



Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire
Peterborough

Protecting wildlife close to home

Wildlife Trust Development Plan

July 2010

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1. Introduction

Together the Wildlife Trusts have a vision for a Living Landscape for the UK, where a country richer in wildlife will enable the conservation of plants and animals, deliver wider benefits for the community and protect wildlife from the damaging effects of development, pollution, unsympathetic land management and climate change. We will contribute to this aspiration in a number of ways, including:

- Prioritising our resources in four Living Landscape schemes while being alert to opportunities elsewhere;
- Pursuing opportunities to expand and connect nature reserves and other sites of value for wildlife;
- Investing in nature reserve management to ensure they are of the highest possible quality given available resources;
- Engaging with other landowners to safeguard wildlife beyond our nature reserves, with special focus on Local Wildlife Sites;
- Acquiring sites of value for wildlife;
- Increase our engagement work with local communities, especially in or adjacent to Living Landscape scheme areas to show local people the benefits of a healthy natural environment and its relevance to their lives, generate more support for our work and reduce negative impacts on nature reserves;
- Inspiring people to volunteer for the Trust;
- Providing formal education services to schools in a financially viable way;
- Supporting our reserve management with ecological monitoring;
- Focussing our work with local authority planners where the greatest outcomes for wildlife can be secured or most significant impacts prevented.

The Development Plan recognises the need to

- Prioritise our work so we can be more effective;
- Focus on work that brings about the best outcomes for wildlife, directly or indirectly;
- Stop doing things that divert resources from our priorities;
- Value the contributions from volunteers and consistently improve volunteers' experience of the Trust;
- Collaborate as a single team and have shared goals;
- Work in partnership with other organisations to maximise our influence and be efficient;
- Underpin all our work with the best available data and science; and
- Recognise the financial impacts of our activities and the need to live within our means.

Our aims and objectives can only be achieved if we have the resources to invest in our activities. Income, especially from unrestricted sources such as memberships, legacies and donations, is needed to cover capital and revenue costs and staff salaries. Alongside this plan is a Business Plan which sets out how we shall seek to generate more resource for our work. A Marketing and Communications Plan will set out a strategy for raising income from regular supporters and raising our profile with key audiences. These plans are closely linked and will be informed by a Vision and Mission as well as a set of shared values. These plans will then be translated into action plans for teams and individuals so all staff see how they contribute to the aims of the organisation.

2. Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

- *People close to nature, in a land rich in wildlife*

Mission

Our mission is to

- *Conserve local wildlife, by caring for land ourselves and with others;*
- *Inspire others to take action for wildlife; and*
- *Inform people, by offering advice and sharing knowledge;*

Values

We believe

- That we must focus on all wildlife and whole ecosystems to safeguard the natural environment;
- That everyone has a role to play in restoring nature;
- That we should value, respect and listen to our staff, volunteers, members and supporters so they can contribute fully to achieving our vision;
- That working in partnership brings more benefits than working alone;
- That conservation depends on local knowledge and good science;
- That we achieve more for wildlife by operating in an efficient and business-like manner;
- That we should operate in an environmentally sustainable way; and
- That working to restore nature should be rewarding for everyone involved;

3. Living Landscape schemes

- We will focus on four Living Landscape schemes: The Great Fen, Nene Valley, West Cambridgeshire Hundreds and the North Chilterns Chalk;
- Outside these areas we will undertake high priority work such as nature reserve management, Local Wildlife Site advocacy and community engagement

Our three counties are composed of diverse landscapes which are a product of their underlying geology and land use. The wildlife resource is not evenly distributed and different landscapes provide for different wildlife habitats, and

some landscapes contain more sites of wildlife value and have greater ecological connectivity than others.

The basic ecological principles underpinning our work are:

1. Well managed sites will support more wildlife than poorly managed sites or sites not managed with wildlife in mind;
2. Larger sites are likely to hold larger number of species and be less prone to extinctions;
3. Larger sites are less vulnerable than smaller sites to the impacts of unsympathetic adjacent land use;
4. Complex mosaics of habitat patches are generally better for wildlife than single habitat types and more resilient to climate change; and
5. A matrix of corridors and stepping stones connecting habitat patches generally facilitates species movement through the landscape, mitigates against local extinctions and is key to the Trust's approach to climate change adaptation.

The Trust has identified parts of the three counties as Living Landscape scheme areas. These are the most wildlife rich areas of the three counties of greatest national significance, where effort is likely to have the greatest positive impact for wildlife. These are:

Scheme name	County
Cam Valley	Cambridgeshire
Cambridgeshire Chalk	Cambridgeshire
Daventry Acid Grasslands	Northamptonshire
Fen-edge Woods	Cambridgeshire
Grafham-Brampton Woods	Cambridgeshire
Great Fen	Cambridgeshire
Greensand Ridge and Flit Valley	Bedfordshire
Harlestone Heath	Northamptonshire
Nene Valley	Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire
North Chilterns Chalk	Bedfordshire
Northants Limestone and John Clare Country	Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire
Ouse Valley	Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire
Rockingham Forest Woodlands	Northamptonshire
South-East Cambridgeshire Woods	Cambridgeshire
West Cambridgeshire Hundreds	Cambridgeshire
Yardley-Whittlewood Ridge	Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire

The top priorities for the Trust will be:

Living Landscape scheme	Main habitats
Great Fen	Fen, wet grassland, wet woodland, reed bed
Nene Valley	Gravel pits, wet grassland, wet woodland, neutral grassland
North Chilterns Chalk	Chalk grassland, scrub
West Cambridgeshire Hundreds	Ancient semi-natural woodland, neutral grassland, hedgerows

See Figure 1. These areas have been selected because

- Within these areas there are networks of sites of high conservation value, including nature reserves;
- The local populations present our best opportunities for community engagement and generating support for the Trust;
- The Trust is already making significant progress in these areas already and withdrawing resources is not feasible; and/or
- There are strategic benefits for the Trust raising its profile;

Within these areas we will prioritise our conservation work and our education and community work to achieve the best outcomes for wildlife. Outside these schemes we shall continue to work for wildlife but shall limit our work as much as possible to:

- nature reserve management;
- acquiring land of high value where this supports our organisational objectives;
- protecting and enhancing Local Wildlife Sites;
- Planning policy advocacy;
- Undertaking planning application work where substantial damage is likely or where major benefits can be realised;
- Engaging communities that are close to Living Landscape schemes; and
- Opportunistic development of Living Landscape schemes where a sound business case is made, especially in the Greensand Ridge & Flit Valley, Northants Limestone & John Clare Country and Ouse Valley.

As a general principle, and especially within Living Landscape schemes, the Wildlife Trust will seek to work in partnership where this provides an efficient means for achieving the Trust's objectives. Through partnership working and the advocacy of the Living Landscape concept, the Trust will seek to influence the activities of others. In defining its own work the Trust will assess what it should do to make the biggest difference for wildlife.

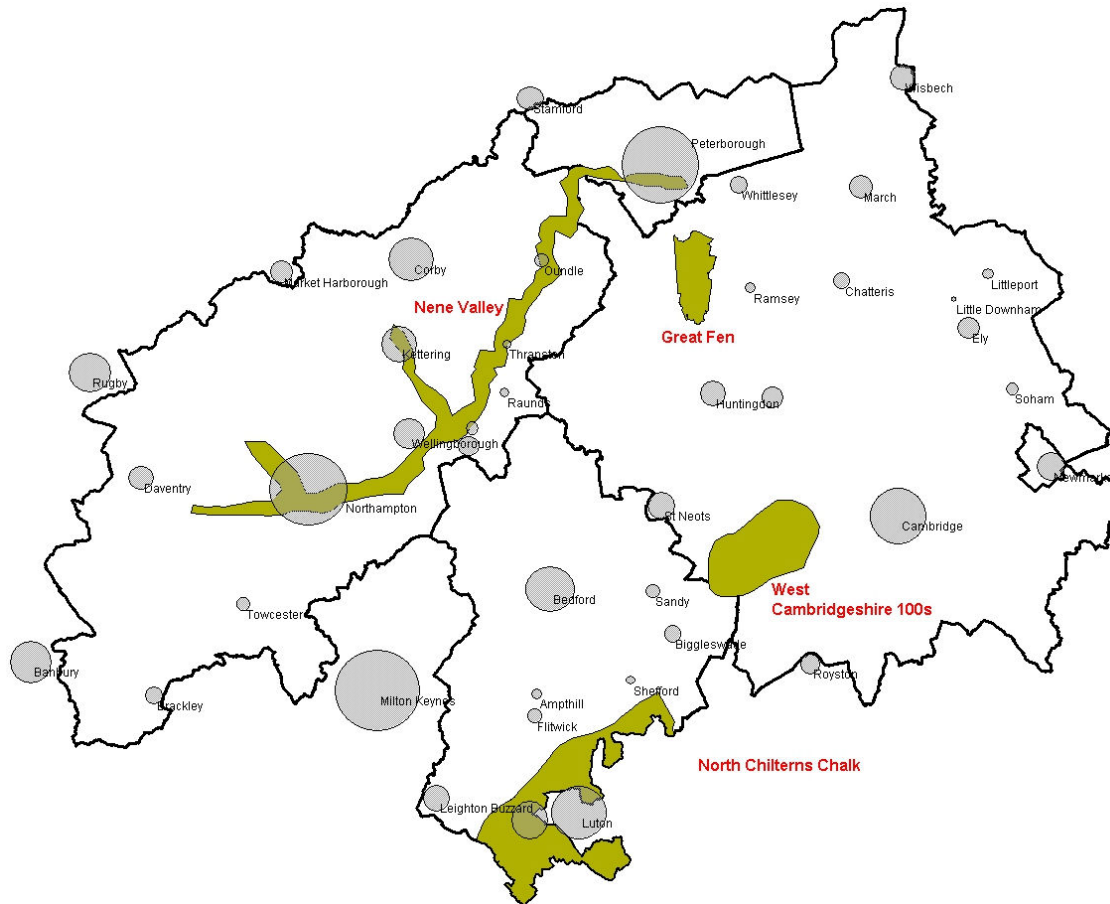


Figure 1. The Trust's top priority Living Landscape schemes. Location and extent are indicative.

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4. Nature Reserves

- We will address strategic challenges to improve nature reserve management;
- We will acquire land and rationalise our land holdings, mindful of the constraints imposed by our Business Plan;
- We will enhance physical and intellectual access for suitable sites to generate support and overcome problems.

The Wildlife Trust cares for some of the most important areas of wildlife habitat throughout the three counties. As well as safeguarding wildlife our nature reserves provide remarkable opportunities for encountering nature and are a major way in which we can raise our profile and unrestricted income through memberships and donations.

The Trust has 126 reserves covering an area of 2300 hectares. Just over 60% of this is owned. These figures do not include the Great Fen, where we own approximately 1500 hectares of land. Eight sites are National Nature Reserves (NNR), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and/or Special Protection Areas (SPA). 49 sites are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 69 are Local Wildlife Sites. Owning and managing land confers significant legal responsibilities for habitat quality standards on SSSIs, health and safety of visitors and other duties required by landowners.

Visitors can have unintended impacts on nature reserves that require investment to maintain. Other visitors may treat reserves with less respect. Such impacts include dog mess, litter, vandalism and theft. Some of these impacts are widespread whilst others are concentrated, especially near to some centres of population. These affect the quality of enjoyment of other visitors and may lower peoples' views of our organisation.

Our aims for our nature reserves are:

1. The continued acquisition of land of high quality for wildlife.

As expert land managers the Wildlife Trust will seek to acquire land of high value for wildlife where it believes it has the resources to do so and can make a positive impact. The Trust has an Acquisitions Strategy and Policy, which will be refreshed in the light of the Development Plan. Acquisition includes securing a long-lease (of at least 25 years).

2. The acquisition of lower-quality land where this has direct and strategic benefits for our objectives such as enlarging a nature reserve, connecting sites together or improving conditions for wildlife or people within a reserve.
3. Investment to overcome structural and operational challenges.

Grazing our nature reserves is of particular importance for the maintenance and enhancement of grasslands. A diminishing number of graziers providing stock has resulted in the Trust having to invest in its own flocks and herds. The infrastructure for managing these animals is deficient and currently relies on goodwill from staff and volunteers. We need a strategic review of grazing across the three counties and to invest in layback land and buildings to ease the logistics of their management.

4. Improving the quality of access to reserves for people, with specific attention given to key sites.

Our nature reserves are open to the public and are receiving increasing numbers of visitors. Some of these reserves, with the right investment,

could become the focus of the highest-quality visitor experience for local people and a means by which we can encourage visitors to join the Trust and become actively involved in our work. Enhanced physical and intellectual access will demonstrate the value of the natural environment, reconnect peoples to it and show the potential of Living Landscapes.

Some reserves would benefit from a greater staff or volunteer presence to reduce the impacts of thoughtless behaviour or abuse, such as sheep attacks by dogs and damage to fences and other structures. We intend to reduce damage to sites and inspire people to value their local nature reserves by having dedicated staff and volunteers trained to engage with people on site and within local communities.

5. Rationalising our land holdings.

The Trust's land holdings may include sites that we would not acquire should they become available today. The Trust will consider whether it should withdraw from certain sites and focus resources elsewhere. Ceasing an interest in land holdings has wider implications for the Trust in terms of membership and income generation so these will be taken into account before action is taken.

6. Improved strategic planning

There are a number of activities that would benefit from Trust-wide oversight, including reserve acquisition, management planning, major capital projects and the management of our legal responsibilities as land owners and managers. We will consider how we can utilise our reserves staff expertise across county boundaries to improve the management of our estate.

7. Monitoring

Our monitoring work needs to enable our reserves staff to manage our reserves as effectively as possible. We will review how monitoring is implemented and develop the way Ecology Groups are established and managed to ensure that reserve management advice is provided in as efficient a way as possible.

5. Wider Countryside

- We will increase our support for the Local Wildlife Site network and position ourselves to provide whole-farm advice where needed;
- We will engage strategically with the planning system;
- We will support Local Records Centres.

To create Living Landscapes we must enhance the wildlife resource beyond our nature reserves.

The Trust's conservation work beyond nature reserves includes involvement in the planning system, managing the Local Wildlife Site network and representing the Trust's interests on many forums such as Biodiversity Action Plan groups, as well as delivering species protection work such as otter and water vole conservation as part of Water for Wildlife.

The Local Wildlife Site (LWS) network is a crucial part of the ecological network of sites in the three counties. Whilst the SSSI network is representative of sites of a certain quality, LWS should be comprehensive and include all those sites that meet specified criteria. The LWS network is made up of sites that are generally less than SSSI-quality but include those of SSSI quality that were omitted from the SSSI network.

The development of the network was pioneered by the Wildlife Trust movement and the Trust has also led on engaging with LWS owners to ensure their positive management.

Wider Countryside teams exist in each county and much of the funding for their work is delivered through Service Level Agreements with planning authorities, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The future availability of funds from these sources is in considerable doubt given the reduction in public spending over the next few years. It is therefore crucial that the Trust identifies the priorities for Wider Countryside work and ensure that it positions itself to secure resources for conservation action.

Our Wider Countryside work will include:

1. A strengthened commitment to Local Wildlife Sites.

The Trust should have a core member of Trust staff in each county dedicated to managing the network and overseeing the engagement with landowners.

2. We should move towards providing whole-farm advice to landowners.

In the past we have focussed on LWS only, whereas landowners are interested in their entire holding. Similarly agri-environment funding is available for whole farms and schemes such as HLS will contribute to the delivery of our Living Landscape objectives. Other organisations can provide such advice and where we are confident of its quality we may be able to work in partnership to meet our objectives. However, we should also be in a position to provide this advice directly ourselves where necessary. We shall prioritise whole farm advice to those farms with Local Wildlife Sites and within Living Landscape scheme areas.

3. The Trust should develop a plan for sustained advocacy work with key stakeholders in our local authorities and other agencies.

Despite cutbacks in public spending, local authorities and agencies still have legal duties to protect the natural environment. An engagement strategy will be developed by senior managers and local authorities will be one of the main audiences in the Communications and Marketing plan.

4. A preference for planning policy work and targeted involvement in planning applications.

The Trust recognises that getting strong planning policies written into Local Development Framework and other instruments is more effective than rearguard action at the planning application stage. We shall continue to prioritise our planning work at the strategic level. However, there will be times when we wish to comment on planning applications. Examples include when there will be direct impacts on sites of wildlife value, or major opportunities for the creation of new areas of wildlife value, especially within Living Landscape schemes.

5. Continued support for local biological records centres.

The Trust values biological records centres and will continue to promote them amongst local authorities and other agencies.

6. Education and Community Engagement

- We will increase the amount of community engagement we do;
- We will expand Watch and Greenwatch;
- We will reduce our work in formal education;
- We will provide experiences for school-age children as part of our community engagement work, and explore other activities such as schools grounds advice and teacher training;
- We will increase and improve our use of volunteers.

The Trust engages with people in many different ways. Formal education is provided to children and young adults and we engage with people of all ages in an informal manner on nature reserves and within local communities. All Trust staff and key volunteers need to recognise their role in encouraging people to take action for the natural world and support the work of the Wildlife Trust.

The Education and Community Team manage a number of education centres from where formal education is delivered.

1. Lings Environmental Centre
2. Paxton Pits Environmental Education Centre
3. Ramsey Heights Countryside Classroom
4. Randall's Farm Environmental Education Centre

Community engagement is also provided from these sites, as well as from the other Trust offices. The Trust is well-regarded by service users and this is particularly because of the quality of staff providing our education programmes.

The Trust's wider community engagement and informal education work is undertaken by many staff within the Trust. This includes:

1. Working with people in their local communities;
2. Engaging with people in or around nature reserves;
3. Volunteering, such as on nature reserves and running Wildlife Watch groups;
4. Running the largest Wildlife Watch network in the country;
5. Providing teacher training and schools grounds advice;
6. Providing the most comprehensive programme of volunteers training in the country; and
7. Appeals and other initiatives to generate local support.

Community engagement activities include family events and open days on nature reserves, consultation with local people about improving access to a site and establishing volunteer groups to care for their local greenspace.

The Trust undertakes community engagement and education work in order to create benefits for wildlife by instilling an interest in the natural world and influencing people to take action that will promote nature conservation. This in turn might lead to children and school groups making space for wildlife in their school grounds or gardens, families visiting nature reserves and people becoming Trust members and volunteers or working in the environmental sector.

In the future both our formal education work and community engagement work need to be delivered in a more focussed way, linked to Living Landscape schemes, our conservation aims and recognising that funding formal education work is challenging. We shall:

1. Increase the amount of community engagement work we do and focus it in key areas.

By engaging with communities local to our priority areas we will raise the profile of the Trust and generate support for our objectives. We will bring alive the concept of Living Landscapes and strengthen peoples' connection to their natural environment. This will facilitate the creation of Living Landscapes as well as help address problems experienced on nature reserves.

2. Expand Watch and Greenwatch.

We will provide a means by which more Watch and Greenwatch groups can be established and managed, within current resources.

3. Reduce our formal education services, and focus them in key areas.

The Trust's emphasis on engaging with communities ensures a strategic fit between nature reserve management and engaging with landowners, as well as with aims in the Business Plan and Marketing & Communications Plan.

Funding formal education work is challenging and schools themselves rarely have the budgets to cover the full cost of a visit. We will continue to provide education services, albeit at a reduced level, as part of a wider community engagement strategy linked to our Living Landscapes.

4. Provide services to schools beyond formal education, as part of a wider community engagement strategy.

With appropriate training we will be able to train teachers to deliver environmental education within their schools. We will also be able to provide schools grounds advice, creating more wildlife-rich learning environments for children.

5. Maximise the use of volunteers and continue to provide training workshops.

Volunteers are vital to the work of the Trust. Volunteering adds to the Trust's capacity and brings expertise. Volunteers provide practical help on nature reserves, in Watch groups and education centres, undertake administrative work, set up and run Wildlife Trust Local Groups and administer the organisation itself. By improving our use and training of volunteers we shall do more for wildlife, more efficiently.

7. Delivering the Development Plan

The Trust will be trying to achieve the high-level aims set out in this Development Plan during a time of extreme pressure on public finances. This may in turn impact on the amount of income generated through donations and membership. The Business Plan sets out the financial context within which this plan will have to be delivered. The Trust aims to grow its unrestricted income over the coming years to provide income to spend on its activities and to achieve the six-months running costs required by its Trustees. The Trust must also control its expenditure. Given the uncertainty of future funding the Trust must

- Focus resources on the Trust's highest priorities and legal responsibilities;
- Restructure to achieve Development Plan aims as efficiently as possible;
- Train staff to take on new work;
- Ensure staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are not overworked;
- Maximise the use of skilled volunteers;
- Limit activities which are difficult to fund;
- Stop doing things that are not delivering objectives; and
- Remain flexible and alert to new opportunities.

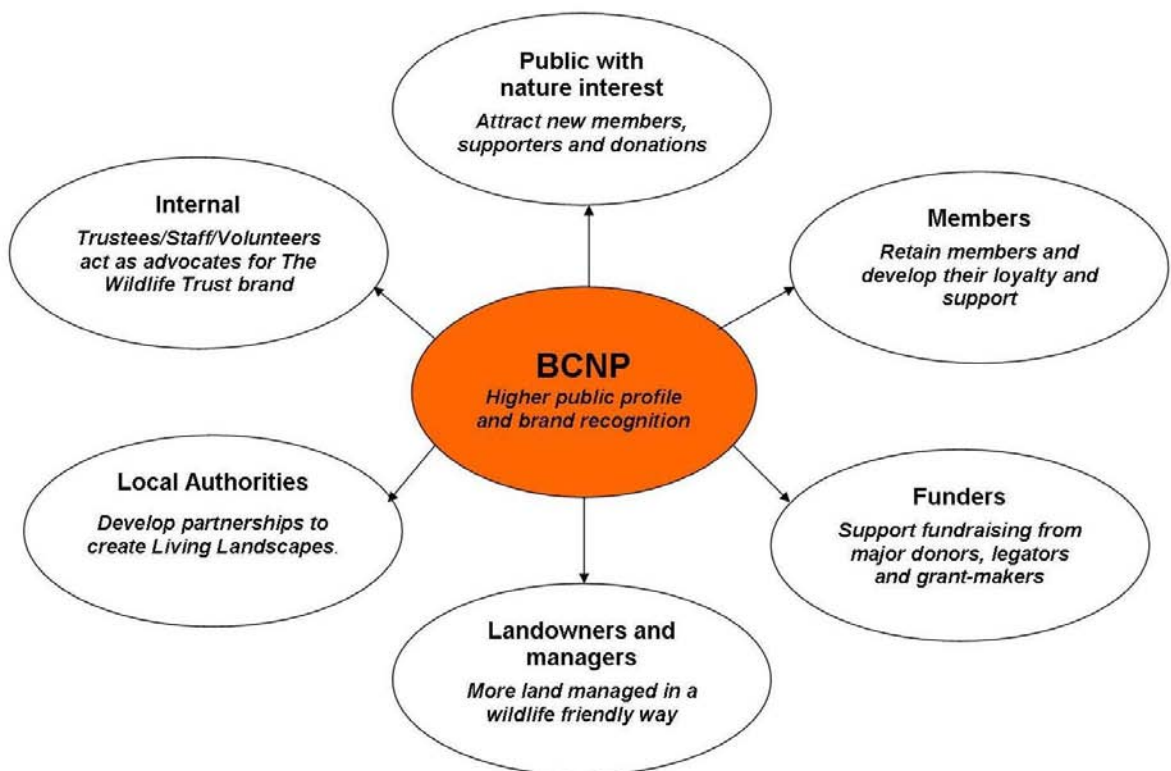
8. Wildlife Trust Marcomms Plan Summary

The Marketing and Communications Plan focuses on those audiences the Trust needs to reach and influence to achieve the objectives contained in the Trust's Development and Business Plans.

The Trust has developed relationships with a wide variety of people, all of whom are important to its work. But the purpose of this Marketing and Communications Plan is to:

- identify those audiences that are *most important and require an organisation-wide approach* to communications;
- identify *how we want these audiences to respond* as a result of our communications and our approach to achieving this.

The Marketing and Communications Plan identifies six primary audiences with a primary objective for each audience (*see diagram below*). The Plan also identifies the Trust's approach to communicating with each audience, resources needed and a responsible manager.



The Trust is generally seeking to secure one or more of the following outcomes from each audience:

- Money;
- Time;
- Decisions/Influence;
- Goodwill/Support.

Trust **communications need to be relevant for each audience** but also provide a **consistent impression of the Trust and its vision, mission and values**.

Wildlife Trust BCNP Brand

Consistent expression of the Wildlife Trust BCNP brand would help the Trust stand out from the crowded marketplace of charities and advocacy bodies seeking public attention. Staff and volunteers need to 'live' the brand and the Trust's public campaigns must develop and express the personality and values of the Trust.

The Trust's logo and visual representation could be used more prominently and consistently across all BCNP communications and physical assets. It is particularly important that the public recognises the organisation when coming into contact with the Trust through speaking to a member of staff, attending an event or visiting a nature reserve.

Key audience - public with nature interest

In terms of increasing membership and the financial strength of the Trust, we need to capture the attention of the 'public with nature interest'. Using the BBC's *Breathing Places* research published in 2006, it is estimated that 700,000 people in the Trust area are actively interested in nature, with 36,000 people already in membership. The BBC's research categorises this audience in the following way:

- **Concerned campaigners – 65,000**
Actively involved in nature conservation already and most likely to be members of a conservation organisation.
- **Child-led – 360,000**
Interested in nature as an experience to share with their children. Their main focus is being outdoors with their family in the park or countryside.

- **Nature enthusiasts – 230,000**

Like nature, walking and heading for the great outdoors. They enjoy wildlife, but are not signed up to any conservation organisation.

We will seek to develop our relationship with this audience through:

- Trust-wide public campaigns with nature-based themes e.g. Bluebell Watch;
- Capturing their contact information both online (through the new website) and offline – through events, activities and other face-to-face engagement;
- Convert these contacts into members, supporters and donators.

Sample Campaign - Bluebell Watch

Objective	Activities	Key message	Comms	Outcomes
Develop contact with potential supporters and recruit new members	Bluebell walks at Trust reserves Online forum for bluebell photos/sighting/discussion	Enjoy and protect wild bluebells with The Wildlife Trust	PR, Website, E-marketing, Social media	New contacts/ members Existing member loyalty Trust recognition

9. Wildlife Trust Business Plan Summary

On 27 July 2010 a new Business Plan for 2010/11 to 2014/15 was incorporated into the Corporate Plan which was approved by Council.

Strategy

This new Business Plan is essentially a strategy to drive up incremental net income underpinned by the interrelated targets, while managing financial risks. This will effectively determine the speed at which the Trust's aims can be delivered over the life of the Development Plan. It also plans for the more effective use and management of staff and volunteer resources.

i) *A membership target*, to increase memberships by almost 50% from 16,500 to 24,250 within five years (note that business targets are set in terms of *memberships*; but it is often useful for external communications to refer to *total number of members*). ;

ii) *An unrestricted funding target*, to increase additional income from memberships, gift aid, legacies and corporates by 50% equalling an increment of £830k p.a. by the end of five years;

iii) *A target to control core expenditure*, to limit increases in current core expenditure to inflation and focus project funding and Service Level Agreements on activities which contribute to strategic objectives and the core budget.

These targets on their own will not allow the Trust to develop the capabilities and capacities it needs to deliver its new mission and fulfil its cash reserves policy. In addition it needs to embed the following culture into all of its processes and activities:

a) *'One organisation' approach*, to establish a performance management culture in which trustees, staff and volunteers own and are all held accountable for delivering the new mission, aims & objectives and funding targets;

b) *Investment in success*, to establish and invest in business cases for developing the management capabilities and capacities needed to deliver the new mission, aims & objectives and funding targets;

c) *People development opportunities*, to ensure trustees, staff and volunteers will be even more effective in delivering the Trust's aims and raising core funding whilst ensuring that the enthusiasm and the passion of trustees, staff and supporters for wildlife remain the cornerstones of the Trust's success.

d) *Active risk management*: the Trust's Risk management Strategy is updated annually. This covers all areas of activity and includes monthly financial

reassessment, with quarterly monitoring presented to trustees, and review of risks to income streams; contingency planning to reduce costs and maximise benefits from new income. In addition, key dependencies such as business-critical posts, will be identified and managed.

Financial Objectives

To achieve the Trust objectives of delivering financial stability and the Development Plan, the Trust has focussed on the twin principles of:

- growing unrestricted income (to close the gap between core expenditure and unrestricted income). The Trust has already invested in the additional new income generation posts of Legacy Officer, and Marketing Officer (Recruitment), and established a campaign team to focus on individual major donors. In addition all of the teams under the Resources Director have been restructured in order to make better use of staff and volunteers. Volunteering in fundraising and communications has increased substantially.
- managing growth in core expenditure (to ensure the gap between core expenditure and unrestricted income does not widen). The Exchequer accounting system installed at the beginning of 2009/10 now gives better visibility and control of both core costs against budget and monitor project costs against restricted funds

To achieve its financial objectives, the Trust has already put in place a financial management regime which is underpinned by the following seven rules:

Rule 1 Managing Cash Flow:

To maintain the cash reserve equivalent to at least three months' operating costs in order to fund any deficits in the annual operating cash flow.

Rule 2 Generating Income - Risk and Performance Management:

To ensure that income generation activities are risk assessed and managed against performance measures and targets.

Rule 3 Generating Income - Investment Cases:

To ensure that all new expenditure on income generation in the annual budget and five year investment plan is evaluated for risks and returns before commitment.

Rule 4 Managing Core Expenditure - Annual Growth:

To uphold the principle of no increases in core expenditure except for an allowance for annual inflation on salaries and for unavoidable inflation of core costs or where any growth in core expenditure falls within a balanced budget and is funded.

Rule 5 Managing Core Expenditure - Staff Costs:

Existing and New Posts: Recruitment to all vacant posts requires a business case to be approved by the Executive Board.

Rule 6 Managing Core Expenditure - Land Acquisition and Management:

To ensure schemes for the acquisition, restoration and management of land are fully costed and recommended by both standing committees of Trustees before approval by Council.

Rule 7 Managing Core Expenditure - New Projects:

To ensure any new projects are time limited and fully funded with an approved level of contributions to overheads and are subject to an explicit and costed exit strategy.

Priorities for 2010/11 – 2014/15

The following investment priorities for the five year period 2010/11 – 2014/15 are concerned with securing unrestricted income:

i) Service Level Agreements:

Conservation Service Level Agreements: The Trust has developed SLAs with several local authorities to further conservation (totalling £414kk in 2009/10). The target is for these to continue at the current level: conservation managers will endeavour to ensure local authorities renew SLAs and where this is not possible replace them with new agreements.

Planning Agreements for Conservation Funding: Planning policy requires developers to provide and manage green infrastructure as part of large scale developments. Where this green infrastructure is of high biodiversity value, or falls within one of the Trust's Living Landscape visions, the Trust seeks to be involved. This source was suspended during the recession by developers putting schemes on hold. When the economy improves we would expect some of the existing schemes to be revived. Although it is very likely that new schemes will appear within the 5 years of this plan, no new schemes have been incorporated in the Business Plan as the future is still unpredictable.

Government Funding for Growth Areas: The previous Government's Sustainable Communities Plan for housing growth supported investment in the creation and long term management of green infrastructure via Growth Area Funds. In the past the Trust has benefited from such schemes (particularly in Northamptonshire) but this previous source of income has almost dried up. Continuation has not been assumed in the Business Plan going forward.

Community and Education Grants and Service Level Agreements: The Trust established its education programme with the aid of funding from the Landfill

Communities Fund in the late 1990's. This funding ended following rule changes in 2004. The Trust has found no other significant grant schemes which fund formal education but has continued to provide the service by utilising over £200k of its voluntary income.

The Trust has been more successful in establishing community funding relationships with the County Councils and Unitary Authorities. In addition, staff are always pursuing opportunities for community related SLAs alongside those agreed for land management.

ii) Membership

To achieve the Business Plan the priorities and resources of other teams will need to be aligned to support the income generation work as outlined. In particular Education & Community and Communications and Supporter teams need to work closely together in the following areas:

- Website ongoing development, updating and increased prospect traffic.
- More and more targeted media promotion and PR support on and offline.
- More activities provided face-to-face for the public and online to attract more prospects to engage with the Trust.
- Improved brand and message definition and communication guidance for all staff.
- Increased capture of contact details for casual 'visitors' and enquirer and all other contacts to Trust, including online visitors.

The aim over the next five years is for the Marketing team to:

- Increase unrestricted net income by 56% from £747k to £1,166k
- Grow membership numbers by 47% - a further 7,769 households over the next five years. (For comparison, the National Trust aim to increase by 35% over next 10 years, from four times the base level).
- Improve retention levels to 90%.

A new Membership Strategy has been developed which focuses on the following specific work programmes:

- Investment in digital communications technology
- Further market research into identifying pools of prospective members
- Review of the current benefits of Trust membership (ie the product)
- Develop the strongest possible supporter proposition
- Step up levels of prospect name-gathering
- Diversify the recruitment channels
- Recruit by other means (including in-house if feasible)
- Develop the retention programme

- Expand the upgrade programme to recover inflation
- Dovetail research with major donors and legacy work
- Pursue other means of fundraising from individuals (eg appeals, on-line giving)

The necessary work within the marketing team is already in budget. Successful delivery will also require input from other teams, and this is included in the Corporate Plan.

iii) Legacies

Legacies: Legacy fundraising is known to be the most effective form of fundraising and should become a much more significant source of the Trust's unrestricted income since:

- 60% of the gifts left to the Trust since 2000 were from people who had been members for ten years or more;
- other smaller Wildlife Trusts are achieving much greater and more consistent annual income from legacies, following sustained periods of legacy promotion (this Trust is not in the top ten of Wildlife Trusts when measured in terms of legacy income, despite being one of the largest Trusts);
- according to the demographics there will be a 40% increase in the annual number of deaths over the next forty years;
- in 2009/10 the cost of generating £236k legacy income was only £25k and 72% of the income was unrestricted.

iv) Corporate membership

The Trust currently has 73 corporate members who contribute £46k to unrestricted income through four levels of subscriptions. In addition many of them give restricted contributions to specific projects and activities totalling over £60k p.a. Charges for corporate work parties and affinity schemes raised a further £10k during 2009/10.

Although the actual number of corporate members has not increased for several years the amount of their contributions has steadily risen. They are more likely to be able to discharge their corporate social responsibility by making restricted contributions to specific Trust projects and activities. A new plan for developing Corporate Relationships has been prepared which reflects this change in emphasis.

Financial Outcomes

The proposals in the Business Plan suggest that over the five year period from 2010/11 to 2014/15 the Trust could grow its unrestricted income by £896k pa (from £2,123k in 2010/11 to £3,016k in 2014/15).

The main additional growth in unrestricted funding would come from legacy gifts (up £156k by 2014/15) and memberships (up by £470k) plus inflation. In addition to improving the Trust's financial means, growing the number of memberships would also increase the Trust's 'political' influence – among stakeholders and funders – to take action for wildlife.

To fund the delivery of the Business Plan over the same five year period, support costs have risen by £119k pa which gives a return on that additional investment of 7.5

The Trust was holding cash reserves at the end of 2008/09 which represented four months unrestricted spending. This is budgeted to fall to three months by the end of 2010/11. The Business Plan indicates that at the end of 2014/15 the cash reserve level will be back up to four months. If the same income growth is projected further then the six month target should be met by mid 2016 and the gap between core income and expenditure would disappear by mid 2018.

Following approval of this plan, staff have developed a system of Key Performance Indicators, and a more explicit system of financial monitoring and risk management.