust's **urban growing hub and wildflower nursery** in Bristol. The site is close to the city centre and is a green oasis surrounded by major transport routes.

Through demonstration, training courses, events, and corporate and individual volunteering opportunities, Grow Wilder connects people with nature and **generates income by selling the produce and wildflowers grown on-site**. The venue also has meeting and event spaces for hire, providing an opportunity for businesses and community groups to meet and be inspired by nature.

The ethos of Grow Wilder is to demonstrate the link between **sustainable food production and benefits for nature and people in an urban setting**, to inspire others to take action for nature in their neighbourhoods.



Grow Wilder © Rosa Beesley

In addition to our market garden and wildflower nursery, Grow Wilder has a rich mosaic of habitats including woodland, wetland, a forest garden, and climate resilient garden. Over 1,000 species have been recorded on-site, including a wide variety of pollinators and 22 species of butterflies.

Grow Wilder also hosts a pioneering nature restoration project, Green Shoots, led by young people aged 13-18 in our Youth Leadership Group. The partnership with Action for Conservation is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

# Securing nature's recovery across Avon

We cover, and work closely with, four unitary authorities - Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and the city and county of Bristol



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[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves)





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**Our vision of nature as the solution, a flourishing future for wildlife and people, is made possible thanks to the unwavering support of our members, communities, partner organisations, and local businesses.**

**To be part of our movement and help us secure nature's recovery across our region, visit our website to get involved.**

**[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)**



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# Join us



[www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)

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