

Keeping things simple – for wildlife

As this report is produced, we are still under partial lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many staff are still furloughed and the Trust expects to have a significantly reduced income within 2020-21.

We have therefore decided to produce a simplified and low-cost report. Our resources are better focused on helping conserve wildlife and ensuring people's physical and mental wellbeing is boosted by access to nature.

Major projects

In February, in partnership with the Forestry Commission, we launched the **Marches Woodland Strategy** with its ambitious aim of doubling tree cover in the area.

The magnificent Severn

Over the past 5 years our work on rivers has grown from nothing to one of our biggest areas of work. This spans activity from providing advice to farmers, natural flooding solutions and helping communities monitor and conserve local rivers.

EU-funded **Freshwater First** completed its first phase and secured funding for a second phase. Over £1.5m of river catchment improvement projects have been completed across the county.

Over 100 woody dams have been created in the Corvedale to **Slow the Flow**. This reduces downstream flood risk and improves wildlife habitats.

We formed **Shropshire Rivers Hub** and instigated a conference attended by 70 individuals from a diverse range of river catchment interests.

Our partnership with **Severn Trent Water** continued to provide advice to some 400 farmers to reduce river pollution to benefit wildlife and give us all cleaner water to drink.

Telford

Activity in Telford and Wrekin has continued to grow. With the support of the Veolia Environmental Trust and Bourneville Village Trust we were able to renovate a surviving squatter's cottage adjacent to our **Lightmoor Nature Reserve** for community and school use. Further improvements at the Forest Glen at the base of the Wrekin have been carried out, benefiting thousands of visitors.

Work also commenced on restoration of the **Newport Canal SSSI**.

We have agreed a deal with The Potter Group and Telford & Wrekin Council to use money from the Landfill Communities Fund to benefit **Telford's green spaces** by making improvements for wildlife and people visiting. This project is set to run for at least five years.



Stephen Barlow

Sundew and cranberry

We have a number of major initiatives that are part way through delivery and/or under development.

The **Marches Mosses BogLIFE** project, which is restoring the peatbogs of Fenns, Whixall, Bettisfield and Wem Mosses continued apace with more work to the former scrapyards, acquisition of additional land (by Natural England) and "cell-bunding". This technique uses peat bunds to create small areas to retain water. This allows the sphagnum moss to thrive and the peatbog to grow, capturing tonnes of atmospheric carbon.

At the other end of the county the **Wild Marches** project continued its development. This aims to explore new opportunities caused by changing financial and environmental pressures along the borders between Shropshire, Herefordshire, Powys and Radnorshire. Emerging government policy on tree planting, climate change, economic recovery, flooding and agriculture all seem to be heading in the same direction as this initiative.

In south Shropshire we have continued to monitor the growing **pine marten** population. A youngster captured on camera trap proves this is a breeding population.

Working with people



We have well over **500 vigorous volunteers**, without whom our work would be significantly diminished. Wherever we are active volunteers will be there, bringing energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills. Volunteers play a key role in managing the Trust's **2,500 acres of nature reserves, keeping Shropshire's finest habitat and landscape in good heart.**

We have **14 local branches and affiliated groups** providing summer and winter events programmes, managing local sites and acting as local eyes and ears. The newly formed Shrewsbury branch ran a full programme of events throughout the year.

Working both formally and informally with children and young people is a given. Work with schools was given a boost as we became the first organisation to start delivering Defra's national **Nature Friendly Schools** programme. This uses outdoor

learning to improve educational attainment and mental wellbeing in some of our most deprived schools.

Our project working with young people aged 11-24, **Growing Confidence**, had a busy summer. Students from six universities were able to take part in a placement programme. 15-16 year olds undertook work experience, working alongside experienced staff.

We also employed two university students to help improve our communications and engagement with these younger audiences.

Our initiative to tackle social isolation, **Feed the Birds**, was able to adapt rapidly to Covid-19 lockdown. Volunteers maintained phone contact with existing clients, while we were able to provide bird feeding kits to many people suddenly isolated by the pandemic.

Working with business

Our partnerships with local businesses are proving increasingly fruitful for the Trust and businesses alike. Environmental issues are important for many businesses and working with the Trust helps them meet their corporate social responsibility targets, while helping sales.

Partnerships with **housing developers** are helping to improve the quality of green space in new developments. We have provided design advice to SJ Roberts on the old sugar beet factory site at Allscott and have taken over the management of four acres of wild space at Redwing Fields, supported by Shropshire Homes.

We are able to provide a forum for businesses to meet to discuss environmental issues, seek advice and build support networks.

Our **Annual Corporate Event** and the **Meres & Mosses Business Environment Network** event attracted some 150 delegates to look at environmental sustainability. Judging by the feedback both were well received.

We like to recognise best practice and this year's winners of the **Marches Blue Business Awards** for good practice in business in relation to the water environment were Treflach Farm, Hobsons Brewery and WM Longreach.

Campaigning for wildlife and the environment

We continue to speak out against the damaging effects of the proposed Shrewsbury North West Road and the badger cull which will see thousands of traps set and badgers killed over the coming year.

At the October AGM members passed a resolution committing the Trust to aim for **net zero carbon emissions** by 2030. This recognises that the climate crisis and ecological emergency must be tackled together and will drive much of our future work.

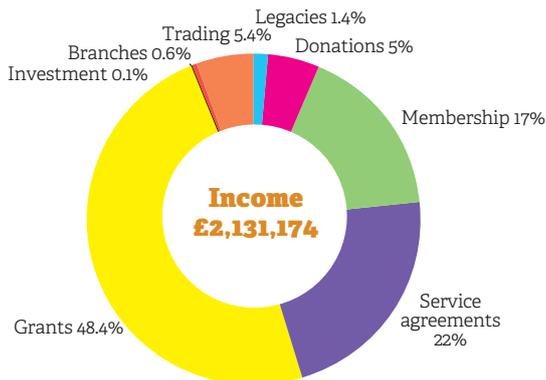
We have begun to map a **nature recovery network** for Shropshire. This ambitious project naturally requires cooperation from landowners and we have secured funding from Defra to explore how we might achieve this with farmers around Clee Hill.

Nationally we have worked with other Wildlife Trusts to campaign for powerful, post-Brexit environmental legislation. An **Environment Bill** is currently on its Parliamentary journey, while locally we have played a lead role in drafting an **Environmental Strategy for The Marches** with the Marches Local Nature Partnership.



Income & expenditure

Income 2019/20



Unrestricted income 52%

This type of income can be used wherever the need is greatest to protect local Wildlife.

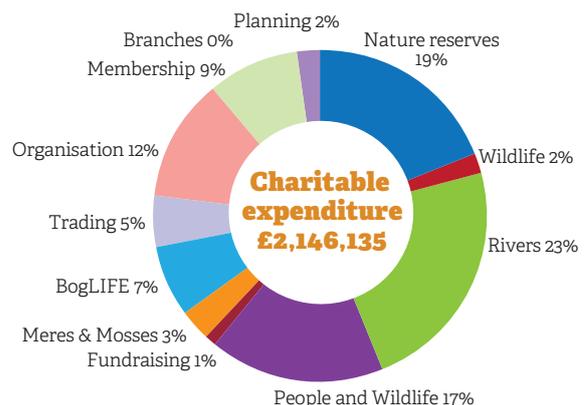
Sources of unrestricted income include:

- Membership subscriptions
- Legacies
- Donations
- Service agreements

Restricted income 48%

Sources of restricted income include grants from funders, public bodies and partner organisations and fundraising for specific projects including some donations.

Expenditure 2019/20



For every £1 we receive in membership we raise almost £6 to match it, your membership money is unrestricted income and supports all our charitable objectives. Membership remains steady and critical to supporting our work.

Revenue expenditure £2,146,135

Land acquisition £177,053

We have been assured by our Financial Advisers Gee7 Wealth that in excess of 98% of our investments are ethical.

And finally

As ever, we would not achieve this work without the support of our members, donors, sponsors and volunteers. Thank you to you all.

Grants and donations

Canoe Foundation

Daniell Charitable Trust

DEFRA

Environment Agency

European Regional Development Fund

Millichope Foundation

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund

NLCF Our Bright Future Programme

Natural England

Potters Environmental Fund

The Rivers Trust

Royal Society of Chemistry

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

Severn Rivers Trust

Severn Trent Water

Shropshire Council

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Sport England

Telford and Wrekin Council

Tesco Bags of Help

The 10:10 Foundation

The Woodland Trust

TK Maxx

Tudor Griffiths Environmental Fund

Veolia Environmental Trust

Water Environment Grant (WEG)

Whitley Animal Protection Trust

Wildflower Society

We would also like to acknowledge financial assistance from all our Business and MMBEN Members as well as support from Accenture, Aggregate Industries, Bridgnorth Aluminium, Cap Gemini, Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club, CJ Wild Bird Foods, Country Gardens and Woodlands, Friends of Pontesford Hill, Friends of Whitcliffe Common, Hatchers Solicitors, Kew Accountants, Lyreco, McKenzie Law, McPhillips, Muller, Northern Industrial Batteries, Sabrina, Sciquip, Scottish Power, Shropshire Homes, Siemens Mobility, SP Energy Networks, Treflach Farm, Vine House Farm, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Wildlife Travel.

Thanks are due to the following donors: all the supporters of the Curlew Appeal and General Reserves appeal. Almost 130 people adopted barn owls, dormice, hedgehogs, the hollies and pine martens.

The following assisted with donations of time and help in kind:

Bridgnorth Town Council, ESI Consulting, Hafren Water, Leo Smith, Mervyn Evans, The National Trust, Shrewsbury Town Council, Shrewsbury Town Fisheries, Tudor Griffiths Group, Upper Onny Community Wildlife Group. Additional support was given by the M&M BEN (Business Environment Network).

**Shropshire
Wildlife Trust**

Shropshire Wildlife Trust is a registered charity (216744) and a registered company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (729746).