

# Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Annual Review 2017/18



© Mike Vickers

Little egrets are an increasingly common sight on our wetland reserves

## Chair's Report

We started the year in a positive way having in place our new strategic plan, business plan and recruiting for the new Head of People and Wildlife role to help drive forward our plans for engagement, volunteering and the reshaping of the management of our land. In the latter half of the year we brought in a number of new Trustees that have added to the skill base and experience of our council. However, in the early part of the year, our CEO suffered a life-threatening illness and was away from the Trust for almost 4 months. Despite the sterling work of staff and Heather Downey who came in as part-time acting CEO, there was an inevitable loss of momentum in the Trust's pursuit of its 2017-2022 strategic plan. Furthermore, as the year progressed, it became clear that, in common with many other Wildlife Trusts, we faced significant current and future financial headwinds, such as uncertainties over agri-environment payments, static membership income, enhanced charity sector and general business regulation, and general inflation impacting on costs.

To maintain future financial stability we therefore initiated a plan to restructure our conservation and estates staff into North and South teams, and also our engagement teams at our two visitor and education centres. At the same

time, we began an in depth review of the ownership and use of our land, and the management we carry out on third party land. These changes and other work enabled us to develop a sustainable budget for the next three years – a major achievement. We also commenced a study looking at future opportunities to share admin and fundraising resources with other local Trusts to support the long-term sustainability.

A year, then, of substantial strategic, organisational and operational challenges, but one in which staff and volunteers once again did tremendously impressive work on the ground in local communities to further our aims of protecting and enhancing Nottinghamshire's wildlife and habitats, and inspiring and engaging people about the natural world. Some highlights of this work are set out below. On behalf of trustees therefore I say a massive thankyou to our dedicated staff and volunteers. As always we also thank our members, donors and sponsors for their continued and valued support.



Ian Johnston – Chairman

## Vision & Strategy

In 2016 Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust agreed a vision for 2040 and a strategy towards that vision to covering 2017-22. Our vision is that by 2040 Nottinghamshire has an urban and rural landscape rich in wildlife for everyone.

To achieve this vision the Trust will be an organisation that:

### Delivers

- exemplary, evidence based, ownership and management of nature reserves, including a suite of large landscape scale sites, for the benefit of wildlife and people
- demonstrable gains, working with partners where appropriate, in the restoration and enhancement of habitats and wildlife across the County



© Phill Lockwood

### Engages

- Nottinghamshire's diverse population to enthuse people with an understanding of the value of, and facilitate access to, wildlife and the natural world
- a thriving membership, volunteer and local community base, working together to manage a network of sites of importance to wildlife and local people

### Influences

- the people, businesses and other organisations of Nottinghamshire to increase awareness of, and support for, sustainable environmental objectives
- key decision makers as the leading and respected organisation for environmental advice in the County
- the planning processes in general by early involvement and working with partners
- specifically and measurably, mineral plans, local plans and planning applications relating to impacts on biodiversity and NWT reserves

# Achievements and performance 2017-18



Our ambitions to restore and recreate heathland habitats in Sherwood Forest made real progress during the year

## Delivering

During 2017-18 we continued to manage our extensive estate of nature reserves and also a range of sites for other landowners. Towards the end of the year we saw some changes in the estate following the announcement that Nottingham City Council would no longer be able to support the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and the end of agreements/leases with several other local authorities. These sites will continue as local wildlife sites and green spaces but will now be managed directly by the local authorities concerned. We also created the new position of Head of People and Wildlife to bring together our reserve management and engagement teams.

We have continued our work on major planning cases including HS2, shale gas energy schemes, minerals extraction and housing developments to ensure, where possible, appropriate protection, mitigation and ecological compensation for species and habitats. At the local level we responded to enquiries from members and the general public, providing advice on wildlife identification, conservation and management and provided independent ecological advice to local authorities within the County.

We relaunched our badger vaccination programme following successful application to Defra for 50% of the funding to cover costs for the next four years. We continued to receive funding to act in our role as Catchment Host for the River Idle and helped secure and coordinated the delivery of the £200k Wetland Landscapes For All project which supported a range of small projects to improve habitats across the county. Through



We continue to invest in our nature reserves to make them more accessible.

our partnership with Severn Trent Water (STW) we continue to host a catchment advisor who works closely with farmers to improve water quality and reduce agricultural pollution into watercourses. Work also continued in the Idle Valley Living Landscape Area, as a continuation from the Nature Improvement Area scheme across the Humberhead Levels, funded by WREN BAF.

The final application was submitted with partners to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Miner to Major Sherwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme. We are delighted that this project was subsequently given the green light and will deliver a circa £3.5million project from 2019-2024.

## Engaging

Volunteers and staff provided hundreds of events and activities across the county from accessible walks and talks to technical training sessions.

We continued to work closely with local authorities to improve the management of public green spaces for wildlife and to develop and support 'Friends Groups'. This included delivery of SLAs with Newark and Sherwood District Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Nottingham City Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Towards the end of the year we undertook a reorganisation of our engagement teams to provide increased flexibility and to ensure that we can continue to provide a range of activities for families and young people. We also started new Wildlife Watch groups and renewed support for this area



Providing more opportunities for young people to take part in and influence our work is a real focus

of delivery which has significant potential and is delivered by a dedicated group of excellent volunteers.

We created a new volunteering development role to improve opportunities for volunteers and provide better systems and support. Our diversity working group held a successful event at Attenborough, learning from key Nottinghamshire stakeholders and we produced a new Audience Development

Plan which supports the objective to engage, educate and enthuse people from all backgrounds and ages.

## Influencing

Our Keeping It Wild group of young environmentalists launched the innovative Nottingham For Nature manifesto which will be used as the basis of a campaign to generate more engagement with young people and influence the development and management of green spaces across Nottingham.

We were represented at strategic levels including the Lowland Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership, Sherwood Forest Regional Park and Nottingham City Green and Open Spaces Champions Group and held briefing sessions with MPs throughout the year on key issues such as future legislation, Brexit and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. We also met with Local Authority leaders to highlight the importance of maintaining local green space in light of increasing pressure on budgets. As the health and wellbeing agenda continues to have a high profile, the Trust has worked to highlight the role that it has taken for many decades in promoting the health benefits of accessing quality green space. We also provided input into national debates and discussions relating to environmental stewardship and issues with the Rural Payments Agency which were impacting thousands of land owners across the country.

With Nottinghamshire being one of the counties under pressure from potential shale gas "fracking" schemes, including the potential impact on one of our key nature reserves at Misson and at sites within Sherwood Forest, we continued to work with both local and national partners to highlight the issues with this technology, particularly when used in the proximity of sensitive and highly valuable green spaces.

Supporting the Police in tackling wildlife crime and anti-social behaviour on nature reserves has continued to be a focus with additional training provided by our team to Officers.



Our partnership with Nottinghamshire Police included provision of training on issues such as protected species

# Financial Review



© Darin Smith

We continue to work to limit the impacts of development linked to fracking on wildlife at sites such as Misson Carr

## Performance review

For the period, NWT (inc subsidiaries) had income of £3,258,794 and expenditure of £3,539,959. Good levels of voluntary income continued to be secured from grants and donations. It should be noted that £221,205 (2017: £63,518) of expenditure was capitalised and has been included in the balance sheet, and some legacy income accrued although funds have not yet been received. There was a negative movement of funds of £316,801, as opposed to a surplus of £128,361 in 2017. The market value of investments decreased by £26,198 (increase of £63,282 in 2017). The income they generated amounted to £31,352 (£31,443 in 2017).

The largest proportion of our income is derived from grants, donations and gifts. Grants, mostly restricted to specific projects, are from a range of sources including statutory and public bodies, Landfill Community Fund, Lottery Funds and grant making trusts. Membership subscriptions provide the core unrestricted income essential to our work and membership income remained stable. Ongoing development of unrestricted funds through membership, legacy campaigns and community fundraising will be essential for long term sustainable income growth.

NWT has a proud record of taking care of members' data with access to members' details restricted to a small core administrative team. All personal and financial details are held in a secure database. We do not sell supporters' details and only work with trusted partners to process data for our mailings. During 2017/18 NWT registered with the Fundraising Regulator and made

preparations for GDPR which came into force in May 2018. As a result of the issues raised by bad practice within the sector there have already been changes in the guidance to charities relating to contacting supporters and along with sister Wildlife Trusts we sought expert advice to ensure we have the correct systems in place to comply with new guidelines.

As a locally based charity we rely heavily upon being able to keep our supporters informed about our work and the ability to occasionally provide members with details of appeals and campaigns which need additional support.

The Trustees wish to express their thanks to every individual or organisation who contributed financially during the year. In doing so, these supporters made a huge and significant programme of local wildlife conservation possible.

Voluntary help is essential to our success and whilst the accounts include all monetary transactions the value of the time and effort of hundreds of unpaid volunteers who support our work cannot be formally quantified. It is estimated that the part played by volunteers in our governance, in Local Groups, on nature reserves, in offices and as ambassadors is worth between £250,000 and £500,000 per year.

The investment policy of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) aims to maximise total returns from investments considering an appropriate level of risk and to avoid investing in organisations whose activities contradict the Trust's values and strategic objectives.

The focus of the Trustees and Officers during the next strategic period will be to ensure that levels of core income match resources needed for ongoing operational needs and activities of the Trust, including maintenance and equipment replacement. During 2017/18 NWT commenced a project with Derbyshire and Staffordshire Wildlife Trusts to explore opportunities to share resources within a number of support functions to improve efficiency, reduce overheads and increase income generation.

## Subsidiaries

East Midlands Environmental Consultants (EMEC) turnover reduced to £869,059 (2017: £687,107) Profits were £78,761 (2017: £40,650). Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Trading's turnover levels increased during the year to £871,951 (2017: 803,944). Profits were £46,431 (2017: £7,763).



The trading company's celebrity lecture series with speakers such as Prof. Alice Roberts continues to generate high levels of interest and income

## Plans for Future Periods

### During 2018/19 the priorities include:

- Continuing a robust approach to the financial management.
- Investing in the development of staff and monitoring implementation of the new organisational structure designed to support the delivery of the Strategy.
- Complete the reserves review and implement an updated reserve management model.
- To focus on the development of volunteering across the Trust.
- Working with key partners to further develop our Living Landscapes vision, focussing on Sherwood and Idle Valley.
- Implementing the Audience Development Plan and continuing to increase diversity at all levels in the Trust and engaging with the county's diverse population.
- Monitoring progress against the 2017-22 Strategy.
- Undertake an asset review to ensure that we fully understand both the liabilities and opportunities within our extensive assets.

# Financial Support in 2017-18

We are grateful to the following for their financial support in 2017-18 through donations, grants and sponsorship:

## Landfill, Lottery, Public and Statutory

- DEFRA
- Derbyshire Environmental Trust
- Environment Agency
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Natural England
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- People's Postcode Lottery
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Severn Trent Water
- WREN

## Grant Making Trusts (GMTs)

- Belvoir Charitable Trust
- Charles Littlewood Hill Charitable Trust
- Jones 1986 Charitable Trust
- Rothera Charitable Settlement
- Alpkit Foundation
- Spear Charitable Trust
- Stella Symons Charitable Trust
- Astor Foundation
- East Midlands Airport Community Fund
- Linmardon Trust
- Harry Dunn / Dunn Family Charitable Trust
- Pauline Meredith Charitable Trust

## Corporate Community Funds

- Co-op Local Community Fund

**Donations** from our membership were a major source of income and two significant legacies were also received as set out below:

- Alan Green
- Adrian Lawson

## Corporate Partner



## Wildlife on Your Doorstep Award



## Champion of Sherwood



## Wildlife Guardian



## Corporate Affiliate Plus



## Corporate Affiliate



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