



**Northumberland
Wildlife Trust**

**Annual report
& accounts
2023 - 2024**





Red squirrel © Peter Cairns/2020VISION



Getting muddy © Julie Norman



Perch © Alexander Mustard/2020VISION

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Restore Nature Now march © Eleanor Church

A message from our Chair

At the end of June, I was fortunate to be able to join our Chief Executive and a group of staff and volunteers on a march in London to demand that the country commits to Restore Nature Now. Faced with a history of nature depletion, species extinction and poisoned rivers, the individuals and families marching in London wanted any future government to recognise nature renewal as a priority. Over 60,000 people gathered together to remind politicians just how important the environment and revitalised support for nature is to the people of this country. Of course, we have a new government now, and it is our task as a movement to get it to prioritise the environment.

Back in the North East, Northumberland Wildlife Trust has been fighting back against previous destruction of the natural environment. Last year, I mentioned that we had purchased a large area of land at West Chevington; been gifted 200 acres of woodland along with a restored farmhouse; and started the process of changing the tenancy arrangements at Whitelee, our largest nature reserve. I am happy to report that we have continued, and even accelerated, the rate of expansion of NWT's activities. Whitelee is now fully under our control, offering opportunities to make significant improvements on peatland restoration and carbon capture now that the sheep have been rehoused. The farmhouse at Elsdon is available as a holiday cottage, providing welcome additional income to the Trust. We completed the

purchase of an area of ancient woodland near Ovington in April. We also completed the purchase of an additional significant area of land at Earsdon, near West Chevington, adding to the network of land managed for nature around Druridge Bay. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of those individuals who have supported these ventures and allowed NWT to continue to think at scale.

Aside from the direct conservation work, NWT has expanded its engagement with local communities, groups and schools. Supported by new specialist appointments for fundraising and farm engagement, we are now in a better position to raise vital funds to support our work with more and diverse groups to inspire them to act for nature and to engage meaningfully with the farming community. This is strongly supported by a very effective media team, using both mainstream and social media to promote nature's recovery north of the Tyne, and improve the profile of the Wildlife Trust movement among the general population.

The next big opportunity for all Wildlife Trusts, including NWT, is the development of various sources of green finance. This "new economy" offers a wonderful chance to access additional finance that could transform nature's recovery. All things considered, there are many reasons to be optimistic, particularly in our region, because there are many more opportunities to make large-scale improvements for nature here.



Nigel Porter
Chair of Trustees

A message from our Chief Executive

After a few years of exciting developmental activity, we had expected this to be a year of consolidation. That has not happened so far! Indeed, we were completing two land acquisitions and planning more as we turned into the new 2024/25 financial year. Unprecedented opportunities are still coming forward and many of our newer initiatives, as well as our ongoing work, are expanding the impact of our work.

Land matters aside, we also launched the Missing Lynx roadshow as a partner of the Lifescape Project, which has opened new conversations with landowners and managers, and people in general, about just how wild Northumberland could be. Alongside that, we developed and launched the Wilder Northumberland Network, which has seen farmers signing up to the concept of creating local connections to boost wildlife through joined up habitats. We are focussing this on Druridge Bay to get nature gains across the whole area, with the West Chevington rewilding site at its core. We have also acquired new land at Earsdon West Forest to act as a 'habitat bank' and trial new green finance mechanisms, which could be transformative for the Trust and nature. At East Chevington, we completed a set of innovative and impressive new hides through the Catch My Drift project, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. Of course, the very popular Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre continues to be the main gateway to the area.

We also made great strides in people engagement. We now have a diverse programme of urban environmental projects, re-connecting people with nature and empowering local communities to take meaningful action for nature and climate. We are working with more groups than ever, making improvements for nature, including even increasing biodiversity on the Town Moor in the middle of Newcastle in partnership with Community Forests and the Freeman of the Town Moor. We intend to fundraise as a priority to sustain and extend this longer term as we believe people are key to driving change.

It is also encouraging to see EcoNorth, our subsidiary environmental consultancy, going from strength to strength. It undertakes practical conservation and surveying to inform development and get the best gains for nature, whilst generating funds towards NWT.

What's up next? In addition to more of the above, we are working in partnership on a range of species focussed projects, from beavers and eagles, to wildcats, pine martens and water voles. We are also exploring a joint approach with the national Wildlife Trust team to develop a northern flagship for nature recovery, focussed in the Rothbury areas, which would be of enormous impact and scale if it can be secured. NWT has created a great platform to help nature recover and deliver that 30% nature gain by 2030 locally.



Mike Pratt
Chief Executive

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The Wildlife Trusts' vision is a thriving natural world, with our wildlife and natural habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and with everyone inspired to get involved in nature's recovery.



Seal pup © Tom Marshall

Trustees' report

Who we are

The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement of people from all backgrounds who believe that we need nature and nature needs us. There are 46 individual Wildlife Trusts in the UK, each of which is a place-based, independent charity, as well as a central body, which co-ordinates collective action, campaigning, shared learning and projects. Northumberland Wildlife Trust represents Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland within this federation.

Our purpose

Our purpose is to:-

- bring about nature's recovery,
- manage large areas of land for the benefit of nature and climate,
- empower people to take action for nature within their communities,
- work with others to create a society where nature matters,
- drive landscape-scale change for wildlife.

Public Benefit Statement

Northumberland Wildlife Trust is a charity dedicated to saving wildlife and wild places and helping people to get closer to nature. We manage over 70 nature reserves and help to create wildlife-rich landscapes and seas by working in partnership with other organisations, landowners and communities. The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit.'

The Trust's public benefit is enshrined in our charitable purpose as outlined above. Our activities and facilities are accessible to all. Our work to promote nature conservation and protect wildlife helps to maintain biodiversity and natural processes for the benefit of everyone and the climate. Our work to educate, engage and enthuse a wide range of people aims to improve understanding of, and engagement in, environmental issues.



Whittle Dene © Duncan Hutt



Pine marten © Mark Hamblin/2020VISION



Rockpools © Matthew Roberts

Our strategy and business plan

We launched our Wilder Northumberland strategy and business plan in May 2020 which set out our 2030 vision and five-year plan to deliver a wilder future for nature, places, people and the Trust. Whilst this is still current, a light touch review was undertaken in July 2023 to review progress, agree priorities and inform measures to evaluate outcomes. As we are entering the final phase of the plan, we intend to reframe the strategy and align it more with the national strategy as many other Wildlife Trusts have done. This will take place from April 2025.

Key additional areas of focus and emphasis include:

- Adopting a new larger scale vision of Wilder Northumberland incorporating wider corridors and bigger areas of activity
- Resourcing more activity to engage with farmers and

landowners in active nature recovery

- How we maximise the nature value of existing sites we manage
- How we take forward key species projects
- How we further develop our business focus on BNG and green finance
- Extending the impact and longevity of our people engagement/community organising approach
- New and existing strategic partnerships

The driver for all this remains the urgent need to intensify our impact on nature's recovery and engage more people with our mission. We plan to increase resources and capacity and to continue to innovate and trial new approaches in order to deliver the step change required by the business plan.

Our vision

“A wilder future for Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside”

This means:

- Everywhere and everything wilder, with landscapes richer in wildlife, bigger and better-connected land, wetlands and seas;
- Reaching more people, forming more partnerships and influencing decision-making about wilding and greening locally;
- Contributing locally, regionally and nationally to restoring nature and tackling climate breakdown.

Strategic objectives

We will deliver our vision through three strategic objectives:

- 1 Lead nature's recovery
- 2 Inspire people and organisations to care and mobilise them to act
- 3 Ensure an agile green culture and sustainable Trust

Underpinning all our work are our core principles and values - that we are passionate, visionary, inspiring, effective and acting with integrity.

Hauxley Nature Reserve, Image funded by NELEP

Strategic objective 1

Lead nature's recovery

By delivering projects aimed at restoring wildlife abundance and diversity, NWT ensures the preservation of local biodiversity. Healthy ecosystems provide essential services such as clean air, improved water quality, reducing flood risk and climate regulation through carbon sequestration, which are all crucial for community health and wellbeing.

PROGRESS THIS YEAR

INCREASED LAND PORTFOLIO

● Whittle Dene

The acquisition (completed April 2024) of Whittle Dene in the Tyne Valley, near Ovingham, added some fine ancient woodland and meadows to our portfolio and connects to our existing holding and to land owned by the Woodland Trust and Northumbrian Water. Taken together, we will have about 3km of the Whittle Burn in management for nature. It is a small local example of the ecological connectivity we need to see at landscape scale across our area. There are also many opportunities there to link with the local communities to involve them in the site's management and activities.

● Whitelee

Whitelee is the second largest nature reserve in England. The end of the tenancy agreement last December meant it returned to our direct management and we are planning its future as an even wilder place. At present grazing is limited to a few cattle, and we are looking to not just repair more of the peatlands, but diversify the habitats as a whole and link in with the wider Kielder landscape.

● Earsdon West Forest

The acquisition of Earsdon West Forest on Druridge Bay, just off the A1 and close to West Chevington, marked our first habitat bank site. This 82-hectare site is a blank canvas of low quality grassland and woodland, stream edge and ponds that can be improved for biodiversity gain. It is another part of the wider jigsaw, our vision for a Wilder Druridge. In addition to habitat creation and enhancement for its own sake, there is the intention to engage actively in the emerging habitat banking market – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Developers, through the planning system, are required to offset any nature loss by purchasing biodiversity credits. We hope that this new type of green finance will provide long term funding to manage and develop a network of nature recovery sites.

● Rothbury estate

We invested time on another large-scale potential land

acquisition in the Rothbury area, as part of a coalition of local and national organisations, which could result in there being a national flagship for landscape recovery, ecology and community here in Northumberland. We do not yet know whether this will progress.

NATURE RECOVERY ON OUR NATURE RESERVES AND WILDING SITES

● West Chevington

The 327ha land at West Chevington, near Druridge Bay, was acquired in 2022-23 with help from the Reece Foundation and provides an opportunity to explore rewilding techniques. It sits atop a former opencast colmine, like many of NWT's existing reserves in the area, and NWT aims to showcase how nature can recover in an industrialised landscape. Much of the initial site assessment and further wetland has been completed. Environmental DNA testing of the arable fields provided baselines for soil health prior to the start of active and passive reversion.

Most arable fields are now out of production and several fields have been sown with grasses. Six new ponds and wetland areas were created with licensing for great crested newts. A massive number of treeguards have been removed and recycled from the plantation woodland. Breeding bird surveys and pollinator surveys have been completed. The site is very important for ground nesting birds such as skylark (40+ pairs onsite) and meadow pipit (25+ pairs onsite).

Drone surveys of the conifer plantation were conducted by a PhD student from Newcastle University looking at woodland regeneration post storm Arwen. The student also surveyed some of the grassland and arable fields. Dams have been installed along some of the main drainage ditches to raise water tables and re-wet parts of the site. Deflectors and coir rolls have been installed along the Steads Burn to allow the stream to re-establish a more meandering natural course.



Whitelee Moor Nature Reserve © Duncan Hutt



East Chevington Nature Reserve © Benjamin Costello

See East Chevington for yourself on YouTube
youtu.be/dH_vlWlASE4



● East Chevington

The National Lottery-funded Catch My Drift Project completed in March 2024 and enabled us to improve biodiversity at East Chevington Nature Reserve, near Redrow on Druridge Bay. Over the past three years, the project has installed two new sluice gates and reinstated drainage ditches, allowing control over the water levels and better management of the reedbeds, the largest in Northumberland. Marsh harriers are now regularly seen, with 4 pairs nesting there this year, whilst Cetti's warbler now have 10 breeding pairs. 25 hectares of wildflower meadow have been sown and will develop into large blocks of species rich grassland benefitting pollinators, birds and mammals. Areas of the plantation woodland have been thinned creating space to plant shrub species such as holly and dog rose, which are a great provider of food for wildlife. The new ponds put in by EcoNorth are now home to great crested newts. Bluebells planted with the local community in 2021 are now established and have increased woodland diversity.

● Peatland

Restoring degraded peatlands boosts biodiversity, facilitates carbon storage, improves water quality and reduces flooding downstream. As the executive team of the **Northumberland Peat Partnership** (NPP) since its start in 2022, we have secured funding and surveyed 11,575ha of peatlands on private and public land. We have produced numerous restoration plans (55 sites, including 34 Border Mires), arranged restoration grants and will start co-ordinating restoration for the first 1,000ha of bogs (Whitelee and The Wou) from autumn 2024. NPP is at the forefront of evidence collection on water quality improvement, where installed sensors measure multiple parameters, such as water temperature, pH, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen. NPP also trialled and deployed the first group of solar powered and satellite linked water level monitoring dipwells and rain gauges, which removes the need to physically visit these loggers. For more information on NPP visit nwt.org.uk/northumberland-peat-partnership.

● Nature reserves

The purchase of Earsdon West Forest means we now manage 72 nature reserves including sites we manage for Northumbrian Water, The Land Trust, MOD and Forestry England. The area of this land is 4,550ha, which represents 0.87% of the combined area of Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle.

At **Briarwood Banks**, we have undertaken woodland restoration and monitoring. Recent monitoring has highlighted the success of previous work, in particular woodland bird populations, such as pied flycatcher and redstart, have increased rapidly. Dormouse monitoring is now underway and we have strengthened ties with our National Trust neighbours.

With **Annstead Dunes**, we are a partner in the EU-LIFE Wader project, which encompasses the North

Northumberland Coast (north of Amble) and river Tweed catchment. Specifically our Annstead Dunes reserve is included in the Invasive Non-Native Species element removing species such as Japanese rose and sycamore. Interpretation will also be upgraded.

PARTNERSHIPS

If we want to change the outcomes for nature, we need people and organisations on board. It is our intention to work with other TWTs, environmental organisations and networks as much as we can to maximise the impact for nature.

We are working with Cumbria WT to identify and develop opportunities coast to coast, across the **Hadrian's Wall corridor**. This is currently being set up and has already featured in the national press and links closely to the existing partnership centred in NNPA. Funds secured from the Ecological Restoration Fund will support rewilding projects, the reintroduction of keystone species and better protections for marine and coastal habitats.

An ambitious vision for **Wild Kielder** is gaining traction, inspired by our Kielder Wildwood initiative (native upland woodland creation). Leading partners, Forestry England and Northumberland National Park, are looking at an area of initially 6,000ha, which would link to Whitelee to create a vast cross-border nature recovery area.

The **Wilder Northumberland Network** was formally launched in March. It is an exciting, new network promoting closer collaboration with land managers committed to nature recovery action, including wilding, naturalised grazing systems and regenerative farming. The Wilder Northumberland Network will increase connectivity across Northumberland, removing barriers to species movement whilst also creating more space for water, trees and scrub. Read more here nwt.org.uk/wilder-northumberland-network.

EcoNorth worked closely with other Wildlife Trust consultancies nationally, as well as **Northumberland Peat Partnership**, to deliver extensive peatland vegetation and soil survey sampling to feed into the England Peat Map, modelling peat depths profiles and training artificial intelligence (AI) programmes to monitor peatland vegetation types via satellite imagery.

NWT volunteers helped improve biodiversity and climate resilience. They contributed 10,522 hours of practical conservation on our own reserves and partner sites such as **Northumbrian Water** and **The Land Trust**. Some volunteers love the extreme, harsh tasks so it was great to team up with **NNPA** again to help with Sitka removal from Whiskershiels and **Hepple Wilds**.

Northumberland Wildlife Trust managed the tree planting and community events for the **North East Community Forest**, a partnership begun in 2022, supporting delivery

of their 30-year vision to increase tree coverage across the North East. This year, community and NWT volunteers planted 13,578 trees. Highlights included 1,000 trees planted in just two hours at Ouseburn Farm and the 1.4km hedgerow around Newcastle United Golf Course, which involved more than 130 people!

Local Wildlife Sites are a comprehensive network of sites of nature conservation importance, designated as either Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) or Local Geological Sites (LGS). They provide refuges for wildlife and represent local character and distinctiveness, complementing other protective designations.

The administrative areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside work together as one **Local Sites Partnership**. This partnership is responsible for determining which sites are selected for designation. Northumberland Wildlife Trust administers the system for the Partnership. We have now surveyed a good proportion of the 258 sites, which records their current status and allows improvement targets to be set.

SPECIES PROJECTS

As well as the fundamental habitat programmes, we have also supported individual species.

● Red squirrels

Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE) is our red squirrels conservation partnership. The five red squirrel rangers have delivered an impressive 1,000 days of onsite effort conserving red squirrels, managing grey squirrels and protecting trees on 2,500 hectares of woodland. It continues to act as an advocate for national funding schemes and has facilitated landowners in utilising these to increase the areas in which red squirrel conservation is being undertaken. This year, we have written 14 squirrel management plans for landowners entering into the scheme (~2,000ha of woodland). As a direct result, we



Harvest mouse © Duncan Hutt

are witnessing the return of red squirrels to areas where they were once present, highlighting the role we play in the recovery of this key species.

RSNE continues to be the primary source of red squirrel information in the North of England receiving weekly requests to comment on woodland management plans, felling licences as well as woodland creation schemes and planning applications. RSNE is also the sole provider in the North East of the Lantra accredited grey squirrel management training, this year training 53 individuals.

In June 2023, The National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded a grant to develop a new project. The **Red Squirrel Recovery Network** is a partnership project across northern England and southern Scotland, which aims to build on conservation efforts of the last 20 years. Research with squirrel volunteer groups revealed a need to increase volunteer participation (recruiting younger groups), engage more people in grey squirrel control, raise awareness of red squirrel conservation and improve community involvement. People also wanted to support new 'game changing solutions.' As such, some of the grant will fund grey fertility control field trials. A smaller amount of funding will investigate the potential impact of pine martens. The project will also increase capacity to support groups to work with local landowners to put stewardship/funding agreements in place and to share best practice throughout the volunteer network. The bid for a full five-year project will be submitted in November 2024.

● Lynx and ecosystems

After 18 months of work with our partner, The Lifescape Project, **The Missing Lynx roadshow**, launched this April, which has been visiting venues across Northumberland, Newcastle, the Scottish borders and Cumbria over spring and summer. The exhibition uses impressive technology and imagery to inform about the lynx and its possible place in our ecosystems. It is opening up a big conversation about how we could create a wilder future and is attracting a wide range of opinions! It is exciting for NWT, alongside The Wildlife Trusts nationally, to be initiating such a bold dialogue about the state of nature locally.

● Water voles

All the work we have put into the Restoring Ratty and Naturally Native projects, bringing back water voles to Kielder and the Tyne catchment, was carefully monitored with 1,485 hours spent by volunteers on water vole surveys and mink monitoring.

● Harvest mice

Harvest mice were bred and released (about 350) at East Chevington in partnership with Northumberland Zoo and have boosted the resilience of local populations. We are still hoping to find dormice here and at Briarwood.



North East Community Forest tree planting event © Liz Heard

Strategic objective 2

Inspire people to care and act

People are key to nature's recovery. Despite all efforts, overall, the UK is still one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. If we are to change the outcome for nature and climate, we need people to care and act now. The problem is, although we need nature, we are increasingly disconnected from our natural environment. Many people feel unwelcome in green spaces, or are unable to access wild places close to where they live. Our aim is to reconnect people with nature, creating a 'ripple effect' of people and communities to achieve 1 in 4 people taking action for nature and climate.

PROGRESS THIS YEAR

OUR PEOPLE TEAM – WILD CITY

The Wild City team helps communities connect with and then take action for nature and climate, creating positive change. We are there to amplify voices and build agency with people, helping nature to thrive alongside people. Community organising is the essential strategy, as we cannot deliver urgent change on the scale required without local collaboration and partnerships.

Due to the large size of our region, we have focused on working with people in areas of deprivation or from underrepresented or marginalised groups. The team consists of nine members of staff who together throughout 23/24 engaged 9,558 people and supported 53 community and youth environmental social action projects.

● Young people

Our education and youth work staff have worked alongside 35 schools and youth groups, helping to embed nature in the curriculum and support young people to gain the knowledge and skills needed for environmental action. We delivered our first teacher training programme and delivered a workshop to 60 teachers at EcoEd North East, paving the way for upskilling more educators. Young people have developed their own environmental projects, ranging from a youth-designed outdoor eco classroom, to creating pollinator corridors and mindful nature gardens. Our Young People's Forum is in its second year, now with 10 members. This year they delivered the Trust's first youth-led public event for 200 young people and provided advice to five projects/teams.

● Community groups

Our communities staff have worked with 43 groups and the general public to connect them with nature and build skills to support community-led wildlife projects. Through the North East Community Forest we have planted 13,578 trees with 505 people, resulting in Newcastle being named a 'Tree City of the World.' We have worked

with diverse groups, such as Deaffink, Newcastle Reform Synagogue, West End Refugee Service, Newcastle Blue Star Football Club, Children North East, Women's Workshop, St Nicholas Hospital and more. These groups have been supported to take action for nature, including upskilling, supported fundraising and knowledge sharing, resulting in initiatives like Saving Newcastle's Swifts (monitoring and nest box installation), creating accessible wildlife gardens, seed swaps, sustainable urban drainage and more.

This year we were part of the Stronger Shores project, aiming to make our coastlines and communities stronger in the face of flooding, coastal erosion and climate change. We also started the Blue Influencers' project, supporting young people to develop social action projects that help our oceans, lakes and rivers, strengthening NWT's marine expertise.



“It was lovely to be in the open air, learning something new with like-minded people.”

From a participant of a series of nature based sessions delivered by NWT's Communities Officer with the Linskill Centre, North Shields.



Education session © NWT



Northumberlandia Visitor Centre and Café © Debbie Lewney

● Mental health

We know that there are benefits for mental health by spending time in nature. Given that mental health issues have dramatically increased since Covid, we have trialled more direct approaches to use nature therapy. We delivered nature based sessions with patients on a male acute mental health ward at St Nicholas Hospital, including wildflower walks, outdoor mindfulness, bird watching, nature crafts and more. One participant said, "I find these sessions a good way to focus on my surroundings and nature, making my problems feel smaller."

We ran three events for health professionals in Blyth and Ashington, in partnership with Natural England, to raise awareness about green social prescribing and better understand barriers to scaling this up across our region. We secured funding to bring on board a new Nature and Wellbeing Officer to lead 'Better With Nature', a six-month project funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with the North East Combined Authority as the Lead Authority. We'll be delivering taster sessions and two six-week courses in nature connection and skills programmes for people facing health and social inequalities, with poor physical or mental health, carers, service users and social prescribers. We will help people to improve their wellbeing and personal resilience through learning green skills together.

By managing 70+ nature reserves and rewilding sites across the region, NWT provides vital green spaces for recreation, relaxation, and wellbeing.

ACCESSIBILITY

Access to nature is not equal and we strive to reduce barriers and make improvements particularly to sites that can readily be reached by the majority of people in our region. We know that access to nature is important for health and wellbeing, relieving stress and for helping people stay active. We have improved access to nature at:

- Weetslade, with an impressive set of steps leading up the hill, which will reduce erosion on this part of the reserve
- Northumberlandia, with resurfaced footpaths throughout the reserve
- East Chevington with superb new hides, signposting and interpretation
- Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre, replacing the Ponteland hide, new interpretation, wildlife CCTV and an interactive on-line reserve tour

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES

NWT actively engages its members, supporters, and the general public by offering educational programmes and general events. During the year, NWT ran 316 events, focusing on our visitor centres, St Nicholas Park and Tower Knowe for Osprey Watch, attracting over 14,900 participants. We ran the usual holiday programme and

self-guided trails, as well as Santa at St Nicholas Park (nearly 100 delighted children and it snowed!). We tried new and different things like a Dawn Chorus walk at Big Waters, star gazing at Hauxley, and mindfulness, yoga and tai chi at Northumberlandia – all linked to nature to bring in people from all backgrounds. We also attended 35 fairs/shows to spread awareness far and wide, with meaningful interactions with over 3,500 people. Our tough Great North runners had a great day out and raised £5,474.

30 Days Wild, the national campaign to encourage random acts of wildness throughout June, had 1,055 signups for information packs from individuals, 128 schools/youth groups, 18 care homes and 17 businesses. We promoted on social media and had various events lined up including the Big Wild Weekend, which included a mindfulness session at Northumberlandia with forest bathing and deeply listening to nature's soft sounds.

RSNE also delivered 16 public activities, including talks to local community groups, training sessions for members of the public and stalls at local events. 355 people of all ages were directly engaged in the work of the project and encouraged to take action and connect to nature.

We launched the quest to be the first county to have its own designated rock and fossil. We partnered with the Natural History Society Northumbria, Visit Northumberland, North Eastern Geological Society, and the Northumberland and Newcastle Society to add credibility to the campaign. Ian Jackson, our trustee was interviewed on Look North. The public voted for dolerite (Whin Sill) and crinoids (sea lily, a relative of starfish/sea urchins). Ian's book, Northumberland Rocks, continues to go well with over 4,400 copies sold, with proceeds to NWT. We certainly have raised awareness of the region's geological gems.

● Visitor centres

NWT has two visitor Centres in Northumberland, at Hauxley and Northumberlandia, which attract about 180,000 visitors per year and make a great introduction to wildlife. They offer accessible recreational opportunities and spaces for community events. These centres serve as hubs for environmental education and active participation, attracting schools, families, community groups and other charities. We run guided walks, rubbing trails, holiday activities and a monthly evening talk programme at Hauxley. It is our flagship reserve, with accessible paths and hides, beautiful ponds which attract a great number of migrating birds and a small population of red squirrels. Northumberlandia hosts larger events such as theatre productions, fun runs and a monthly food and craft market, which can bring different audiences to engage with nature. It scooped gold in the Northumbria in Bloom Awards in the Tourist and Visitor Attractions and Country Estates Category. Aside from the landform sculpture, which is the main attraction, the judges were impressed by the nature trails, woodland paths, visitor information boards describing the resident wildlife, the

community events programme and the planting of 6,000 trees by volunteers.

ADVOCACY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Acting as an advocate for wildlife, NWT influences local and national policies to protect natural habitats. We work closely with the collective Wildlife Trusts movement to influence policy to ensure sustainable development and long-term environmental health, benefitting current and future generations. We have always been involved in the 30 by 30 initiative to restore 30% of land and sea to a good condition by 2030. But, we have also promoted campaigns and action on banning neonicotinoids, river pollution, banning peat products, green prescribing, marine protection, COP28, diversity and inclusivity, and of course, pre-general election priorities for government.

AWARENESS AND INFORMATION SHARING

Creating awareness of the biodiversity crisis, the climate emergency or local wildlife stories is an important part of connecting with people and prompting that emotional reaction that triggers action. NWT news stories and social media are vital for creating awareness and our website and other communications tools give key messages and detailed information.

News coverage

In 2023-24 the Trust appeared in print 222 times with 50% of the coverage being in full colour and either a full or double page. Similarly the stories appeared 751 times online. We had 26 radio interviews and news sound bites on a whole range of topics. Most impressively the Trust appeared 128 times on television - local and national. Of particular interest are the two one-hour programmes filmed at our Hauxley reserve for BBC One last July. Robson Green's Weekend Escapes featured an interview with Alex Lister and fabulous views of the Druridge Bay reserve. Ranger Hamza's Eco Quest, a fifteen-minute programme for Cbeebies, showcased 75% of the reserve.

Digital communications

The NWT website continues to be the main source of information for most people, with 439,471 users, an increase of 23% on last year. We had 9,191 subscribers to our monthly newsletter, which gives supporters a neat regular update and ways to get involved; the average open rate was good at 43%.

We posted on all the main social media platforms:

Facebook followers 10,896 +5.8% on last year

Instagram followers 3,687 +13.3%

X followers 6,546 + 2.2%

Linked-in 2,629 followers

The RSNE website also provides a wealth of information on the work we do and red squirrel conservation facts and guidance. Last year, the website received over 40,000 visitors.

Print

We produced the member magazine Roebuck three times a year, which keeps supporters up to date with key wildlife issues and NWT's activities. We also printed the What's On guide, which goes to members, visitors centres and tourist attractions throughout the region, promoting our events programme to involve as many people as possible with nature activities.

VOLUNTEERING

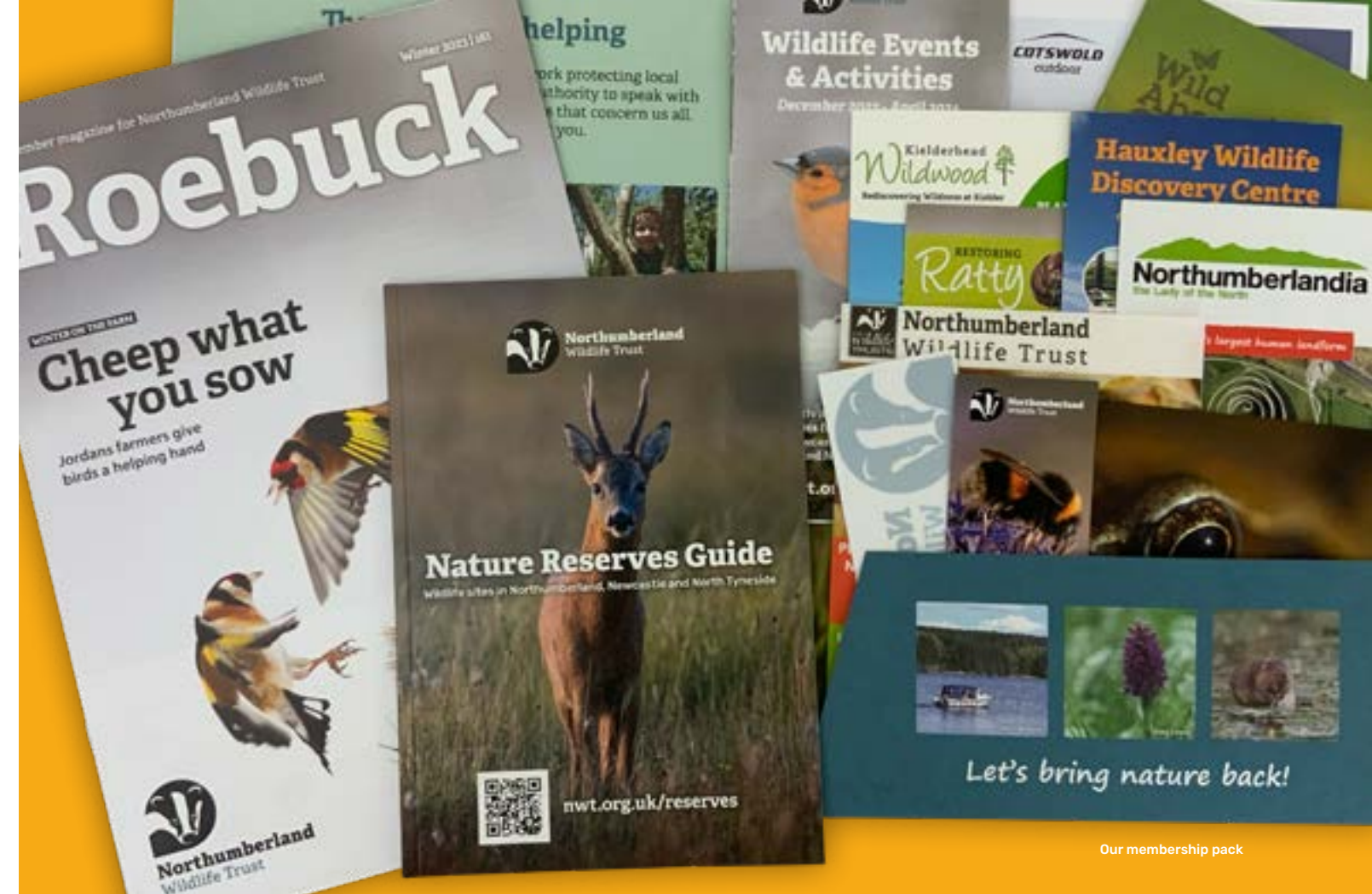
Volunteers provide an amazing extension to our work in repairing nature, engaging with people and helping us run the organisation. Around 400 volunteers contributed 28,457 hours in 2023/24, which equates to 18 FTE. Volunteering at NWT offers individuals from diverse backgrounds the chance to learn new skills and experience, improve their health and wellbeing, and contribute positively to their community.

Many staff besides our estates team used volunteer support on their projects. Highlights included helping with community wildlife gardens in the city through Nextdoor Nature; Osprey Watch, where volunteers ran the popular viewpoint at Tower Knowe over summer; and tree planting with the North East Community Forest project. Information assistants at Hauxley contributed 3,321 hours, which shows a huge dedication to meeting and greeting visitors at our flagship reserve. Community engagement volunteers helped at fairs and shows and at the cafés too. And, we can't forget the reception, finance and marketing volunteers who helped keep our offices running smoothly.



“Planting bulbs in Pottery Bank Wildlife Garden brought forth moments of pure joy and connection. Grateful for the memories etched into the garden's soil.”

Yiu Kwong Chu



MEMBERSHIP

Membership is not a transactional commitment like the National Trust - it is, in effect, a donation. Members provide an important source of unrestricted income that allows us to fund the Trust's most pressing needs. Members feel more strongly about nature and the TWT Great Big Nature Survey analysis concluded that they actually do more for nature too. We certainly know that members help with volunteering, campaigning, fundraising and writing to their MPs, as well as being nature advocates in their own communities - we salute them for their support.

Despite the cost of living crisis, membership figures stabilised and closed the year with memberships at 5,583 +0.4% vs last year. We recruited 13% more memberships and had 21% fewer cancellations. Overall income raised was £386,000 but we recognise that inflation has eaten into membership buying power. Recruitment remained mostly online (80%+) but recruiters still went to fairs and shows, as well Northumberlandia and Hauxley as we think that this is an important part of awareness building and the 'commitment decision.' We did test different initiatives to recruit new members, including 'sales' which are still worth doing despite higher lapse rates. We have also tried lower cost, lower commitment options for those who wish to support us with our 'Adopt an animal' online scheme, which has been moderately successful.

APPEALS

NWT ran three appeals in 2023-24, which members, donors and supporters kindly helped with:

Wilder ways to Wellbeing - The Big Give Green Match Fund - £27,100

The Wilder ways to Wellbeing appeal ran in April to support our community engagement work. Donations helped to pay for 22 free school holiday activities in urban parks and develop and test different methods of empowering teachers to embed outdoor learning in five schools.

Whittle Dene land purchase appeal - £53,323

The Whittle Dene appeal ran over the summer of 2023 and raised money towards purchasing part of Whittle Dene near Ovingham.

Natively Northern spring surveys -The Big Give Christmas Challenge - £22,525

The Natively Northern Spring Surveys appeal raised £22,525 to support detailed survey work to plan and target action to protect two iconic Northumberland species, red squirrels and water voles.

Strategic objective 3

Ensure a sustainable, agile and green culture

PROGRESS THIS YEAR

SUSTAINABLE FINANCES

Key to our long-term success is our financial sustainability. We operate a robust financial planning system, with rolling cash flow forecasts and working capital reviews. Quarterly management accounts operate with an open view to managing financial risks with a solid fundraising strategy, income pipeline and horizon scanning for new opportunities.

Financial reserves are the portion of our unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the Trust's purposes in accordance with our charitable objectives. We review our reserves policy annually to monitor and maintain our financial resilience. Our key driver in setting the unrestricted funds target is maintaining sufficient cash flow to allow us to continue to operate in periods of uncertainty and to ensure that we can fund the large number of projects for which grant funding is received in arrears. We then aim to retain sufficient unrestricted cash reserves to cover non-project running costs for a specified number of months. The current target is to achieve and maintain a minimum of six months' cover.

At the end of the year, we had liquid unrestricted funds of £658,000, a reduction of £84,000 from last year. The compensation payment of £168,000 in December 2023 for the termination of the Whitelee Farm Business Tenancy was a significant one-off reduction in unrestricted funds. The benefits from this payment enabled the Trust to manage our biggest nature reserve for nature, reducing commercial grazing and gain entry into the Natural England Countryside Stewardship Scheme to fund resources for the next five years and capital peat restoration to the value of £1.6m.

£658,000 represents around seven months' worth of anticipated non-project related running costs. As the charity has grown in recent years, our budgeted expenditure is increasing, so the size of the fund needs to increase to cover both expected growth and continued uncertainty in income generation, and the impacts of the cost of living crisis.

Total unrestricted funds at the end of the year were

£7,274,000, of which £658,000 are realisable liquid funds, after excluding fixed assets and loans taken out to purchase fixed assets. During the year, we took out £925,000 'patient' philanthropic loans to purchase the first half of Earsdon West Forest (see below). The loan is excluded from the liquid funds calculation.

We are committed to putting our remaining income and financial reserves to work as soon as possible, to achieve our overall charitable objectives.

Our restricted funds, provided by funders for very specific purposes, are £2,016,000 at year end. Included in this balance is £1,900,000, a donation provided by the Reece Foundation for the acquisition of West Chevington rewilding nature reserve in 2021. Reece Foundation hold a legal charge over the Trust for the use of the nature reserve in line with our charitable purposes.

● Diversifying into Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

This year we bought a new piece of land (82.56ha) at Earsdon West Forest, Northumberland, costing £1,850,000. We completed the first half of the land purchase in December 2023 and the second half on 30 April 2024. It is a sizeable, strategically important and well-placed site in the Druridge Bay landscape.

The main purpose behind this acquisition is to enrich the landscape and contribute to the recovery of nature. We will fund this by developing and implementing the Trust's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) business. BNG is a new approach to ensure future development contributes towards nature's recovery. Developers must ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development, with either better quality or more habitats. Major and small developments must deliver a BNG of at least 10%, whilst rules for nationally significant infrastructure projects are expected from late 2025. Through BNG, the Trust is looking to improve financial sustainability by increasing the proportion of revenue derived from trading and reducing our dependency on grant funding. NWT is offering a habitat banking service to developers to provide off-site units where the 10% uplift cannot be achieved on-site. Earsdon West Forest is the Trust's first habitat bank. EcoNorth offers consultancy on BNG.



See Earsdon West Forest for yourself on YouTube
youtu.be/F3LxAQ2JSXA

Earsdon West Forest © NWT

Progress has also been made in understanding the potential of green financing for peatland, through carbon credits, and plans for test sites are likely to demonstrate how this can contribute to financing its restoration.

Consolidating principal funding sources

During the year ended 31 March 2024, we generated income of £4,208,000, down by £1,060,000 compared to £5,268,000 presented in last year's financial statements. The reduction this year is predominately due to the inclusion of the fair value assessment of the donated land and buildings at The Haining, near Elsdon, worth £1,245,000 as a financial adjustment in last year's income. Without that accounting adjustment, then income this year has increased year-on-year.

Our income comes from a wide variety of sources, including membership subscriptions, voluntary donations and contracts for delivery of services. The principal funding sources during the year were:

Income source	2023/24	2022/23
Grants (conditional and unconditional)	1,367,000	1,562,000
Subsidiary trading income	886,000	782,000
Visitor trading and similar income	390,000	343,000
Sponsorships and membership subscriptions	386,000	432,000
Contract	608,000	379,000
Donations	318,000	1,508,000
Legacies	209,000	200,000
Education and training	19,000	21,000
Rental	18,000	16,000
Other income	7,000	25,000
Total income	4,208,000	5,268,000

We have increased the area of land and number of reserves within Countryside Stewardship (CS) schemes, helping us become more financially secure. Income from CS revenue is expected to increase from £46.6k this year to £274.5k next year. Basic payment is being phased out, however, we are planning to apply for the new Sustainable Farming Incentive on a number of reserves, which has the potential to raise up to an additional £100k annually, depending on what we decide to do at West Chevington.

Subsidiary company Gift Aid contribution

The Trust has two wholly owned subsidiary companies, Northumberland Wildlife Enterprises Limited, which is currently dormant, and EcoNorth Limited. The purpose of EcoNorth Limited is to raise funds for the charity through its work as an environmental consultancy, providing commercial ecology surveys, assessments, information, advice and guidance. The profits of EcoNorth Limited are donated to the charity each year under



Common blue butterfly © Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION

the Gift Aid scheme. This year, EcoNorth had a record turnover, surpassing £1m for the first time ever, with a Gift Aid contribution to Northumberland Wildlife Trust of £100,000. The total Gift Aid contribution to NWT over the last 11 years is now close to half a million, with more than quarter of a million provided in the last 3 years.

Café and trading improvement

NWT has run its own café at Hauxley since it opened in 2017 and took the decision to employ a dedicated café manager mid-2021, shared between Hauxley and Northumberlandia. Since then, both cafés are making a positive contribution to running the sites, helping wildlife and bringing people closer to nature. We have made significant changes at Northumberlandia, improving the catering equipment, testing menus, and adding ambience (planters, decking) and extra seating space outside. Hauxley has added equipment, an improved counter layout and new menus. Northumberlandia's business is very seasonal but Hauxley has continued to thrive year-round and is now a well-loved spot for a cuppa and a scone, capitalising on its fantastic views and seasonal variations of wildlife.

We have 5-star hygiene rating at both cafés. Wherever possible, we use local suppliers and sustainable products. The cafés are also touchpoints for visitor information, donations and event assistance.

Going forward, we will have a holiday let to provide additional income at the Haining, which was kindly gifted alongside a beautiful piece of land near Elsdon. Please check it out here: nwt.org.uk/haining.

CARBON REDUCTION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Role of nature reserves as carbon stores

Taking back control of Whitlee this year was important because major peatland restoration will lead to significant habitat improvement for multiple species and will also reduce our carbon emissions by 5% per year for the next 5 years. All our work on peatland, grassland, ponds and tree planting contributes to sequestering carbon.

Transport and energy services

EcoNorth delivered ecological surveys, design related advice and, where necessary, mitigation for a range of nationally significant highways schemes, including proposed A66 improvements and local road network maintenance and repairs. They are also continuing to support the delivery of the passenger train and station upgrades to the local rail line between Newcastle and Ashington.

EcoNorth provided ecological services to energy supply and distribution clients, supporting the final stages of the Viking Link project, an international high voltage cable enabling the exchange of renewable energy between the UK and Denmark. They also continued to support the assessment and planning stages of solar energy

installations as well as floating offshore wind proposals off the west coast of Ireland.

TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

Over the last few years, we have upgraded our systems to improve efficiency, reporting and insights. We have tried to integrate systems with those used by The Wildlife Trusts so that we can easily share information and better evidence our overall performance. This strategy has affected our choices of software for accounting, CRM and communications (website, e-marketing). We also have software for HR, Health & Safety and volunteering. There is still much to be done, but we are making gains. Likewise, guidance and frameworks from TWT on cyber security, safeguarding and EDI are transforming our approaches and making the organisation more secure, effective and compliant for the future.

A BETTER APPROACH TO STAFF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

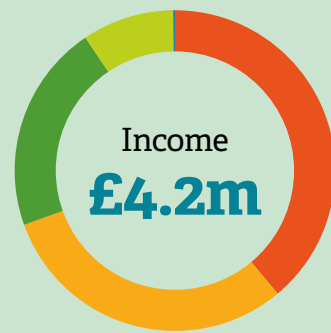
NWT obtained the Bronze Better Health at Work Award and trained three staff members as workplace Health Advocates. The Better Health at Work Award is an initiative across the North East that encourages workplaces to address health, safety and wellbeing issues. The importance of NWT doing this award goes way beyond measuring sickness absence rates. It is about sharing and signposting health related information to staff and volunteers, showing that the organisation does care about its people, not just so they will be more productive, but so they will have a healthy, balanced home/work lifestyle. Giving employees the opportunity to get together at events, with the opportunity to share experiences, can strengthen an individual's relationships with colleagues. Sometimes it is just about giving people the time to get together and talk. Verbal feedback after the stress management event indicated that this was very popular because, "We rarely get together as a full team due to the nature of the job." During the Bronze Award journey, we have significantly improved the lives of at least two employees by helping one person stop smoking and another to get help for insomnia. We know that this will prevent any associated health problems in the future.



NWT staff from the Wild City team © Liz Heard

Our year in numbers

Harvest mouse © Joel Ireland; Survey © Duncan Hoyle; Red admiral © Steven Morris; Garden © NWT; Youth group © NWT; West Chevington © Jason Friend; Hide © Sheila Luck; Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre © Sheila Luck; Tree planting © NWT; Whittle Dene © Duncan Hutt; Den building © Liz Heard; Earsdon © NWT; Giving tree © Matrin Pickup; Osprey © Peter Cairns/2020VISION



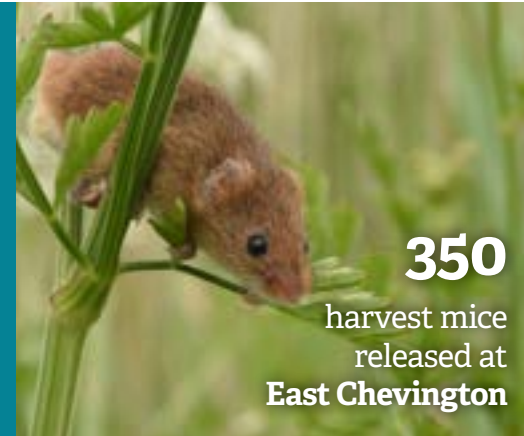
Charitable activities	£1,638,000	39%
Donations and legacies	£1,287,000	31%
Subsidiary trading	£886,000	21%
Visitor trading and similar	£390,000	9%
Other	£7,000	<1%



Charitable activities	£2,696,000	66%
Subsidiary trading	£843,000	21%
Café and visitor centre trading	£331,000	8%
Cost of raising funds	£242,000	6%



82p in every **£1**
was spent on charitable activity
(excludes subsidiary company)



350
harvest mice
released at
East Chevington

147
surveys undertaken by
staff and volunteers



421
volunteers helped
with nature recovery

28,457
volunteer hours, 18FTE



8,915
members
£386,251
through membership income

Young People's
Forum's first event

200 people came

500
items of clothing swapped



43
community groups
acted for nature



Worked with **35**
schools and youth groups
Putting nature into
the curriculum and
taking action



NWT land
managed for nature
4,550ha
72 nature reserves



3
New hides at
East Chevington



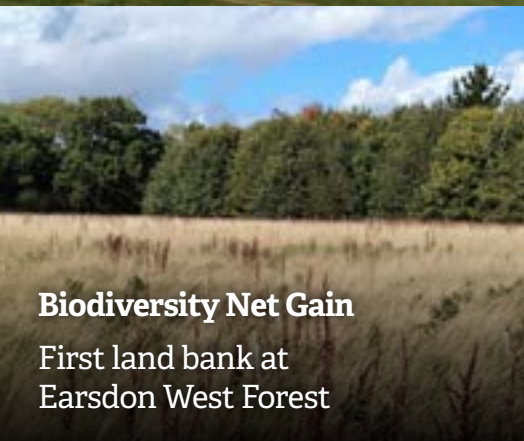
Communities
planted
13,578
trees as
part of the
**North East
Community
Forest**



Supporters donated
£102,948
towards **3** appeals



NWT ran **316** events,
introducing people to nature,
with **14,907** attending



Biodiversity Net Gain
First land bank at
Earsdon West Forest



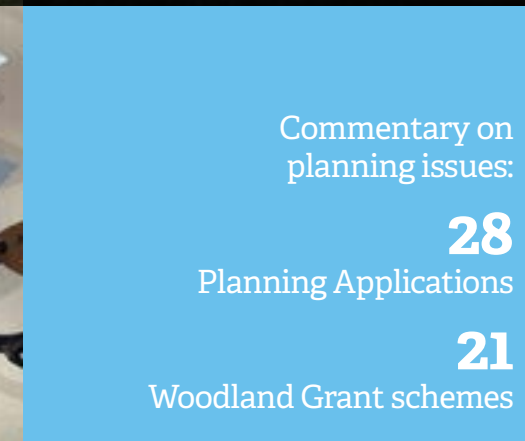
**Wilder Northumberland
Network launch**
Nature recovery and
connectivity across
24,000ha
10 sites



2 Visitor centres
180,000
Visitors introduced
to nature



£5,874
donated to the
Giving Tree at Hauxley



Commentary on
planning issues:
28
Planning Applications
21
Woodland Grant schemes



Osprey Watch
attracted
4,257
visitors to the cabin
at Tower Knowe, Kielder

APRIL

Wilder Ways to Wellbeing

Wilder Ways to Wellbeing is NWT's education team's new approach to connect young people with nature through supporting and empowering schools to embed nature in the classroom and the curriculum.

- Expanded environmental knowledge, providing resources and equipment.
- Upskilled educators to feel confident to include outdoor learning into everyday practice.
- Improved school grounds for outdoor learning.
- Provided 22 free school holiday sessions to help families connect with local green spaces and learn about nature and climate.
- Appeal raised £27,00 with match funding.



Helping young people to value nature



Wild enthusiasm for nature

JUNE

30 Days Wild

The UK's biggest nature challenge run by The Wildlife Trusts, 30 Days Wild invites people of all ages to connect with nature every day during the month of June.

- The Wildlife Trusts provided free resources, including a wild bee poster with seeds and other material, for everyone who signed up.
- NWT had 1,055 signups for information packs from individuals, 128 from schools/youth groups, 18 from care homes and 17 from businesses.
- We created nature awareness through social media and in the press
- The Big Wild Weekend, included mindfulness sessions, medicinal herb walks, talks, outdoor yoga and music in nature sessions across three sites.
- We linked up with the Big Wild Pub Quiz online and Big Wild Camp Out.

MAY

Skyward inspiration from ospreys

Ospreys have bred in Kielder Forest since 2009. Each year, NWT trains and co-ordinates a team of knowledgeable volunteers who share their expertise with visitors.

- A new osprey viewing point and wildlife cabin at Tower Knowe Visitor Centre brought stories of the Kielder ospreys to life and engaged new audiences.
- A new camera provided clear and reliable images of a nest.
- Osprey Watch attracted 4,257 delighted visitors from April to August.
- Volunteers spent 1,278 hours connecting people with wildlife.



The osprey, a spectacular migrant bird



Securing rare ancient woodland

JULY

An opportunity at Whittle Dene

The Trust was given the chance to buy 42 acres of Whittle Dene, near Ovingham, half of which includes rare ancient woodland.

- Funding from an anonymous donor and £53,000 raised from an appeal allowed us to agree the purchase (completed April 2024) and develop the management plan.
- We secured an important Local Wildlife Site designated for its ancient woodland, which is a priority habitat nationally.
- NWT is working to improve the land by removing non-native trees, replanting and encouraging scrub as buffer habitat around the edges. The grassland and farmland have potential for restoration to species rich meadows.
- Local community groups continue to run training and educational events.

AUGUST

Red Squirrel Recovery Network

We started the development phase of this Heritage Lottery-funded partnership project to secure the long-term future of red squirrels. It will cover:

- Setting up a new partnership of northern Wildlife Trusts with groups in southern Scotland.
- Raising public awareness and generating action.
- Recruiting more volunteer groups.
- Increasing capacity to support groups to work with landowners to put stewardship/funding agreements in place and to share best practice.
- Developing field trials for delivering fertility control for greys.



Innovative programme to help save the reds



Recognition for the Lady of the North

OCTOBER

Northumbria in Bloom Award

Northumberlandia, the world's largest landform sculpture, near Cramlington, scooped gold in the Tourist and Visitor Attractions and Country Estates Category. The team of judges were impressed by:

- A very innovative and unique attraction for both local people and tourists, a great example of art and nature in perfect harmony.
- The nature trails, woodland paths, wildlife information boards and the numerous community events each year.
- 6,000 trees planted at the site and around Cramlington by volunteers.
- 100,000 visitors each year.

SEPTEMBER

Green Influencers finish on a high

The Green Influencers Scheme (Ernest Cook Trust) enabled young people to develop and run environmental social action projects with NWT.

- 205 young people took part across Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland, engaging with 2,326 members of the public via community events.
- Projects included designing and building an eco-classroom, creating a mindfulness garden and pollinator corridors, and introducing a whole school recycling system.
- A team from Gosforth delivered a presentation at a national youth conference.
- The success of the project has led to a Blue Influencer's programme, based around youth social action on water/marine issues.



Youth action takes control



Clothes recycling event

NOVEMBER

Young People's Forum

NWT's first youth-led public event was Switch and Stitch at Northumbria University Student Union. The collaborative event included clothes swaps, mending and upcycling workshops, secondhand fashion shows, live music and a raffle with items donated from Barbour. The event had amazing results:

- Over 200 people attended, building important connections between NWT and young people.
- 500+ clothing items swapped or donated for a second life
- 19 people expressed interest in volunteering with NWT
- We built connections with new university societies, corporate partners and local organisations.
- We trialled new content with NWT's Instagram, including targeted ads and an Instagram Story Takeover on the day

DECEMBER

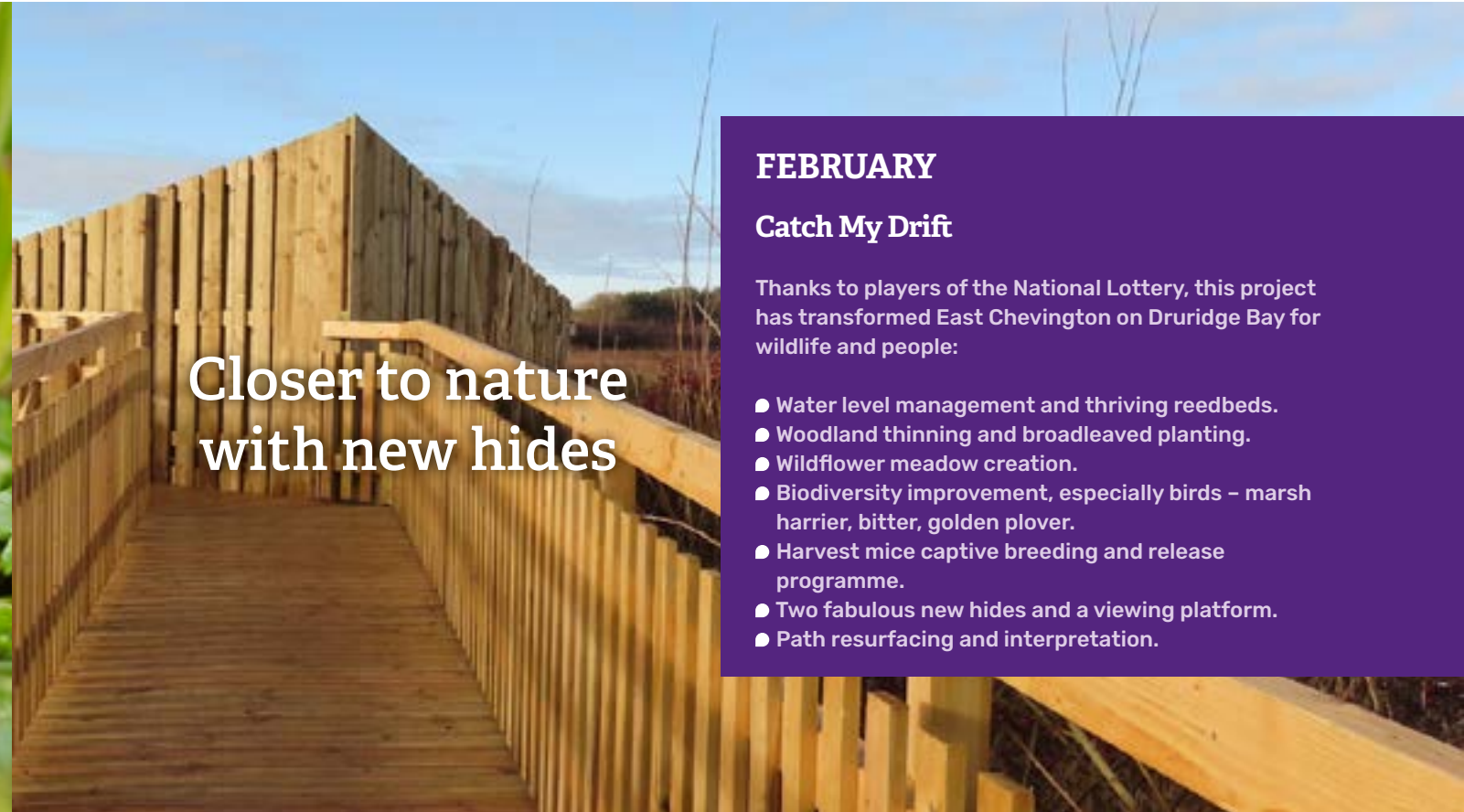
Squirrel and water vole surveys

Red squirrels and water voles are seriously under threat in the north of England due to loss of habitat and threat from invasive species such as grey squirrels and mink. Projects to support these animals require detailed evidence to support strategies.

- The Natively Northern Spring Surveys appeal supported detailed survey work to plan and target action to protect these two iconic Northumberland species.
- The Big Give matched appeal raised £22,525.
- It was a major undertaking, with significant volunteer input, gathering data from traps and cameras, linking with reported sightings data, co-ordinating into usable reports.



Return of the native



Closer to nature with new hides

FEBRUARY

Catch My Drift

Thanks to players of the National Lottery, this project has transformed East Chevington on Druridge Bay for wildlife and people:

- Water level management and thriving reedbeds.
- Woodland thinning and broadleaved planting.
- Wildflower meadow creation.
- Biodiversity improvement, especially birds – marsh harrier, bitter, golden plover.
- Harvest mice captive breeding and release programme.
- Two fabulous new hides and a viewing platform.
- Path resurfacing and interpretation.

JANUARY

Whitelee – a new dawn

Whitelee Moor is one of Britain's most important upland nature reserves. It is a site of European conservation importance due to its blanket bog and heather heaths. Ending the tenancy agreement will allow NWT to:

- Modify the grazing regime, reducing overgrazing from sheep.
- Undertake more bog restoration, supporting improved biodiversity, water retention and carbon capture.
- Remove invasive species, such as Sitka spruce.
- Plant more broadleaved trees in line with Forestry England's and our own Wilder Kielder vision of connecting and restoring landscapes.



Wilder on a grand scale



New habitat bank site

MARCH

New green finance initiative

The purchase of Earsdon West Forest was our first habitat bank to tap into new green finance opportunities from Biodiversity Net Gain.

- Excellent connectivity with West Chevington and Druridge Bay sites.
- 82ha mainly low quality grassland and woodland, stream edge and ponds - ready for enrichment.
- Detailed surveys parcel land into biodiversity units of habitat type, quality and age.
- The benefit to nature will be demonstrated in the change from pre-restoration to post-restoration (Net Gain).
- Long-term benefits to biodiversity and for funding Trust activity.

Longer-term plans

NWT looks forward to bigger change. The more ambitious vision we now hold for a 'wilder Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle' has so much potential. This includes our land and sea conservation, our species work and connecting with people in all ways possible.

The Trust itself has grown and improved culturally as part of the wider movement and has made great strides in its systems and support services. In all of these areas there is still more to be done. We aim to express this next step change as we complete the last phase of our current strategy and business plan and will review and reframe this in 2025/26 to capture our renewed focus.

We aim to build on the important achievements of recent years. This includes further developing and managing differently our existing land holdings and the new land we have acquired and brought back into management. We also aim to work extensively with farmers and landowners as we seek to develop a wider network for nature recovery. New sites such as Whittle Dene woods and Earsdon West Forest need to be managed from now on and further effort focussed on key sites, especially around



West Chevington © Duncan Hutt



See West Chevington for yourself on YouTube
youtu.be/_24QyRhZVig

Druridge, such as West Chevington and Stobbswood. The possibility of taking forward and developing the Rothbury estate and linked sites would take all of this to the next level.

We will pursue joined up approaches between the coast and Kielder and much in between. Whitelee, Benshaw, Hadrian's Wall corridor, Wild Kielder and Wallington will be key partnerships.

We will also continue our species led conservation, including seeing through our conversations about lynx and the extent it changes what we need in our landscape. There are possibilities of wildcat, beaver, eagle and other reintroductions and supporting pine marten's natural return. Water vole and harvest mice are also part of this more diverse and abundant picture we will culture with others.

People engagement and related community organising remains a key focus. We are proudly part of the Community Forest initiative and through that we aim to increase tree planting in the urban landscape and at other sites, such as the Town Moor and urban parks. The Ouseburn Way will be a particular focus.

One of the most challenging, but also potentially transformational, things going forward will be to harness green finance, in particular BNG. We have purchased the land at Earsdon West Forest as a habitat bank, creating an engine to fund and connect Wilder Druridge. We have staffing and governance in place to initiate that process and the next year will see this becoming a core part of financing our future.

Finally, with the new government and our stronger connections with the national team (RSWT) and TWT movement in influencing, we will put effort into getting new local politicians onside with our vision for change for nature north of the Tyne. We are going to produce a 'State of the Nature' report. It will set out the current status and articulate the big things needed to return at least 30% for land and sea to good condition by the end of our next 5-year plan, which also coincides with the new parliament term.

Difficult as it is, we also need to make more progress towards making the Trust greener and less carbon driven. We have set this out in our nationally agreed climate action plan, but it needs more resource and focus to make headway. The Trust already makes a big difference for climate locally through its land work but we need to match this ambition organisationally.



Tree planting © Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION

In summary the main things we see happening in the next year include:

- The set up and implementation of a new BNG finance mechanism based on Earsdon West Forest
- Extending the longevity and impact of our connecting people with nature programmes by seeking longer term funding
- Co-leading, with RSWT and local strategic partnerships, the acquisition for large scale wilding/nature recovery in the Rothbury area, and connect Druridge sites, as part of a new 'Coast to Kielder' vision
- Rolling out the Wilder Northumberland Network with nature friendly farmers
- Rewilding Whitelee and undertaking a major new peatland restoration scheme
- Working on the new 'coast to coast' Hadrian's Wall corridor nature recovery partnership with Cumbria WT
- Continuing discussions with stakeholders on lynx and related change in the uplands
- Submitting the full application for the Red Squirrel Recovery Network project
- Developing other key species work on pine marten, eagle, beaver, water vole etc.
- Increasing capacity and focusing on digital enablement and transformation, including the development of a 'State of Nature' data project
- Investing in internal systems and improving culture by supporting the Young People's Forum, EDI practice group, safeguarding framework, volunteer system, XLedger finance/CRM and other systems to support staff better and increase effectiveness
- Focusing on agreed achievable targets to demonstrate our commitment to transitioning to a Net Zero Trust

Principal risks and uncertainties

The senior management team and the trustees review the risks the charity may face and, where appropriate, establish processes and procedures to mitigate those risks and agree action plans on a quarterly basis. This is done through our sub-committee structure. We also consider external factors such as the impact of the pandemic, new regulations or the state of the economy. At each quarterly Council, a formal strategic risk management paper, which highlights those risks that the sub-committees reviewed as 'high' after mitigation, is presented.

We assess that the Trust's principal risks and uncertainties include the following;

- Securing funding for charitable activities and good cost recovery to ensure sustainability
- Insufficient cash to meet obligations
- Failure of health and safety compliance
- Sudden loss of key personnel, or our head office communications and IT systems
- Lack of capacity to deliver an increasingly complex work programme
- Government structure and policy changes

Governance and organisational information

● Governing document

The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission.

● Trading subsidiaries

The Trust has two subsidiary companies; EcoNorth Limited (ECN) and Northumberland Wildlife Enterprises Limited (NWE). NWE is currently dormant. ECN is governed by a Board of Directors on which at least one Trustee represents the Trust's interests. The Managing Director is line-managed by the Trust's Chief Executive. To find out more detailed information about either of the subsidiary companies, the individual company accounts are filed annually with Companies House.

In this report, the accounts include the income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the charity and both subsidiaries whenever the statements are referred to as 'consolidated' or 'group.'

● Organisational structure and decision-making

The Trust is governed by the Board of Trustees (Council), who are also the directors of the company under company law. A list of trustees who have served during the financial year is shown on page 63. Delegation of authority is set out in the Trust's governance documentation. Council delegates all of its powers to the Chief Executive to enable them to manage the Trust's operations and to lead and direct its strategic development. However, the Chief Executive is obliged to consult with trustees as appropriate and to report fully and appropriately on decisions taken and material developments. Specific issues which require reporting include:

- New strategic projects and partnerships
- Significant variations against budget or significant financial issues
- Issues affecting the Trust's reputation

Council meets four times a year, working to an annual forward agenda. A detailed agenda is agreed with the Chair well in advance of each meeting and staff provide written papers on all agenda items. Standard agenda items are strategic business issues, financial reports including the latest management accounts, policy changes and activity reports. A register of conflicts of interest is held and updated annually, and every Council agenda includes declaration of any potential conflicts which might arise at that meeting.

A sub-committee structure assists in the scrutiny of

trustee responsibilities. The Finance and Risks Committee (FRC), has delegated authority for ensuring that suitable financial systems and controls are in place and are working effectively, and that risks are properly identified, managed, mitigated and reported. The FRC meets quarterly and is chaired by the Treasurer.

This year, the Trust moved to its new formal trustee-led committee structure with the addition of two new committees – Nature Recovery Committee (NRC) and Governance and Compliance Committee (GCC). The Nature Recovery Committee has delegated authority for ensuring that the efforts and resources of the Trust are directed in the most effective and efficient way to secure nature's recovery within Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside.

The Governance and Compliance Committee has delegated authority for ensuring that the Trust areas of governance, corporate responsibility and compliance are robust and maintained. The GCC oversees key policy areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), health and safety, employment, safeguarding, data protection, whistle blowing and complaints.

Informal groups also operate to provide a place for more detailed discussion that then inform formal committees and Council down the line. Examples of this include the new EDI group and the new trustee/staff BNG working group.

Working group sessions between trustees and staff will also be set up to discuss future priorities and emphases as we review the strategy next year.

● Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report including the strategic report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group and of their incoming resources and application of resources, including their income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Group will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Group and the company's transactions and disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Group and the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Group and the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

● Trustee appointments

Trustees may be elected by the membership at the AGM, or co-opted. The maximum tenure for elected trustees is nine years, with re-election required every three years. For co-opted trustees, the maximum service period is three years. All trustees have the same responsibilities, irrespective of tenure. There must be no less than eight elected trustees and no more than twelve. The maximum allowable number of co-opted trustees is four. Trustees may claim travel or other expenses but no trustees are remunerated for their services to the charity.

Recruitment and selection is led by the Trust's Governance Group, which reports directly to Council. All prospective trustees complete a skills analysis, which is compared with the Trust's agreed skills gaps; there is also an interview with the Chair and Chief Executive. The Trust advertises all trustee vacancies, seeking specific skills when required. It also takes the diversity of the Board into account when considering new appointments.

● Trustee induction and training

New trustees are provided with a range of documentation in advance of their first meeting, including the Trust's governing documents, the constitution, recent Council minutes and the latest annual report and accounts. They are invited to attend an induction session with the Chair and senior staff shortly after they start, and they are encouraged to meet informally with a more experienced trustee within their first three months. The Chair also has an informal discussion with each new trustee after their first six months.

Council have one 'away day' per year with senior staff. This is to facilitate both more in-depth discussion of specific issues than is often possible at Council meetings, and to provide an opportunity for trustees to visit sites or projects.

● Financial reserves policy

Our financial reserves policy is to maintain sufficient cash flow to allow us to continue to operate and ensure we can fund the large number of projects for which grant funding is received in arrears. The policy sets out the aim to retain sufficient unrestricted cash reserves to cover non-project unrestricted running costs of the charity for a minimum of six months.

● Information on fundraising practices

We are committed to dealing respectfully and ethically with our supporters. Without them, the charity would not be locally representative and not be able to champion wildlife and natural places, to inspire people and to promote sustainable living, according to our Mission and Strategy. We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and have agreed to ensure our fundraising is legal, open, honest and respectful. The standards for fundraising are set out in the Code of Fundraising Practice. There have been no complaints from members of the public about our fundraising methods to date (but we do have a complaints procedure in place which is accessible) and the Trust takes a considerate and sensitive approach to asking for support.

The Trust employs face-to-face recruiters to attend our own reserves, fairs and shows but does not undertake street fundraising. It engages agencies to help with door-to-door and telemarketing (welcome and satisfaction calls) and requires them to adhere to the standards demanded by the Code. We comply with the Institute of Fundraising's guidance on treating donors fairly when we come into contact with people who may be in a vulnerable circumstance, or need additional support to make an informed decision. Periodic checks are carried out in person and by listening in on telephone calls to check that standards are being adhered to.

● Pay and remuneration

Pay for all staff, including the Chief Executive, is according to a job evaluation system, which places roles on one of seven pay scales. Staff are normally appointed at the bottom of a scale and move up the scale in four annual stages.

Trustees approve inflation awards annually, based on a benchmarking system. The total salary bill in the year for the Chief Executive and the three senior managers was £198,000. One individual was paid over £60,000 and the highest salary in the Trust was 3.4 times larger than the lowest salary.

The Trust has no pension liabilities; it contributes to staff pensions but this is on a defined contribution basis only.

● Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

NWT is committed to providing access and equality in its activities, across its nature reserves, as well as supporting equitable treatment for staff, volunteers, members and supporters regardless of sex, gender, race, religion or belief, age, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, sexual orientation or disability. In December 2020, the Charity Governance Code was updated with a focus on the principle of integrity and equality, diversion and inclusion. The trustees reviewed the Trust's practice against these principles and has developed a working document to highlight areas for improvement in the coming years.

● The Wildlife Trusts network

Northumberland Wildlife Trust is part of the national federation of The Wildlife Trusts, represented nationally by The Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), which undertakes a central fundraising, influencing, coordinating and media role. All Trusts pay a levy (linked to their unrestricted performance over five years) towards the costs of running this central organisation, and there is a comprehensive regional and national governance mechanism to facilitate collective decision-making. Collectively RSWT and the 46 individual Wildlife Trust charities are known as The Wildlife Trusts (TWT). RSWT also adds value nationally by leveraging substantial additional funding to individual Trusts through a number of mechanisms, and provides critical support and advice, national leadership on strategy and leadership development, as necessary.

TWT formulate strategy and policy and have joint working arrangements to which all Wildlife Trusts are expected to adhere, though each Trust retains their individual autonomy as part of a federated structure.

In practise, TWTs function as a national network of similar bodies who share the same visions and mission. Data and systems are shared across the movement, to demonstrate joined-up activity, effectiveness and reach, and we act in unison in key policy areas and in national campaigns.

Overall TWTs have over 900,000 members, manage 2,300 nature reserves and other sites covering over 98,500 hectares of land, manage 40,000 volunteers and engage with over 500,000 people through walks, talks and events. The Trust is an important contributor to this impact through its work in Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside but also in partnership throughout the North East and the North of England. The effect of our working within the TWT network is that we can make a difference to conservation at local, sub regional, regional and national scales.

The Trust also takes data protection very seriously and has taken external advice and reviewed its procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of GDPR.

● Disclosure of information to auditors

Each of the persons who are trustees at the time when this Trustees' Report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable group's auditor is unaware, and
- they have taken all the steps that ought to have been taken in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable group's auditor is aware of that information.

The trustees' report above, which incorporates the requirements of a directors' report and a strategic report under the Companies Act 2006, was approved by the trustees on 1 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Nigel Porter
Chair of Trustees



Derek Coates
Treasurer



Blue jellyfish © Linda Pitkin/2020VISION

Independent auditor's report

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Northumberland Wildlife Trust Limited (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated balance sheet, the company balance sheet, the consolidated statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) ('ISAs (UK)') and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's or the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a

period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report including the strategic report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the trustees' report and the strategic report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report including the strategic report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We identified areas of law and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements from our general and sector experience and through discussions with the trustees and other management (as required by Auditing

Standards) and from inspection of the charitable company's legal correspondence, and we discussed with the trustees and other management the policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.

Firstly, the charitable company is subject to laws and regulations that directly affect the financial statements including financial reporting legislation (including related companies and charities legislation) and taxation legislation and we assessed the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

Secondly the charitable company is subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material effect on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, for instance through the imposition of fines or litigation. We identified the following areas as those most likely to have such an effect; data protection, health and safety, safeguarding and certain aspects of company legislation, recognising the nature of the charitable company's activities. Auditing Standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any. Through these procedures, we did not become aware of any actual or suspected non-compliance material to the financial statements.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of any instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/ auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Anne Hallowell

Anne Hallowell BSc FCA DChA
(Senior Statutory Auditor) for and
on behalf of UNW LLP, Statutory Auditor
 Chartered Accountants
 Newcastle upon Tyne

1 October 2024



Blue-tailed damselfly © Ross Hoddinott/2020VISION

Financial statements

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2024
(incorporating income and expenditure account)

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Restricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	1,089,429	197,241	1,286,670	2,444,223
Charitable activities	3	53,795	1,584,558	1,638,353	1,673,841
Other trading activities	4	1,274,612	1,040	1,275,652	1,125,299
Investments		4,643	-	4,643	778
Other income		2,698	-	2,698	24,043
Total income		2,425,177	1,782,839	4,208,016	5,268,184
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	5	1,416,103	-	1,416,103	1,294,505
Charitable activities	7	882,981	1,813,411	2,696,392	2,603,839
Total expenditure		2,299,084	1,813,411	4,122,495	3,898,344
Net income/(expenditure)					
Transfers between funds	18	126,093	(30,572)	95,521	1,369,840
		41,497	(41,497)	-	-
Net movement in funds		167,590	(72,069)	95,521	1,369,840
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		7,106,046	2,087,778	9,193,824	7,823,984
Net movement in funds		167,590	(72,069)	95,521	1,369,840
Total funds carried forward		7,273,636	2,015,709	9,289,345	9,193,824

The consolidated statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 45 to 61 form part of these financial statements.

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Consolidated balance sheet at 31 March 2024

	Note		2024 (£)		2023 (£)
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	10		-		-
Tangible assets	11		9,440,472		8,263,900
			9,440,472		8,263,900
Current assets					
Stocks	13	5,106		12,871	
Debtors	14	626,084		641,938	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,436,724		941,331	
			2,067,914	1,596,140	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(1,236,072)		(604,646)	
Net current assets			831,842	991,494	
Total assets less current liabilities			10,272,314	9,255,394	
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16		(935,883)	(20,526)	
Provisions for liabilities	17		(47,086)	(41,044)	
Total net assets			9,289,345	9,193,824	
Charity funds					
Restricted funds	18		2,015,709	2,087,778	
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		4,442,194		4,274,604	
Revaluation reserve		2,831,442		2,831,442	
Total unrestricted funds	18		7,273,636	7,106,046	
Total funds			9,289,345	9,193,824	

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on 1 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Nigel Porter
Chair of Trustees



Derek Coates
Treasurer

The notes on pages 45 to 61 form part of these financial statements.

Company registered number: 00717813

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Balance sheet At 31 March 2024

	Note		2024 (£)		2023 (£)
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		9,238,672		8,083,560
Investments	12		5,002		5,002
			9,243,674		8,088,562
Current assets					
Stocks	13	5,106		12,871	
Debtors	14	425,094		421,923	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,085,590		617,144	
			1,515,790	1,051,938	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(1,073,264)		(424,513)	
Net current assets			442,526	627,425	
Total assets less current liabilities			9,686,200	8,715,987	
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16		(935,883)	(20,526)	
Net assets excluding pension asset			8,750,317	8,695,461	
Total net assets			8,750,317	8,695,461	
Charity funds					
Restricted funds	18		2,015,709	2,087,778	
Unrestricted funds					
General funds		4,962,479		4,835,554	
Revaluation reserve		1,772,129		1,772,129	
Total unrestricted funds	18		6,734,608	6,607,683	
Total funds			8,750,317	8,695,461	

The company's net movement in funds for the year was £54,856 (2023: £1,296,335).

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and preparation of financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on 1 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Nigel Porter
Chair of Trustees



Derek Coates
Treasurer

The notes on pages 45 to 61 form part of these financial statements.

Company registered number: 00717813

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Consolidated statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	20	866,880	111,330
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from the sale of tangible fixed assets		4,000	1,000
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,287,980)	(44,287)
Net cash used in investing activities		(1,283,980)	(43,287)
Cash flows from financing activities			
New loan	16	925,000	-
New finance leases		-	35,573
Repayment of finance leases		(12,507)	(12,240)
Net cash provided by financing activities		912,493	23,333
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		495,393	91,376
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	21	941,331	849,955
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		1,436,724	941,331

Notes to the financial statements

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

● Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Northumberland Wildlife Trust Limited meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy.

The consolidated statement of financial activities (SOFA) and consolidated balance sheet consolidate the financial statements of the company and its subsidiary undertakings. The results of the subsidiaries are consolidated on a line by line basis.

● Company status

Northumberland Wildlife Trust Limited ('the company') is a charity dedicated to saving wildlife and wild places and helping people to get closer to nature.

The company is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in the United Kingdom and domiciled in England. The address of the registered office is given in the reference and administrative details page of this annual report. The members of the company are the trustees named on page 63. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company.

● Basis of consolidation

The financial statements consolidate the accounts of Northumberland Wildlife Trust Limited and its subsidiary undertakings.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption contained within section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 not to present its own income and expenditure account. The income and expenditure account for the year dealt with in the accounts of the company was £54,856 (2023: £51,335).

● Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of

the general objectives of the group and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the group for particular purposes. The costs of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

● Income

All income is recognised once the company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

The recognition of income from legacies is dependent on establishing entitlement, the probability of receipt and the ability to estimate with sufficient accuracy the amount receivable. Evidence of entitlement to a legacy exists when the company has sufficient evidence that a gift has been left to them (through knowledge of the existence of a valid will and the death of the benefactor) and the executor is satisfied that the property in question will not be required to satisfy claims in the estate. Receipt of a legacy must be recognised when it is probable that it will be received and the fair value of the amount receivable, which will generally be the expected cash amount to be distributed to the company, can be reliably measured.

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the company has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the company of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time of the Friends is not recognised; refer to the trustees' report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated professional services and facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the company, which is the amount it would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable.

● Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the group to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the group's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

● Going concern

In determining the appropriate basis of preparation of the financial statements, the trustees are required to consider whether the group can continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The group's business activities, together with factors that are likely to affect its future development, financial performance and financial position are set out in the strategic report. In addition, the material financial and operational risks and uncertainties that impact the group's performance are outlined in the strategic report.

The trustees have considered the position of the group at the year end, its recent financial performance and forecasts for a period of at least 12 months from the date of the signing these financial statements. As a result of this process, at the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees are of the opinion that it is appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of preparation of the financial statements.

● Intangible assets and amortisation

Intangible assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised

and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, intangible assets are measured at cost less any accumulated amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Amortisation is provided on the following basis:

Website - 20 % straight line

Asset residual values and useful lives are reviewed at the end of each reporting period, and adjusted if appropriate. The effect of any change is accounted for prospectively.

● Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost (or deemed cost for land and buildings held at valuation at the date of transition to FRS102), less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation is charged at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual values, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land	- not depreciated
Freehold property	- 2% straight line
Long-term leasehold property	- 2% straight line
Furniture, fittings and equipment	- 25% straight line
Motor vehicles	- 25% straight line
External fixtures and fittings	- 25% straight line
Computer equipment	- 50% straight line

● Investments

Investments in subsidiaries are valued at cost less provision for impairment.

● Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks. Cost includes all direct costs and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads. Cost is determined using the first-in first-out (FIFO) method.

● Financial instruments

The group only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other accounts receivable and payable, and cash and bank balances.

Debt instruments due within one year are measured,

initially and subsequently at the transaction price. Debt instruments due after one year are measured initially at the transaction price and subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

At the end of each reporting period debt financial assets are assessed for impairment, and their carrying value reduced if necessary. Any impairment charge is recognised in the profit and loss account.

● Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the group; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

● Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash in hand.

● Finance leases and hire purchase

Assets obtained under hire purchase contracts and finance leases are capitalised as tangible fixed assets. Assets acquired by finance lease are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives. Assets acquired by hire purchase are depreciated over their useful lives. Finance leases are those where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership are assumed by the group. Obligations under such agreements are included in creditors, net of the finance charge allocated to future periods. The finance element of the rental payment is charged to the consolidated statement of financial activities so as to produce a constant periodic rate of charge on the net obligation outstanding in each period.

● Employee benefits

Short-term benefits

Short-term benefits, including holiday pay and other similar non-monetary benefits are recognised as an expense in the period in which the employee's entitlement to the benefit accrues.

Defined contribution pension plan

The company operates a defined contribution pension plan for its employees. Contributions are recognised as an expense when they fall due. Amounts due but not yet paid are included within creditors on the balance sheet.

The assets of the plan are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

● Taxation

The taxation expense for the year comprises current and deferred tax and is recognised in the profit and loss account except to the extent that it relates to items recognised in other comprehensive income, or directly in equity, in which case the tax expense is also recognised in other comprehensive income or directly in equity.

Current tax is the amount of income tax payable in respect of the taxable profit for the current or past reporting periods. It is calculated on the basis of tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the balance sheet date.

Deferred tax represents the future tax consequences of transactions and events recognised in the financial statements of current and previous periods. It is recognised in respect of all timing differences, with certain exceptions. Timing differences arise from the inclusion of transactions and events in the financial statements in periods different from those in which they are assessed for tax.

Unrelieved tax losses and other deferred tax assets are recognised only to the extent that it is probable that they will be recovered against the reversal of deferred tax liabilities or other future taxable profits.

Deferred tax is measured using the tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the balance sheet date that are expected to apply to the reversal of timing differences.

● Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgments, assumptions and estimates that affect the application of accounting policies and amounts reported in the profit and loss account and balance sheet. Such decisions are made at the time the financial statements are prepared and adopted based on the best information available at the time. Actual outcomes may be different from initial estimates and are reflected in the financial statements as soon as they become apparent.

Significant judgments in applying accounting policies

In preparing these financial statements, no significant judgments were required in the process of applying the company's accounting policies.

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

Estimates included within these financial statements include land at valuation, depreciation and asset impairments (for example provisions against debtors). None of the estimates made in the preparation of these financial statements are considered to carry significant estimation uncertainty, nor to bear significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

2 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Restricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Donations	144,761	173,367	318,128
Legacies	209,014	-	209,014
Grants	373,277	-	373,277
Sponsorship and membership subscriptions	362,377	23,874	386,251

Total 2024 **1,089,429** **197,241** **1,286,670**

	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Restricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Donations	1,294,461	213,613	1,508,074
Legacies	199,542	-	199,542
Grants	304,423	-	304,423
Sponsorship and membership subscriptions	368,602	63,582	432,184

Total 2023 **2,167,028** **277,195** **2,444,233**

3 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Restricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Charitable activities	53,795	1,584,558	1,638,353

	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Restricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Charitable activities	150,524	1,523,317	1,673,841

4 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

Income from non charitable trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Restricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Subsidiary trading income	886,123	-	886,123
Visitor trading and similar income	388,489	1,040	389,529

Total 2024 **1,274,612** **1,040** **1,275,652**

	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Restricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
--	--------------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------

Subsidiary trading income	782,453	-	782,453
Visitor trading and similar income	342,831	15	342,846

Total 2023 **1,125,284** **15** **1,125,299**

5 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS - SUMMARY

	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Cost of raising funds (note 6a)	428,660	381,235
Fundraising trading expenses (note 6b)	144,170	175,570
Subsidiary trading costs (note 6c)	843,273	737,700

Total **1,416,103** **1,294,505**

6 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

a) Costs of raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Travel, training & recruitment	1,600	1,600
Leaflets and publishing	15,568	15,568
Legal and professional	3,714	3,714
Office & project costs	49,893	49,893
Wages and salaries	357,885	357,885

Total 2024 **428,660** **428,660**

	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Restricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
--	--------------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------

Travel, training & recruitment	4,050	-	4,050
Leaflets and publishing	27,250	-	27,250
Legal and professional	12,889	-	12,889
Office & project costs	28,493	6,570	35,063
Wages and salaries	301,983	-	301,983

Total 2023 **374,665** **6,570** **381,235**

b) Fundraising trading expenses

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)	
Visitor cost of sales and other fundraising costs	116,348	116,348	
Support costs allocated to trading activities	27,822	27,822	
Total 2024	144,170	144,170	
	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Restricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Visitor cost of sales and other fundraising costs	101,138	613	101,751
Support costs allocated to trading activities	73,819	-	73,819
Total 2023	174,957	613	175,570

c) Subsidiary trading costs

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Cost of sales	229,286	229,286
Administration expenses	72,431	72,431
Cost of sales staff costs	233,023	233,023
Administration staff costs	289,583	289,583
Depreciation	18,950	18,950
Total 2024	843,273	843,273
	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Cost of sales	136,425	136,425
Administration expenses	74,645	74,645
Cost of sales staff costs	221,703	221,703
Administration staff costs	291,274	291,274
Depreciation	13,653	13,653
Total 2023	737,700	737,700

7 ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITIES

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 (£)	Support costs 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Charitable activities	1,983,422	712,970	2,696,392
	Activities undertaken directly 2023 (£)	Support costs 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Charitable activities	1,921,874	681,965	2,603,839

Analysis of direct costs

	Total funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Staff costs	1,229,021	1,215,467
Depreciation	93,565	63,922
Direct project costs	289,159	268,806
Travel	63,273	106,371
Training & recruitment	17,287	24,717
Legal & professional	202,079	216,690
Overheads, publishing and office costs	89,038	25,901
Total	1,983,422	1,921,874

Analysis of support costs

	Total funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Staff costs	406,278	413,000
Travel	1,395	3,299
Training & recruitment	2,080	4,223
Legal & professional	26,537	13,719
Overheads, publishing and office costs	171,138	134,805
Premises and utilities	72,361	98,771
Governance costs	33,181	14,148
Total	712,970	681,965

8 AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

The auditor's remuneration amounts to an auditor fee of £16,000 (2023: £15,125), and fees in respect of other services of £1,650 (2023: £1,650).

9 STAFF COSTS

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Wages and salaries	2,109,648	2,060,240	1,682,244	1,635,020
Social security costs	191,398	181,224	135,016	129,123
Contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	214,744	201,963	175,924	166,307
Total	2,515,790	2,443,427	1,993,184	1,930,450

The average number of persons employed by the company during the year was as follows:

	Group 2024 (No.)	Group 2023 (No.)	Company 2024 (No.)	Company 2023 (No.)
All staff	78	80	65	66

The average headcount expressed as full-time equivalents was:

	Group 2024 (No.)	Group 2023 (No.)	Company 2024 (No.)	Company 2023 (No.)
Business and management	9	16	9	16
Charitable activities	46	42	46	42
Fundraising and publicity	10	8	10	8
Subsidiary	13	14	-	-
Total	78	80	65	66

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	Group 2024 (No.)	Group 2023 (No.)
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	1	1

Key management personnel have been determined to be the trustees, Chief Executive and three members of the senior management team. Trustees received no remuneration or benefits. The total remuneration of the senior management team was £228,012 (2023: £194,501).

During the year, no trustees (2023: none) were reimbursed for expenses.

10 INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Group

	Computer software (£)
Cost At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	10,773
Amortisation At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	10,773
Net book value At 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	-

No intangible assets are held by the company.

11 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Group

	Land and buildings (£)	External fixtures and fittings (£)	Furniture, fittings and equipment (£)	Motor vehicles (£)	Total (£)
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2023	8,544,742	639,690	527,978	279,136	9,991,546
Additions	1,179,640	1,422	69,694	37,224	1,287,980
Disposals	(9,335)	(33,149)	(272,681)	(4,047)	(319,392)
At 31 March 2024	9,715,047	607,963	324,811	312,313	10,960,134
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2023	387,491	629,291	501,624	209,240	1,727,646
Charge for the year	38,923	6,679	25,647	38,659	109,908
On disposals	(9,335)	(33,149)	(271,361)	(4,047)	(317,892)
At 31 March 2024	417,079	602,821	255,910	243,852	1,519,662
Net book value At 31 March 2024	9,297,968	5,142	68,901	68,461	9,440,472
At 31 March 2023	8,157,251	10,399	26,354	69,896	8,263,900

Company

	Land and buildings (£)	External fixtures and fittings (£)	Furniture, fittings and equipment (£)	Motor vehicles (£)	Total (£)
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2023	8,383,262	639,142	449,469	264,155	9,736,028
Additions	1,179,640	1,422	27,785	37,224	1,246,071
Disposals	(9,335)	(33,149)	(259,362)	(4,047)	(305,893)
At 31 March 2024	9,553,567	607,415	217,892	297,332	10,676,206
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2023	387,491	624,027	446,483	194,467	1,652,468
Charge for the year	38,923	6,679	6,698	38,659	90,959
On disposals	(9,335)	(33,149)	(259,362)	(4,047)	(305,893)
At 31 March 2024	417,079	597,557	193,819	229,079	1,437,534
Net book value					
At 31 March 2024	9,136,488	9,858	24,073	68,253	9,238,672
At 31 March 2023	7,995,771	15,115	2,986	69,688	8,083,560

The freehold land held by the group was last revalued internally on 1 April 2015.

The group has adopted a policy of revaluation for tangible fixed assets. Had these assets been measured at historic cost, the carrying values would have been as follows:

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)
Freehold land	3,736,440	3,736,440
Freehold property	1,526,873	1,558,034
Total	5,263,313	5,294,474

Included in group land and buildings is freehold land at valuation of £6,570,049 (2023: £6,570,049) which is not depreciated. Land and buildings include leasehold land and buildings with a net book value of £12,772 (2023: £13,216).

The net book value of motor vehicles above includes an amount of £30,748 (2023: £49,728) in respect of assets held under hire purchase contracts.

12 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

Company

	Investments in subsidiary companies (£)
Cost	
At 1 April 2023	5,002
At 31 March 2024	5,002
Net book value	
At 1 March 2024	5,002
At 31 March 2023	5,002

13 STOCKS

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Finished goods and goods for resale	5,106	12,871	5,106	12,871

14 DEBTORS

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Due within one year				
Trade debtors	413,619	536,294	266,740	337,313
Amounts owed by group undertakings	-	-	4,775	-
Other debtors	745	-	745	-
Prepayments and accrued income	209,234	100,680	152,834	84,610
Tax recoverable	2,486	4,964	-	-
Total	626,084	641,938	425,094	421,923

15 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Trade creditors	176,236	106,475	165,460	87,568
Amounts owed to group undertakings	-	-	-	42,779
Other taxation and social security	146,858	119,582	109,485	65,808
Obligations under finance lease and hire purchase contracts	8,963	11,827	8,963	11,827
Other creditors	9,350	7,928	1,948	2,906
Accruals and deferred income	894,665	358,834	787,408	213,625
Total	1,236,072	604,646	1,073,264	424,513

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Deferred income at 1 April 2023	139,000	224,003	139,000	224,003
Resources deferred during the year	640,100	139,000	640,100	139,000
Amounts released from previous periods	(139,000)	(224,003)	(139,000)	(224,003)
Total	640,100	139,000	640,100	139,000

Deferred income relates to grant and contract income received in advance which relate to activities in future periods.

16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Loans	925,000	-	925,000	-
Net obligations under finance lease and hire purchase contracts	10,883	20,526	10,883	20,526
Total	935,883	20,526	935,883	20,526

The loan of £925,000 relates to an amount received to aid with the purchase of Earsdon West Forest, Morpeth, Northumberland. The loan is interest free and there are no fixed repayment terms.

17 DEFERRED TAXATION

	2024 (£)
Group	
At the beginning of the year	41,044
Credit for the year	6,042
Total	47,086

The deferred tax balance is made up as follows:

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)
Land held at valuation	(47,086)	(41,044)
Total	(47,086)	(41,044)

18 STATEMENT OF FUNDS

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 (£)	Income (£)	Expenditure (£)	Transfers in/out (£)	Balance at 31 March 2024 (£)
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	3,069,771	1,539,054	(1,455,811)	41,497	3,194,511
Hauxley Visitor Centre fixed asset reserve	899,324	-	-	-	899,324
Subsidiary trading funds	305,509	886,123	(843,273)	-	348,359
Revaluation reserve	2,831,442	-	-	-	2,831,442
Total	7,106,046	2,425,177	(2,299,084)	41,497	7,273,636
Restricted funds					
General Estates	14,898	20,000	(34,472)	(426)	-
Fundraising and Development	21,974	16,000	(4,359)	(12,470)	21,145
Nature Recovery	64,200	291,592	(410,788)	54,996	-
Nature Reserves	1,949,923	464,169	(373,139)	(50,042)	1,990,911
Peat Partnership	27,000	390,025	(443,738)	26,713	-
Red Squirrel	-	290,710	(245,047)	(45,663)	-
Wild City	9,783	310,343	(301,868)	(14,605)	3,653
Total	2,087,778	1,782,839	(1,813,411)	(41,497)	2,015,709
Total of funds	9,193,824	4,208,016	(4,112,495)	-	9,289,345

Transfers between funds relate to deficits from unrestricted funds to meet shortfalls in restricted project funding offset by transfer of surplus income on projects with capital acquisitions in year.

Details of the specific grants and donations making up the restricted funds are as follows:

Fundraising and development

Reserves Volunteering Fund to support volunteering activities at the Trust.

Giving Tree Fund to manage the donations provided as part of the giving tree based at Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre.

Nature Reserves

Benshaw Moor Appeal Funds for the management of Benshaw Moor Nature Reserve.

Big Waters funds to contribute to the management of the mixed habitats and large ponds.

Wilder Northumberland is a Reece Foundation-funded project to consult local communities and facilitate nature-friendly management of land to restore natural processes and prepare for species reintroduction.

Wilding West Chevington, this significant donation from The Reece Foundation in 2021 enabled the acquisition of the new site near Druridge Bay where we are highlighting how nature can recover.

Wild City

Nature in the City is a Reece Foundation-funded project working with local communities in urban areas to stand up for wildlife and enhance green spaces.

We have a small restricted fund for Our Young People's Forum which is made up of members from across Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland. The group aims to help the Trust work better for young people whilst gaining skills, experiences and taking action for nature in the process.

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 (£)	Income (£)	Expenditure (£)	Transfers in/out (£)	Balance at 31 March 2023 (£)
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	1,764,316	2,684,160	(1,027,075)	(351,630)	3,069,771
Hauxley Visitor Centre fixed asset reserve	899,324	-	-	-	899,324
Subsidiary trading funds	259,712	783,497	(737,700)	-	305,509
Revaluation reserve	2,831,442	-	-	-	2,831,442
	5,754,794	3,467,657	(1,764,775)	(351,630)	7,106,046
Restricted funds					
City to Coast Living Landscape	40,230	306,129	(438,109)	91,955	205
Druridge Bay Living Landscape	1,913,431	367,887	(397,551)	30,835	1,914,602
Kielder Living Landscape	65,230	1,051,341	(1,164,349)	185,903	138,125
Fundraising and Development	50,299	75,170	(133,560)	42,937	34,846
	2,069,190	1,800,527	(2,133,569)	351,630	2,087,778
Total of funds	7,823,984	5,268,184	(3,898,344)	-	9,193,824

19 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2024 (£)	Restricted funds 2024 (£)	Total funds 2024 (£)
Tangible fixed assets	7,540,472	1,900,000	9,440,472
Current assets	1,389,205	678,709	2,067,914
Creditors due within one year	(673,072)	(563,000)	(1,236,072)
Creditors due in more than one year	(935,883)	-	(935,883)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(47,086)	-	(47,086)
Total 2024	7,273,636	2,015,709	9,289,345

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2023 (£)	Restricted funds 2023 (£)	Total funds 2023 (£)
Tangible fixed assets	6,363,900	1,900,000	8,263,900
Current assets	1,323,362	272,778	1,596,140
Creditors due within one year	(519,646)	(85,000)	(604,646)
Creditors due in more than one year	(20,526)	-	(20,526)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	(41,044)	-	(41,044)
Total 2023	7,106,046	2,087,778	9,193,824

20 RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)
Net income for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	95,521	1,369,840
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	109,908	77,575
Amortisation charges	-	1,436
Profit on the sale of fixed assets	(2,500)	(499)
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	7,765	(2,245)
Decrease in debtors	15,854	146,195
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	634,290	(232,537)
Deferred tax position	6,042	(3,435)
Land donation	-	(1,245,000)
Net cash provided by operating activities	866,880	111,330

21 ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)
Cash in hand	1,436,724	941,331

Cash in hand includes a £350,000 donation received pre year-end to aid the acquisition of land at Whittle Dene. As the purchase was not completed until post year-end, the amount is included within cash and deferred income as at year ended 31 March 2024.

22 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET DEBT

	At 1 April 2023 (£)	Cash flows (£)	At 31 March 2024 (£)
Cash at bank and in hand	941,331	495,393	1,436,724
Debt due after 1 year	-	(925,000)	(925,000)
Finance leases	(32,353)	12,507	(19,846)
Total	908,978	(417,100)	491,878

23 PENSION COMMITMENTS

The group operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the group in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the group to the fund and amounted to £118,708 (2023 as restated: £110,853). Contributions totalling £3,206 (2023: £3,051) were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date and are included in creditors.

24 OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At 31 March 2024 the group and company had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Not later than 1 year	20,122	16,420	7,473	8,170
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	20,388	27,180	332	7,805
Total	40,510	43,600	7,805	15,975

25 FINANCE LEASE COMMITMENTS

Minimum lease payments under finance lease fall due as follows:

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Within one year	10,169	13,741	10,169	13,741
After one year and before five years	12,749	22,525	12,749	22,525
Less finance costs allocated to future periods	(3,072)	(3,915)	(3,072)	(3,915)
Total	19,846	32,351	19,846	32,351

26 CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

	Group 2024 (£)	Group 2023 (£)	Company 2024 (£)	Company 2023 (£)
Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements				
Acquisition of tangible fixed assets	925,000	-	925,000	-

27 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Remuneration of key management personnel is disclosed in note 9.

During the year, the charitable company purchased consultancy services of £132,902 (2023: £110,298) from EcoNorth Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary, and charged EcoNorth £42,941 (2023: £82,590) for services supplied. At the year end, the charitable company was owed £4,775 from EcoNorth Limited (2023: owed £45,175 to EcoNorth Limited).

During the year, the charitable company purchased goods and services totalling £nil (2023: £4,546) and sold services totalling £nil (2023: £13,254) from/to Kielder Water and Forest Park Development Trust, which is related through a common director. At the year end, the Development Trust owed the charitable company £nil (2023: £nil).

During the year, the charitable company supplied services totalling £19,894 (2023: £59,126) and purchased goods totalling £1,025 (2023: £1,000) from Urban Green Newcastle. At the year end, Urban Green Newcastle, of which a trustee of Northumberland Wildlife Trust is a director, owed the charitable company £nil (2023: £nil).

During the year, the charitable company supplied services totalling £nil (2023: £nil) and purchased services totalling £5,308 (2023: £4,416) to/from Northumberland National Park Foundation, which is related by virtue of a common director. There were no balances outstanding at the year end.

28 POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

Two parcels of land were purchased at Earsdon West Forest. The purchase of the first parcel was completed within the financial year. However, the second parcel of land, with a total cost of £925,000 was completed post year end in April 2024.

In March 2024, a donation of £350k was received for the purchase of Whittle Dene land. The purchase was anticipated to go through in March 2024. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, which were outside of NWT's control, the purchase was made in April 2024. This was as a result of land boundary and access rights issues between deeds and sales documents. The lawyers and agents had to resolve this issue before the purchase could be completed, causing a week of delay.

29 PRINCIPAL SUBSIDIARIES

The following were subsidiary undertakings of the company:

Names	Company number	Principal activity	Class of shares	Holding	Included in consolidation
EcoNorth Limited	02274277	Ecological consultancy	Ordinary	100%	Yes
Northumberland Wildlife Enterprises Limited	02044288	Dormant	Ordinary	100%	Yes

The financial results of the subsidiaries for the year were:

	Income (£)	Expenditure (£)	Profit for the period (£)	Net assets (£)
EcoNorth Limited	1,027,784	(887,119)	140,665	546,313
Northumberland Wildlife Trust Enterprises Limited	-	-	-	2

Acknowledgements of financial and other support for 2023-2024

We would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who made our work this year possible.

Charitable trusts, foundations and grant funders giving £1,000 or more:

- Branch Out Fund
- Co-op Community Fund
- Community Foundation – Local Environmental Action Fund
- Durham Wildlife Trust
- Networks for Nature
- Newcastle City Council – Ward funding
- Newcastle Youth Fund
- Northumberland Community Chest
- Players of People's Postcode Lottery
- Ray Wind Farm Fund
- Re-wilding Britain
- Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts
- Sir James Knott
- The Big Give (The Reed Foundation)
- The Climate Action Fund
- The Ernest Cook Trust
- The Hadrian Trust
- The Lifescape Project
- The Mailing trust – Twizell Estate
- The National Citizen Service
- The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- The National Trust
- The Natural Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
- The Naturesave Trust
- The Newcastle Fund
- The Percy Hedley 1990 Charitable Trust
- The Reece Foundation
- Trustees of the Hepple Estate
- W A Handley

Organisations and companies contributing £5,000 or more towards our income and charitable objectives through donations and corporate partnership agreements:

- Defra/Environment Agency
- Forestry England
- The Land Trust
- Natural England
- Newcastle City Council
- North Tyneside County Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Northumbrian Water Limited

Organisations and companies contributing £1,000 or more from company memberships:

- Aaron Optometrists
- Andrew Poplett
- Egger (UK) Ltd
- Ringtons
- Tarmac
- Thermofisher Scientific
- Thomsons of Prudhoe
- Vattenfall

Legacies and in memoriam donations contributing £1,000 or more:

- Karen Knox in memory of Tony Tynan
- The Estate of Mr Ronald Shaw
- The Estate of Mrs I A Payn
- The Estate of Mr A Johnson
- The Estate of Mrs Anne Thom
- The Estate of Mr Robert McKittrick
- The Estate of Rev C Scott
- The Estate of Dr Judith Bulmer
- The Estate of Mr I Tapster

Individual gifts of £5,000 or more (acknowledging that many donors prefer anonymity):

- Graham and Sara Alder
- Valerie Bess
- Whittle Dene £10,000 (anonymous donors) x3

Pro bono support:

We would like to thank the following supporters for their pro bono support during the last year:

- Barbour

Reference and administrative details

Charity name

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Charity registration number

221819

Company registered number

00717813

Registered office

The Garden House
St Nicholas Park
Jubilee Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE3 3XT

Trustees

Trai Anfield
Eveline Brunton
Derek Coates, **Treasurer and Chair of Finance and Risk Committee**
Patricia Cresswell, **Chair of Governance and Compliance Committee**
Graham Gill, **Vice Chair and Chair of Nature Recovery Committee**
Ailsa Hobson, **Secretary**
Ian Jackson (*resigned 10 October 2023*)
Michael Jeffries
Nigel Porter, **Chair of Trustees**
Karen Statham, **Vice Chair**
John Baker Cresswell
Suren Kanagasundaram
Rosie Tapsfield

President

Conrad Dickinson

Vice Presidents

Angus Lunn
Ian Armstrong

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chief Executive Officer

Mike Pratt

Director of Finance and Central Services

Dan Venner

Director of Conservation

Duncan Hutt

Director of Engagement and Fundraising

Sheila Sharp

Independent auditor

UNW LLP
Citygate St James'
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NE1 4JE

Bankers

Royal Bank of Scotland
31 Grey Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6ES

Solicitors

Hay & Kilner
Merchant House
30 Cloth Market
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1EE

Glossary

AI – artificial intelligence

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

CRM system – Customer Relationship Management

CS – Countryside Stewardship, a government-funded scheme to incentivise improvements to the environment

DEFRA – Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

ECN – EcoNorth Limited

EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Forest Schools – A scheme

of outdoor-based learning in a woodland environment

FRC – NWT Trustee-led Finance and Recovery Committee

FTE – Full time equivalent

GCC – NWT Trustee-led Governance and Compliance Committee

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation

Living Landscapes – The Wildlife Trusts' landscape-scale conservation approach

Living Seas – As above, but in the

marine environment

MOD – Ministry of Defence

NWE – Northumberland Wildlife Enterprises Limited

NWT – Northumberland Wildlife Trust

NRC – NWT Trustee-led Nature Recovery Committee

PPL – People's Postcode Lottery

RSWT – Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts



SORP – Statement of Recommended Practice for Charity Accounts

TWT – The Wildlife Trusts

WDC – Wildlife Discovery Centre



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