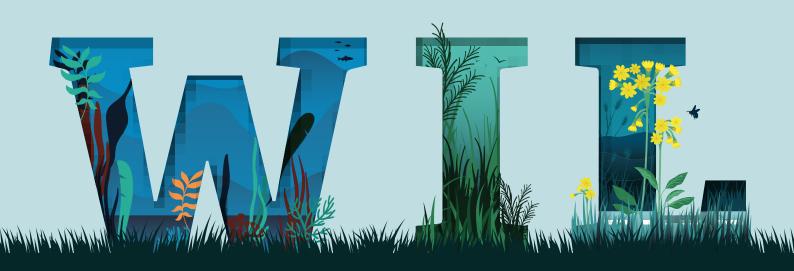


Creating a wilder Hampshire and Isle of Wight

This time last year we set out the scale of the challenge for wildlife and asked for your help to shape a plan.



This is our plan. It is our response to the nature emergency.

It has been informed by the conversations, ideas and evidence we have gathered over the past year.



It has been shaped by the thousands of people who have told us they are worried about the state of our seas and rivers, plummeting wildlife numbers and the threat of climate breakdown, and who want to do something about it.

We will need all your help to deliver it.

We want...

In the next ten years we must create a much wilder Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

We want nature's recovery to be at the forefront of tackling the climate crisis.

We want broken ecosystems to be restored and missing wildlife to return.

We want people to benefit from a healthy natural environment.

We need...

More people on nature's side and more space for wildlife to thrive.

This means:

We need 1 in 4 people to take action for nature's recovery.

We need at least a third of land and sea to be where wildlife is recovering.

We need the pressure on nature reduced everywhere else.

Together, we will build a movement for change



We will focus our efforts on these interconnected goals and deliver two flagship programmes

Team Wilder and **Wilder Land and Sea.**

and help put nature on the road to recovery...

We've lost **so much already.**

You might not even notice or you might have forgotten. You might remember that the state of nature was different when you were growing up, but subtle changes easily go unnoticed. Subsequent generations have unknowingly accepted this creeping impoverishment. Wildlife is in freefall and yet, for many, the present paucity of nature is seen as normal.

This is not normal.

"In the 1930s Chandlers Ford was a village. A woodland of pedunculate oak, birch, sweet chestnut and a scattering of yew extended from opposite the house to Hocombe Road. It was possible to walk through Silkstead to Compton and Shawford Downs, back along the River Itchen to Brambridge and home via Cranbury Park. Nearby was Hiltingbury Lake and the pinewood, home to red squirrels.



Since the 1930's species-rich wildflower meadows have become virtually extinct. Since the 1950's we've seen declines in over half of all species across the UK and since the 1970's there's been a 60% fall in vertebrates globally. Elsewhere recent reports tell the story of insect populations collapsing by 75% between 1990 and 2014.

Hampshire and the Island are not immune to these trends. Half of our ancient woodlands have been destroyed since the 1930s. Three quarters of our world famous chalk streams are in poor condition with aquatic invertebrates and Atlantic salmon in long term decline. Nightingales and breeding waders such as redshank and curlew are perilously close to extinction. Saltmarshes are disappearing so fast there may be none left within a generation.

The few places where a rich diversity of life can still be found are nature reserves and special wildlife sites. Without these precious havens the picture would be even worse. But they are too small and are under siege from a host of external pressures. They cannot stop the biodiversity crisis on their own.

The statistics are stark and the evidence stacks up to show us how close to the edge we've come. If we don't act now these changes will spiral dangerously out of control.

We have everything still to lose.

This planet is our only home – it has the ability to provide everything we need and more. Protecting it is not about

making concessions for nature. We are as much a part of the ecosystem as the water we waste and the soil we pollute. We are foolish to continue to trash our house and poison our lifeblood.

Our planet is heating up as a result of unconstrained growth, the true cost of which is being ignored. We continue to strip the earth of natural resources and pour toxic chemicals and waste into the environment. Our waters are polluted and full of plastic. Our soils are washing away and our air isn't clean. The fabric of life is unravelling fast.

And as this happens, new generations grow up more and more disconnected from the natural world around them, starved of the opportunity to enjoy the wonder of wild life and understand their place amongst nature. And so it continues to slip away unnoticed.

Meanwhile mental health problems, obesity and isolation are on the rise. The social and economic cost of our failure to deal with these issues is huge, and growing.

How much more do we have to lose before we wake up and take action?

We must today start to turn this around and tip the balance in favour of nature's recovery and our own survival. The other option is do nothing and then there will be nothing left.



Why now?

2020 is a critical year. A turning point. Decisions and actions taken in the next ten years will affect the next thousand years. By 2030 we must see nature recovering, wildlife returning and ecosystems restored. We can't defer, we can't wait for more data or better reasons to act. The evidence is already there and we know what to do.

If we delay, the damage will be irreversible. If we wait until the impacts of environmental breakdown are upon us – until we witness the rising sea levels, personally suffer the effects of pollution or notice the lack of birdsong – it will be too late.

Putting nature into recovery must be what we turn all our efforts to now. It has to be the priority. It won't be easy. This is a complex challenge and the next ten years is just the start.

But this has to be what defines the next decade.



Who are you? A nature lover, mother, brother, business leader, farmer, teacher, artist or scientist?

There is no one without a role in this plan and we can only succeed together. Yes, these may be big global issues, but your voice matters and local action counts. Everything counts. It all adds up.

We need different people playing different parts – rebels and advocates, funders and supporters, doers and thinkers.

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This is and has to be a joint effort. Together our local actions in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight form part of the collective national and global effort for a better, wilder future.

We can be the people that fix this.





There is **so much to gain**.

People could be here in years to come and see purple emperors flit amongst the canopy and hear turtle doves churr. They might not even notice. It could be normal

Our vision is beautiful and vital.

We want nature recovering, wildlife returning, ecosystems restored.

We want a deafening din, a cacophony of chirping and buzzing.

We want great places to live that are good for people and good for wildlife.

We want nature to be normal, for children to grow up with wild and green spaces to explore.

We must restore and re-wild our land and sea and tip the balance in favour of nature.

We know this is what's needed for our food, oxygen, physical and mental health, our prosperity and for a strong and vibrant society. We know that nature's recovery can help tackle the climate crisis.

Our future has to be wilder.





How do we get there?

The shifts that are needed are seismic – from our approach to growth and consumption, our relationship with food and animals, our connection to nature and our environment, our own sense of agency and power.

Of course not all of the changes required are within our gift, but we can all play our part, today and tomorrow. We can collectively create the momentum that is needed for these shifts to take place.

Within this plan, we are setting out some of the most important changes that need to happen in the next ten years and the part we at Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust will play.

Our work will focus on achieving our connected goals of more people on nature's side, more space for wildlife to thrive, and reduced pressure on the environment.

The Trust's approach will be threefold – we will **deliver change directly,** we will **support others to make changes** and we will **advocate for change** in the wider social and political environment.

We will continue to directly deliver improvements for wildlife locally. As we have over the past six decades,

we will continue to nurture our nature reserves, ensuring they provide vital safe havens for threatened species. We will always look for opportunities to expand and link these spaces to form essential stepping stones in the nature recovery network.

We will be led by the evidence of what will make the most difference, we will learn from others and we will make sure we target our resources and attention in the right place.

We will test new approaches, we will be braver and take more risks. We will embrace rewilding as a route to recovery and we will promote nature-based solutions as a way of tackling some of our most pressing issues.

We will seek out partners who want to be part of a wilder future. We will support and catalyse action, sharing our expertise and encouraging individuals to make sustainable changes in their lives, communities or businesses.

As we take strides towards nature's recovery, we will minimise our own footprint – becoming a climate positive organisation in the coming years – and will support others on this journey.

We will also campaign vociferously and tirelessly for the changes that are needed in law, in policy and in practice.



More people on nature's side: Team Wilder

We recognise that, in order to tip the balance, we need many more people on nature's side. Without this we cannot hope to put nature into recovery, create more space for wildlife to thrive or reduce pressure on the environment.

You may well already be one of our members, champions, supporters or advocates. If so, thank you - you are part of the growing movement of individuals who are standing up for nature.

We know that for the scales to shift decisively we will need a committed minority – **1 in 4 of the population** – to be acting in support of nature. Whilst public concern about the environment is at an all-time high, behaviour change is lagging far behind. The science shows that if 25% of people take action, this is enough to change the minds and behaviour of the majority.

It doesn't matter who you are – you have an important role to play. You have the power to make decisions in your own life. You can choose what you eat, what you wear, how you travel, where you put your money, who you vote for.

You can decide to share your space with wildlife – whether that's a window box or a large estate in rural Hampshire. You can talk to your friends, neighbours, teachers, work mates and politicians and pass on your passion – inspiring and encouraging others to join our team.



These things will make a difference to your life and to what the future looks like. Your choices will have ripple effects and will add to the building wave of support. Whether it's people taking a stand through school strikes and protests or thousands of people taking small, everyday actions - including supporting the Trust - the cumulative impact will create the movement for change that nature needs.

There are wonderful things already happening in our counties. From community groups coming together to improve the headwaters of our chalk rivers, to young people giving their time to inspire others about our local marine riches - the enthusiasm we witness every day is contagious.

We are seeing champions emerge from every section of society and we welcome those farmers, businesses and politicians who are joining with us and leading the change in their fields. "I feel more passionate than ever that creating a sense of stewardship amongst local communities – such as here in Petersfield – could be a really sustainable way of making a change. In my experience, the scale of the problem can sometimes seem so enormous that people wonder whether anything they do will make very much difference. If we can create something really tangible that people can do and create a model that can be followed elsewhere, then we have a chance"

D.Evans, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust member



Wild thing, you make my heart sing.

The bedrock of our movement is a connection with nature. For six decades we have offered children, young people and adults opportunities to experience, learn about and love wildlife.

Today, we live our lives increasingly disengaged and removed from nature. Children are often denied the chance to go wild outside, get messy and explore. Some have never seen or felt long grass against their legs before coming to us with a school visit. Too many children living on the Island have never been to the beach or paddled in the waters of the Solent.

We know the power of connecting people with nature and the benefits, not only for mental and physical health, but of instilling a care and respect for wildlife that can last a lifetime. With the alarm bells ringing about the environmental crisis, we must be careful not to fuel a floating 'eco anxiety', which can be damaging, particularly for younger people who may feel overwhelmed and powerless. This concern needs mooring with strong connections and appreciation of nature. As we work with more children and young people we will nurture their love of wildlife and provide the right channels at the right time for them to play their part in nature's recovery.

"It's important to help the wildlife because they are homeless and hungry and they need our help"

Shannon, pupil from St Alban's Primary School, Havant.

We will make sure that people of all ages have more opportunities to experience nature, to be inspired and moved by its beauty and wonder. We ultimately need more people to value their natural world if we have any chance of people acting to save it.



Doing good business

Over the past few years we have seen more local businesses step forward to play their part in a creating a wilder Hampshire or wilder Isle of Wight. Some are taking strides to ensure that the way they work is good for nature as well as being good for business.

We will develop more opportunities for businesses to support the Trust and be part of Team Wilder – opening our doors to those who would like to find shared solutions, supporting others to make changes and offering employees the chance of creating greener, wilder places to work.

Wilder communities, champions, campaigners and change-makers

For the momentum to build we need people to take the lead and champion nature in their own field or on their

own patch. We would love to see Wilder communities popping up across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. By people connecting for common concerns and shared goals, we could see places transformed for people and wildlife.

We know that there are thousands of people across our counties who are passionate about how their area, school, business, land, or workplace could be greener or wilder.

Whilst you have the power and passion to create change, the Trust has an important role to play. We will nurture and support leaders – whether community or workplace champions, farmers, campaigners or young change-makers. We will celebrate your successes and, through sharing your achievements, help others to follow your lead.



More space for nature to thrive: Wilder Land and Sea

Space for wildlife on our land and in our seas is being constantly squeezed: Built over, bruised, bashed, and beaten. We need to stop abusing it with chemicals and pollution. We have to give nature space and time to breathe and recover.

We need a Nature Recovery Network made up of hundreds or thousands of wild spaces on land and at sea, connected up to form the arteries that will help wildlife spread through our counties

We need at least a third of land and sea to be where wildlife is recovering.

We need the pressure on nature reduced everywhere else.

Since the very foundations of the conservation movement, many generations have striven to protect 'special areas' and look after the rarest of species.

At Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, we are proud that our nature reserves support incredible wildlife – from nationally important populations of species such as sword-leaved helleborine and chalkhill blue butterflies, to iconic birds such as avocet and nightjar, which both breed

on our sites. Our reserves are where the most vulnerable wildlife survives and are vital to the existence of much of our biodiversity. Without them wildlife would be in a far worse state.

But they, and other protected wildlife sites, are too isolated and are under pressure from an increasingly hostile surrounding environment. Even the 'wildest' patches are impacted by changing weather patterns, pesticides and recreational pressure.

We need to find more space where nature can take priority, where whole ecosystems can be restored and where missing species can return.

'Fishlake Meadows gives us a glimpse of how the Test Valley would have looked over 2000 years ago; a dynamic, shifting swathe of ponds, lakes, reedbed, willow scrub and fen grassland. Today we see everything from swallows and kingfishers to bittern, ospreys and otters.



But just twenty years ago it was drained and ploughed arable fields. What a fantastic demonstration of nature's ability to re-wild itself and bounce back"

Jo Iddenden, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust Reserves Officer

Rewilding and bringing back missing species

We know, from detailed data and mapping, that as much as **half** of the land in our two counties has potential for nature's recovery. Of course size isn't everything – habitat extent and connectivity is just part of the picture – we need much wilder, richer quality habitats that function more naturally, and welcome both the common and rare species in greater abundance.

Wilder spaces not only create less hostile homes for wildlife but also help combat the climate crisis. – absorbing carbon and pollution, restoring essential natural resources, buffering and building resilience for changes coming our way.

In the coming years we believe that there is potential to find these opportunities for rewilding our land and seas. We want to see the space for wildlife **trebled** in our counties. We will look to at least **double** the land we own and we will work with farmers, landowners and public bodies to transform areas of our counties and change the fortunes of our wildlife.

We will focus our efforts on creating wilder places in key areas – the New Forest, the South Downs, rural north Hampshire, the chalk river valleys, the coastal zone and especially the Isle of Wight. Islands have a vital place in maintaining diversity of life. Constituting just 5% of the earth's land area, they house a fifth of our wildlife and offer vital sanctuary for many of the most critically endangered species.

We will pursue opportunities on the Island and in parts of Hampshire to reintroduce vital missing species that can help restore ecosystems and bring life back.

Large-scale rewilding is only one piece of the jigsaw. We believe that we can all share our space with nature and find paths to bring life to every corner of our counties – from towns and gardens, verges, parks, farms and estates.

'Every space across Britain should be used to help wildlife"

David Attenborough



Farming with nature

Over the past few decades, agriculture policy and the quest for cheap food have driven intensive farming systems, with devastating impacts on nature.

The maintenance of maximum crop yield, through fertiliser and pesticide use, has left much of the space largely inhospitable to wildlife. Not only is intensive agriculture one of the principal causes of the collapse in insects and other wildlife, but it also undermines the health of our precious rivers and erodes the vitality of the soils, leading some experts to warn that we may be able to sustain as few as forty harvests.

Intensive meat and dairy production has also been implicated as one of the drivers of global heating, leading to fundamental questions about our relationship with food and discussions about alternative diets and models of farming.

As the majority land use, a new approach to farming has the greatest potential to turn around the ecological crisis. Now is a time of huge transition in food and farming – the prevailing model of subsidies, inputs and cheap consumer goods is unsustainable and today there is real opportunity to reimagine how we use land to produce food and create wider societal benefits. Low intensity grazing systems, for example, are important for maintaining the landscape and play a vital role in building soil fertility, and the use of new technologies can vastly reduce the impact of arable farming.

A radical overhaul of agricultural policy is needed and current proposals are moving us in the right direction, with the Government looking at models that reward public goods rather than public commodities. Paying farmers to move towards regenerative farming systems as well as take areas out of production to reforest or re-wild, will build soil fertility, reduce pollution and increase carbon capture. Importantly, this approach would help create the space and habitat that wildlife needs to recover.

In the past year we have seen more and more farmers leading the charge and pushing the importance of farming with nature rather than against it. We will learn from, support and work with these pioneering land managers to help wildlife return and build healthier farming systems.



Development that delivers for nature

The rate of growth and development across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight shows no sign of abatement, with hundreds of thousands of houses planned, expansions of our ports in the pipeline and the pressing need to accommodate more traffic across our busy road network.

Not only does this relentless development slice up the space for nature, but also intensifies the pressures of pollution, consumption and recreation.

We urgently need to take stock. The sustainability of our natural resources and the health of our environment should be at the heart of all proposed development. A fundamental rethink of how we use our space across the whole of the UK is needed to avoid further straining those areas of the country, like ours, already creaking under the pressure. Locally, we need a more holistic, long-term view that plans land use over decades, takes account of impacts beyond boundary lines and is informed by robust evidence.

Our Nature Recovery Network maps can help to guide these decisions – showing where nature is and where it needs to be. We will use this evidence to help ensure that 'net gain' in development can be delivered in a way that truly gives back more to nature than it takes away and that mitigation schemes, private investment and public funding can be targeted to secure nature's recovery.

Wilder public and private spaces

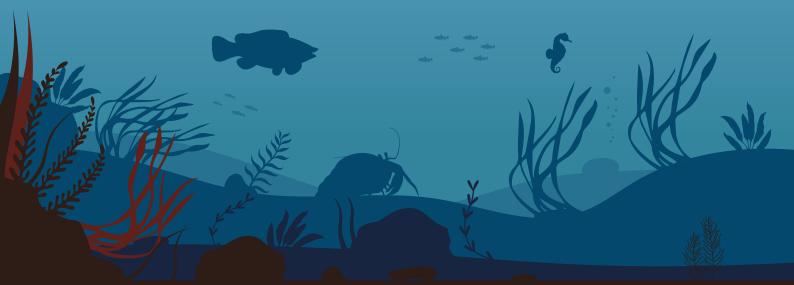
The benefits of greening our landscape are far-reaching and even small actions can help turn towns and cities into wildlife destinations. Parks, school grounds and community spaces can all offer something for nature and, in doing so, can bring people together – creating healthier, more connected communities.

As well as improving quality of life, investing in nature-based solutions could help public authorities respond to the climate emergency and reduce pollution and carbon emissions across our counties.

National and local governments have enormous land holdings and have to be bolder and more ambitious in harnessing the public estate and working with private landowners to contribute to nature's recovery. This includes giving adequate powers and resources for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and actively looking for opportunities to give back space to nature – re-wilding, rewetting or transforming areas of the countryside.

Our own homes and gardens could also contribute to the nature recovery network. Private spaces that open their doors to nature can have a significant impact for wildlife. Nationally, domestic gardens can equate to around 30% of urban space and, in Portsmouth, are home to nearly a third of the city's trees. Gardens can offer a rich oasis for wildlife in urban landscapes. Small measures can transform a hostile built environment into a haven for pollinators like bees and butterflies and today you'll find the majority of our frogs enjoying local backyard ponds.

However, design and convention often dictate that these private spaces are small, hard, neat and not very friendly to wildlife. Many people feel that wild is an anathema to practical or pretty outside space, some conflate wild with messy and lazy and others feel that wildlife gardening is an esoteric art-form. We want to break down these barriers and get people going wild in their garden, allowing nature to share their outside space and reaping the benefits of beauty and enjoyment - improving all of our lives.



Wilder seas

The state of our seas is of huge concern, with massive biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, collapse of fisheries, ocean warming and pollution amongst the significant issues in the marine environment. In recent years we have expanded the network of protected areas around the coasts of Hampshire and the Island, most recently with the designation of a 'blue belt' of Marine Conservation Zones. This does not, in itself, guarantee the recovery of our seas. Action to tackle the pressures is desperately needed in these busy, polluted waters.

The success of our Marine Protected Areas depends on strong, effective management across the entire network. We need to keep the pressure on marine managers and legislators to meet their responsibilities and to recognise that our duty to protect the marine environment extends beyond the boundaries of protected areas and has to include all our seas and oceans.

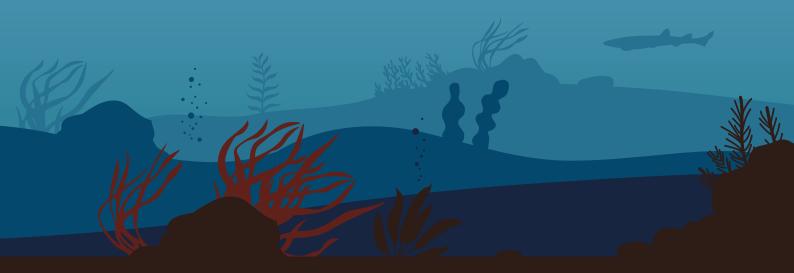
The way we use the marine environment has to be arranged with nature first, to ensure that we can

continue to benefit from our largest habitat and the source of our greatest biodiversity.

Our fisheries are under extreme pressure, with unsustainable levels of exploitation leading to stocks failing to replenish. We need to connect with our local fisheries, building awareness and value for Solent species. It is difficult today to comprehend that our local seas once provided bountiful fish stocks and we will be working at all levels to make sure that our fisheries are managed sustainably in the future so that our local marine wildlife has the chance to bounce back.

Similarly, seagrass meadows and oyster beds once covered our coastal fringes and sea floor - supporting countless other species, whilst storing carbon and absorbing wave energy. By restoring these essential habitats and functions, we can help to protect ourselves from the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.

The sea is vital for sustaining life on Earth and we must protect and restore it now if we hope to do the same on land.



Our plan



Team Wilder

We want to see 1 in 4 people connecting with wildlife and taking action for nature's recovery. This is vital if we are to create more space for wildlife to thrive and reduce wider pressures on the environment.



Wilder Land and Sea

We want to see nature recovering, ecosystems restored and wildlife returning. We want to see at least **a third of our land and sea** made wilder, and the pressures on the environment reduced everywhere else.

Team Wilder

Wilder champions

We will offer a programme of training and support for people who want to be campaigners or leaders in their fields, workplaces or communities.

We will support young champions and give young people a voice, through the establishment of a youth council.

We will work with farmers and businesses leading action for nature's recovery.

We will marshal wildlife experts and citizen scientists to monitor the state of nature locally, helping to inform decisions and shape our work.

Wilder communities

We will empower community groups to create change, providing toolkits and guidance.

We will run public-facing campaigns to encourage individuals and communities to go wild at home or in their local area.

We will celebrate and showcase how people are contributing to nature's recovery.

Wilder Solent

As part of our Secrets of the Solent project, supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund, we will encourage people living or working by the Solent to value our marine wildlife and act in support of our local seas.

We will celebrate our local seas, the wildlife they support and the people that look after them.

Wilder lives

We will push for nature to be embedded in the curriculum and within the fabric of school life.

We will continue to give children, young people and adults opportunities to experience wildlife and the natural environment and we will build connection to nature into all the work that we do.

We will expand our education and learning programme to reach through schools and children to families and communities.

We will offer training for practitioners – including teachers, healthcare professionals and employers – to harness nature in their work with other people.

Wilder giving

We will create new opportunities to support wildlife in ways that fit with different lifestyles and priorities – from supporting specific places, giving time or helping us to successfully campaign for changes.

We will double the Trust's membership over the next ten years, harnessing this vital support to drive our work forwards.

Wilder Hampshire & Isle of Wight Awards

We will establish an annual event, bringing people together from across the counties to celebrate those making a difference for wildlife and the environment.



Wilder Land and Sea

Advocacy for nature's recovery

We will push for a strong and ambitious Environment Act with nature's recovery at its heart, together with an independent, well-resourced watchdog.

We will use our expertise and experience to help shape national and local policy and legislation that enables nature's recovery.

We will call for local authorities to publicly recognise the nature emergency alongside the climate emergency and put in place actions to tackle this.

We will ensure that nature-based solutions are at the heart of plans to tackle the climate crisis.

Rewilding and missing species

We will seek out opportunities to deliver large-scale re-wilding projects, experimenting and trying out wilder approaches, with a focus on restoring whole ecosystems and building abundance at every level.

We will call for the space for wildlife to be trebled in our counties; we will double the land that we own and create new nature reserves.

Bringing together local experts and stakeholders, we will identify opportunities to reinstate wildlife species we have lost, including essential ecosystem engineers, such as beavers.

Farming with nature

We will expand our work with landowners, identifying new and effective ways to deliver benefits for nature, society and farming.

We will recognise and celebrate those that are leading the way through an annual Farming with Nature award.

Development that delivers for nature

We will challenge policies, plans or proposed developments that fall short of 'net gain' for wildlife.

We will train and support community campaigners to be the voice of wildlife in their local area and hold authorities to account.

We will offer a Building with Nature service to developers who want to deliver more than the minimum and build better homes for wildlife and people.

Wilder public and private spaces

We will challenge public bodies to harness the potential of the public estate for nature's recovery.

We will hold public authorities to account, calling on them to reduce pressures on the environment and contribute to nature's recovery.

We will enable individuals and communities to add to the Nature Recovery Network, connecting up spaces and creating wildlife corridors across neighbourhoods and towns.

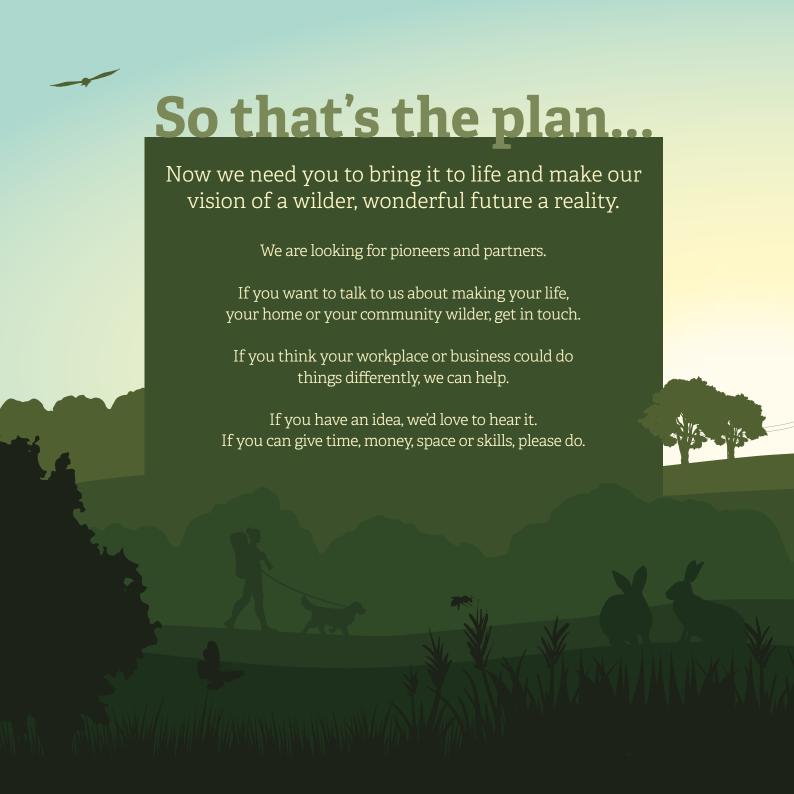
Wilder seas

We will push for good management plans for marine protected areas and for action to rehabilitate vital marine habitats.

We will press for the best management of our fisheries and support their sustainable future.

We will undertake innovative 'blue carbon' projects with partners – enabling investment in marine habitats as a nature-based climate solution.











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