

Berkshire Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

Our Impact

2025–26

More nature everywhere, for everyone

Working together for a **wilder future**

Welcome to our Impact Report for 2025–26, showcasing some of the highlights that your support has helped us to achieve.

Over the past five years, our *Wilder* strategy has had three main goals: put nature into recovery, empower people to act together and secure our future. These come together to support one overarching vision, which is simply more nature everywhere, for everyone.

Thanks to the generous support of members, volunteers, funders and partners, we have seen wetlands restored, rivers connected, ancient woodlands saved, threatened species protected and communities empowered to act for nature where they live. We're delighted to share some of this year's achievements with you here.

As we turn to the years ahead and begin our new Strategy 2030, the challenges have never been greater. The climate emergency is accelerating, rivers are polluted, greenspaces are lost to inappropriate development and for every £1 invested in nature across the UK, far more is spent on activities that degrade it.

We know it doesn't need to be this way, and we remain committed to our vision of the future. That's why we're now focusing on building a movement for change. Thank you for being part of this and sharing our mission of a wilder future for everyone.



George Levvy Chair



Estelle Bailey Chief Executive

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
September 2026

Our work protects and restores the natural world, and connects people with wildlife.

Our vision
More nature everywhere, for everyone

Our mission
To bring about nature's recovery through local action

To achieve our *Wilder* vision, we have three main goals:

1. Put nature into recovery
2. Empower people to act for nature
3. Secure our future

GEORGE LEVY & ESTELLE BAILEY – CHRIS DEENEY

JON HAWKINS/SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

"I think the Wildlife Trusts are a really powerful and positive agent of change. Many charities make a lot of noise and achieve little; I find the opposite with the Wildlife Trusts."
BBOWT member, annual survey

Five years of a ***Wilder* strategy**

Key achievements from 2021–26



Approximately 73% of sites we own or manage are in good condition or their condition has improved thanks to careful habitat management by staff and volunteers.



We worked with a range of formal partners, including councils, institutions, farmers and business, to deliver positive outcomes for nature across more than 120,000Ha in our three counties.



Communities we engage with agree that they feel inspired to take further action for wildlife (85%) and that their engagement with nature has also improved their wellbeing (90%).



More than 1,000 people have become Wildlife Ambassadors, campaigning on BBOWT's behalf with local and regional decision makers.



Nearly 60,000 people support BBOWT as members, making regular and ongoing contributions to ensure the financial stability of the organisation and nature's recovery.



We launched an ecological consultancy, Future Nature WTC, and three Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) sites, providing positive impact for nature and income to BBOWT.

IMAGE CREDITS – MAIN: EMMA BRADSHAW. 1, 4, 6: LOGAN WALKER. 2: BECKY CHESSHYRE. 3: UJULA GA. 5: JULIE BELLINGHAM

Our impact in numbers

Your support helped us achieve all this and more in 2025–26



146,900 visits to visitor centres

Read more about what we've achieved during 2025–26 thanks to your support in our full Annual Report and Accounts here: bbowt.org.uk/publications



91% of volunteers feel valued by BBOWT



2,651ha managed by BBOWT across 85 nature reserves



Advice given to **39** land managers



Advice given on **24** Local Wildlife Sites



13,968 children and young people engaged in education activities



120,213Ha of wider countryside conservation projects delivering positive outcomes for nature



1,700 BBOWT volunteers



276 pieces of local and national media coverage



24 MPs briefed about nature as critical infrastructure



146 schools visited our education centres



68,706 social media followers across six platforms



302 community groups connected through our network



95% of planning applications responded to by BBOWT that have been withdrawn, refused or amended with improved considerations for wildlife

Putting nature into recovery

Safeguarding Berkshire's heathlands

Thanks to a grant from Grundon, we've been able to have cattle grazing Wildmoor Heath nature reserve in east Berkshire once more. The funding allowed us to install a water supply and trough, improve fencing, purchase a tractor and use 'Nofence' collars for the cattle.

Heathland is an important habitat in Berkshire and home to rare and threatened species such as Dartford warbler, nightjar, adder, grayling and silver-studded blue butterflies. Traditionally the habitat was maintained through a combination of grazing and cutting back woody vegetation like gorse and birch as part of subsistence agriculture. Without BBOWT's management, including grazing, Wildmoor Heath would eventually turn into a woodland and the heathland's special wildlife would lose their homes.

The Sussex cattle now grazing the reserve are a traditional, hardy breed with a calm temperament and well-suited to the rough grazing. The 'Nofence' collars allow us to graze specific areas within the wider fenced extent of the reserve, targeting those parts that need grazing the most.

The cattle graze on faster growing plants allowing other, more delicate plants to grow. As they move around the site, they help break up areas of scrub and create areas of bare ground, which is important for a range of heathland wildlife including reptiles and certain species of butterflies. We've already seen the positive impact that the cattle are having.

The Grundon donation was provided via the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). This work was also supported by a local philanthropist.


HANNAH MAW

"Grundon is pleased to have provided funding for the return of grazing at Wildmoor Heath. This project will deliver lasting benefits for the heathland habitat and support the conservation of rare species that depend upon it. We value the opportunity to contribute to BBOWT's ongoing management of this important site and its efforts to safeguard the area's biodiversity for the long term."

Toni Robinson, Risk & Sustainability Director at Grundon

10 Sussex cattle grazing the nature reserve

1 new tractor

1 new water supply and trough

ROY MACDONALD

GRUNDON

Putting nature into recovery

Restoring Thames-side habitats

A two and a half-year scheme, funded by Mend the Gap, has focused on sites along the Thames, south of Wallingford. Mend the Gap is a project managed by the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes to deliver a number of activities to enhance land impacted negatively by the electrification of the Great Western Railway around the Goring Gap.

In this area, the Thames floodplain hosts important examples of fen, swamp and reedbed and includes the 19-hectare Cholsey Marsh nature reserve. Home to important riverside marsh and managed by BBOWT, this is a sensitive site that is also enjoyed by people – the Thames Path national trail passes through, and a public slipway intersecting the reserve draws visitors in the summer.

Habitat enhancements delivered at the nature reserve and across multiple sites nearby through the project included creating new scrapes to enhance the presence of water on sites and provide seasonal foraging opportunities for birds and invertebrates, restoring a lime tree corridor, managing scrub to support warbler habitats and restore habitat diversity for fen and open water. We also provided advice and management plans to other nearby landowners.

One particular species to benefit from the project is the Desmoulin's whorl snail, a localised species that favours sedges and grasses in wet places. The species' stronghold in Britain is a band of land from Dorset to Norfolk, with a few scattered populations elsewhere, making Cholsey Marsh a significant site for these minute molluscs.



SARAH ATTWOOD

"Working with Phil from BBOWT has been a fantastic experience – he provided great advice, suggested routes to meet our joint goals, organised site works, ensured that contractors worked within constraints and completed the project and surveys with great results. We're very grateful for the help we have received from BBOWT and the Mend the Gap Team. I'm looking forward to future work together."

Patrick Amory, on whose land we provided advice, survey work and embodied scrapes, owl boxes and laid hedges.

15 landowners worked with

8 ephemeral water bodies installed or refreshed

729 records of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail

AMY LEWIS

Supported by MEND the GAP

Chilterns National Landscape

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

Putting nature into recovery

Investing in nature

We launched our third Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) site, Valley Farm, which is part of Yoesden nature reserve in Buckinghamshire. This adds to our first two habitat banks, Duxford Old River at Chimney Meadows nature reserve in Oxfordshire and Ludgershall Meadows, part of the suite of sites comprising Upper Ray Meadows nature reserve on the Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire border.

Valley Farm sits beneath the 'hanger' woodland of beech, yew and whitebeam trees within Yoesden Wood. The condition of the chalk grassland has declined after many years of overgrazing and nutrient enrichment, resulting in a noticeable reduction in plant diversity.

As a habitat bank, the site will be carefully restored to create flower-rich chalk grassland, potentially supporting a variety of specialist butterflies, including three scarce blue species: the Adonis, chalkhill and small blue.

BBOWT will reintroduce a conservation grazing regime with targeted over-sowing to help increase the abundance of indicator plant species. We will also create and enhance hedgerows and plant a few in-field trees to improve habitat connectivity across open fields.

Managing Valley Farm as a Biodiversity Net Gain habitat bank will enable us to restore and maintain increased biodiversity on the site over the next 30 years and beyond. As part of Yoesden nature reserve, it's creating a more connected area of wildlife-rich habitat within the Chilterns National Landscape in south Buckinghamshire.


BBOWT

"This site is a fantastic example of what off-site BNG was designed to do for nature recovery. It is a literal stone's throw from one of the Trust's stunningly diverse chalk grassland reserves in the Chilterns and will deliver a number of the mapped measures in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes' new Local Nature Recovery Strategy."

Louise Mapstone MSc CEcol CEnv MCIEEM PISEP
Biodiversity Net Gain Officer, Buckinghamshire Council

COLIN WILLIAMS

50 BNG offsite allocations completed and registered with Natural England

£

37% of units sold across our 3 habitat bank sites

55Ha of land secured for nature restoration over 30 years

Empowering people to act for nature

Saving our chalk streams

Chalk streams are one of the rarest habitats on earth, and we're lucky to have several across our three counties though they are seriously threatened. Since 2023, our Save Our Chalk Streams campaign has fought to give them the protected status they deserve and desperately need, and we've seen significant wins this past year. Our successful campaigning led to chalk streams being included in government's National Policy Planning Frameworks for the first time.

We saw local success too. Inspired by BBOWT's campaign work, Cllr David Moore, Buckinghamshire Councillor for Farnham Common and Burnham Beeches, got in touch to express his support and to find out what more he could do for his community's chalk stream. We helped with the Council's motion to protect chalk streams in the county. At a full council meeting in November 2025, with cross-party backing and enthusiasm and a unanimous vote in favour, the motion successfully passed.

Councils, like Buckinghamshire, and local people and community groups, are not waiting for the Government to recognise the importance of chalk streams in law, they're doing it themselves.

Our campaigning is possible because of more than 1,000 volunteer Wildlife Ambassadors who speak up for local wildlife and habitats by contacting their MPs and local decision makers. Their voices give important weight to our campaigns and bring our advocacy work back to our local towns and villages.

Our chalk stream campaign work has been supported by a local philanthropist.



BBOWT

"To the best of our knowledge, Buckinghamshire is the first unitary authority to adopt a dedicated pro–chalk stream motion of this kind...I'm really thankful for the trust for their support and suggestions, just as with the Chilterns Society and Chilterns National Landscape."

Cllr David Moore, Buckinghamshire Councillor for Farnham Common and Burnham Beeches

LINDA PITKIN/2020VISION



80% of global chalk streams are found in the south of England

Only **11** British chalk streams have any legal protections

5,400 people called for stronger protections for chalk streams

Empowering people to act for nature

Supporting local community groups

During the year, we completed our Community Network project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. By facilitating networking, and delivering training and practical support, the project addressed the 'value–action gap' by enabling people who care about the environment to take meaningful, sustained action through volunteering and community groups.

Over two years, the project supported existing groups to strengthen their skills, confidence and connections, while also helping new groups to form and recruit members, with the ambition of engaging around 300 groups across the region.

The Community Network created a supportive and inclusive space where groups and individuals could learn new skills, share knowledge, feel part of a wider movement and connect locally and across counties. The project supported people who had not previously taken action for nature, helping them to find opportunities, gain confidence and access peer support. Through the activities of volunteers the project also delivered habitat creation and improvements to local green spaces, contributing to nature recovery in the heart of communities and community wellbeing.

Community volunteers continue to be supported by BBOWT's volunteering team, ensuring their impact for nature in their local area continues. We now support a growing volunteer community through formal, BBOWT-led opportunities and informal opportunities in towns and villages across our three counties. This gives a strong foundation for our focus on building a movement for change in our Strategy 2030.

COMMUNITY FUND

"BBOWT's Community Network is an invaluable source of information, support and knowledge when running a small community group."

Lisa Phipps, Keep Nethercote Rural

70 events delivered over 2 years including workshops, walks and talks

548 recipients of the Community Network newsletter

1,119 individuals and 302 community groups brought together through the project

BBOWT

Empowering people to act for nature

Turning our schools wilder

We launched a pilot for our Wilder Schools programme that helps children connect with nature and care for wildlife in their school grounds. Through nature-focussed, curriculum-linked sessions, the Engagement and Learning Team aims to improve children's wellbeing and empower schools to maximise the biodiversity of their sites. We are working with primary schools across the area and aim to expand to secondary schools and other educational settings.

Teacher training is a key component as it helps to grow confidence to teach outside the classroom. The team also plans to work with the whole school community through, for example, assemblies, meetings and fundraising initiatives. We aim to help families connect with their local wild spaces and benefit from spending more time together in nature. We encourage action for nature both at home and/or in local green spaces, and our goal is for a community that advocates for nature.

Our pilot study involved six schools and helped identify opportunities to co-design the programme with pupils and teachers and to understand how best to work in partnership with school communities.

The full Wilder Schools programme, launching autumn 2026, will see our team working with a new range of schools. In each school, our engagement and learning officers will work with one group of children over three years, starting while the children are aged seven to nine. These 'longer, deeper' journeys with schools aim to embed outdoor learning and action for nature within school life, letting children connect with nature and care for wildlife in their school grounds over several years.

"It's a great way to get staff more confident and involved in outdoor learning, which only enhances our students' day-to-day lives and wellbeing."
Teacher from one of the pilot schools

"I didn't know there was so much wildlife in our school! I am going to try harder to look after it now."
Pupil from one of the pilot schools



BBOWT

BBOWT

6 schools completed the pilot

305 KS2 children took part

100% teachers who reported back agreed that the programme had improved their outdoor learning areas and increased biodiversity

Securing our future

Protecting Ham Green Wood

Our Ham Green Wood appeal raised £600k to enable the purchase of an important woodland, home to rare species of bats and butterflies. Ham Green Wood is at the heart of our Bernwood Forest and Ray Valley Living Landscape, close to our Upper Ray Meadows and Finemere and Rushbeds Woods reserves. Adding this site to our existing network of reserves further strengthens and protects the value of the whole area for wildlife.

The site contains one of the largest remaining examples of ancient woodland in the area and two thirds of the woodland is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). An ancient green lane running down one side of the wood, Oxford Lane, is a hotspot for black hairstreak butterflies. The colony here is nationally important and the site is often described as the 'best' for black hairstreak in the country. As well as black and brown hairstreaks, Ham Green Wood is home to other butterfly species including purple hairstreaks, white admiral, purple emperor and silver-washed fritillary.

The grassland is a blank canvas with the potential for increasing its wildlife value through our expertise. This could include the creation of meadows, ponds and scrub margins to soften the border between the grassland and the woodland.

Our Nature Recovery Fund allows us to take advantage of opportunities like this when they arise, supporting our work for nature, for climate and for people.

Thank you to everyone who has generously given to this via donations and gifts in wills.

"It is so important that our Wildlife Trusts secure key areas of land for nature conservation so that their future is protected. All the best for reaching your target and buying this woodland."
Donor to the Ham Green Wood appeal



LOU REEVE

LOGAN WALKER

Nature RECOVERY FUND

£600,000 raised

1,000+ donors supported the appeal

76 acres of ancient woodland and **66** acres of grassland protected

Our **finances**

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust continues to maintain a healthy financial position, despite experiencing many of the same financial and fundraising headwinds as the wider charity sector

Like many other charities, rapidly increasing costs meant that we underwent an organisational restructure in 2025-26 in order to bring our operating budget back into balance.

This has enabled us to keep our charitable reserves at a healthy level whilst maintaining our nature conservation and people engagement activity. Our 2025-26 income was stable, thanks to significant donations and gifts in wills from individuals, and a successful year of trust and grant project funding. Part of our income is restricted to specific projects and unavailable for general costs.

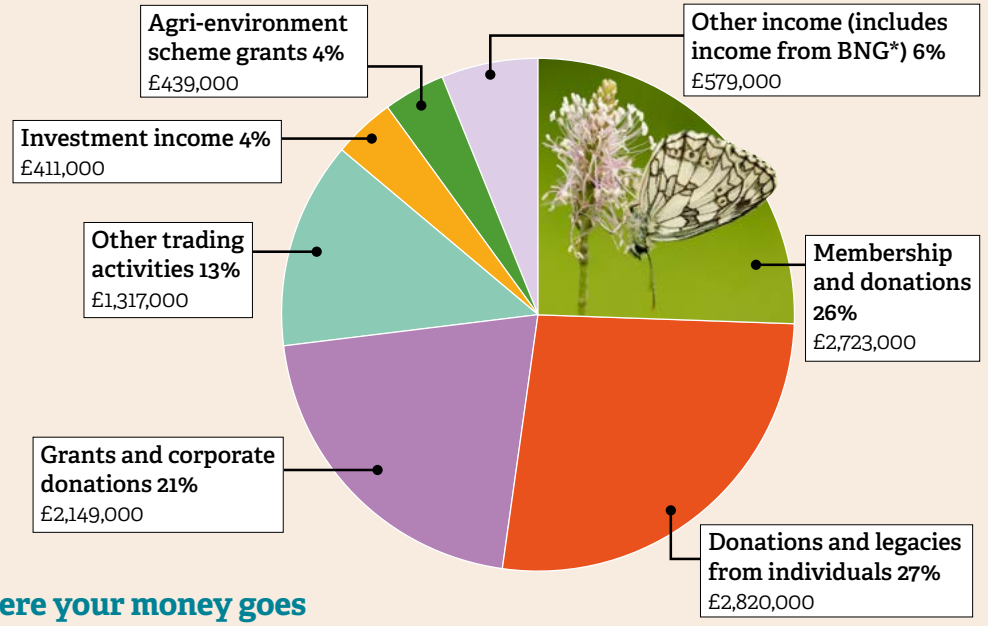


VICTORIA BENTLEY

How you support us

Income 2025–2026
Total: £10,438,000

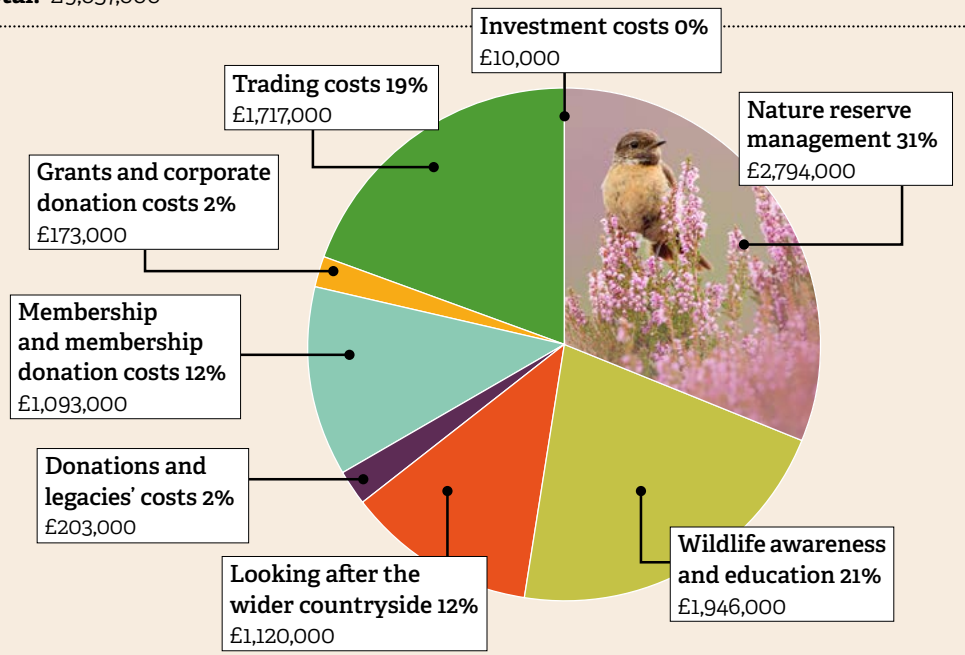
*restricted funds, unavailable for general expenditure



DAVID MOLE/WARBURG WILDLIFE

Where your money goes

Expenditure 2025–2026
Total: £9,057,000



BEN HALL/2020VISION

Our **members**

Fundraising promise...
The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) is committed to fundraising and communicating in an honest and transparent way.

We aim to ensure that everyone who chooses to support us, whether by joining as a member, making a donation, giving their time to volunteer with us or attending events, has a positive and rewarding experience and understands that their support is truly valued.

As part of this we will be honest and transparent, protect your data, be respectful of your wishes, and accountable. Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust trustees regularly review all fundraising activity for both its cost effectiveness and compliance. Furthermore, trustees review all complaints received and any fundraising ones are reported to the Fundraising Regulator.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

"Keep up the wonderful work, it is so important."
BBOWT member, annual survey

28,761
active memberships (including individual, joint and family members)

£5.5m+
income received from memberships, donations and gifts in wills

3,221 new memberships during the year

11,737
Wildlife Watch Club members

53% of our income is from membership, donations and gifts in wills



VICTORIA BENTLEY

Thank you to **our supporters**

The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust relies on the generosity of its members and other supporters. Without this support we would not be able to achieve our aim of more nature everywhere, for everyone, in our three counties.

We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals who have generously supported BBOWT during the 2025-26 financial year. We would like to particularly acknowledge the continued support from individuals and organisations that enabled us to carry on with our work through the ongoing challenge of cost-of-living crisis.

President
Steve Backshall

Honorary Vice-Presidents
Dr Robin Buxton MBE DL CEnv FCIEEM
Professor Sir Dieter Helm CBE
Audrey, Lady Wood

Board of Trustees
George Levvy (Chair)
Jolyon Austin (Vice Chair)
Zoe Hancock (Honorary Treasurer)
Natalie Ganpatsingh
Drew Bennellick
Miles Evans
Mark Chacksfield
Timothy Davies
Garth Clark
Samuel Burgh
Amy Padfield
Simon Dickson
Subash Ludhra



JON HAWKINS/SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Charitable Trusts (£2,000+)
ABRI Community Fund
Greenham Trust
HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust
Helen Roll Charity
Mr & Mrs J A Pye's Charitable Settlement
Tesco Stronger Starts
The Bouttell Bequest
The EBM Charitable Trust
The Joe & Rosa Frenkel Charitable Trust
The Richard Radcliffe Charitable Trust
The Rothschild Foundation
Thatcham Relief in Need Fund
Gerald Palmer Eling Trust
John Ellerman Foundation

Statutory organisations
DEFRA
Environment Agency
Highways England
Natural England

Grant making bodies
Chilterns Conservation Board
Chilterns National Landscape
National Lottery Heritage Fund
The Crown Estate
The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT)
Wild Oxfordshire
Landfill Communities Fund
FCC Communities Fund
Grundon
Veolia Environmental Trust

Local Authorities
Cherwell District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
West Berkshire Council
West Oxfordshire District Council
Wiltshire Council

Local Business Donors
Balfour Beatty
Betsy Williams Solicitor
Eleos Compliance
HDA Environmental
Icon Solutions Hiral Patel Award
IS Oxford Ltd
Purely Plants
RWE
Sula Innovation
Team Technologies
TDK

Business Engagement Partners
Blenheim Palace
Castle Hotel Windsor
Crowcon Detection - Halma Group
English Provender Company Ltd
Freeths LLP
Gigaclear
Greencore Homes
Horwood House Hotel
Iron Mountain Data Centers
Johnson Matthey Plc
Jordans Farms
Karl Storz Endoscopy (UK) Ltd
KKB Remediation
Nature Bureau
Novuna
OCU Group
Oxford Pharmagenesis Ltd
Pacific Produce
QuickMoveNow
Radley College
Renegade Brewery
SDC Builders Ltd
Sophos PLC
St Anne's College
St John's College
Tieva INC (Prodec Networks)
University College Oxford
Vine House Farm

Philanthropists
Mrs Annabel Christie
Mr Simon Collings
Rose Dale
Mr Greg Dyke
Dr Tony and Mrs Marion Gillie
Linda Hill
Mr Roger Jefcoate CBE DL

Legators
We are extremely grateful to the following people who left a bequest to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust in their Will:

Mrs Sarah Austin
Mr David Bignell
Mrs Mary Broster
Mr Robin Carr
Mrs Jennifer Chitson
Mr Stanley Codling
Mr John Cole
Mr Paul Dickinson
Miss Ann Donne
Mr Alan Dorey
Mrs Alison Evans
Mrs Elizabeth Graves
Mrs Patricia Green
Mr Arthur Harris
Mr Kenneth Herring
Mr John Hirst
Mr Anthony Holloway
Mr Leslie Killick
Mrs Jean Mudford
Miss Suzanne Parrott
Mr Norman Pearce
Mrs Daphne Prue
Mr Christopher Rea
Mr David Rolls
Mr Ronald Rowles
Mr Walter Smallbone
Mrs Rosamund Stuttard
Mr Andrew Tacon
Ms Wendy Tyndale
Mr Terence Willett
Miss Margaret Wigan
Mr David Wishart

We also thank those individuals and families who have chosen to donate anonymously.

Volunteers
A special thank you to everyone who volunteers for nature's recovery in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Looking to 2030 and beyond

As we launch our *Strategy 2030*, our vision of 'more nature everywhere, for everyone' does not change. We simply move towards a different way of trying to achieve that vision across our three counties.

At the heart of our new strategy is the premise that nature is essential infrastructure. We are part of it, not separate from it. However, the systems surrounding us and which govern how we farm, build, invest and consume, do not yet see nature as essential. As a result, nature and biodiversity are in decline.

Strategy 2030 reflects this reality. Nature's recovery depends on changes in how land, water and places are managed. To change the systems, we need to change the people who decide on those changes.

Our new strategy will focus on two goals which together address both sides of the challenge:

- Because nature's recovery ultimately depends on people and public support, our first goal is to **build a movement for change.**
- Because nature needs space and connectedness to thrive, our second goal is **achieve 30% of land well managed for nature across our three counties.**

Together, these goals will reinforce each other. Greater public support enables more action for nature. More visible nature recovery strengthens public support.

Read more about *Strategy 2030* at bbowt.org.uk/publications

SUE CROXFORD

Be part of **nature's recovery**

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust is the leading local organisation driving nature's recovery across our three counties.

We care for special places for wildlife and people, and work in partnership with communities, farmers, businesses and decision makers to restore nature. Working at a scale from local nature reserves to regional policy, we help shape how land is used, how places are built and how people connect with the natural world. To find out more or to support our work visit **bbowt.org.uk**

We are part of The Wildlife Trusts movement, a UK-wide federation of independent charities working together to restore nature and inspire people to act for nature.

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Grants, trusts, individuals & major gifts
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Biodiversity Net Gain Enquiries
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Gifts in Wills
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Volunteering
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Registered charity number: 204330
Company registered number: 00680007

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LOGAN WALKER