

Annual Review 2022/23



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Maldwyn
Montgomeryshire
Wildlife Trust

Chair's Overview

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust has been involved in numerous projects over the last year. We have grown steadily in staff numbers, range of activities and, inevitably, turnover. The Wild Skills Wild Spaces project has enabled us to build some infrastructure at Llyn Coed y Dinas, Severn Farm Pond and Dolforwyn Woods nature reserves. Green Connections Powys, meanwhile, has established strong links with landowners and community groups who are spreading the benefits to nature through the landscape.

Partnerships – such as with Open Newtown; Hafren Dyfrdwy and their support of the Pathways for Pearls land management; and Barcud housing association who have funded a wildlife garden in Welshpool – have broadened the Trust's reach. Investment in restoring the Montgomery Canal, and our involvement in the Canals, Communities and Wellbeing initiative, has given the opportunity to celebrate its value to nature, with guided walks, an interactive app and interpretation panels. This has in turn raised awareness of the impact opening the canal up to motorised boat traffic would have on wildlife.

Dyfi Wildlife Centre had a very successful year, with excellent visitor numbers to see the centre, the reserve and, of course, the ospreys. Three eggs hatched and the chicks successfully fledged. The kitchen proved too small for demand so an extension was built over the winter, which should make life easier for the staff and improve customer service. The café and centre remained open until mid-December due to persisting visitor demand. The popular 'Loop' boardwalk

was also reinstated, allowing visitors access to more of the reserve.

Our administrative staff has been strengthened, with better capacity for communications, health and safety and HR. Our CRM (Customer Relations Management) system has taken time to set up and find its full value, but we are now reaping the benefits. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), which coordinates the federation of 46 Wildlife Trusts, has also improved its services, providing useful advice on governance and business.

We could not function without our dedicated volunteers. Our staff have shown vast expertise in running the Trust. We have been aided by a broad range of generous funders. Members and supporters have shown there is a strong desire for nature to flourish in Montgomeryshire. Thank you, all.

Tim McVey, MWT Chair



Tim visits the Dyfi Wildlife Centre

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 510 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 181 new members during 2022/23, with the total number of member households at 1,045, and the number of individual members at 2,182. In spring 2023, our CRM membership database was integrated into our website, simplifying membership processing and Gift Aid collection. Not only is the new system better suited to GDPR compliance, in time it will enable us to offer a paperless direct debit facility, thereby further reducing our carbon footprint.

Volunteering bounced back following the Covid disruptions we had seen in the previous couple of years. Our Reserves Officer and Conservation Officer were both glad of such staunch support once more, with huge amounts of work to do maintaining our nature reserves and carrying out wildlife surveys. We also advertised for volunteers to staff our Welshpool shop, based at our Park Lane House headquarters, which we happily reopened in November 2022. With three main shop volunteers, plus other volunteers who are happy to help on an adhoc basis, we have been able to open the shop for reduced hours two days each week – helping boost our core revenue, while increasing opportunities for one-to-one public engagement, such as advice with bird feeding and nest boxes. Other essential tasks made possible by the invaluable help of volunteers included nest box monitoring at Dolforwyn Woods and huge amounts of maintenance and repairs at Severn Farm Pond, thanks to new Friends Of groups established by past participants in the Wild Skills Wild Spaces project.

In total, during the 2022/23 period, our volunteers have donated 1,243 days of their time, with a monetary value to the Trust of £62,150. As always, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

People and Wildlife

Wild Skills Wild Spaces

Funded by Welsh Government's Sustainable Management Scheme, this pioneering nature for wellbeing project, with NHS Powys Teaching Health Board and Cardiff Metropolitan University, went from strength to strength in its second year. The four-strong team developed their skills base with training in green wood-working, hedge-laying and willow weaving. Seventy-two 11-17 year olds were engaged, with 600 delivery hours. Youth for Nature, a rolling volunteer programme, was set up. Forty three adults from referrers such as Mind and Ponthafren participated in 270 hours of ecotherapy, while a self-referral option was also introduced. Thirteen adult volunteers were recruited and two Friends Of volunteer groups were established, doing weekly sessions at Severn Farm Pond and Cultivate. Post-ecotherapy, 11 participants went on to part-time employment, volunteering and training; and 17 received John Muir Awards. Furthermore, Nature and Wellbeing Hubs made from reclaimed shipping containers were installed at Llyn Coed y Dinas and Severn Farm Pond to

enable all-weather delivery and twilight youth sessions in winter.



Team Wilder

An approach that uses community organising to empower people to take action for wildlife, Team Wilder was initially funded by People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) through RSWT, which paid for one part-time member of MWT staff. In June 2022, UK-wide Wildlife Trusts

project Nextdoor Nature was launched in the same spirit, to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, it aimed to support anybody and everybody to help nature on their doorstep. Nextdoor Nature paid for two part-time staff who, during 2022/23, received training in community organising, engaged with communities and set up groups. These included Dolanog Wildlife Group, Friends of Berriew Community Woodland and a SMART Rivers Team with Severn Rivers Trust, plus 5 active 'Wilder Schools'. To add further space for nature, relationships were forged with local councils, and events were delivered at care homes. Online wildlife recording system, Nature Counts, empowered the public to submit sightings to inform our evidence-based conservation work.

Wild Wellbeing

Not-for-profit housing association Barcud funded our work creating a species-rich area at Welshpool's Gungrog Estate where residents can meet up and learn new skills, while boosting their wellbeing. From rubble concrete, there is now a dipping pond



Raised beds at Gungrog Estate's wildlife area

and concrete, there is now a dipping pond where children can learn about aquatic invertebrates, raised beds, and a seating area offering fantastic views of the Montgomery Canal.

Open Newtown Partnership Project

With £723,000 funding through the Welsh Government's ENRaW scheme, this partnership with Cultivate, Oriel Davies and Tir Coed saw the MWT project officer facilitating nature-based activities in green spaces for improved wellbeing. Popular 'Wild Women' sessions empowered women to be outdoors at night while engaging in bushcraft, ecotherapy and natural crafts. The group has an active WhatsApp group and will continue to meet and enjoy nature beyond the life of the project.

Another project legacy is a community seating area in Dolerw Park made from locally sourced oak.

Stand for Nature Wales

Funded by the Climate Action Fund, through the National Lottery Community Fund, Stand for Nature Wales (SFNW) is a partnership across Welsh Trusts to empower young people to climate action. Launched in April 2021, the four-year campaign works with 9- to 24-year-olds to devise nature-based solutions to climate issues. In 2022/2023, the project created meadows, managed ponds and constructed homes for wildlife in schools, reserves and other community spaces. The S4NW team also ran or attended 18 events, including the



A Stand for Nature Wales youth group watches birds from a hide

project's first Youth Summit, gathering together young people from across Wales for 3 days of shared activities. In addition, they delivered 4 college sessions, 4 school sessions, 4 sessions to external groups and 17 sessions to their Welshpool Youth Action Group (YAG), as well as 15 sessions to Llanidloes YAG and 12 to Machynlleth YAG.

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. While we unfortunately did not receive funding for our carbon work in 2022/23, we nevertheless upheld our commitment to calculate our carbon footprint, a vital step in helping us analyse the environmental impacts of how we carry out our work and gradually reduce our emissions to become carbon neutral by 2030. MWT's carbon lead attended a course on Climate Change with a view to delivering peer to peer training in the future, and links were forged with other Welsh Trusts to find solutions to shared issues.

Dyfi Osprey Project

Our resident pair of ospreys, Idris and Telyn, returned in spring 2022. Having fledged two chicks in both 2020 and 2021, we were delighted that all three

chicks – named Pedran, Padarn and Paith, after Welsh rivers – hatched and survived to migration age. The Nature Networks Fund paid for increased protection and security measures on and around the osprey nest to keep

these magnificent birds of prey safe. Meanwhile it also helped fund better live streaming cameras and software, meaning 4k resolution for the first time, better zoom and seamless fade from one camera to another – resulting in a world-class osprey viewing experience.



However, it was a year of mixed fortunes for our returning offspring. Aeron (2017) and Tegid (2016) both bred successfully at their North Wales nests. Positive news was that their younger brother, Dinas (2018), also found a mate and bred for the first time in the same area. Sadly, another of our returning males, Hesygn (2019) was found deceased on Harlech beach. A post-mortem concluded he died of natural causes, with that year's record high temperatures possibly having a contributory effect.

Conservation

Meanwhile, our beaver family expanded in 2022 with the arrival of a single kit, named Bracken, in July. It was delightful to see the young beaver coming to the feeding platform with its family so we could see that, like its dad, it is a dark morph beaver.

Thanks to the Nature Networks Fund, early 2023 saw the return of 'The Loop' boardwalk around the top pond, but this time made out of 100 percent eco-friendly recycled material, in keeping



with the rest of the Cors Dyfi boardwalk. This allows closer access to the water and better opportunities to see dragonflies and damselflies as well as extending the walkways for our visitors by 50%, taking the total boardwalk length from 600 metres to 900 metres.

Dyfi Wildlife Centre

We were delighted to welcome back many visitors who had deferred holidays in previous seasons due to Covid. Spring and summer 2022 saw the Dyfi Wildlife Centre finally bustling with life, with

group visits, talks, events and plenty of delicious cake. During the closed season, work was undertaken to expand the kitchen, using funding from the Community Facilities Programme, to keep up with the demands of the very popular Caffi Tŷ Maenan. Meanwhile the centre's already outstanding carbon credentials were further enhanced in late spring/early summer 2022 by the addition of a new 40Kw solar panel (PV) canopy in the car park. Funded by Brilliant Basics (Welsh Government) (80%) and MWT (20%), this development



brought the site's total solar capacity, when combined with the building's south-facing roof solar array, to 90Kw. The clean energy generated from this canopy will not just be used for the 16

fast charging points for electric vehicles (EVs) and four e-bike chargers, but will also help power this climate-positive building, with any excess being exported to the Grid.

Volunteers

With visitor numbers returning to pre-Covid figures, it was lovely to have our volunteers back full time in the 2022 season. Many can now class themselves as 'veterans' with several years' experience. We also welcomed some new faces to the team in several new roles. People engagement, online engagement, talks, caffi and reserve management were just some of the ways our team clocked up nearly 6,000 hours.



Photos: © MWT/Emyr Evans

Living Landscapes

Nature Reserves

MWT manages 18 nature reserves, all havens for wildlife and 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 2022/23 business as usual was resumed following the Covid disruptions of the previous years, with our Reserves Officer running two work parties most weeks. In total there were 253 volunteer days across 56 sessions. Twelve reserves were worked on, and jobs included boardwalk repairs, scrub clearance, coppicing, hay meadow



Blue tit nest

management, hedge maintenance and fencing repairs. During this period, we were sad to say goodbye to two wardens who had collectively carried out the voluntary roles for 14 years! Thankfully, we also welcomed two new wardens into the fold. Our successful dormouse appeal allowed us to replace numerous dormouse nest boxes, some of which were on their last legs! The dormice seemed to approve, with the best overall count recorded since 2016! Breeding Bird Surveys were completed on eight sites, and Wetland Bird Surveys on three. Our team again contributed data to the British Trust for Ornithology's Nest Record Scheme; 16 different species were followed through a total of 174 nesting attempts, about 50% of which were thought to be successful. This is slightly down on 2021 (56%), but more nests were monitored.

Canals, Communities and Wellbeing

This collaborative project between MWT, WTSWW, Glandŵr Cymru, Canal & River Trust in Wales and Bannau Brycheiniog

National Park Authority was led by Powys County Council. Supported through the Welsh Government's ENRaW scheme, its aim was to increase



Montgomery Canal guided wildlife walk

awareness of, access to and biodiversity at Powys' two canals, with our focus on the wildlife-rich Montgomery Canal. We installed four eye-catching interpretation panels on canal wildlife; developed a bilingual smartphone app; created a Nature Play area at Llyn Coed y Dinas; and led six guided walks to 90 members of the public (with an additional three led the following year due to popularity); all boosted awareness of the canal's wildlife value.

Pathways for Pearls

Spring 2022 was the worst year since 2010 for our rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly. Sadly, the population at Llanymynech was also declared extinct. So, new Pathways for Pearls landscape-scale project couldn't have come at a better time. Funding from



Hafren Dyfrdwy, along with People's Postcode Lottery (PPL), enabled us to give advice, carry out surveys and work with land managers, to improve habitat quality and connectivity. Work carried out included hedge-laying

and woodland management. We were delighted to welcome Senedd Species Champion for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Assembly Member Russell George [pictured], to one of the sites, where he enjoyed a close encounter!

Powys Local Wildlife Sites Partnership

MWT is a key partner on the Powys Local Wildlife Sites Partnership, providing the Secretariat role, as well as putting sites

forward for consideration. Thanks to Green Connections, we put forward 26 Montgomeryshire sites, 25 of which were selected, including 8 of our nature reserves.

Mont 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'. Grants from NRW funded research, a public appeal, a report and bought tracking equipment in 21/22. Following on from this, in April and May 2022 Curlews were caught and tagged using colour rings and radio tags purchased the year before. This yielded some interesting data which is currently being analysed by an Aberystwyth University Masters student – so watch this space. Meanwhile, MWT continues to work with other organisations to support Curlew recovery, and to find funding for further conservation work.

Green Connections Powys

A collaborative Wildlife Trusts project, with MWT, RWT and the Brecknock office



of WTSWW, Green Connections Powys launched in April 2021 and was funded by Welsh Government's ENRaW scheme. We worked with community groups, small businesses, landowners and local councils to take action to address biodiversity loss and create a nature recovery network. During 2022/23 we advised landowners and community groups improving land for wildlife, we funded habitat management for several landowners, and we offered surveys to support management plans. The Trust ran several training days for community groups, and many engagement events, such as Brilliant Banwy in Deri Woods and a Bioblitz at Pentre Mawr farm. In summer 2022, the team ran 10 swift walks/surveys, with 119 people attending.

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust

Financial Statements

For the year end 31st March 2023

The summarised accounts herewith are an extract from the Charity's statutory annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023. WR Partners reported on the accounts as independent auditors.

The annual report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 25th September 2023.

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

Peter Powell

Jill Robinson

Sarah Evans

Tim Ward

Sian Dorward

Susan Morley
Joined Dec 2022

Bob Beaman
Resigned Jan 2023

Chris Townsend
President

Thank You

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

Barcud
Brilliant Basics Fund
Ceredigion County Council
Climate Action Fund
Community Facilities Programme
ENRaW
Hafren Dyfrdwy
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Open Newtown
People's Postcode Lottery
Powys County Council
Pure Leapfrog
Ricardo Energy
RSWT
Vine House Farms
Wilder Marches
Welsh Government
Welshpool Town Council

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 2023

	Restricted funds (MWT only) 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from				
Donations and legacies	350,000	125,185	475,185	156,523
Charitable activities	948,421	-	948,421	873,650
Trading activities	-	238,889	238,889	180,019
Total income	1,298,421	364,074	1,662,495	1,210,192
Expenditure				
Charitable activities	602,969	298,745	901,714	906,959
Trading activities	-	152,872	152,872	111,397
Total expenditure	602,969	451,617	1,054,586	1,018,356
	695,452	(87,543)	607,909	191,836
Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of investment	-	-	-	16,069
Net income/(expenditure)	695,452	(87,543)	607,909	207,905
Transfers between funds	(68,895)	68,895	-	-
Net movement in funds	626,557	(18,648)	607,909	207,905
Reconciliation of funds				
<i>Funds at 1 April 2022</i>	<i>2,140,747</i>	<i>752,788</i>	<i>2,893,535</i>	<i>2,685,630</i>
Funds at 31 March 2023	2,767,304	734,140	3,501,444	2,893,535

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 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	2,886,726	2,638,872
Investments	37,822	37,822
	<u>2,924,548</u>	<u>2,676,694</u>
Current assets		
Stocks	39,703	32,684
Debtors	154,181	293,409
Cash at bank and in hand	453,608	79,657
	<u>647,492</u>	<u>405,750</u>
Creditors: falling due within one year	70,596	188,909
Net current assets	576,896	216,841
Net assets	3,501,444	2,893,535
Charity funds		
Restricted funds – MWT only	2,767,304	2,140,747
Unrestricted funds	734,140	752,788
Total funds	3,501,444	2,893,535

This document is an extract from the full accounts of
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Charity number: 512390 | Company number: 1612249

www.montwt.co.uk

Cover photo © Mark Hamblin/2020VISION: One of our key Montgomeryshire species, the increasingly rare Curlew is the subject of ongoing conservation work