

Pledge for Nature 2023

The Pledge

I pledge to work to create, enhance and restore nature in my council area.

The government's Environmental Improvement Plan published in January this year sets out the ambition to restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat by 2042, restore or create 140,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2028 and roll out Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify areas to create, enhance and restore habitat and deliver environmental benefits.

How will you create, enhance, and restore nature in your council area?

About the Pledge

Why should we create, enhance, and restore nature?

By now most of us are aware of the countless benefits nature has to offer and how it is vital for our economic, physical, and mental wellbeing. There are many studies which demonstrate the more connected to nature we are, the happier and healthier we are. The NHS could save an estimated £2.1 billion every year in treatment costs if everyone in England had access to good quality green space¹. However, we simply do not have enough nature and what we have is often poor quality and fragmented. The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries (in the bottom 10% globally) and is the worst out of the G7 countries. Bigger, better quality and more biodiverse habitats support more species, provide cleaner air and water, act as natural solutions to flooding and drought and even trap more carbon. The climate crisis is one of the greatest and most universal threats to the planet, but it cannot be tackled effectively without addressing the nature crisis.

To ensure that nature's recovery is successful we must create more, enhance what we already have and restore what we have lost.

¹ [Investing in nature is an investment in the NHS, says Environment Agency Chief Executive - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/investing-in-nature-is-an-investment-in-the-nhs-says-environment-agency-chief-executive)

What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

Local Nature Recovery Strategies were devised, as a part of the Environment Act 2021, to be a new system of spatial strategies to create, enhance and restore habitat and improve the local environment.

Each Strategy will, for the area that it covers;

- agree priorities for nature's recovery,
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature,
- map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

It is intended that when fully rolled out each county will have a Local Nature Recovery Strategy and will be led by a “responsible authority” appointed by the Secretary of State. All local authorities should be involved in the development of the Strategy for their area whether or not they are the “responsible authority”.

BBOWT will be working with the Local Nature Partnerships and local authorities in our area to help create Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

For more information please see:

[Local nature recovery strategy statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942212/local-nature-recovery-strategy-statutory-guidance.pdf)

What is BBOWT's approach to create, enhance and restore nature?

To achieve our long-term goal of nature being in recovery, we have our own 30 by 30 target. We want to see 30% of the land across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire well managed for nature by 2030.

At BBOWT we have developed our own Nature Recovery Network which prioritises important areas for wildlife across our three counties. This map illustrates where we will implement a range of land management approaches to create a joined-up system resulting in a visibly wilder landscape which will support nature's recovery. Our Nature Recovery Network involves both existing places where wildlife is more abundant, such as BBOWT's nature reserves, and areas to be restored and created to connect fragmented and deteriorating habitat. This will allow plants, animals, seeds, and spores to move more easily

from place to place and enable natural processes such as pollination and seed dispersal to happen between these areas.

To reconnect the fragmented habitats across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire we are undertaking habitat restoration and creation projects in urban and agricultural areas. We are also delivering wildlife-friendly management advice to farmers and landowners through our Land Advice Service.

BBOWT are working towards accomplishing the following by 2026:

- 10,000 hectares of wildlife friendly land management advice delivered across our Nature Recovery Network
- 1,000 hectares of land put into positive wildlife management as a result of BBOWT support
- 100,000 hectares of wider countryside conservation projects delivering positive outcomes for nature.

This will be achieved through landscape-scale conservation projects often focused around our Living Landscapes. The Living Landscapes scheme involves BBOWT working with landowners, farmers, councils, businesses, individuals, and communities to create, enhance and restore habitat in the wider countryside around our nature reserves. These schemes can then facilitate large scale nature recovery projects like 'Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and Ray' which will create, enhance, and restore nature across a 300km² area of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Learn more about our plans within our Nature Recovery Network map here:

[Nature Recovery Map | Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust \(bbowt.org.uk\)](https://bbowt.org.uk/nature-recovery-map)

Find out more about our Living Landscapes in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire here:

[Living Landscapes | Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust \(bbowt.org.uk\)](https://bbowt.org.uk/living-landscapes)