



Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
De a Gorllewin Cymru
Wildlife Trust of
South & West Wales



A Wilder South and West Wales

Our Refreshed Strategy 2020-2030

The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales



Introduction

The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales covers almost half of Wales, from Cardiff to Ceredigion. The landscape is diverse, with mountains and moorlands, woodlands and grasslands, lakes and rivers. Our coastline is equally important: rugged cliffs, islands, sandy shores, estuaries, salt marshes and, of course, the open sea.

From a distant perspective these are glorious places. A landscape reflecting times when our ancestors found some harmony with nature. But if we look closely the detail is missing. It is a depleted landscape, a consequence of our recent unhappy relationship with nature.

Welsh wildlife is in peril. One in six species in Wales are at risk of extinction. We are losing precious species and habitats at an alarming rate. People are increasingly disconnected from wildlife and wild spaces on their doorstep, with over a third of adults in Wales spending three hours a week or less outdoors. The climate crisis is an urgent, escalating problem posing a serious threat to both people and wildlife in Wales.

Despite these challenges, our Wildlife Trust has seen some spectacular gains. The Puffin population on our islands has tripled since the turn of the century. We've reintroduced Water Voles to waterways across the region. We've inspired thousands of people to take action for nature and the climate. We want to make success stories like this the rule, not the exception.

The focus of our Wildlife Trust - our key driver - will always be nature. If we look after nature, nature will look after us. Our survival as a species on this planet is inextricably dependent on the survival and prosperity of all life, human and non-human.





The ways we work

Intrinsic value of nature

In a world where the value of nature is increasingly tied to its value to human beings, we will promote the intrinsic value of wildlife.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity both within our organisation and in our work with others.

Health and wellbeing

We care about the health and wellbeing of our employees. We seek to foster a healthy culture at all levels of our organisation.

Welsh language

We will encourage and support staff who wish to learn Welsh, as well as Welsh speaking staff who wish to improve their language skills, to continue their professional development.

Outputs and outcomes

Our work is guided by outputs and outcomes, allowing our staff to work flexibly and to their strengths to achieve our goals. We build trust and autonomy to allow each person to work to their full potential.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an established and integral part of our work. We welcome and encourage volunteer involvement at all levels of the organisation's activity.



Our strategy

Our strategy closely aligns with The Wildlife Trusts and Wildlife Trusts Wales' strategies. It reflects the principles and values we share with the other Wildlife Trusts, but also takes account of our local perspective and interests. We have adopted the structure developed by Wildlife Trusts Wales for our strategy.

Our strategy also engages with national and global conservation efforts. This includes the UK's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030. This supports the global 30 by 30 target agreed at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022.

Our goals

We want to tackle the nature emergency, climate crisis and society's increasing disconnect from nature. To achieve this, we have three main goals, which align with The Wildlife Trusts' strategy.

- 1. Action for nature: 30% of land and sea managed for nature by 2030.** We want to see nature in recovery with abundant, diverse wildlife and natural processes.
- 2. Action with people: a greater number of people, from more diverse backgrounds, will be taking meaningful action for nature and the climate.** We want to see better decision making for the environment at a local and national level.
- 3. Action on climate: encourage nature-based solutions to address local and global problems.** We want to see nature playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems.



1 Action for nature

Our goal: 30% of land and sea managed for nature by 2030.

One in six species in Wales face extinction, and the future of once-common wildlife is uncertain. We have lost 73 species to extinction between the 1970s and 2019. It is critical to help nature recover now.

Currently, 12% of land in Wales is designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and 69% of Welsh seas are Marine Protected Areas. Designations are critical in protecting our most vulnerable wildlife but must be actively managed to achieve favourable conservation status.

The main findings of the Natural Resources Wales' report, 'Protected sites baseline assessment 2020', which identifies the condition of wildlife features on Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, were:

- 24% of features are favourable
- 44% of features are in unfavourable condition
- 36% of features are not in a desired state

(Note: the final category 'not in a desired state' is misleading. These are features where the status is unknown. We must assume, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that these features are unfavourable.)



We want a future where wildlife is abundant, resilient and secure. We want to see extensive, interconnected habitats. We want wilder seas and landscapes where people and nature thrive.

Common Cuttlefish © Alexander Mustard/2020VISION

Condition assessments for Welsh Marine Protected Area features, published by Natural Resources Wales in 2025 concluded that out of 85 wildlife and habitat feature assessments:

- 38% of features are favourable
- 55% are in unfavourable condition
- 7% were in unknown condition

We must change this and tip the balance from loss to recovery. To create a coherent and resilient ecological network, we need more, bigger, better and more joined up spaces for nature. Our aim is for at least 30% of land in Wales to be protected, connected, and positively managed for nature. Only Marine Protected Areas that are recovering will form part of the 30% target.

Working with nature, enabling natural processes with minimal intervention, is the surest way of helping nature to recover.

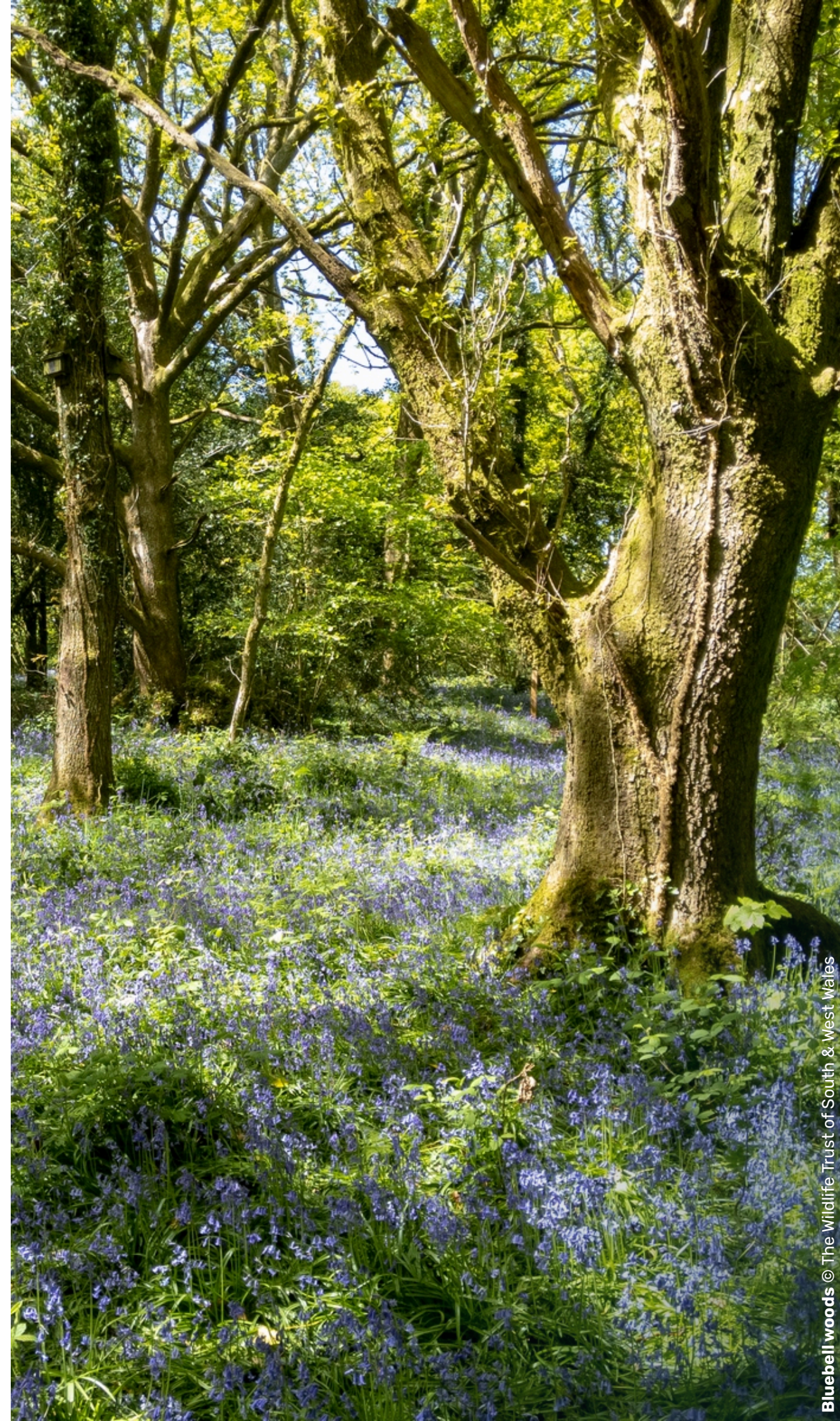
Change is needed across Wales, from the countryside to villages, towns and cities, to create places that are better for both people and wildlife. We want to optimise opportunities for wildlife wherever and whenever we can. We do not need everything everywhere, but there must be a place for everything somewhere.

We want farming to be at the forefront of change driving nature's recovery. Nature-friendly farming restores and conserves precious soils, providing opportunities for wildlife and contributing to a much healthier and more prosperous future for us all.

Our highest priorities

We will:

- **Work towards the sustainable management of all our nature reserves**, for the species and habitat they support. Whenever possible, we will work with nature, adopting a minimal intervention approach, to enable natural processes to deliver our desired outcomes.
- **Work towards all identified features on our reserves being at favourable or recovering** conservation status.
- **Use our nature reserves as exemplars** to promote the contribution that protected land makes to conservation.
- **Develop major habitat restoration projects** to help create the bigger, better and more joined up spaces for nature across land and sea.
- **Undertake monitoring, recording, and management that is evidence based.**
- **Identify and map areas for recovery and restoration.**
- **Take a strategic approach to the acquisition of new reserves.** Using our acquisition process, we will identify opportunities for increasing and strengthening our existing reserves.
- **Develop formal policy guidance for the planning and management of our nature reserves.**
- **Undertake work to save rare species**, carry out reintroductions following guidelines, and **promote the recovery of more common species and habitats.**
- Advise farmers and landowners and **advocate more strongly for farming for wildlife**, using the Less is More approach.
- **Control invasive non-native species** on our own land through prevention and management.
- **Take a minimal approach to managing diseased trees**, only removing trees which pose a threat to public safety.





Water Vole © Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

We will forge new partnerships to drive forward nature’s recovery. Our plans and decisions will be based on sound scientific evidence.

Working with The Wildlife Trusts and other partners we will:

- **Contribute to the improvement of monitoring of wildlife in Wales.** This will help to increase our shared knowledge and ability to direct appropriate advice and resources.
- **Increase our shared capacity to defend against unsustainable activity** in the marine environment. We will call for greater protection of marine species and advocate for the management of our marine protected areas.
- **Raise public awareness and recording of invasive non-native species.** We will influence policy to ensure an effective system of invasive non-native species control.
- **Develop a suite of evidence-based policies and position statements.** This will ensure an aligned approach to the challenges facing wildlife in Wales.
- **Continue to work with universities** and build case studies from our projects. Our data and research will contribute to the development of good conservation practice. The evidence collected will inform legislation and policy to protect wildlife and wild places.
- **Collaborate to give a Wales-wide response to national infrastructure and major development schemes.**
- Advocate and **campaign for a network of Marine Protected Areas** both inshore and offshore.
- **Lobby Welsh Government for a funded commitment to the measures identified in the Marine Megafauna and Seabird Conservation Plans.**
- **Engage with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, National Park Authorities and Local Authorities** to ensure they play their role in nature’s recovery. We want to see this through investment, leadership and setting targets for nature’s recovery.
- **Call for local authorities to publicly recognise the ecological crisis.** We want to see more green infrastructure and accessible natural green community spaces. We will aim to prevent developments that damage wildlife and natural habitats.

We will support The Wildlife Trusts and other partners, but not take a lead role, in:

- **Monitoring the obligation of public bodies and Welsh Government** to report their work in achieving nature's recovery. When this is lacking, we will be a voice for nature through campaigns and by building case studies to show good and bad practice.
- Campaigning for fisheries policies that ensure sustainable management and conservation of marine ecosystems. We will **support a fair transition for the fishing industry, focusing on sustainable practices** and environmental protection.
- **Engaging with the Office of Environmental Governance of Wales** to support delivery of their objectives.
- Working with partners and UK colleagues to **influence devolved and Westminster Governments**. We will build a greater understanding of devolution within the Wildlife Trust movement.
- **Ensuring nature's recovery is the fundamental focus of land management payments in Wales.**
- **Campaigning for environmental sustainability** to be integrated into economic development in line the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.
- **Advocating for new policies for agriculture and fisheries** that respond to the climate and ecological crisis. This will include new pressure reduction measures such as tackling pollution.
- **Being the voice for nature.** We will campaign with others for a ban on single-use plastics and reduction in use of other plastics, reduction in the use of pesticides, and a ban on the use of peat-based compost.





2 Action with people

Our goal: a greater number of people, from more diverse backgrounds, will be taking positive action for nature and the climate in South and West Wales by 2030.

People are part of nature and are key to nature's recovery. We know that if nature is to be restored at scale, we need many more people to be connected and engaged with nature. We must act now to inspire and facilitate that change.

Research has shown that the support of at least 25% of a population is needed for any large-scale societal change. As part of our work, we aspire to see one in four people taking meaningful action for nature's recovery across South and West Wales.

We believe that everyone has the right to access and enjoy nature. We know that time spent in nature significantly improves quality of life. As connection to nature is lost, our health and wellbeing can decline. Our aim is to create safe, inclusive spaces which help people foster a greater connection with nature, in turn inspiring action to protect it.

A young person with brown hair, wearing a bright green jacket and a red backpack, is seen from the side, looking through binoculars. They are standing in a field of dry grass under a clear blue sky. The backpack has a small penguin charm hanging from it.

Our highest priorities

We will:

- **Embrace the principles and techniques of community organising**, through the 'Team Wilder' approach, to empower communities to take action for nature and the climate. We will give people the skills, confidence and voice to take meaningful action for nature's recovery.
- **Strengthen our commitment to empower people of all identities, cultures, backgrounds and abilities to value, enjoy, and act for nature.** We will be proactive in seeking guidance from these communities to understand the barriers that exist between individuals and the natural world. We will work towards the changes they would like to see.
- **Engage and support young people across our region.** We will provide opportunities for young people to learn about and connect with nature, fostering a sense of belonging. We will empower them to become future environmental champions, community leaders, and campaigners.
- **Create a dynamic network of volunteers**, helping to build connections between different generations and communities.
- **Develop natural history skills** and promote citizen science to help monitor the state of nature locally.
- Celebrate and **showcase how people are helping nature** to recover on land and at sea, sharing stories to inspire others.
- **Reinforce existing and forge new partnerships.** We will work with other organisations, land managers, businesses, and decision makers who are committed to nature's recovery.
- **Diversify ways in which people can engage with and support us** to reach new audiences and increase our supporters.
- **Foster a better understanding and appreciation of wildlife** in South and West Wales, to inspire a deeper connection with the natural world.



We will also continue to work with The Wildlife Trusts and other partners to support wider policies, strategies, and campaigns. Together we will amplify the voices and actions of the people and communities in our region.



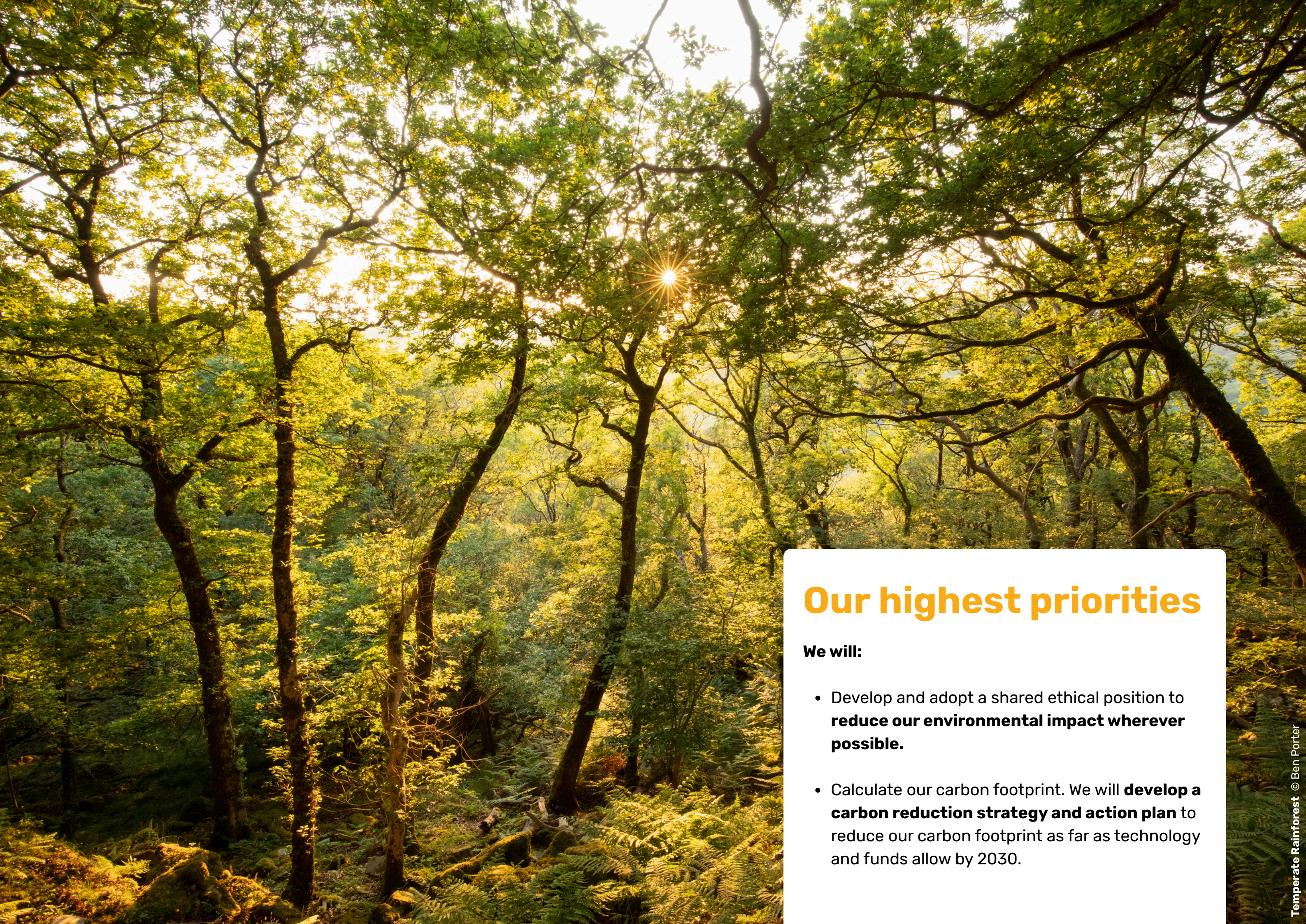
The climate crisis is an urgent, escalating problem. More extreme weather events – flooding, wildfires, heatwaves and drought – are becoming more common in Wales and worldwide. We are already seeing the disastrous impact this is having on wildlife and on people. The global climate has been regulated by nature for millions of years. It is only now that one species, humankind, is disrupting that balance.

Nature has the answers. Nature-based solutions can provide around one third of the cost-effective climate mitigation needed between now and 2030 to stabilise warming to below 2°C, whilst simultaneously tackling the ecological crisis.

Our Trust will prioritise the restoration of habitats that capture and store carbon. This includes marine, wetland and woodland habitats. However, we cannot tackle the climate crisis alone. Solutions depend not just on local action, but on wider transformative change across society.

3 Action for climate

Our goal: encourage nature-based solutions to address local and global problems.

A photograph of a lush forest with tall trees and dense foliage. Sunlight is streaming through the canopy, creating a bright starburst effect in the center. The ground is covered with ferns and moss.

Our highest priorities

We will:

- Develop and adopt a shared ethical position to **reduce our environmental impact wherever possible.**
- Calculate our carbon footprint. We will **develop a carbon reduction strategy and action plan** to reduce our carbon footprint as far as technology and funds allow by 2030.



Working with The Wildlife Trusts and other partners we will:

- **Campaign for the recognition of the impacts of climate change** on nature on land and at sea. We will also campaign to highlight the role of nature-based solutions in mitigating climate change.
- Be clear on our approach to carbon offsetting and nature finance. We will seek to **engage in nature-based solutions projects** where they help deliver our strategy
- **Advocate for the reform of the agriculture and forestry sectors**, recognising how farming systems can benefit nature and climate. We will also highlight bad agricultural and forestry practices.

We will support The Wildlife Trusts, and other partners, but not take a lead role, in:

- Advocating that any subsidised land uses designed to combat climate change also contribute to nature's recovery.

Resources

Our ability to address the climate and ecological crises is constrained by limited resources. We are committed to growing sustainable and unrestricted income to deliver this strategy.

We will:

- Review and **improve unrestricted income generation** from three main sources. This includes charity income, membership and fundraising, as well as through our trading arm DWT Enterprises which covers our cafes, shops and visitor accommodation. We will develop a prioritised and costed plan for improvements.
- Investigate **new possible sources of income.**
- Develop cases for support to **focus grant applications on projects that best help us deliver our strategy.**
- Focus on **sustaining the current levels of financial and operational strength.** This will ensure we remain one of the most respected partners for our work and can make the most of new opportunities.



A photograph of two dolphins leaping from the ocean surface. The dolphins are dark grey with white underbellies, and they are captured mid-jump, creating a splash of white water. The ocean is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue with some wispy white clouds. The dolphins are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the horizon line visible in the background.

Staffing

We have a small team, compared to other Wildlife Trusts who manage a similarly sized area. We rely on our staff being flexible and multi-skilled to cover a range of roles. Throughout the period of financial recovery, we reduced support staff costs and kept management staff costs level. As a result, staff salaries and pension contributions fell behind those of other Wildlife Trusts. This inequality has compounded over the years. We will invest in and recognise the importance of our staff as our most important asset to ensure good retention of staff.

We will:

- Commit to **increasing pension contributions and salaries** to at least average Wildlife Trust levels by 2030.
- Continue to **empower and promote the wellbeing of all staff**. We will create an open and supportive culture where everyone feels inspired, safe and cared about.
- **Invest in staff through training opportunities**. Our staff will feel confident and have the knowledge and skills to deliver the priorities outlined in our strategy.



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Wildlife Trust of
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