



Lancashire,
Manchester &
N Merseyside

Lancashire Wildlife Trust ANNUAL REVIEW 2015



Join us: lancswt.org.uk

Protecting Wildlife for the Future

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY

The Trust is established to promote the conservation of nature for the purpose of study and research and to educate the public in the understanding and appreciation of nature, the awareness of its value and the need for its conservation.

Key Objectives:

These are the nationally agreed priorities with the Partnership of Wildlife Trusts.

- To protect, create and enhance wildlife in our region, creating living landscapes and living seas
- To stand up for wildlife and the environment
- To inspire people about the natural world and encourage everyone to take action for wildlife
- To foster sustainable One Planet Living, where the functioning of the natural environment is appreciated as essential for supporting life
- To ensure our work is based on knowledge and sound evidence
- To be recognised and respected for our work
- To grow our resources and increase support for our mission
- To ensure the organisation is effective and fit for purpose



Chairman of Trustees Steve Garland with Chief Executive Anne Selby.



GOING WILD FAR AND WIDE

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside has preserved and protected the wonderful biodiversity in our region for more than 50 years.

Recent highlights have included:

- Large heath butterflies (1) reintroduced on to Heysham Moss, bluebells (2) in Aughton Woods and golden bog moss (3) found on Winmarleigh;
- Creating sand dunes by burying Christmas trees (4) on the Fylde, five kinds of heron (5) at Brockholes and the flower meadows (6) at Salthill Quarry;
- Sand lizards (7) and red squirrels (8) on the Sefton coast and fields of fungi (9) at Mere Sands Wood;
- Dragonflies and damselflies (10) on the Manchester mosslands, the Kingfisher Trail (11) at Bolton, Forest Schools at Moston (12) and willow tits (13) in Wigan;
- And let's not forget our campaigning work to safeguard creatures in the Irish Sea (14) and on land where we are asking landowners to support our Plan Bee project (15) in Lancashire, Manchester and Merseyside

- 1 www.lancswt.org.uk/news/2014/07/02-large-heath-fly-again-heysham-moss-nature-reserve
- 2 www.lancswt.org.uk/reserves/aughton-woods
- 3 adlib.everysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=93717&id=94059
- 4 www.lancswt.org.uk/news/2014/03/10/christmas-trees-protect-fylde-homes
- 5 www.brockholes.org/blog/night-heron-makes-birders-day
- 6 www.lancswt.org.uk/reserves/salthill-quarry-local-nature-reserve
- 7 news.bbc.co.uk/local/liverpool/hi/people_and_places/newsid_8974000/8974485.stm
- 8 www.lancswt.org.uk/helpredsquirrels
- 9 www.lancswt.org.uk/reserves/mere-sands-wood-nature-reserve
- 10 www.lancswt.org.uk/reserves/cadishead-moss
- 11 www.lancswt.org.uk/kingfisher-trail
- 12 www.lancswt.org.uk/forest-schools-manchester
- 13 www.lancswt.org.uk/helpwillowtits
- 14 www.irishsea.org/
- 15 www.lancswt.org.uk/helpthebees



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Despite the challenging economic climate, we have been able to deliver positive outcomes for wildlife across a range of projects. As a significant number of externally-funded projects ended, managing cash-flow was a key issue for the Trustees. This has been achieved through good management by the staff team and a clear focus on tight budgeting and clear accountability.

As a result of reviewing our Trustee team and the way we work, we made positive changes to our meetings and to the operation and role of sub-committees and working groups. In 2015 we aim to establish a new sub-committee to support membership development and marketing. We have also been successful in capitalising on the skills of Trustees outside the formal meeting programme through direct involvement with the staff team in several areas. We have approached our wider membership for new Trustees with key skills.

We also completed a review and revision of our Memorandum & Articles of the Trust and continue to work towards our objectives and targets in our business plan. The Conservation committee discussed a wide range of issues including reserve acquisitions, badgers and bovine TB, control of introduced pest species and threats to protected species.

Brockholes attracted more than 165,000 visitors and has significantly improved its financial position. This was achieved through changes in operations, a lot of hard work from the staff team, some valuable external advice and support from the wider Trust. A new, efficient and successful car-parking system was installed and the catering provision was brought in-house from October 2014.

This year we have been successful in bids for several major projects such as the Biodiverse Society and Carbon Landscape projects. In addition we released the first large heath butterflies back onto our Heysham Moss reserve for over a century. We continued work on our three Living Landscapes and Living Seas projects and on planning applications across the county, which include HS2 and hydraulic fracturing or "fracking".



Red squirrel at Formby

In the year to March 31 2014 we were delighted that our funding bid for £450,000 to purchase Chat Moss had been successful. We had negotiated to purchase the site as a key part of our Living Landscape work on the Great Manchester Wetlands. Sadly the vendor backed out of the sale and the grant was duly returned to the funder.

We continue to work as part of The Wildlife Trusts partnership at a national level. This enables us to add our voice to national and international issues in partnership with the other 46 Trusts.

We also benefit through sharing expertise and experience across the partnership and good support from the national officers. The **MyWild Life** national campaign was successfully launched and is already having a positive impact across the UK.

I thank our loyal and growing membership for their continued support in difficult times. This has been demonstrated most clearly by the donations to support the redevelopment of the visitor centre at our Mere Sands Wood reserve which exceeded the £30,000 target. In addition, our education programmes continue to grow and are always fully booked.

I especially thank our large team of volunteers who come from a diverse range of backgrounds and communities. Without them we could not deliver our enormous and extensive programme of work for wildlife. This year has been positive for the Trust, though not without huge challenges.

The whole team has been stretched to the limit at times, but I think that we managed the situation well. The year ahead will be just as challenging, but we are in a good position to take it on.

Steve Garland

LOOKING AFTER WILD PLACES

Our nature reserve portfolio has 38 sites covering more than 1,300 hectares. The Trust also manages and advises on the wildlife management of a number of other sites– safeguarding, enhancing and influencing others to benefit wildlife.

Highlights:

- The development of Lunt Meadows as a wetland nature reserve in Sefton;
- Regeneration of woodland sites at Otterspool Park in Liverpool and Acornfield in Knowsley;
- Work on safeguarding red squirrel populations in Merseyside;
- Tackling invasive species like Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed;
- Rhododendron removal at Mere Sands Wood;
- The Plan Bee Project is working across the region to create new meadows with bee-friendly flowers;
- The South Pennines Grassland Project is working with landowners and managers to restore grassland sites;
- The Lancashire Dunes Project has focused on invasive plant removal such as Japanese rose, white poplar and sea buckthorn;
- The large heath butterfly reintroduction project at Heysham Moss finished its initial work with the release of almost 100 newly hatched adult butterflies;
- Completion of three-year restoration and access works at Little Woolden Moss in Salford;
- Bringing Highfield Moss, in Wigan, into conservation management, following consultation with local residents;
- Developing a farmed complex of wet grassland and lowland meadow, with species such as skylark, lapwing, redshank and great crested newts being targeted, at Cutacre in Tyldesley;
- Our Contracts Team completed restoration works to Winmarleigh Moss and a £180k project to divert the River Alt in Liverpool. Also work at Cutacre, Lytham, Holiday Moss and Haslam Park, in Preston.



STANDING UP FOR WILDLIFE

At a strategic campaigning level, The Trust has continued to play a major role in the development of Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) in the sub-region. Chief Executive Anne Selby is chair of Natural Capital Group, which is setting the strategic direction for environmental/low carbon policy across Greater Manchester.

Anne also helped establish and now is the vice-chair of the Nature Connected group in Liverpool City Region.

We continue to be actively engaged in The Wildlife Trusts partnership work, challenging Government and political parties to sign up to a Wildlife and Wellbeing Bill prior to the 2015 General Election.

Marine consultations over proposed Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in the Irish Sea have been a major focus of work with our sister trusts in the North West.

Comments on several major development proposals and local plan consultations have been submitted during the year by staff and volunteers. Exploration for shale gas reserves by 'fracking' one mile under Lancashire in the Bowland Shales has presented a number of major worries over potential wildlife impacts.

The Trusts have been looking at new ways to counter bovine TB that do not involve the ineffective culling of badgers. The Trust has joined a group of concerned farmers, landowners, academics and veterinary surgeons to try to keep bovine TB out of the North West.

Working with Cumbria
and Cheshire Wildlife
Trusts we have raised the
profile of the wildlife in

INSPIRE AND ENCOURAGE

This year has seen our People and Wildlife team starting major new community engagement projects thanks to four funding successes from Heritage Lottery Fund, and our excellent work within education, community activities and volunteering are all continuing to thrive. This enables the Trust to engage and enthuse more people about the importance and value of nature on their doorstep.

Highlights:

- Funding for The Biodiverse Society to get more people volunteering to record wildlife;
- Obtaining funding towards the Great Manchester Wetlands and the associated Carbon Landscape;
- Heritage Lottery Funding for a volunteering and community engagement project at Lunt Meadows;
- HLF funding for the Kingfisher Trail in Bolton;
- The education team and associated staff and volunteers worked with 15,000 children, young people and families;
- The Mud Pack youth volunteering activity continues to support conservation at Brockholes and within the Preston area;
- Nature Tots is continuing to do well operating out of four centres across the region;
- Wildfamilies is also doing well and has expanded to now include Brockholes, The Hive food growing project in Bolton and Chat Moss;
- Forest Schools continues to grow. We secured funding of £66,000 from People's Postcode Lottery, which is paying for us to work with four schools in Manchester;
- Our Men In Sheds project, at Bolton, has had outstanding success at engaging a wide range of men all keen to put practical skills to use;
- At The Hive within Moss Bank Park, Bolton, we have been developing the facilities and interest in our activities;
- Blackburn with Darwen BC have continued their Service Level Agreement with us for another year of restoration work;
- We secured £30,000 from Lancashire County Council's Central Gateway which will fund our support to groups and projects in East Lancashire;
- In Wigan we have engaged members of the public through a variety of events;
- Community and education activity at Chat Moss, also funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, is now in full swing and putting Chat Moss on the map;
- In total 3,300 people attended our events and community engagement activities.

The Trust has continued to develop its important volunteering project and requests for volunteering continue to increase, and we have successfully supported over 1,000 individuals to complete in excess of 64,000 hours of volunteer time.



Children pond-dipping with Nick Baker at Moston Fairway

RAISING OUR PROFILE

It has been a challenging year for the Trust. Not only have our funding streams continued to decline but our membership growth trends are beginning to slow. We need our members support more than ever so that we can continue to protect wildlife for the future.

Highlights

- A growth to 26,700 members was achieved this year which equates to 11,900 households;
- A new website in line with the national template and strengthening the Wildlife Trust brand on a local, regional and national scale with more than 20,000 unique visitors each month;
- An average online reach of over 40,000 people per week through our social media channels

- Regular appearances in key publications such as the Manchester Evening News and Lancashire Magazine;

- Regular appearances on all local BBC radio stations, BBC and ITV regional news and BBC Newsround and BBC Breakfast;

As part of national campaigns, My Wildlife and 30 Days Wild have seen the Trusts reach new audiences and engage even more people in nature – this is so crucial if we are to protect the future of our natural environment.



LOOKOUT FOR BROCK STARS

This has been a year of major change at Brockholes. Over 165,000 people visited the site including a large number of first-time visitors. The reserve continues to grow and develop with every season and some magnificent sightings have occurred over the past 12 months, including a passing otter enjoying the Meadow Lake.

Highlights:

- More than 21,000 people participated in an event or activity at Brockholes in 2015;
- We completed a project to improve the welcome and the profile of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust at Brockholes. This has included the development of more welcome and orientation signage and interpretation, the launch of the new Visitor Pass and World Host customer service training for all staff;
- A pair of avocet and a pair of curlew have bred on site with each pair hatching three young; An osprey platform was installed on an island in Meadow Lake. Five types of heron brought birders flocking to the reserve and our own naturalists continue to populate social media with incredible wildlife photographs;
- The reserve team has planted 1,200 trees and dismantled and removed about five kilometres of redundant barbed wire fence;
- The new Lookout hide opened in March 2015 funded by LEF;
- A programme of woodland coppice management has begun to improve woodland diversity in the young plantations;
- Brockholes was a finalist in the Best Large Visitor Attraction category at the regional tourism awards and was awarded a Visit England Quality Café accolade;
- The Friends of Brockholes have been active and raised funds for trees, tools, interpretation and benches;
- The stone circle was installed by LWT staff and volunteers, providing a wonderful place for visitors.



LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST FINANCE 2014/15

In common with many in the Charity Sector, The Trust continued to operate in a challenging economic environment with many of our historical sources of external funding, particularly in the public sector, facing real cuts. Over the past few years the Trust has adapted and will continue to adapt to this environment. It believes that it has the skills to grow in areas such as education, environmental employment schemes and interfacing the health agenda with the environment.

It will also be focusing on reducing the reliance on external funding by growing voluntary income. Our valued membership continues to grow with nearly 27,000 members at the end of the financial year.

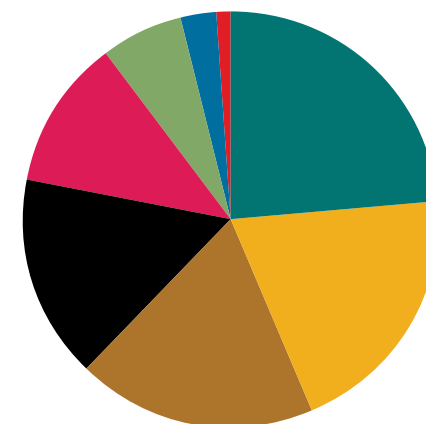
Key Points from the accounts:

- In the Annual Report we provide a short interpretation of the consolidated statutory accounts. These incorporate the results of the Trust and its subsidiary Brockholes Enterprises Limited. A full set of accounts is available on request or can be accessed through the Charity Commission web site.
- Overall income for the year was up to £3.9m. Voluntary income continued to grow along with more income generated by our visitor centre at Brockholes. We are extremely grateful to our members, funders and visitors for supporting the work we do in our region.
- Brockholes saw a significant improvement in its operating performance during the year but is still not generating a profit. A number of initiatives have been implemented over the past 12 months to help the site towards becoming self-funding on an annual basis.
- Resources expended remained stable year-on-year.
- Overall the Trust had a net outflow of resources of just over £0.5m.
- At the end of the year the Trust had net assets of £13.1m but the majority of this is tied up in fixed assets and in particular land and buildings which have been acquired for nature conservation and public enjoyment. Our nature reserve portfolio contains 38 sites covering more than 1,300 hectares. These are fantastic assets to have and show our commitment to local wildlife and conservation but they are not usable in money terms to fund our activities.
- Our cash balances grew slightly over the year, partly as a result of the sale of a parcel of land that had little conservation value. It is important that the Trust maintain adequate reserves in order to continue to deliver on its core objectives in spite of the economic climate.
- The tables and pie charts on the next page show where our income came from and how we spend the majority on protecting wildlife and engaging people in conservation activities.
- For every pound we receive in membership we raise over £4 to match it – so your membership money goes a long way.

For every pound we receive in membership we raise more than £4 to match it – so your membership money goes a long way

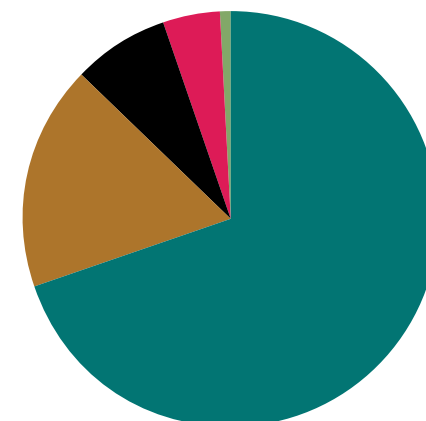
Revenues

	2015 £'000	2014 £'000
Grants	936	953
Membership	790	763
Contract	737	654
Brockholes	621	510
Landfill	459	500
Other Income	260	264
Donations	107	77
Legacies	37	37
	3,947	3,758



Spend*

	2015 £'000	2014 £'000
Charitable Activities	3,124	2,870
Brockholes	777	779
Membership	338	374
Fund Raising	193	178
Governance	36	37
	4,468	4,238



* Spend includes a £621,000 (2014: £614,000) depreciation charge on the Trust's fixed assets. This is a non-cash expense; the majority of the funding for the purchase of those assets was received in prior years.

A THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The general environment remains challenging with many of our historical sources of funding, particularly in the public sector, facing real cuts. However the Trust believes that it has the knowledge and resources to adapt to this changing environment and that it has the skills to continue to develop other opportunities.

In addition the Trust recognises that in order to continue to deliver on its core objectives it needs to increase the level of income that is not reliant on public sector funding. Our membership continues to grow but at a much slower rate with a particular decline in the number of corporate supporters for the Trust – a clear sign of the economic climate challenges with which we continue to wrestle.

Our membership growth has slowed, but we now have 26,700 members. We think that's a real force to be reckoned with! That said, we want to increase this to even more to support the work of the Trust and to raise the importance of the natural world across all homes in the region.

Our legacy income has once again been crucial in delivering the Trusts objectives, so many of you now are choosing to leave a gift in your will and what a wonderful legacy you are leaving for wildlife.

We are simply amazed and heartened that despite the financial climate so many of you came forward to support our Mere Sands Wood appeal. It raised more than £30,000 towards the redevelopment of the visitor centre, and that development work will continue in 2015/16.

The Trust is very grateful to all of our supporters. It is now, more than ever, that we need to stand together and be a strong force for wildlife. We have many more challenges to face and every membership, every donation and every volunteer hour really does count.

**Thank you for making
a difference to wildlife
and the future of our
natural environment**

Anne Selby





CORPORATE MEMBERS, Gold Booths, EDF Energy, Qualitel Voice & Data, United Utilities, **Silver** Amey, Beaverbrooks, Hanson, RBS, Fort Vale Engineering, **Bronze** Albany Training, Aggregate Industries, Community Gateway, Derek Fox & Sons, Dugdale Nutrition, Eagle & Child Ramsbottom, Ecospeed Couriers, Hoghton Tower, Knotweed Eradication, Manchester Airport, Myerscough College, Neales Waste Management, Pets 'r' Pals, Responsible Mailing, South Ribble Borough Council, Uclan, Wienerbergers. **Thanks to all our funders**

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The Lancashire Wildlife Trust is a Registered Charity (No. 229325) and a Registered Company (No. 731548) dedicated to the protection and promotion of wildlife in Lancashire, seven boroughs of Greater Manchester and four of Merseyside, all lying North of the River Mersey.