



Annual Report

2024/2025



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Sir Faesyfed
Radnorshire
Wildlife Trust



OUR VISION

RWT's work and influence is increasing the abundance and diversity of wildlife, inspiring people to take action for nature and helping to reduce the impact of climate change.

To achieve this, we will:

- Manage our nature reserves as leading examples and seek ways to expand and connect them to improve wildlife habitats.
- Encourage and support others to manage their land for wildlife and climate resilience in a sustainable way.
- Inspire local people to take action for wildlife and support landscape-scale projects that aid species recovery and reduce the impact of climate change.
- Make wildlife and wildlife-rich areas easily accessible for everyone in Radnorshire. Increase and diversify our membership, volunteers and supporters, and empower them to act for nature.
- Identify, develop, and support community and youth ambassadors to lead positive change for nature in their communities.
- Use our land and influence to develop and demonstrate nature-based solutions which deliver benefits to people and wildlife, including carbon sink and biodiversity value.
- Share our work on environmental sustainability, including sustainable farming and land management

Our 2030 goals

1

To ensure that 30% of land and water in Radnorshire is managed to support thriving natural habitats for a wide range of species

2

One in four people in Radnorshire are taking positive action for nature

3

RWT is a net zero organisation and is leading the way in identifying and using nature-based solutions.



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OUR VALUES

Nature is at the heart of what we do:-

- We have a deep understanding of Radnorshire's habitats, the wildlife which depends on them, and what they need to survive and thrive in the future.
- We also have a good understanding of farming, forestry, and the economics of land management in both uplands and lowlands, as well as the need for a joined-up approach for nature's recovery.

We are rooted in our communities:

We are part of Radnorshire's communities, both rural and urban, and are inclusive in our approach.

We lead by example:

We are vibrant and energetic, focused on impact.
Our work is based on evidence.

We are a caring organisation:

We seek to support and develop our staff, council members, volunteers, and members.



The trustees of RWT have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Commission.

The following section of this report (Achievements and Performance') gives a detailed account of the activities undertaken to fulfil the Trust's objectives during the year 2024-25.

The general benefits of protecting biodiversity and of an environment rich in wildlife are enjoyed by the whole population.

In addition, RWT provides specific benefits that are available to everyone, regardless of whether they are a member of the Trust:

- Most of our nature reserves are open to the public free of charge every day all the year round
- Much of our educational work is free of charge or at minimal cost, and is offered to all schools in Radnorshire
- Most of the field visits and talks that we arrange are open to the public, and many of them are free of charge
- We monitor planning applications, development plans and related documents for their impact on wildlife habitats and place any concerns in the public domain, which includes attending wildlife enquiries
- We provide a free enquiry service on matters concerning wildlife which is available to all members of the public protecting and enhancing the ecosystem services which are critical for food production, farming, and life in general
- Provision of places and activities which improve people's health and wellbeing
- Membership of RWT is open to everyone on payment of a modest annual subscription, with a very large reduction for those on benefits

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

RADNORSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
IN NUMBERS 2024-25

TOGETHER, WE:



CARRIED OUT **2177.67 HA** OF
HABITAT MANAGEMENT

ADVISED ON **11663.29 HA**
OF LAND



ENGAGED WITH **505** LAND
MANAGERS

2168



NUMBER OF
PEOPLE **TAKING**
ACTION FOR
WILDLIFE (digital &
in person contact)

Insect photo credits: Sam Coppard



18 NATURE
RESERVES

12 **162**

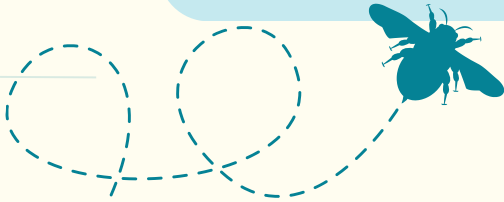
STAFF REGISTERED
VOLUNTEERS

1223

MEMBERS

ENGAGED WITH **25**
COMMUNITY GROUPS
AND SCHOOLS

PLANTED OVER
16,000 TREES



TRAINED **10**
NATURE RECOVERY
TRAINEES

162 VOLUNTEERS
GAVE **4701.5** HOURS
OF THEIR TIME FOR
NATURE'S RECOVERY

The past year has been one of significant progress for Radnorshire Wildlife Trust (RWT). Despite external challenges that face many small environmental charities, including economic uncertainty and delays in governmental policy, we have continued to deliver on our mission to restore nature across Radnorshire. The Trust had a change in leadership and other key staff members during the year. While this may have generated an element of uncertainty, it also presented the Trust with an opportunity to reset and revitalize our work.

Organisational Overview

With thanks from the Council for his achievements over his tenure, James Hitchcock left RWT in October to focus on advocacy work for Rewilding Britain. Victoria Heffer joined as CEO in January having spent more than 25 years working in the investment management industry in London. Silvia Sivers returned from maternity leave as the financial year drew to a close. The Council thank Gina Hale for covering the Head of Conservation role in her absence. In the final quarter, the Trust also changed its Finance lead with Zoe Porter moving to work full time for Gwent Wildlife Trust (previously in a shared role with RWT). We welcomed Andrew Nineham to join in a part-time Finance Manager role. We expect his extensive commercial experience will enhance the Trust's strategic financial management.

Our members and volunteers remain incredibly important to the Trust. RWT's membership remained stable over the year. Radnorshire boasts one of the highest percentages of resident members of all the Wildlife Trusts which is wonderful, but work continues to further grow our membership. Despite raising our prices for the first time in several years, we aim to keep the cost of joining RWT as low as possible. Many of our events are free of charge to enable wide community engagement in our work.

Our volunteers are a vital cog in RWT's ever turning wheel and their hard work, loyalty and expertise is invaluable to the Trust's activities. There were numerous events for members and volunteers over the year, including our annual Christmas lunch at Gilfach. We aim to continue to grow our volunteer group with an emphasis on broadening its profile over the year ahead.

The number of RWT's corporate partnerships remained stable and we plan to explore new relationships offering fresh avenues for collaboration and funding.

In June 2024, our Warwick House office was on the market with a view to moving to a rental unit nearby in Automobile Palace. The business plan for the move was revisited and a decision was made to remain at Warwick House. The building is in need of work, particularly dealing with its poor insulation. We are hoping to improve the workspace for staff and volunteers.



Victoria Heffer, RWT CEO



Our nature reserves

RWT is responsible for 18 nature reserves across Radnorshire; we aim to manage / improve habitats for wildlife, build climate resilience and engage communities in nature restoration.

Gilfach remains the jewel in the Trust's crown. With the dedicated support of the reserve's wardens and the hard work of our volunteers, Gilfach has continued to flourish. With funding from the Nature Networks Fund (NNF3), RWT's reserves team carried out habitat restoration work, including wetland creation and planting trees across the bracken-dominated field at the edge of the oak wood. The grazing management was altered to enable natural tree and scrub regeneration. The visitor centre renovation plans moved slowly over the year following the fundraising appeal. Work continues behind the scenes (pre-planning applications, built heritage advice, etc) that will move to action on the ground soon. We aim to breathe life back into the building and improve the visitor experience.

With a focus on rewilding, our project at **Pentwyn** continued to evolve with the introduction of pigs and ponies alongside cattle, creating a more dynamic grazing system. Habitat restoration work included efforts to deliver more diversity in our pastures and riparian corridors. Our team, together with many volunteers, have carried out significant tree planting- experimenting with cactus guards for the first time in places. A generous funder supported the introduction of 10 native and rare plants. With multiple events over the course of the year, Pentwyn has become a lively hub for a wide range of visitors, including local schoolchildren. A thriving farm cluster group has brought the farming community together to share knowledge and ideas

Our reserves are closely monitored by our staff and volunteer wardens, as well as the Trust's Conservation Advisory Group. We have had various surveys and reports carried out on the Ash Dieback at Bailey Einon which unfortunately, due to the ongoing risks to the public, will remain closed for the foreseeable future. We would like to thank our members for their understanding. Finally, the Trust is being generously gifted a wonderful ancient oak woodland by the Cadbury family who have supported RWT in many ways over many decades. Further details on this new reserve will be shared in the coming months.



Silvia Sivers



Sam Coppard

Current and new projects

The **Wilder Lugg** is a river restoration project that focuses on improving water quality, boosting biodiversity and natural flood management through the creation of leaky dams and wetlands. As well as capital projects and improvements on the ground, our Project Officer has also delivered training and citizen science workshops with strong landowner engagement and support from the local community.

Scaling up catchment-wide river restoration also sits at the heart of our **Wye Adapt to Climate Change project** which is managed in partnership with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. This initiative has been successful in supporting landowners to change the way their land is managed to deliver more resilience in the face of climate change. Engagement has been high with over 15,000 acres now under improved management with a focus on soil health, water retention and riparian habitats. Our **Local Wildlife Sites project** was funded by Powys County Council for a year to the end of March 2025.

While our **Stand for Nature Wales project** came to an end, it created significant impact across communities in Radnorshire. Our aim is to always leave projects with a 'tool kit' to continue operating independently from the Trust and driven by local communities. **The Green Future Leaders programme** supported two interns for six months. We were successful in gaining funding for a new project called **Wilder Communities** with thanks to the National Lottery and the Ashley Family Foundation. The activities of the Project Officer in empowering local communities to enhance biodiversity in their area reflects one of the Trust's strategic goals to encourage people to 'act for nature'.



In 2023, we were awarded funding from John Ellerman Foundation for the **Wye Now? project**. The initiative's initial aim was to deliver campaign and advocacy work but we refocused its objectives slightly for the final two years of the project's life. Given our existing collaborations with those organisations that are working on improving the health of the Wye, it was deemed more appropriate to focus our efforts at farm / land advice along the riparian corridor. Together with funding from DRW Foundation, we now have a team of three part-time advisors.

A continued lack of clarity over the forthcoming Sustainable Farming Scheme is a significant challenge for RWT, as well as Radnorshire's farmers and other landowners. Our new team of land / farm advisors are building relationships across the county and will be prepared to advise on potential nature-friendly grants as soon as the government makes an announcement.

Jason Elberts

Mike Snelle



Scaling impact through innovation and collaboration

RWT recognises the power of collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and ideas to deliver the best outcomes for nature across the county.

We have a wide range of partnerships where we are working directly with other Wildlife Trusts and environmental charities, such as Wye Adapt to Climate Change with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.

We do not want to reinvent wheels or compete for grants where we believe other organisations are a better fit in terms of expertise and resource. Being a core member of the Wye Catchment Partnership as it continues to evolve has been interesting and RWT hopes to receive some of the recent DEFRA funding for restoring the Wye catchment to good ecological health.

We have also supported the efforts of our wonderful Citizen Scientists, led by Friends of the River Wye, who continue to monitor water quality, with data driving advocacy for cleaner rivers. Other collaborations with entrepreneurial and visionary organisations like the Black Mountains College deliver mutual benefits in multiple ways

FUTURE PLANS

Plans and progress towards RWT's 2030 strategy

As we progress through 2025 and beyond, we aim to focus all our efforts on restoring nature in Radnorshire. To be successful, we need a strong, focused and energetic team with a good mix of experience, skills and perspectives. With a new CEO in place, we look forward to RWT's staff team continuing to increase its impact on the ground.

As well as a strong and stable team supported by our trustees, volunteers and other partners, the Trust needs to strengthen its financial position to ensure a level of sustainable income in future. While we have been successful in attracting project funding in recent years, unrestricted donations that keep our organisation alive have been difficult to come by. There will be increasing focus on the latter in the years ahead with new initiatives such as a Patrons' Circle and a more structured approach to legacy giving which has been so important to the Trust over the years. We received over £12,000 in legacies over the year for which we are very grateful.

At the time of writing, we have applied for significant continuation funding for two of our key projects- the Wilder Lugg (catchment scale restoration) and Pentwyn (connecting people with nature and food/farming). We hope to include some species reintroduction projects into RWT's work in the coming years. It is exciting to see wildlife camera footage of otters and pine martens start to be regular features on our social media feeds.

The three pillars of our five-year strategy are always at the forefront on our minds: Restoring Nature, Inspiring People, and Mitigating Against Climate Change. All our activity can be linked to one or more of these strategic goals, but we need to improve the way we collect data, monitor and report.

We will continue to work closely with our advocacy colleagues at Wildlife Trust Wales to ensure the forthcoming Sustainable Farming Scheme is appropriately funded so that farming in Radnorshire and the rest of Wales is managed in a sustainable, nature-friendly way that embeds climate resilience. While RWT will ensure that our 18 reserves are havens for wildlife, we recognise this alone will not come close to reversing nature's decline. We will do whatever is in our power to encourage all farmers and other landowners to increase the focus on nature restoration in the way they manage their land, with proper financial incentives to support this crucial transition.

We are a small charity with big ambitions, and we remain optimistic. While tackling global climate change can feel overwhelming, the people of Radnorshire have the power to reverse the huge post-war declines we have seen in our wildlife. The support of our amazing members, volunteers and partners whose passion and generosity fuel our work is heartening and convinces us that we can make a difference.

It is an exciting time for RWT with so many opportunities to deliver on our mission. There will always be challenges with political and economic influences pushing the Trust off course from time to time, but with your support, we will continue to work hard to ensure nature thrives once again in Radnorshire.



Sam Coppard



Terry Whitaker/2020VISION



Silvia Sireys

THANK YOU

Patron - Iolo Williams

President - Julian Gibson-Watt

Vice Presidents - MT Gibson-Watt, Lord Guy Milford, Elizabeth Passey

Board of Trustees

Sue Holden - Chair

Jen Newman - Vice Chair

Bill Stow - Hon. Treasurer

Edmund Hayward - Hon. Secretary

Gafyn Blakeway,

Richard Thomas,

Rosie Wood,

Joss Garman,

Leigh Harling Bowen,

Chris Ledbury (resigned Oct 2024)

Staff (at end March 2025)

CEO - Victoria Heffer

Head of Conservation - Silvia Sivers

Wilder Lugg Project Officer - Dan Westbury

Wye Adapt to Climate Change Officer & Farm Advisor- Sarenta King

Reserves Officer - Robert Hall

Wilder Pentwyn Project Officer - Chloe Jackson

Farm Advisor - Caroline Gellor

Assistant Reserves Officer - Tam Jones-Morris

Office Manager - Catrin Sparrow

Fundraising Manager - Becca Oakley

Finance Manager - Andrew Nineham

Marketing Officer - Elin Dafydd

With special thanks to all our volunteers including our dedicated TVG members, and all passionate supporters of RWT's vision.



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info@rwtwales.org

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