

# Annual Review 2021/22



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur  
**Maldwyn**  
**Montgomeryshire**  
Wildlife Trust



# Chair's Overview

In March 2021 strict Covid restrictions were still in place. Over the months that followed, the situation was fluid as infection rates waxed and waned and the vaccination programme did its remarkable work. Amidst all this chaos, nature was therapeutic for people's stresses and the great outdoors was a safe space.

Meanwhile the Trust grew in size and confidence, and, in line with The Wildlife Trusts movement, we produced our Strategy: an action plan for dealing with the nature and climate crises. This year, we've been active across all its key areas – putting nature into recovery, involving more people in nature, and developing natural solutions to problems such as climate change and mental health issues – for the aim of a 'Wilder Montgomeryshire' by 2030.

Long before the events of spring 2020, trailblazing nature for wellbeing project, *Wild Skills Wild Spaces*, was devised. Due to the pandemic it was put on hold, but by June 2021 we were ready to launch. Individuals referred from our partners at Powys Teaching Health Board came for weekly ecotherapy sessions, to be in nature and learn outdoor skills.

In other work, *Green Connections* Powys supported and advised landowners and communities to develop wild spaces, to help tackle the nature crisis, while *Stand for Nature Wales* inspired and empowered young people to get involved in the fight against climate change.

In May 2021, our brand-new visitor hub at Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve, the Dyfi Wildlife Centre, finally opened (also delayed due to Covid). With world-class live streamed and recorded wildlife footage, it's proved a huge success amongst locals and tourists alike. The climate-positive building has exceeded expectations – generating far more energy than it uses.

Thanks to these projects and more besides, our team has grown more than ever before. But we still rely just as much on a large, loyal and incredibly valued group of volunteers who happily returned to help us fulfil our work. Regardless of the role they do, without them we could not function. Very many thanks, as always, to them and to all our other supporters.

**Tim McVey**, MWT Chair



Tim at Cors Dyfi Nature Reserve

## Who We Are

**Since 1982, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust (MWT) has been the leading voluntary organisation promoting wildlife conservation, managing and caring for 18 nature reserves within the county, totalling some 530 hectares in area.**

### **Our Vision:**

An environment rich in wildlife for everyone

### **Our Mission:**

To rebuild biodiversity and engage people with their environment

### **Our Objectives:**

- 1) To stand up for wildlife and the environment
- 2) To create and enhance wildlife havens
- 3) To inspire people about the natural world
- 4) To foster sustainable living

## Membership and Volunteers

The Trust welcomed 142 new members in 2021/22, with the total number of member households at 1,053 and the number of individual members at 1,932.

During 2021 our CRM membership database was developed and implemented. Linked to our website, this new system will help streamline membership activities and simplify Gift Aid collection; it's also far better suited to GDPR compliance requirements. What's more, in the future it will enable us to offer paperless direct debit facilities – further progress with reducing our carbon footprint!

With Covid restrictions slowly lifted during this time, volunteering activities started ramping up again. While numbers and hours were not at pre-pandemic levels, nevertheless we were delighted to see so many longstanding volunteers still keen to lend their support. Our Reserves Officer continued running multiple weekly work parties, to make up for the restrictions on numbers and the backlog of jobs from lockdowns, furloughed staff and a lack of volunteering. Our Conservation Officer was also very grateful for substantial help surveying wildlife and sites. Other essential tasks aided by volunteers including the replacement of boardwalk at Severn Farm Pond and training on the *Montgomeryshire Crayfish Project*.

In total, during the 2021/22 period, our volunteers have donated 549 days of their time, with a monetary value to the Trust of £27,457. As always, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

# People and Wildlife

## Wild Skills Wild Spaces

Four new staff members were employed in April 2021 to deliver Wild Skills Wild Spaces (WSWS) – a trailblazing scheme to boost people’s wellbeing and reconnect them with nature, while making a positive change for wildlife – which launched 16th June 2021. Funded by Welsh Government’s Sustainable Management Scheme, the project is a partnership with Powys Teaching Health Board and Cardiff Metropolitan University. Referrals from GPs and community mental health and adult care teams, and from local schools, undertook a 12-week programme of ecotherapy sessions on MWT nature reserves, and a partner site in Newtown, with outdoor activities such as wildlife identification, foraging, bushcraft and green wood-working. Sessions were soon being delivered to five groups at any time (three youth groups and two adult groups). From 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, WSWS worked with 69 young people (aged 11-17) and 49 adults (aged 18-67) for a total of 180 sessions and 450 hours of delivery time. In autumn

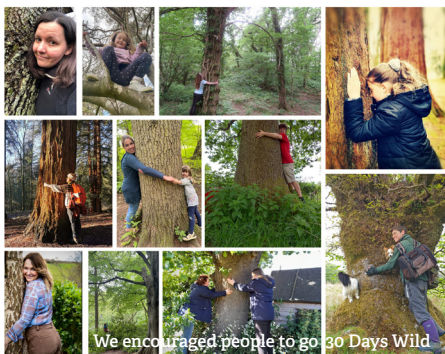
2021 WSWS received an NHS Forest 2021 Award for ‘Engaging People with Nature’. WSWS participants also contributed to conservation work, including building and installing 81 nest-boxes, using kits made by Llanfyllin Men’s Shed, at four MWT nature reserves. Infrastructure improvements included the removal of more than 100 metres of old, rotten boardwalk from Severn Farm Pond in preparation for new boarding, and a new toilet being installed at Dolforwyn Woods. Other project legacies included the formation of a new Friends of Severn Farm Pond Group.



WSWS youth participants at work on a reserve

## Community Outreach and Social Media

Our events started back up, although limited in number, with reduced participants, as per Welsh Government guidance. To continue the Trust’s mission to protect and promote the wildlife of Montgomeryshire, staff engaged with community groups, schools and local people and held events including a Bat and Moth Night at Cors Dyfi and talks on geology, waders and dolphins. Our active online community outreach endured with ‘The Week in Wildlife’, a staff and supporters’ nature highlights showcase, providing inspiration. Meanwhile our social media presence grew in size and influence, with many new followers: 323 on Facebook, 168 on Twitter and 121 on Instagram, plus a new profile on platform TikTok to reach a younger audience. At our Dyfi Osprey Project, dedicated profiles gave us a platform for regular updates and YouTube enabled live streaming of our nest cameras 24 hours a day, all season, with a chat



facility for public engagement. June saw the seventh year of the popular annual '30 Days Wild' campaign; in Montgomeryshire alone there was a 74% increase in sign-ups as participants completed daily 'random acts of wildness'.

## Stand for Nature Wales

Funded by National Lottery Community Fund, Stand For Nature Wales (S4NW) is a partnership across Welsh Trusts to empower young people to act for climate change and the nature and biodiversity crisis. Officially launched in April 2021,

the four-year campaign works with nine to 24-year-olds to devise nature-based solutions to climate issues. In 2021/22, the project created meadows, dug new ponds and constructed homes for wildlife in schools, reserves and other community spaces. The S4NW team also ran or attended 16 events, delivered 25 school sessions, delivered 29 sessions to youth groups and four sessions to their Welshpool Youth Action Group (the first of their Youth Action Groups in Montgomeryshire).



© Niall Benvie/2020VISION

## Carbon Accounting

We are in the midst of two inextricably linked, escalating crises: climate and nature. While our core objective is to restore nature we can't do this without taking action to help tackle climate change. Funding from the People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) has enabled us to calculate MWT's annual carbon footprint, to look at the environmental impacts of how we carry out our work, and to start developing a Carbon Reduction Strategy and associated Action Plan to become carbon neutral by 2030. Thanks to the funding, we appointed a Carbon Lead to carry out some of these activities and to undertake TWT carbon literacy training seminars, such as 'Carbon Sequestration of Habitats' and 'Grazing Regimes and Emissions'.



# Cors Dyfi

## Dyfi Osprey Project

Both breeding female osprey Telyn and our breeding male Idris had returned to Cors Dyfi before the start of April 2021 – making this the earliest start to the breeding season since the project launched in 2011. Three eggs were laid in April; all three then hatched without issue in May 2021, though one chick sadly died on the nest. The two surviving



Osprey chicks Dysynni and Ystwyth

chicks were ringed on 24th June by Tony Cross. A boy, Dysynni (Blue 490), and a girl, Ystwyth (Blue 491), they were named, according to our tradition, after Welsh rivers or lakes: the Dysynni River, to the north of the Dyfi, is where ospreys are regularly seen fishing, and the Ystwyth River which gives its name to university

town Aberystwyth where our ospreys' DNA is studied. Dysynni and Ystwyth fledged successfully in July before leaving for migration in late August.

## Conservation

While father (Barti) and son (Byrti) of our long-awaited beaver family arrived at the end of March 2021, the mother (Bedwen) was not released into the seven-acre beaver enclosure until 16th April. The reunited trio lived up to expectations and immediately set to work felling birch and willow trees. Funded by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Cors Dyfi has a five-year licence for the project. It's part of a wider Welsh Beaver Project to reintroduce native beavers. It's also hoped the beavers will help bring the habitat at Cors Dyfi under control – its tricky terrain renders it impossible to manage with human power alone. 2021/22 also saw the first ever record of Long-eared Owls breeding on the reserve, making 2021 forever synonymous with the nocturnal bird of prey.



Long-eared Owls bred at Cors Dyfi

## Dyfi Wildlife Centre

Our beautiful new visitor centre opened for the first time ever – and as soon as legally possible – on 3rd May 2021 with restricted entry and a booking system. Built thanks to grants from National Lottery Heritage Fund and Welsh Government, along with public donations, the £1.1 million flagship brought together existing facilities with new ones to enhance the visitor experience immeasurably. Cutting-edge technology – a 40Kw solar panel system on its south-facing roof, power wall electrical storage and ground

source heat pump – was utilised to make the building climate-positive (better than carbon net-zero!). Across 2021, it generated 142% more electrical energy than consumed, exporting a staggering 10 megawatts of clean energy back to the Grid for others to use. Constructed using locally sourced wood and slate, recycled and repurposed materials, the building is a shining light of sustainability. Even its café – Caffi Ty Maenan – champions Welsh produce, with ‘real food’ sourced from nearby, minimising food miles and supporting local farmers and producers. A high-tech viewing area with cinematic



The Dyfi Wildlife Centre opened May 2021

imagery offers world-class views of the osprey nest. In 2021/22 we also successfully completed the Arwain Project – a community engagement initiative – thanks to European funding through Powys County Council. In March 2022 our Penny Floor was unveiled in the Galeri. The largest coin floor of its kind in the world, it used almost 50,000 British pre-decimal pennies – donated in response to public appeals on social media – to create a 30 square metre resin-covered mosaic of the Dyfi River.

## Volunteers

While a small team of volunteers had assisted us before the new Dyfi Wildlife Centre opened to the public, summer 2021 saw many others return after a long pandemic-related break – for some their first real experience of mixing with people in nearly 18 months. Some took up former roles, such as people engagement in the Observatory, while others tried out new roles, including in Caffi Ty Maenan, or assisted with events, beaver monitoring and fence-line/enclosure checks. From autumn,

we were able to restart practical conservation work, such as removal of small birch and willow trees (which self-seed in the bog and have the potential to dry it out if left unmanaged). In March 2022, it was volunteers who counted and cleaned thousands of donated pre-decimal coins, before laying them by hand in a unique design. Our wonderful team of volunteers proved invaluable as ever, always prepared to muck in, coping with late changes to work around restrictions as well as the ever-fluctuating weather. Overall, around 70 volunteers contributed more than 3,000 hours.



Volunteers laying the Penny Floor

# Living Landscapes

## Nature Reserves

MWT manages 18 nature reserves around the county, all havens for wildlife, as well as inspiring places for people to visit. They include limestone grassland, ancient woodland, upland lakes, peat bogs and wildflower meadows. Each is carefully maintained by MWT staff and a team of dedicated work party volunteers. In 2021/22 work party volunteer numbers had nearly returned to pre-Covid levels, but with at least two work parties delivered per week as opposed to one.



In total, there were 252 volunteer days across 67 sessions. Eleven reserves were worked on, and jobs undertaken included: coppicing, fencing, hay meadow



management, removing dangerous trees, scrub clearance, hedge maintenance and repairs, creating a new pond and bench. It was great to start surveying again (with the exception of bats), after the Covid lockdowns hiatus. Volunteers resumed Breeding Bird Surveys on six nature reserves and three were surveyed as part of BTO's Wetland Bird Survey, recording 34 species. Bird nesting data was also collected; 106 nests of 13 different species were monitored and nearly two thirds of nesting attempts were thought to be successful. After the highest ever count of Autumn Crocus at Llanmerewig Glebe in 2020, numbers were down. As counts fluctuate each year, this is not a concern

and indeed, overall there appears to be a slight increase. Pearl-bordered Fritillary monitoring illustrated mixed fortunes in spring 2021, but overall numbers were down on 2019. Other work included Dormice Surveys, biodiversity audits at five major Hafren Dyfrdwy sites and supporting the production of a new Nature Recovery Action Plan for Powys.

## Montgomeryshire Crayfish Project

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) funding facilitated a small project on crayfish distribution in the county. Ten water samples, across three river catchments, were collected and analysed for the presence of environmental DNA from three species: the native White-clayed Crayfish; invasive non-native Signal Crayfish; and the fungus that causes 'crayfish plague'. These results are being used to target further work and the development of a partnership to try to protect remaining populations of our native crayfish.





Green Connections scything training

## Green Connections Powys

A collaborative Wildlife Trusts project, Welsh Government-funded Green Connections Powys has been working with community groups, small businesses, landowners and local councils to take action to address climate change and biodiversity loss and create a nature recovery network. In 2021/22, staff worked with 15 landowners, four businesses, 17 community groups (including local councils) and ran four training days. MWT also highlighted the Swift, a beautiful bird which has sadly declined 50% globally over the past 25 years. In December 2021, an online talk by Edward Mayer was attended by around 100 people from as far afield as Poland, showing the considerable interest in these birds. MWT also started planning

and promoting an extensive calendar of swift walks and surveys, along with community engagement, for spring and summer 2022.

## Cefn Croes

In collaboration with NRW and Falck Renewables, MWT has continued to monitor the work to the upland peat bogs underneath Falck's wind farm at Cefn Croes. By blocking drainage ditches, a mosaic of pools was created and the site's natural hydrology restored. Notable signs of success have included a continued increase of indicator species, such as Sphagnum Moss and Bog Asphodel, and greater numbers of animals such as Merlin and Snipe. Despite good habitat suitability for Water Voles, however, two days of searching for field signs were unfruitful.

## Montgomeryshire Curlew Project

Once widespread in Wales, the Eurasian Curlew is now Red Listed and at risk

of becoming extinct as a breeding species in the country by 2030. In 2021 Montgomeryshire was identified as an 'Important Curlew Area' within the Wales Action Plan for Recovery of Curlew. Funding by NRW enabled MWT to work with ornithologists on vital monitoring work and a report on the county's current curlew population. A public appeal for data on local sightings was launched, while awareness of the bird's plight was raised through social media, and thanks to an online talk by expert Mick Green (since viewed on YouTube more than 160 times). We also used NRW funding to buy colour rings and radio tags ready to start catching curlews to install trackers on them in April 2022.



The iconic Eurasian Curlew

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# Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

## Financial Statements

### For the year end 31st March 2022

The summarised accounts herewith are an extract from the Charity's statutory annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022. WR Partners reported on the accounts as independent auditors.

The annual report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 27th September 2022.

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. Copies of the full statutory annual report and accounts may be obtained from the Charity's registered office: Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Park Lane House, High Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7JP.

Trustees who served during the year and subsequently:

Tim McVey  
*Chair*

Clare Boyes  
*Vice Chair*

Ann Bitcon  
*Treasurer*

Chris Hurrell  
*Resigned Nov 2021*

Jane Lloyd Francis  
*Resigned Nov 2021*

Jenny Lloyd  
*Resigned Jan 2022*

Bob Beaman

Peter Powell

Jill Robinson

Sarah Evans

Tim Ward

Sian Dorward  
*Joined Feb 2022*

Chris Townsend  
*President*

## Thank You

We would like to thank the following organisations for their financial support during the year:

Arwain  
Barcud  
Climate Action Fund  
Dyfi Distillery  
ENRaW  
National Lottery Heritage Fund  
Natural Resources Wales  
Open Newtown  
People's Postcode Lottery  
Ricardo Energy  
RSWT  
Vector Renewables  
Vine House Farm  
Welsh Government

Furthermore, we would like to thank all the individuals and groups who made donations to Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, whether financially or through volunteering.

**MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST**  
**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

	Restricted funds (MWT only)	Unrestricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Income from</b>				
Donations and legacies	-	156,523	156,523	179,225
Charitable activities	873,650	-	873,650	630,132
Trading activities	-	180,019	180,019	57,891
<b>Total income</b>	<u>873,650</u>	<u>336,542</u>	<u>1,210,192</u>	<u>867,248</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Charitable activities	681,062	225,897	906,959	568,888
Trading activities	-	111,397	111,397	26,042
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<u>681,062</u>	<u>337,294</u>	<u>1,018,356</u>	<u>594,930</u>
	192,588	(752)	191,836	272,318
Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of investment	16,069	-	16,069	1,973
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<u>208,657</u>	<u>(752)</u>	<u>207,905</u>	<u>274,291</u>
Transfers between funds	(11,086)	11,086	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<u>197,571</u>	<u>10,334</u>	<u>207,905</u>	<u>274,291</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Funds at 1 April 2021	1,943,176	742,453	2,685,629	2,411,338
<b>Funds at 31 March 2022</b>	<u>2,140,747</u>	<u>752,787</u>	<u>2,893,534</u>	<u>2,685,629</u>

This document is an extract from the full accounts of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust & MWT Trading Limited.

**MONTGOMERYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 MARCH 2022**

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	2,638,872	2,420,668
Investments	37,822	21,753
	<u>2,676,694</u>	<u>2,442,421</u>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Stocks	32,684	16,245
Debtors	293,409	211,974
Cash at bank and in hand	79,656	230,220
	<u>405,749</u>	<u>458,439</u>
<b>Creditors: falling due within one year</b>	<u>188,909</u>	<u>215,231</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u>216,840</u>	<u>243,208</u>
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>2,893,534</u>	<u>2,685,629</u>
<b>Charity funds</b>		
Restricted funds – MWT only	2,140,747	1,943,176
Unrestricted funds	752,787	742,453
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>2,893,534</u>	<u>2,685,629</u>

This document is an extract from the full accounts of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust & MWT Trading Limited.





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**Montgomeryshire**  
Wildlife Trust

# Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

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Charity number: 512390 | Company number: 1612249

**[www.montwt.co.uk](http://www.montwt.co.uk)**

Cover photo: Green Connections Powys staff and volunteers have a go at scything during a training day