

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two young girls riding bicycles through a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The girl on the left is wearing a yellow jacket with black polka dots and purple pants. The girl on the right is wearing a pink jacket and blue patterned shorts. In the background, there is a large, dark-colored house with a prominent chimney. The sky is overcast and grey.

Be part of
**NATURE'S
RECOVERY**

**Your local Wildlife Trust's vision for the natural environment
in Berks, Bucks and Oxon by 2030**

Who we are

The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust,

BBOWT is the only membership organisation in the three counties that protects wildlife and the places where it thrives, encourages people to discover their local nature reserves, and understands the value of the health and economic benefits of wildlife.

BBOWT is

52,000 members

1,450 volunteers

46 local groups

£5.4m turnover

88 nature reserves

4 environmental education centres

3 Living Landscape schemes



Our Vision

An environment rich in wildlife, valued by all.

Our Mission

To create a Living Landscape across our towns, cities and countryside and inspire our communities to act for nature.

Our Aim

To lead the way for nature's recovery and connect people with nature, so that:

- Our soil and water resources are managed to create functioning ecosystems and wildlife-rich places.
- Local communities, decision-makers, landowners and businesses work with and for nature.
- People recognise their dependence upon nature and its value to their mental and physical wellbeing.

Cover Image: We will connect people and nature. Matthew Roberts. Brown hare by Richard Bowler



NATURE'S RECOVERY

We will bring nature into urban areas.
Taylor Wimpey

Message from the CEO and Chair

This Strategic Plan for 2016-2021 sets out an exciting new approach for the work of the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. Never has it been more important to be ambitious and focused in our work.

The Plan is designed to **restore nature** so that our wildlife habitats are 'more, bigger, better and joined'. A new goal has been set to increase the area of unprotected wildlife-rich land in our three counties from 6.9% to 10% by 2030. A healthy natural environment is not only good for wildlife but provides us with clean water, pollinates our crops, conserves soils, and reduces flooding.

Even this is not enough. We also need to **get people involved** and empower them to take action for wildlife. We will inspire more people of all ages and backgrounds to understand and value the natural world.

Central to the Plan is the urgent need to build **more strong partnerships** to make this vision a reality: farmers, house-builders, construction firms, water and energy companies, health and education providers, local authorities, other charities, government agencies and more.

We are committed to ensuring we **build up our abilities** so that BBOWT can succeed and stays relevant to a changing society and changing economic landscape. We will do all we can to ensure that people recognise and **value nature's benefits** to society and the economy. Over the next five years, with the support of our loyal members, BBOWT will play a leading role in securing an environment rich in wildlife, valued by all.

Society is changing and so are we

Portraits: Ric Mellis



Estelle Bailey

Estelle Bailey
Chief Executive



Clive Booth

Sir Clive Booth
Chair

More, bigger, better and joined

Healthy for wildlife, healthy for people

You might ask why nature needs to recover in the first place. The answer is that our three counties have suffered 70 years of habitat destruction. New houses and roads have gobbled up land. And there are 100,000 more homes to come in this area. Unsustainable farming has depleted soils, wiped out a lot of our wildlife and made flooding worse.

We can't put all this damage right, but there are many places left where small changes in management would allow large areas of land

to function more naturally. And that would benefit not just wildlife, but all of us as well.

Large-scale scientific studies show that nearby nature makes us happier, healthier, and more relaxed. It's hardly surprising; after all we have evolved to feel secure in resource-rich environments.

So what would it be like, living near a nature restoration area?

In essence it would be a return to the quantity and variety of wildlife everyone took for granted 100 years ago. Whether walking in town or country you'd see more wild flowers, hedgerows, meadows and ponds. You'd almost certainly notice more birds, bees and butterflies visiting your garden.

There might be wildlife-rich areas set aside for rivers to flood into, and wildlife-friendly planting at your place of work. Your children might even know more names of flowers and

butterflies than you. The science predicts a whole range of more subtle effects too: less obesity, illness and depression. Which means more days when you feel great.

It won't happen everywhere, but it's a start. **The next few pages show the five Themed Actions we will take to deliver the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust's Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021.**

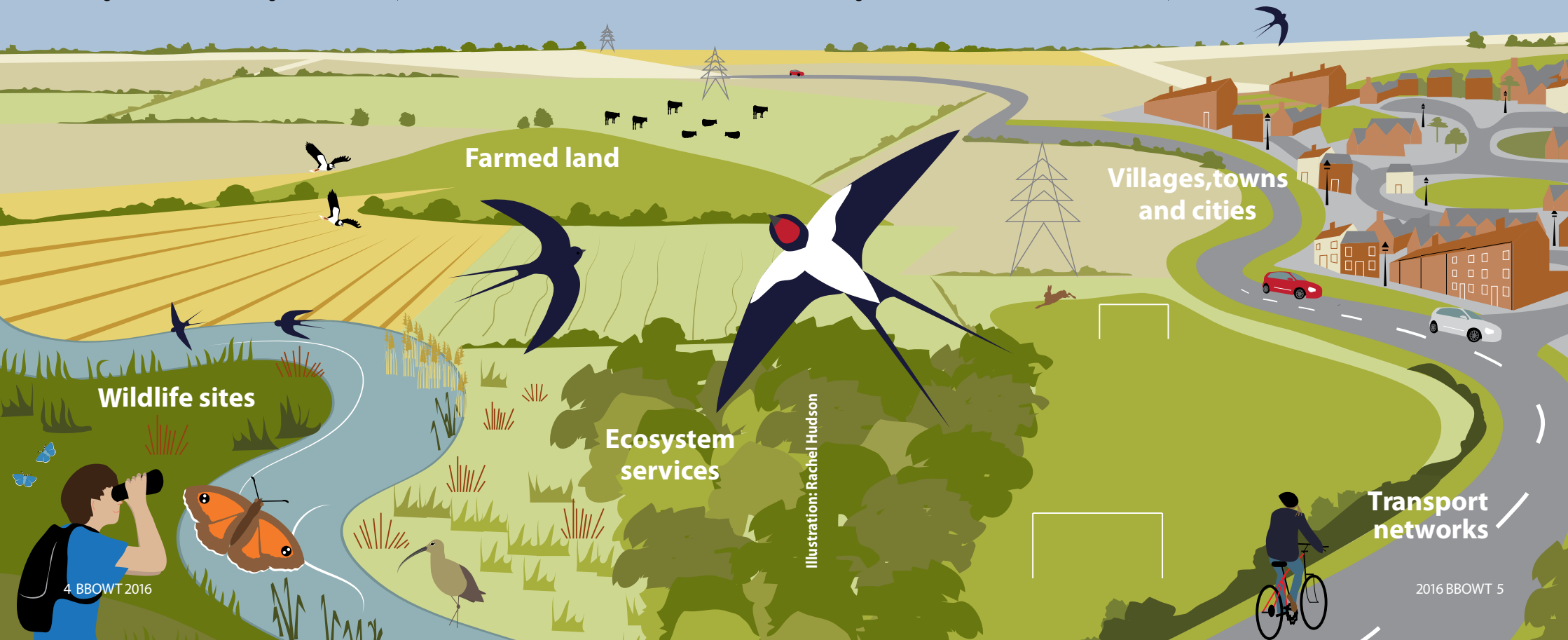


Illustration: Rachel Hudson

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Restore nature

Today we manage 88 nature reserves covering over 2,500 hectares. These are natural havens where wildlife thrives and spreads into the wider landscape when conditions are favourable. We will ensure the reserves continue to flourish.

We will continue to use the principle championed by Professor Sir John Lawton of 'More, bigger, better and joined' to create three new Living Landscape areas to protect and improve biodiversity and habitats for wildlife.

BBOWT will stand up for wildlife, fighting to protect areas recognised for their wildlife value: nationally these are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and locally, Local Wildlife Sites. We will work with partners to improve the wildlife value of land beyond these protected areas, in ways that improve the ecological networks across our region.

Through careful management of soil and water resources these networks will be more resilient to the extremes of weather and rising temperatures resulting from climate change, bringing wider benefits to society.

We will

- Continue to invest in our current estate and Living Landscape projects, and establish the Upper Thames Vision as an exemplar project.
- Fight to defend areas protected for their wildlife value.
- Work with landowners beyond those areas to improve the wildlife richness of our countryside.

At a glance 

Beyond areas already protected:

8% of land rich in wildlife by 2020

10% rich in wildlife by 2030

6 Living Landscape schemes in rural and urban areas

West Berkshire Living Landscape - more than 65,000 people currently live within six miles of here.

Rob Appleby

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Get people involved

We will make it easier for people and communities from all backgrounds to visit and cherish their local nature reserves, local green spaces and Living Landscapes.

We will build on successful urban projects in Oxford and West Berkshire to connect with communities that are traditionally less engaged in our work.



Volunteers just love volunteering.
Jess Gallagher

Thousands of people already visit our nature reserves every year. Some of them take part in events and conservation activities. Others quietly enjoy the environment and species they find there. All derive great benefits to their health and wellbeing. We want this to continue.

Today more than 12,000 schoolchildren visit our sites each year. Over the next five years we will ensure more schoolchildren and young people experience nature and wildlife. Giving young people healthy, natural experiences builds their confidence and sense of responsibility.

We will

- Take Living Landscapes into Reading, Slough and Milton Keynes, by establishing partnerships with local communities and businesses to make more green spaces for people and wildlife.
- Improve the attractiveness of our visitor centres while ensuring they remain important resources to learn about nature. Establish a new wildlife centre in Oxfordshire.
- Continue to engage and educate everyone about nature, particularly young people.



Who knows the value of awakening a sense of wonder?
Ric Mellis

By 2021

20,000 people taking action directly for wildlife

50,000 schoolchildren visiting our education centres

40,000 high quality volunteering experiences

Enjoying local, urban green spaces.
Eleanor Church



Valuing nature's benefits

We will only make real progress with Restoring Nature when wildlife and ecosystem services provided by the natural world are recognised and valued by landowners, decision-makers, planners, developers and the NHS.

We will build on BBOWT's strengths to work with utilities, food and technology businesses, and retailers, to help them recognise the true value of natural capital in their processes.

We will work with public health bodies to ensure the 'natural health service' is available for everyone visiting our nature reserves and their local green spaces. We will work with decision-makers in local authorities who can influence the integration of natural green spaces within all forms of new development.

We will

- Develop new ways to value ecosystem services, and improve our understanding of climate change impacts to build resilience into our activities.
- Work with partners on a shared agenda for natural green spaces in the built environment.
- Increase opportunities for local influencers to work with BBOWT to make more spaces for nature and people where they live.

By 2021

40,000 people attending community events, courses & activities

10 new schemes integrating wildlife with development

2,500 people engaging in activities in nature to benefit their health

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More strong partnerships

Achieving our Strategic Plan will require more strong partnerships. Businesses, local authorities and politicians increasingly recognise the need to help with nature's recovery; we will inspire more to do so and to act with urgency. BBOWT provides an unmatched knowledge of local ecology, the impacts of our activities for wildlife and where solutions lie. Nature's recovery will depend on BBOWT joining up with those able to make a positive impact, as we're doing already with The Crown Estate, Thames Water and The Parks Trust, among many others.

We will

- Partner with developers and local authorities to create more natural green spaces in built environments.
- Work with companies and organisations to ensure ecosystem services are fully integrated with development proposals.
- Continue to campaign and advocate for wildlife locally and nationally.

By 2021

150 partners working with BBOWT for nature restoration

60 decision-makers making positive impacts for wildlife

All 21 of our MPs aware of nature's needs and people's needs for nature in their constituencies



Working together for nature's recovery: Thames Water and BBOWT discuss future plans at Farmoor Reservoir, Oxfordshire. Ric Mellis



BBOWT staff and volunteers are our greatest asset, and we will invest in them. Alison Blaney

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Build up our abilities

Everything BBOWT does depends on the organisation being efficient, financially robust, and well-led and governed. We will inspire our 130 staff and 1,450 volunteers, giving them the practical support to realise their potential, and better coordinate and streamline our work.

A new commercial approach to trading, ecological consultancy and land management will bring in new income.

We will

- Ensure BBOWT has the appropriate resources, systems and governance processes in line with national fundraising standards.
- Invest in supporting and equipping our staff and volunteers to deliver the Strategic Plan 2016-2021.
- Seek income from new sources and manage our assets more efficiently.



By 2021

Even stronger financial base

More diverse board of trustees

Every member of staff and every volunteer empowered to realise their full potential



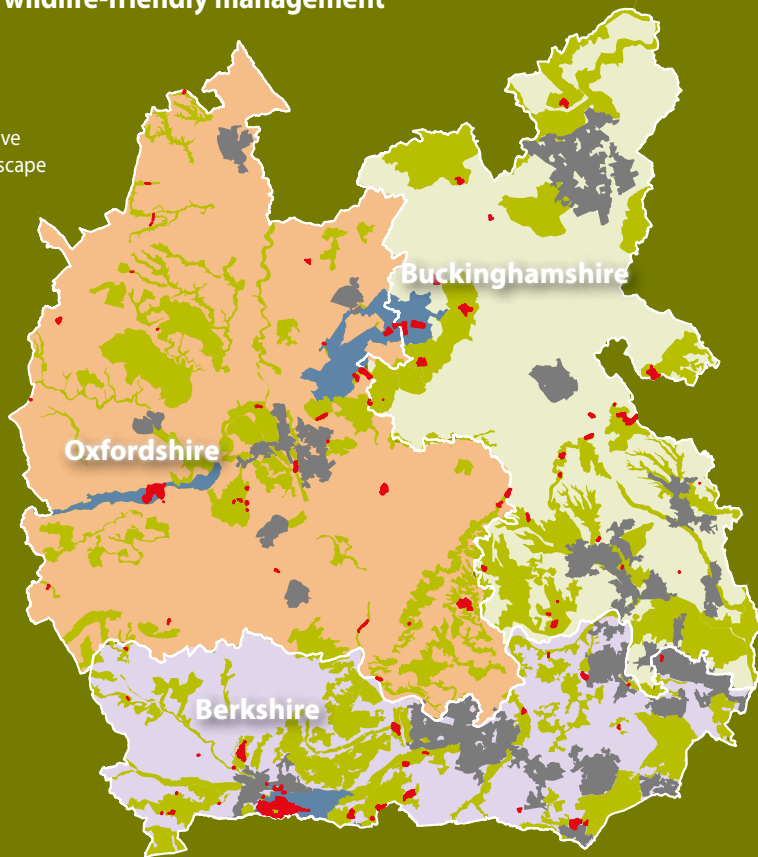
Where nature could return

Studies of our three counties show the areas most likely to benefit from wildlife-friendly management

Key

- BBOWT nature reserve
- BBOWT Living Landscape
- Urban area
- Potential nature restoration area

This map shows which parts of our three counties are most suitable for creating networks for nature.



Our goal

By 2030 we will have **increased the area** of unprotected wildlife-rich land in our three counties from 6.9% to 10%.

And we will have **expanded our reach** into local communities to bring wildlife into people's lives.

All our lives are better when they're a bit wild



Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire



Join us Be part of nature's recovery!

To deliver our Strategic Plan we need a wide range of partners. Please contact us to find out how you can make a positive difference for wildlife and people.

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**The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust
(BBOWT) is one of 47 Wildlife Trusts
across the UK working to bring about
nature's recovery, and to reconnect
people to the natural world.**

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Working together with our partners,
we will lead the way for nature's recovery.
Jess Gallagher