



2010-11 Annual Report



yellow-wort Colin Verradell



Changing

This year will be remembered as a time of great change for nature conservation in Britain.

This was signalled by two major national initiatives that should leave their mark well into the future – the ‘Making Space for Nature’ review and the National Ecosystem Assessment. The first makes major recommendations regarding the restoration of nature, the second is a step forward in the way we value the benefits we get from nature. The Wildlife Trusts have been active in both of these areas and the former probably only happened because of persuasion from our national office representing the views of all 47 local wildlife trusts. Both of these initiatives are vital components in the Natural Environment White Paper.

These changes are of major significance to Sussex, reflecting much of what we have been saying with our Living Landscape concept. The essence of what needs to be done to enhance England’s ecological network can be summarised in four words: more, bigger, better and joined. We need to recognise the value of the natural world and reflect this value in decision-making. Furthermore, we need to remember the



Times

importance of linking people to nature for this concept to succeed.

This has also been an important year for the marine environment. We have been working at the highest levels feeding information into the Government process to designate Marine Conservation Zones as part of the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009.

'Big Society' has been a much debated concept and one of our key aims is to work with the Sussex community, in its widest sense, from influencing decision makers in Government to our innovative work through Forest Schools and Youth Rangers. As always, our achievements rely on the commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers (a staggering 25,000 volunteer hours have been recorded during this year) and the continuing support of our members, the Sussex business community and external funding bodies.

To this end, we have re-organised our structure and created the Community Wildlife Department to focus on inspiring, informing and educating people of all ages.

Our education work continues to thrive with over 22,000 children enjoying nature at first hand through visits to Woods Mill, Seven Sisters and Ashdown Forest. In addition, for those unable to make visits, our Outreach



team takes our own special brand of environmental education direct into schools. We have also increased the scope and variety of courses for adults, resulting in over 800 people signing up to increase their knowledge of the natural world.

The creation of a Community Wildlife Officer and an increased capacity for offering advice to landowners, means that we are now far more effective in protecting wildlife and habitats beyond the boundaries of our own nature reserves – a vital move towards a 'Living Landscape' for all of Sussex. We have organised visits and workshops for landowners, including hedgerow management,



rhododendron control and management of equestrian land, through the Gatwick Greenspace and West Weald Landscape Partnerships.

Throughout the year we have continued to place strong emphasis on our Living Landscape projects, developing and raising our ambitions for nature conservation. We have worked on a larger scale, linking people to nature to enhance our local environment through our West Weald Landscape Project north of Petworth, our grazing project on Malling Down, near Lewes, our wetland projects in several river catchments and our community wildlife projects in Crawley, Brighton and Hastings.

While the impacts of people on our landscape are easy to recognise, the processes that create our habitats are less obvious. We are working with nature to encourage change on our reserves through partnership projects such as our grazing programme at Friston Forest, which will create a more diverse habitat encouraging plants such as field pansy, scarlet pimpernel, yellow-wort, self heal, silver-spotted skipper butterflies and scarlet tiger moths.



- 1 Bechstein's bat *Hugh Clark*
- 2 brown trout *Graham Eaton/naturepl.com*
- 3 silver-spotted skipper *Ivor Chuter LRPS*
- 4 planting saplings
- 5 British white cattle *Ivor Chuter LRPS*
- 6 scarlet tiger moth caterpillar *Ivor Chuter LRPS*
- 7 kingfisher *Mike Lane/NHPA*



Woods Mill, Henfield, is not only the administrative headquarters of Sussex Wildlife Trust but also a nature reserve enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year. First and foremost it is a site managed for nature and this year an exciting project has been undertaken to bring about a positive change to the landscape – the creation of a new river channel.

The old channel was not only steep-sided, but of uniform depth along its entire length – not a great place for wildlife to flourish as it presented a barrier to the movement of aquatic species through the landscape. With funding from Viridor Credits and Natural England, the work was co-ordinated by the Environment Agency and the river has been transformed.

With a series of gentle meanders, pools and riffles, it has become an exceptionally diverse channel with the potential to support a much richer range of plants and animals including water shrew, kingfisher, little egret, dragonflies and bats. Already, mining bees have taken up residence in the exposed sandy river banks, something that was not previously possible. It is hoped that sea trout will now spawn here, taking advantage of areas of gravel and fast-flowing water.

Looking beyond Woods Mill, this project is a clear demonstration of how the Trust sees the future for wildlife – one that is based upon a landscape of inter-connected species-rich core areas.



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Chairman's Report

At this year's AGM I'll hang up my boots after eight years as Chairman of the Trust. I am amazed to look back at how much the Trust has grown during that time with membership increasing by 77%. Membership income now supports the Trust to the tune of £1.195m per annum (it was £475,000 in 2002-3).

During my first year as Chairman the education programme at Seven Sisters Country Park and our Outreach service were launched and have grown year by year. Plans to graze our own nature reserves with our own livestock were in their early stages as we celebrated the wonderful gift of 320 acres of chalk downland just East of Lewes at Southerham; a gift which transformed the way we manage our grazing animals.

In 2010-11 the Trust's annual turnover was just under £3 million, thanks mainly to the loyal support of our members – a good number of whom very kindly agreed to increase their level of support, despite the challenging economic climate. This generous response has helped increase the level of annual membership income by £40,000.

Income from legacies this year has exceeded £295,000. Sadly, when legacies come to the Trust we have no way of thanking our generous benefactors, so I would like to take the opportunity of thanking you now if you have remembered the Trust in your Will.

The Trust responded to The Natural Environment White Paper from a local perspective and contributed to the regional and national responses. If you responded personally, thank you – more than 15,000 responses were received at DEFRA – a record number.

Finally, I'd like to thank all our hardworking staff, our fantastic team of dedicated volunteers and, last but not least, my fellow Trustees for their support during my years as Chairman. It's been great fun as well as hard work! I wish Sussex Wildlife Trust well in 'Taking Care of Sussex' and I am confident it will continue to go from strength to strength.

Patrick Berry

Money Matters

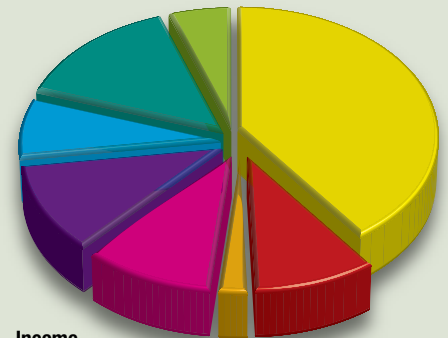
Although we expected the year to be less successful in terms of fundraising due to the continuing gloomy economic situation, we have, in fact, been pleasantly surprised by what has been achieved. Total income is just under £3m with membership income again playing a big part in this year's success. As always, our members supported us throughout the year in a variety of ways; attending our events, volunteering, supporting the annual appeal or by leaving a legacy. Our success is underpinned by their generosity.

We reported last year that we had acquired 3.1 hectares of unimproved chalk grassland on the north side of the Downs at Ditchling. This year we purchased a further area covering just under 1 hectare running alongside the road leading to the top of Ditchling Beacon. The total cost of this land purchase was £57,000 – money raised by our members through the annual appeal.

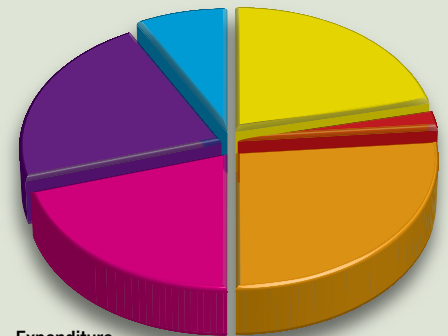
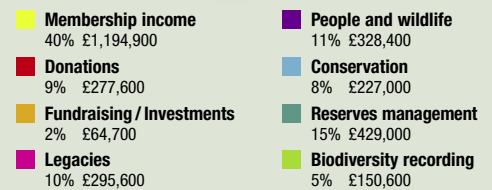
Thanks to a generous five year grant from Arcadia, the charitable foundation of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, we have been able to reshape the way the Trust works so it can better deliver the principles of landscape ecology. As well as increased capacity, the grant enabled us to appoint a Living Landscapes Officer to work with our reserves team and the South Downs National Park Authority on heathland restoration. The Trust already manages several community-based projects in the Gatwick area, Brighton and Hastings. This grant also part-funded a Community Wildlife Officer, based in Lewes, to engage local communities in wildlife activities and events.

Our commitment to education remains high. This year our facilities have been enhanced with the addition of some high-tech teaching aids, funded from our Gateway to Nature project, set up to improve the learning experience at Woods Mill. Our classroom now offers an interactive white board and five video microscopes with associated computers, data loggers and cameras.

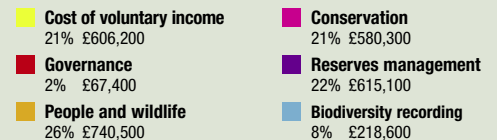
There have also been significant enhancements to our interpretation work to encourage greater understanding of our work by visitors to the reserve.



Income



Expenditure



The above information is extracted from the full annual audited accounts and its purpose is to highlight visually the different segments of the Trust's Income and Expenditure for the year. To view a full set of these accounts please visit www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk If you require a printed copy please tel: 01273 497523.



mining bee Andy Sands/naturepl.com



Anna Marie Kyriacou

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Bronze Membership

Ashdown Forest Llama Park

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Brighton Marina Estate

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Cliffe Veterinary Group

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CSL Behring UK Ltd

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Evonprint

Face Media Group

Geeks on Wheels

Gemini Press

Ginger Dragon

Good Energy

Greenmetrics

Harvey & Sons

Keepers Woodlands Ltd

Kids Love Earth

MCR Printing

mistore

Old Tollgate Hotel
Parkers Truck & Van Rental
Roundhill FM
RSA
SiteVisibility
South Downs Cellars
Swan Press
Wienerberger Ltd
Woodlands.co.uk
Zeta Colour

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Vine House Farms Limited
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Land Fill Tax Scheme

SITA Trust
Viridor Credits Environmental
Company

Other Supporters

Adur District Council
Arun District Council
Ashdown Forest Conservators
Brighton & Hove City Council
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Crawley Borough Council
Eastbourne Borough Council
East Sussex County Council
Environment Agency
Horley Town Council
Hastings Borough Council
Horsham District Council
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Mole Valley District Council
Natural England
Reigate and Banstead Borough
Council
Rother District Council
SE Water
South Downs Joint Committee
Southern Water
Surrey County Council
Wealden District Council
West Sussex County Council

Charitable Trusts

A I Hawksbee Charitable Trust
Arcadia, the charitable
foundation of Lisbet Rausing
and Peter Baldwin
Bramham Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
The Gurney Charitable Trust
The Irene Newman Charitable
Trust
Joan Cullen Charitable Trust
Lisbet Rausing and Peter
Baldwin Trust
Lord Medway's Charitable Trust
RR and I Newman Charitable
Trust
The Tubney Charitable Trust
Anonymous Charitable Trusts

Lottery Funding

Access to Nature
(Big Lottery Fund)
Your Heritage
(Heritage Lottery Fund)

Legacies were received from

Miss P V M Bozier
Mr A Callow
Miss J B Courtaulds 1974
Discretionary Settlement
Mr M J Dench
Miss M E D Evans
Miss P E Goldsmith
Caroline Agnes Joan Hervey
Trust
Miss J Oxley
Dr C G C Petit
Mrs P M Rickells
Mr F L Saigeman
Mrs B E Saulez
Mrs S Schaffer
Mrs O J Spratt
Miss M R Weller
Mr L A Whitcomb
Mrs D E Wood

A total of £295,565 has been
received in legacies and bequests
during the year.



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Reg Charity No. 207005

Continuing our 'green initiative', the Trustees Report and a full set of audited annual accounts are available from our website www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

Go to **About** section and click on **Annual Report**.

To receive a printed copy please telephone 01273 497523.