

A summary of the impact of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust in 2021 - 2022

# Annual Review

2021 - 2022



**Lincolnshire**  
Wildlife Trust



# Message from the Chair

This was another year dominated by Covid-19, which continued to have a major impact on all our lives, and on the work of the Trust. Although the vaccine roll-out had begun and indoor venues had started to open up, strict social distancing guidelines and limits to public gatherings meant that many Trust activities still could not take place, or were severely curtailed. The majority of staff were still working from home and Zoom meetings continued to be the norm.

Despite these difficult circumstances, the Trust made significant achievements during the year. You can read all about these in this *Review*, but I would like to pay tribute, here, to the hard work and dedication of all our staff and volunteers in meeting and overcoming the challenges, and continuing to deliver for nature in Lincolnshire.

One of the most significant achievements during the year was the acquisition of 128 acres of former

farmland at Bourne North Fen, thanks to a Biffa Award grant of £750,000. This exciting project represents a new approach to managing land, by delivering a range of nature-based solutions, in addition to increased biodiversity.

Financially, the Trust had an exceptional year, with a total income of £5.9m, compared to £2.8m in the previous year. However, the main reason for this was the award of funding for two new significant projects. Strict rules on financial reporting mean that all the income has been shown in this financial year even though the money will be spent over several subsequent years. This skews the income total and makes it look higher than it is in reality.

The Trust also saw a sizeable increase in legacy income, receiving over £1m gifts in wills. Legacies are vital to our work and every single gift, however large or small, makes a difference, and helps us protect Lincolnshire's wild places. We would like to thank all those people who

have remembered us in their wills and our thoughts are with the family and friends of those whose legacies we have received.

During the last two years of the pandemic, nature became a source of solace for many, as lockdown rules heightened our appreciation for open green spaces and people developed a deeper connection to nature. This was reflected in an increase in membership and membership income. The marked increase in website visitors we saw in 2021 was maintained and visitors to nature reserves remained higher than pre-pandemic levels. This has been something of a mixed blessing as reserve managers reported higher levels of vandalism on some sites.

Building on the work that started the previous year, the new ten-year strategy for The Wildlife Trusts movement continued to evolve and develop. The focus during the year was to develop our own strategy, reflecting issues relevant to



MAIN IMAGE: BARRIE WILKINSON, INSET: GEOFF TRINDER

## Purple emperors fly at Swinn Wood

On the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds, north-west of Alford, Swinn Wood is an ancient woodland bought by the Trust in 2016. In summer 2021, stunning purple emperor butterflies were recorded for the first time - adding to the already impressive list of butterflies that also includes purple hairstreak, white admiral and silver-washed fritillary.

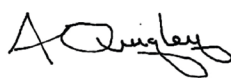
Lincolnshire but aligned with the other 45 Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, giving us a more confident, national and global voice.

Another result of Covid-19 was the need to change to a postal delivery of the *Lapwings* magazine. Over many years, an army of volunteers have saved the Trust thousands of pounds in postage and have acted as our ambassadors, being a point of direct contact with many of our members. Although we have now decided to keep the postal method of delivery going forward, I cannot begin to tell you how grateful we are for the time and effort you have all put in.

At the AGM in October 2021, David Cohen stepped down as Chair, after five years in the role. Prior to that, he served as Honorary Treasurer and had been a member of the Board for 12 years. On behalf of the Board, the staff and the members, I would like to thank David and all of the Trustees for devoting so much of their time and energy to the

Trust over many years.

I was appointed Chair in November 2021 - a role I feel very privileged to hold. I am fully aware that while we have achieved much, there is more to be done. There are many reasons to be optimistic: worldwide, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of nature and a real sense of urgency about reversing climate change and the biodiversity crisis. Our challenge will be to keep that momentum and focus as people's and politicians' attention turns, increasingly, towards the cost of living and the economic crisis.



Anita Quigley  
Chair of the Board of Trustees



OWEN BEAUMONT

### Natterjack toad population booms

Numbers of natterjack toads have declined all over the country and they are restricted to coastal sites. However, management and active protection of the spawn and tadpoles at Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe Dunes National Nature Reserve has helped the population boom. In spring 2021, there were record numbers of natterjack toads calling at Saltfleetby and 189 strings of spawn were laid (the previous high was 32 strings in 2019).

**Our vision is for a thriving natural world, with our wildlife and habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and people inspired and empowered to take action for nature.**

### Our strategic goals are:

- 1** Nature in Lincolnshire is in recovery with abundant, diverse wildlife and natural processes creating wilder land and seascapes where people and nature thrive.
- 2** People in Lincolnshire are taking action for nature and the climate, resulting in better decision making for the environment at both the local level and national level.
- 3** Nature in Lincolnshire is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems.



### On the cover:

Primroses and wood anemones  
by Geoff Trinder



# Bringing nature back

## Nature in recovery

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, with increasingly fragmented remnants of habitat isolated across our land and seas. The Trust has an ambition to change this. Our '30 by 30' objective is for at least 30% of land and sea to be actively managed for nature's recovery by 2030. Currently we estimate that just 7.5% or 54,000ha of land and sea meet this target in Lincolnshire.

The Trust's nature reserves will play a central role in this as reservoirs of biodiversity that can help nature to spread back into these new areas.

Maintaining and enhancing our nature reserves remains fundamental to nature's recovery. We are grateful for the hard work of

our field staff, volunteers and contractors across all the reserves. It is their work that ensures the reserves deliver for nature. Examples include the the installation of a new sluice at Anderby Marsh which enables water levels to be maintained and has resulted in record numbers of waders and wildfowl.

At Woodhall Spa Airfield, we have added new infrastructure for cattle management. This has allowed us to create new meadows, graze the reserve with low inputs and results in high quality, high welfare livestock.

And, since new land was acquired at Castle Bytham two years ago, a hedge has been planted and a new visitor route established from the public footpath through Lawn Wood. Hay rich in seeds was collected from Robert's Field nature reserve and spread over the new fields to help native wildflowers and grasses to establish.

A source of native seeds and plants of local provenance for habitat creation

projects across the county is now available from the Lincolnshire Seed Bank, held at the Trust's Headquarters. This was established with support and guidance from the Royal Horticultural Society's Millennium Seed Bank Team.

The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) is hosted by the Trust and complements our advocacy work, particularly on planning, agriculture, tourism and health. An important piece of work has been production of Biodiversity Opportunity Maps for local authorities as part of the evidence base for their Local Plans. GLNP also operates the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) which now holds over 12.5million records of over 17,000 species. Since its launch there has been a 47% increase in the number of searches on the centre's online portal - enabling ecological consultants and local authorities access to environmental data so it can be better considered within the planning system.



INSET: KNAPWEED BY SARAH PALMER



## Lincolnshire's floral heritage celebrated

The end of our three-year LoveLincsPlants project which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund was celebrated with a series of *Lincspirational Lightshows*. This inspirational show, comprising 30 artworks created by members of the public, was screened at venues ranging from a particularly large crowd in Lincoln to the tranquillity of Gibraltar Point at sunset.



RUTH TAYLOR

## Grey seal pups kept safe

After the forced closures due to lockdown, the viewing area at Donna Nook was opened for the grey seal pupping season. Sixty-one volunteers spent 2,365 hours wardening at Donna Nook and keeping an eye on the 2,134 grey seal pups born at the reserve.

### Meaningful action

People are the key to nature's recovery. We need nature, yet we are increasingly disconnected from our natural environment.

As life began to return to normal and the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic were lifted, volunteers were welcomed back and events resumed again. Beach cleans, activity trails and other outdoor activities were all popular as they could be done safely outdoors as we eased our way back to normality. Our events were all well attended and enjoyed and included a wide selection such as Wildlife Wednesdays at Far Ings, the ever popular Breakfast with Santa at Gibraltar Point and the launch of Whisby Nature Park as an official Dragonfly Hotspot!

Area Group meetings began to take place again with walks and field trips proving popular. The groups continue to provide a great way for like-minded people to meet, share their love of wildlife and support the Trust.



BROAD-BODIED CHASER: GEOFF TRINDER

### Dragonfly Hotspot declared

With a total of 23 species of dragonfly and damselfly recorded, Whisby Nature Park has been recognised by the British Dragonfly Society as a Dragonfly Hotspot.

The Dynamic Dunescapes project continued to connect hundreds of people with the fantastic coastline that we have here in Lincolnshire. Activities included dementia inclusive guided walks, family events on the beach, a number of student bursaries for research projects and work to engage dog walkers.

Visitor facilities at Far Ings have been upgraded with funding from SSE Sustainable Development Fund. The centre is now easier for people to use and encourages a greater diversity of visitor. The work engaged volunteers and the local community with students designing a new mural in the stairwell. Changes to the operation at the Gibraltar Point Visitor Centre have enhanced visitor experience as befits this important National Nature Reserve. Improvements to the old coastguard building and the garden have created new ways to engage people thanks to support of the Lincolnshire Co-op and The Rotary Club of Skegness.



BARRIE WILKINSON

### Action taken to protect nature

When a planning application threatened Far Ings National Nature Reserve, our campaign reached over 26,000 people on social media and generated over 800 formal responses with the application being subsequently withdrawn.

**Over £4,000**

was raised for the 30 by 30 campaign with Trevor Millum completing his challenge to write a poem a week for 30 weeks, and Fiona McKenna's Walk for Wildlife Viking Way walk.

**More than 3,500**

hectares of land was cared for in Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves

## Nightjars

bred at Epworth Turbary for the fourth consecutive year

## Cranes

returned to Willow Tree Fen and volunteers staffed the new viewing area. The removal of the main track provided more space for the cranes and other wildlife.



**20 barn owl boxes**

were put up on land within a 10 mile radius of Lincoln by local volunteers

**29 ringed plovers**

fledged at Gibraltar Point - the only site in Lincolnshire where they breed

**2,638**

People signed up to take part in #30DaysWild in June, an 10% increase on the previous year.







## Future fenland purchased

The purchase of Bourne North Fen in south Lincolnshire is a new and innovative approach to land management. Creating a healthy wetland will support species that once flourished in the Fens such as bittern, bearded tit, greater water parsnip, European eel and spined loach. But the site will do much more - it will help regulate water supply during times of shortage and absorb floodwaters, improve water quality and capture carbon.

### Nature-based solutions

Healthy natural habitats can store and sequester carbon, help prevent flooding, reduce soil erosion, improve soil fertility, provide pollination services, allow nature's recovery at sea, and support improvements to people's physical and mental wellbeing. Working in partnership with others, the Trust is restoring our natural ecosystems at scale and demonstrating what is possible.

A ground-breaking acquisition of 52 hectares (128 acres) at Bourne North Fen is intended to create a "multiple benefits" wetland within the South Lincolnshire Fens, connecting sites between the River Welland and River Glen catchments. This has been funded by Biffa Award, Anglian Water and the support of our members.

Lowland peat, with its capacity to store carbon, is becoming increasingly recognised as part of the solution to addressing the climate change crisis. There are two major areas of lowland peatland in Greater Lincolnshire - the Fens and the Humberhead Levels.

These areas are incredibly important for food production. However, over time they have seen a significant decline in biodiversity and face water resource and flood risk management issues. The Trust has been working in partnership with others across both areas and as a result many partner organisations have backed our landscape-scale approach to securing and restoring these important peatland areas.

Recent external funding secured by the Trust includes a Nature for Climate Change Discovery Grant shared between the Trust and its partners: The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Natural England and RSPB. The funding will enable the Trust to develop a clear evidence base and prepare restoration plans for a number of sites including Bourne North Fen, Willow Tree Fen and the Witham Peats. It will also allow us to provide land management advice to local landowners.

Two of the Government's Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Test Projects began in the Humberhead Levels and South Lincolnshire Water Partnership areas. Led by the Trust, the projects seek to influence the Government's long term approach to supporting land owners to manage their land in an environmentally beneficial way. The projects have worked with land managers to assess the natural capital of various sites, develop potential management plans and draw all of the learning and ideas together at a very successful conference.

Lastly, Green Investment Greater Lincolnshire (GIGL) is a new project that will help to establish new ways to invest in biodiversity, carbon and water resources across Greater Lincolnshire. Led by the Trust and funded by Defra and the Environment Agency, a start up conference was held in March 2022 to kick start the project.

## Remembering Lincolnshire's wildlife

We are honoured to record our appreciation to the following individuals whose legacies we received or were notified of in the year ended 31 March 2022.

- |                            |                                |                           |                           |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Elizabeth Hill Addison   | • Lord Martin Hugh Broadbridge | • Peggy Patricia Franklin | • Alan George Riseborough |
| • Mary Ambrey              | • Derek Alwyn Clay             | • Eva Frith               | • Sheila Mary Scarbro     |
| • Neville Geoffrey Arthurs | • Aubrey Gordon Collins        | • Margaret Annie Medland  | • John David Sowards      |
| • Edward Backus            | • Joan Florence Cooke          | • C Mary Merivale         | • Jane Ward               |
| • David George Bramford    | • Stanley Barker Corden        | • Thomas Henry Pyatt      | • Shirley Janet White     |

## A heartfelt thank you to our corporate members, funders and partners

### CORPORATE MEMBERS

- Anglian Water Services
- B A Bush & Son Limited
- Cleethorpes Builders Merchants
- Cray Valley Limited
- Creative Nature
- Crowder & Sons Ltd
- Fenland Laundries Limited
- Holivans Limited
- J E Piccaver & Co
- J W Ruddock & Sons Limited
- John Kinch Group
- Lindum Group Limited

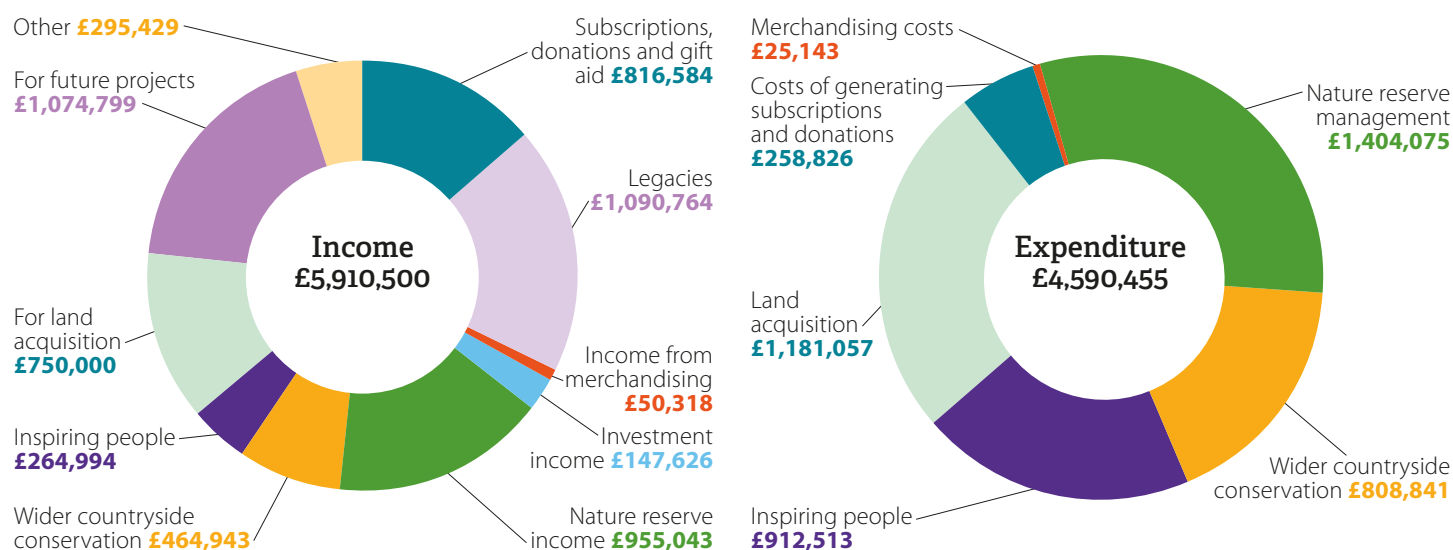
- Mortons of Horncastle Limited
- Natureland Seal Sanctuary
- Page Paper Limited
- Riva Construction
- Rowhire Limited
- SCS Technology Solutions Limited
- Sibelco UK
- Truelove Property & Construction
- Yara (UK) Limited
- Wienerberger Limited
- Woodhall Country Park

### DONORS, SPONSORS AND GRANT AID

- Anglian Water Services
- Defra
- East Lindsey District Council
- Environment Agency
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- European Union
- FKB Ltd
- HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Lincolnshire Co-operative Society Limited
- Ministry of Defence
- National Grid

- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Natural England
- North Kesteven District Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- People's Postcode Lottery
- Phillips 66
- RSWT
- Sea-changers
- Severn Trent Water
- Skegness Rotary
- T Balfe Construction Ltd
- Tesco
- SSE
- Vine House Farm

# Financial summary



The Trust has had an exceptional year, with total income of £5.9m, compared to £2.8m in the year to March 2021. This was despite pandemic restrictions still being in place for part of the period.

Unrestricted income rose from £2.0m to 2.9m, primarily due to an increase in legacy income. We received over £1m from gifts in wills (2021 £341k) and are very grateful for this support which will enable us to do even more valuable conservation work across the county. We received other unrestricted income from a variety of sources, including agri-environment schemes, central and local government funding, income generated from our land holdings and educational and visitor activities. Diversity of income streams continues to assist our financial resilience.

During the year, we successfully applied for two major grants - the Nature for Climate Peatland Discovery Grants Fens East Peatland Partnership (£817k) and LIFE Moor Space (£237k). This income is shown in the financial statements to March 2022 due to the accounting rules which apply to charities concerning the timing of income recognition. The Charities Statement of

Recommended Practice (SORP) states that income must be recognised in the financial statements when the charity is entitled to the income, even though these projects have only just commenced and little or no funds have actually been received, nor has significant activity commenced.

A grant was also received from Biffa Award (750k) for the purchase of Bourne North Fen with additional contributions from Anglian Water and our own funds from legacies and membership.

Membership income increased slightly from £764k to £775k, reflecting an increase in members from 25,971 to 26,013.

Trading income improved from £10k to £50k as the retail activities in our Visitor Centres began to recover as Covid-19 lockdown restrictions eased.

Unrestricted revenue expenditure increased from £2.3m to £2.5m, due to increased expenditure on raising funds, which includes recruitment and retail activity. Restricted expenditure increased from £641k to £955k. The expenditure associated with the significant peatland projects will be incurred during the next few years and hence there is a timing difference between the income

recognised this financial year and the funding actually being spent.

In addition to the significant land acquisition at Bourne North Fen, capital expenditure during the year included new nature reserve machinery, IT upgrades and replacements, the completion of the transition to a membership customer relationship management system, improvements to grazing infrastructure and visitor centre enhancements.

Grants and external funding enable the Trust to expand our work and we are enormously grateful to the grant-giving organisations which have supported us during the year. However, it is our members, Area Groups and volunteers who are the backbone of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. Your ongoing support means we can continue to help Lincolnshire's wildlife and wild places to survive and thrive.

Full details of our income and expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2022 can be found in our audited Annual Report and Financial Statements at [lincstrust.org.uk/publications](http://lincstrust.org.uk/publications)



# Future plans

As the Trust approaches its 75th anniversary, we have raised our ambitions to reach more people and increase our impact. The challenges facing nature and society are vast, so we are going to have to think bigger, bolder and take action together. It's not enough to just slow down the loss of the natural world and protect what remains of our wildlife. We need to stop and reverse the declines – at scale and at pace. We're working with other organisations and communities to make a real difference. For example, one of our new projects will see the return of oysters and seagrass to the Humber Estuary.

## Seascape restoration of the Humber estuary

Historically the Humber Estuary supported vast swathes of seagrass meadows and once hosted the largest native oyster fishery in the UK, with a population and associated reef so large it was a recognised shipping hazard. However, by the 1950s, the native oyster was considered extinct in the region and there had been widespread loss of the seagrass meadows. Together with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and with funding from Ørsted, we will be restoring parts of the Humber on an ambitious scale not seen before. During the first phase of the project, seagrass seeds will be planted in 4 hectares of the estuary to provide vital shelter and a nursery ground for a variety of fish. The release of 500,000 native oysters will enable biogenic reefs to form, in turn providing critical habitat for multiple species whilst also filtering and improving the water quality of the estuary.

Thank you for your support and for being part of nature's recovery in Lincolnshire



BARN OWL: DANNY GREEN/2020VISION

## Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Banovallum House, Manor House Street, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 5HF | 01507 526667 | [info@lincstrust.co.uk](mailto:info@lincstrust.co.uk) | Registered charity no. 218895

### PRESIDENTS:

Geoff Trinder (President)

Brian Tear (Vice President)

### TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS:

Anita Quigley (Chair)

Cathy Sirett (Vice Chair)

Julian Purvis (Honorary Treasurer)

Michael Burgass

Emma Buyers

Grace Corn

Kitty Hamilton

Robert Oates

Tim Sands

Mark Smith

### SENIOR STAFF:

Chief Executive and Company Secretary: Paul Learoyd

Head of Conservation: Tammy Smalley

Head of Finance: Sarah J Smith

Head of Nature Reserves: David Bromwich

Head of Public Engagement and Communications: Matthew Capper

[www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk)

