

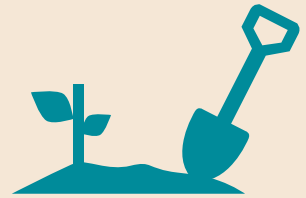
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust 2020 Annual Report

2020...what can we say. It was, of course, an exceptional year. Like everyone else across the country, and indeed the world, many of our plans were thrown in to disarray by Covid-19 and multiple lockdowns.

The capacity of the Trust was significantly reduced throughout the pandemic, both in terms of staff and volunteers. **Compared to 2019 the Trust operated at 80% of its staff and 59% of its volunteer capacity.** Of probably even greater impact, a large amount of staff time was diverted away from delivery

to responding to changing regulations, and the need to develop and implement Covid-19 safe systems of working and financial planning.

Despite the difficulties, and the suspension of many of our work programmes for long periods, we still managed to achieve a huge amount for people and wildlife.



Bubbenhall Wood and Meadow project

194 volunteers contributed **604 days** of volunteer time over the past four years, helping local wildlife by improving the land they rely on for homes and food

OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

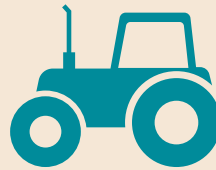
Education

Launching our wildlife learning hub: warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wildaboutlearning helped children enjoy the natural world at time when they were not able to get out and about much



Farming

40 farmers are now members of our Arden Farm Wildlife Network, working with us to make their farms better for wildlife

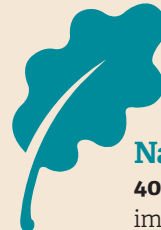


£253,600 funding

Awarded from the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** to support our River Sherbourne Valley Living Landscape

Health & Wellbeing

We helped over **90 people** improve their mental health, with many saying spending time in nature helped them manage their anxiety or depression



Nature Reserves

40ha of woodland improved for wildlife, through management of our nature reserves



Hams Hall Environmental Centre

Volunteers helped to build a **roundhouse**, an amazing educational resource

Young Adult Ambassadors

22 young adult volunteers took part in our **“Wilder Future for Warwickshire”** project, where they learnt a range of skills to help them give nature a voice



Social media followers:



10,670



10,963



4,609



908

SOME KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Nature Reserves

Despite reduced resource, we continued to manage our reserves throughout the pandemic and were delighted to experience an increase in the number of people visiting our reserves in 2020. The pandemic has re-awakened people's connection with the natural world, and we saw local communities turn to the greenspace on their doorsteps for solace and respite at an incredibly difficult time. The fact that no one living or working in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull is more than 6 miles from one of our nature reserves, gave local people the opportunity to experience nature at a time when we needed it most.

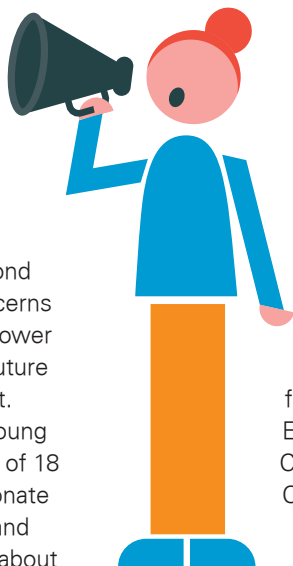
At Brandon Reach, our 'Reaching out to Communities' project, funded by FCC Communities Foundation, with a third-party contribution from Millie's Watch Charitable Trust, was completed. The project delivered £47,000 worth of access and infrastructure improvements,

“The programme helped young people between the ages of 18 and 35, who are all passionate about environmentalism and conservation, learn more about standing up for nature.”

helped and advised at all stages by The Warwickshire Disabled Ramblers. The site now takes its place beside Brandon Marsh and Brandon Wood as a welcoming, safe and accessible place to experience nature.

Wilder Future for Warwickshire

The Wilder Future for Warwickshire project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, was set out to help the Trust respond to the environmental concerns of young people and empower them to deliver a wilder future for their local environment. The programme helped young people between the ages of 18 and 35, who are all passionate about environmentalism and conservation, learn more about



Young Adult Ambassadors learning about sustainable farming techniques

standing up for nature.

The project started in January 2020, stopped in March and restarted again in August 2020 in a completely different format. Intended to be highly interactive, social programme, in-person programme, it adapted to online delivery, with virtual platforms and a series of webinars.

were in post and busy developing ideas, commissioning feasibility studies and engaging the local community on the built, cultural and natural heritage of the River Sherbourne in Coventry.

Dialogue commenced with Coventry City of Culture, which was also delayed from its original start date of January 2020 to May 2020 due to COVID-19. The Sherbourne Valley Project is now positioned as a key legacy delivery partner for the City of Culture.

Love Your River Cole

In December 2020 a partnership led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust through the Tame Valley Wetlands team was successful in obtaining a grant of £705,000 from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to continue our work as part of the Love Your River Cole (LYRiC) project.

The river and its valley run from the centre of Birmingham to where the river joins the River Blythe near Coleshill in north Warwickshire. The grant will support our vital work restoring and enhancing key locations along the river. These include the historic Parkland at Castle Bromwich Gardens (Solihull), Cole End Park (North Warwickshire), Glebe Farm Recreation Ground (Birmingham), and Meriden Park (Solihull).

Work will be delivered by a partnership of eight organisations (including the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country) and will involve tree planting, wildflower meadow creation and wetland habitat enhancements as well as access improvements to paths and trails through the key sites. We will also be

The volunteers received training in ecology, practical conservation, environmental campaigning, social media influencing and political lobbying, with a view to helping the Trust raise awareness of key conservation issues and ultimately to inspire and motivate their peers to champion the environment.

Sherbourne Valley Project

In August we announced that we had secured £253,600 for the Development Phase of our Sherbourne Valley Project. The funding was primarily from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with match funding from Coventry City Council, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent, Citizen Housing and Diocese of Coventry.

By November 3 members of staff funded by the project



Outdoor craft activities helped people improve their mental health

“We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.”

focusing on creating and supporting local green jobs in partnership with The Prince’s Trust, and will offer traineeships aimed at giving people the experience and accredited training required to pursue a career in the environmental sector.

TeAM

The Environment and Me project was successfully extended through an application to the National Lottery Community Fund, allowing us to expand the programme into Warwickshire. TEaM helped people who were thrown

into crisis due to lockdown manage their mental health through virtual nature events and a new weekly nature newsletter. Volunteers said the project was a true lifesaver in 2020 and if TEaM hadn’t given them the confidence to use green spaces, they may not have left their houses at all that year.

Funding was secured for Armed Forces veteran projects and from the European Social Fund to develop the 8-week bush craft programme.

TEaM works at a wide range of sites, from allotments and gardens to rivers and

woodlands. The project supports people with a range of activities to help improve their mental health. Jess grew up in an urban environment, and was not used to encountering the natural world as a child. Jess joined the TEaM bush-craft programme through Recovery Academy and shares her experience in our film, Jess’s story.



You can watch it here www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/Jess

50 Years

We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. Not in the way we had planned in 2019, which involved a range of in-person events and activities, but none the less we feel we did the founders of this wonderful charity proud in the way that we were able to mark the milestone through our magazine and through a series of online events.

It really is a remarkable history when we consider the very modest beginnings of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, with just 8 members and no reserves. In 2020 we had over 24,000 members supporting the Trust and standing up for nature and it was certainly a moment to reflect on just how far we have come, and also to look to the future.



Financials

OVERALL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

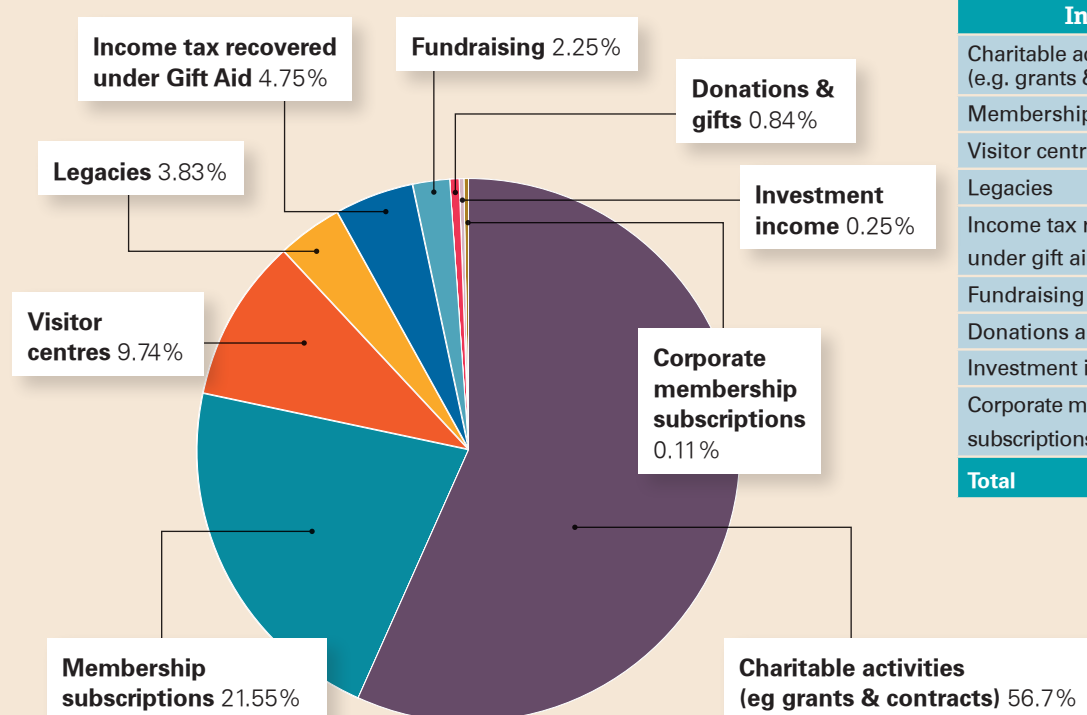
2020			
	Charitable	Trading (Middlemarch Environmental)	Total
Total Income	£2,845,000	£5,250,000	£8,095,000
Total Expenditure	£2,833,000	£4,650,000	£7,484,000
Net Income (Expenditure)	£12,000	£600,000	£611,000

It's all thanks to you

2020 was a challenging year where unpredictability and uncertainty took centre stage in our lives. Like many organisations, there was great concern about how the pandemic would impact the Trust and the work that we do for wildlife and people. We were absolutely overwhelmed by the loyalty and generosity of our members and supporters throughout the year, and thanks to you we were able to continue to deliver all of the amazing projects outlined in these pages. We really are incredibly grateful.

The pandemic was a timely reminder of how intrinsically linked we are with nature, and how deeply it can nurture our wellbeing and provide solace during dark times. Your support is more vital now than ever before and we must do all that we can to champion nature's recovery, together.

INCOME 2020



Income	2020
Charitable activities (e.g. grants & contracts)	£1,613,000
Membership subscriptions	£613,000
Visitor centres	£277,000
Legacies	£109,000
Income tax recovered under gift aid	£135,000
Fundraising	£64,000
Donations and gifts	£24,000
Investment income	£7,000
Corporate membership subscriptions	£3,000
Total	£2,845,000

Like a lot of charities, we apply for grants from a variety of organisations in a competitive process which involves us having to demonstrate the importance of our vital work.

We are extremely grateful to the following organisations who awarded us grant funding in 2020

- Big Local
- Environment Agency
- The Ratcliff Foundation
- National Lottery Community Fund

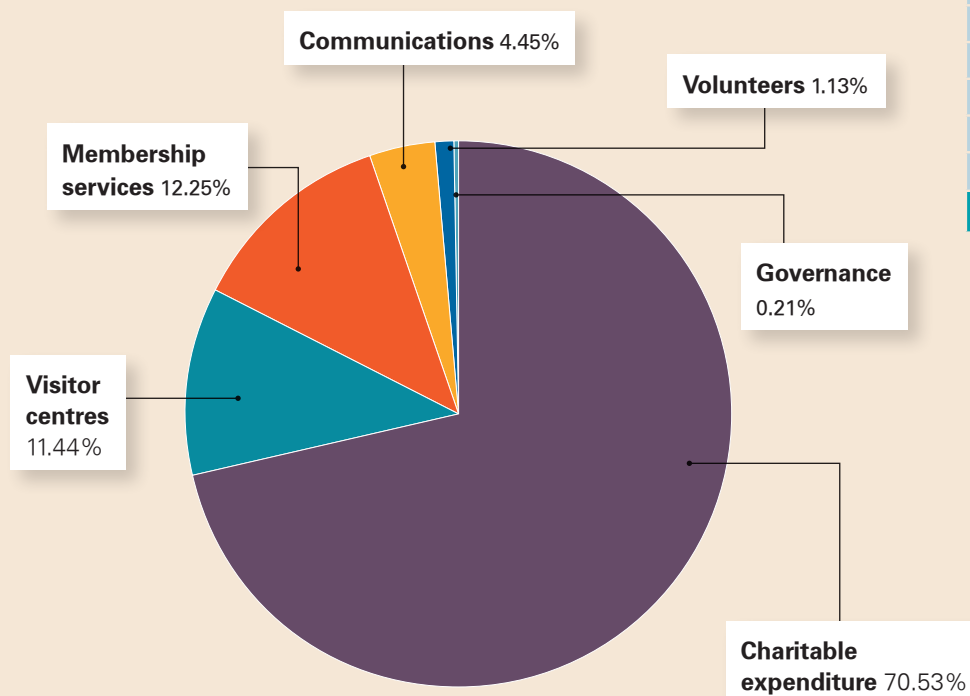
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC)
- Rugby Borough Council (RBC)
- Orbit Housing
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Severn Trent
- Stonewater Housing
- Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
- Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust
- European Social Fund and the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- L&Q

The lifeblood of our organisation is our membership. Membership subscriptions

provide us with vital income free from conditions set by funders which allows us to invest in the areas that matter most. Without your support our charity would not be able to function. Thank you!

We are humbled and truly grateful to the generous donations of our legators; June Cooper, Dorothy Elstub, Vera Rosemary Harrison, William Michael Hulme, Jenny Skidmore, Margaret Cotton, Carole Robinson, Ronald Edward Parr, Christine Mary Kitchen and Herbert Heywood

EXPENDITURE 2020



Expenditure	2020
Charitable expenditure	£1,998,000
Visitor centres	£324,000
Membership services	£347,000
Communications	£126,000
Volunteers	£32,000
Governance	£6,000
Total	£2,833,000

Our charitable expenditure within the annual report includes the management of our nature reserves, our Living Landscapes work in partnership with farmers, landowners, businesses and councils, as well as our health and wellbeing, planning policy and education work.

Designated Funds	2020	2019
Nature Recovery Fund	£1,500,000	£1,000,000
Charity Projects Fund	£946,000	£946,000
Infrastructure Investment Fund	£25,000	£25,000
Covid-19 Recovery Fund	£315,000	£315,000
Contingency	£730,000	£730,000
Total	£3,516,000	£3,016,000

Vision for the future – 2030

Over the course of 2020, the Trust supported the development of national Wildlife Trust strategy, playing a full role in the development of the 30by30 campaign (a call for 30% of the UK land area to be managed for wildlife by 2030) and related issues such as the proposal for a new legal designation referred to as Wildbelt.

The development of national strategy has continued into 2021 and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust is now working on its own plan for delivering that collective strategy locally across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

“Nature’s recovery is the only way to solve the climate and ecological emergency.”

We are living in a climate and ecological emergency. Year after year we see and feel the growing disruption this is causing in extreme weather events, declining populations of familiar species and the deterioration in the services which

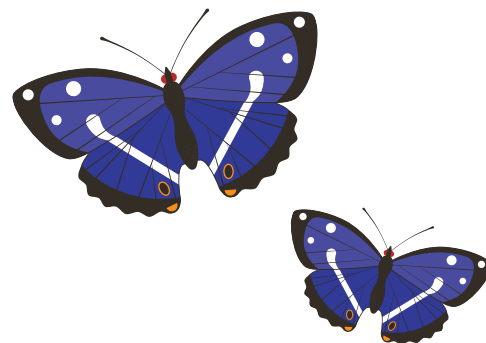
nature provides us ... pollination, flood management, soil fertility, beauty, serenity and relaxation.

Adding sad irony to this stark crisis by distancing ourselves from nature and treating wildlife as a disposable commodity we are making ourselves more and more unhealthy. Is it a wonder that levels of disease related to obesity and poor mental health are higher than ever before when fewer people spend less time outdoors enjoying the free benefits nature provides to mind and body?

Nature’s recovery is the only way to solve the climate and ecological emergency. It is an effective and

cheap way to help improve our health and well-being.

So, we must no longer just think about slowing the loss and protecting what remains. We need to stop and reverse the declines and bring wildlife back at scale



and at pace, to help restore biodiversity, stabilise the climate, ensure food security, improve health and wellbeing, and protect our economy, which depends on nature and not the other way around.

Our 2030 strategy will set out what we will do in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull under one goal; More space for nature with more people on nature’s side. This will be our unique contribution.

Local action, collective impact, global change.

We look forward to sharing our strategy with you in the coming months!

