

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023/24



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they haven’t experienced”

– Butterfly Conservation President  
Sir David Attenborough

# WELCOME

During 2023 we saw the hottest ever global temperatures July to September and the devastating effects of extreme weather patterns caused by climate change.

Meanwhile we are witnessing staggering biodiversity losses with species disappearing faster than ever in human history. In the UK we have experienced such significant biodiversity loss that we are now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth.

Climate change and habitat destruction are killing off animal and plant populations across the world.

Report after report using biological data from millions of volunteers highlights that we are just not moving fast enough and that our politicians are not listening or acting. We can no longer wait for the Government to set the agenda; we need to change the conversation. Nature is in crisis.

At Butterfly Conservation we are already taking focussed action to ensure we play our part in protecting and restoring our butterflies and moths and encouraging more people to connect to nature.

We are proud of the impact we are making. Butterflies and moths are extraordinary indicators of change. We are focusing on more butterflies and moths in recovery, more landscapes improving and more people taking action. We have the solutions and we are making a difference.

We now hold over 55 million moth and butterfly records gathered by tens of thousands of recorders. A huge, huge thank you to all the volunteers that tirelessly collect these records. This data enables us to carry out research. It is through the research we commission, lead and collaborate on that we find solutions to problems. How can we help species cope with climate change? What is the best way to manage land for butterflies and moths? How are widespread issues like nitrogen deposition affecting the places butterflies and moths live? Our research seeks answers to these questions.

We continue to work with the Link organisations across the UK, who provide a combined voice for all those who care about the natural world; lobbying hard to ensure environmental protections are not diminished. Our advocacy campaigns are not just distant conversations, they highlight how everyone can take part and show they care.

And we continue to work with others to develop Wild Spaces that help urban communities participate in helping butterflies and moths. If we want more people to care, we need to meet people where they live and work.

None of our work is possible without our committed volunteers and Branches, our hard working and passionate staff team, our funders, our partners and our loyal members. We thank you wholeheartedly for your tireless work to turn around the fate of our nation's much-loved butterflies and moths.

We are feeling positive about the future, we hold a sense of hope. We are seeing more and more people become advocates for our planet. More people through our work are seeing the joy of the natural world and making the connection between modern life and nature. We are changing the conversation and inspiring others to care.



Julie Williams  
CEO



Martin Spray CBE  
Chair



# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION: IN A NUTSHELL

## OUR VISION

A world where butterflies and moths thrive and can be enjoyed by everyone, forever.

## OUR PURPOSE

We conserve and recover butterflies and moths and champion them for the benefit of nature and people.

## OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1 Halve the number of UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths.
- 2 Improve the condition of 100 of the UK's most important landscapes for butterflies and moths
- 3 Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for butterflies, moths and people

## THE INITIATIVES

We will deliver these strategic goals through a programme of Initiatives.

- 1 Recover butterflies and moths
- 2 Connect people to nature
- 3 Unite for wildlife
- 4 Tackle threats to nature
- 5 Manage land sustainably

## OUR VALUES

Our values underpin our culture, the way we do things and what we believe in.

### Deliver excellence

We use our wealth of scientific evidence and practical experience to deliver positive change for butterflies, moths and nature.

We are the experts you can trust us to give you the information you need.

### Passionate

Nature is at the heart of all we do. We are dedicated to delivering positive change to conserve butterflies, moths and our environment. We are relentless in the pursuit of our vision, seeking new ways to make a difference.

### Inspiring

We take action and speak up for what we believe in; we enable people to understand, enjoy and care for butterflies and moths.

### Collaborative

We will achieve our vision by building networks, communities and partnerships to deliver success for nature. Our culture champions and promotes inclusion, equality and diversity.



# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



## 2,600

Wild Spaces registered through our dedicated website, including more than 80 schools

## 2,000

staff visits to 952 sites to monitor threatened species and provide habitat management advice, up 21% on the previous year

## 46 MILLION

butterfly and moth records are now available to everyone via NBN Atlas – the UK's largest repository of public biodiversity data

## 94,229

participants in Big Butterfly Count 2023 – up 46% on 2022

## 250,000+

social media followers hearing our message

## 40,000+

members supporting our work

## 62

priority species of butterfly and moth supported through targeted conservation action

## 66,000

butterflies and 47 different species recorded by volunteers on our reserves in 2023

## 23

different countries represented at our International Symposium, with 109 contributions in total – our highest ever figure

## 5,000+

staff hours spent monitoring species, managing land, or giving advice to support priority species

## 1,473

people registered on Assemble – our new online platform for volunteers – within two months of going live



# RECOVER BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

## KENT'S MAGNIFICENT MOTHS

When our Kent's Magnificent Moths project began, Bright Wave and Sussex Emerald moths were thought to breed only on limited coastal habitats within the UK. Following increased awareness of threatened moths in Kent, both species were unexpectedly discovered in a new inland landscape of native wildflower meadows, restored by local farmers with help from Natural England.

Fifteen years ago, these meadows were arable fields - this July, our volunteers recorded over 1,000 Bright Wave Moths in just one of them. As we continue to uncover the moths' requirements here, perhaps enabled by our changing climate, this exciting discovery offers hope that landscape restoration can encourage rare species to thrive.

## HEATH FRITILLARY

Heath Fritillary had a remarkable year on Exmoor, with the total number of butterflies recorded more than double that of any year since 2004, 2018 excepted. Small groups and individuals were recorded far from their usual sites, with 'wanderers' recorded in marginal habitat between core sites.

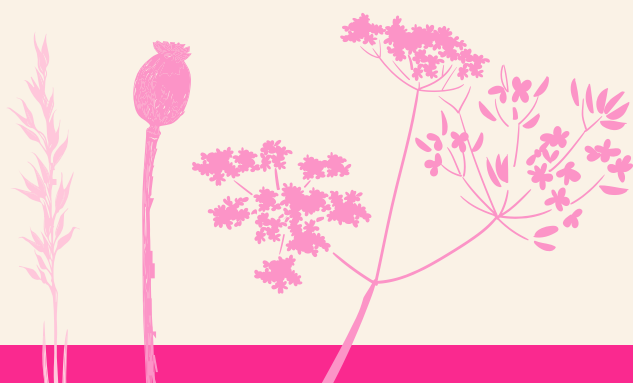
Some breeding areas had counts four times the number seen in recent years, and the butterfly returned to several sites where it hadn't been seen for a decade. Its return to the western reaches of the Grabbist-Wootton Ridge, following extensive scrub management, is particularly encouraging.



## MOTH DETECTIVE WORK

For some extremely rare species, restricted to just one or two UK sites, we started recovery programmes with urgent action to uncover their requirements and safeguard populations. In recent years, staff and volunteers in Scotland have seen success working on a handful of highly threatened micro-moths, potentially finding the eggs of Silver Shade and the caterpillars of Tiree Twist for the first time in the wild.

We've also re-found Black Sober at its sole Scottish site, first found and last recorded in 1984 and 1985, and established monitoring for Affric Twitcher. Each example provides us with a better understanding of their ecology to help deliver appropriate conservation action.



## CUMBRIA'S MARSH FRITILLARIES

Following reintroduction in 2007, Cumbria's Marsh Fritillaries are thriving. In 2023, new colonies were found in Swindale, Wet Sleddale and Matterdale. With breeding reported at 35 sites, plus other adult sightings still to be checked, the butterfly is obviously doing well! Caterpillars from the reintroduction, originating from the last surviving Cumbrian butterflies, crossed with Scottish specimens from Islay, are sometimes found on very small scabious plants, situated in flushes, in webs containing very few larvae. This is perhaps a trait inherited from Scotland that now allows it to occupy landscapes in a way its predecessors couldn't.



## DARK BORDERED BEAUTY

Dark Bordered Beauty is a very rare and threatened moth that is only known from three small populations in Scotland and one in England. The moth is poor at dispersing, so natural colonisation of restored habitat short Aspen suckers, could take many years. Given this situation and knowing that the population at RSPB's Insh Marshes reserve was doing extremely well, the UK Dark Bordered Beauty Steering Group embarked on an approved Assisted Translocation to establish the moth at two new sites in the Cairngorms.

After many years of planning, the first release began in June 2023 with 160 caterpillars reared at the Highland Wildlife Park moved to a new location. Adults were subsequently recorded, proving some of the larvae had successfully completed their life cycle at the site, whilst further adults were also released. This exciting step is just the latest stage of our long-term collaborative work to enhance the fortunes of one of our rarest moths.

Heath Fritillary  
by Will Langdon



# CONNECT PEOPLE TO NATURE

## WILD SPACES

2023 was an exciting year for our Wild Spaces programme. The launch of a dedicated website ([wild-spaces.co.uk](http://wild-spaces.co.uk)) was a significant milestone, with over 2,600 Wild Spaces now registered. Some Wild Spaces were led by our Branches, such as the wildflower meadow established by our Yorkshire Branch in Roundhay Park, Leeds. Our members and volunteers created Wild Spaces in gardens, local churchyards, parks and allotments from Orkney to the Isle of Wight.

In Perth and Stirling, our Wild Spaces project, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, engaged 1,051 people in 31 community events (including training sessions, moth mornings, discovery days and at the Stirling Science Festival), using demonstration Wild Spaces to inspire people to create a space of their own.

More than 80 schools across the UK have registered a Wild Space, and we will continue to focus on supporting schools to create many more in 2024.

Whilst Wild Spaces is open to everyone, our flagship urban projects focus on reaching young people aged 16-34, people from diverse backgrounds, and people at risk of green space deprivation. Our work across London boroughs, for example, has already created more than 60 Wild Spaces, including many community spaces in deprived areas for local people to access and enjoy.







## SUPPORTING SCIENCE

As part of our role running the UK's recording schemes, we need to keep pace with technology and support the people involved. To this end, we recently delivered the Supporting Science project, aided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.

For recorders, we ran two successful online identification courses and worked with artist Elisabetta Calabritto to publish a beautiful visual guide to our online recording options. The courses were part of an experimental new training pathway designed with Field Studies Council (FSC). To help address the increasing workload of County Recorders, who do vital work verifying records, we ran a special edition of FSC's Discovering iRecord course, and an iRecord verification course for newcomers. 20 graduates from the training pathway are now volunteering, supporting County Recorders as Verification Assistants.

To boost awareness and use of records, we also published two distribution datasets online. The 46 million records are now accessible via the NBN Atlas. They reflect the tremendous efforts of recorders and verifiers across the UK.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to the National Lottery Innovation Fund, we were able to bring together a group of young people and listen to what they had to say about the barriers they experience in engaging with environmental volunteering, and the kinds of opportunities that would excite and motivate them.

We recruited a Youth Engagement Officer to take this work forward, with the priority of creating our first Youth Panel. The Youth Panel will develop and test exciting new opportunities for youth representation within Butterfly Conservation. In return, they will gain new skills, experience, and an insight into the workings of our organisation.

We also trialled our first ever Youth Ranger Scheme on our Magdalen Hill Down nature reserve near Winchester. For three days in the summer holidays, eleven young people aged 13-17 experienced tasks and challenges faced by our conservation staff as they manage reserves. Whether clearing Clematis or learning butterfly identification skills, the young rangers approached it all with great enthusiasm.



# UNITE FOR WILDLIFE

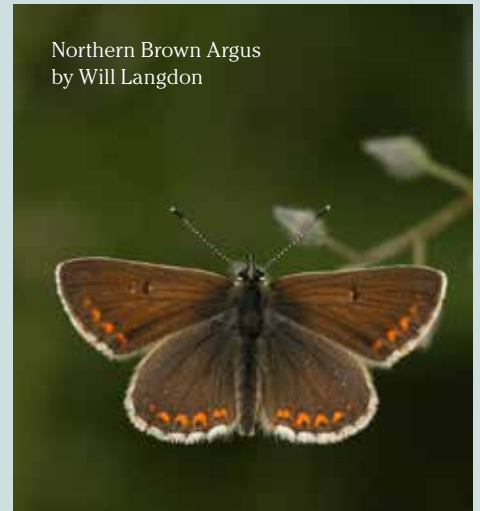
Saving species and supporting lasting changes at a landscape scale isn't something Butterfly Conservation can do alone. We've made major progress in our collaborative work across the UK in the past year, starting new partnerships and developing others to make even more difference for butterflies, moths and people.

## SPECIES ON THE EDGE

Species on the Edge is a partnership of seven species-focused conservation charities and NatureScot, dedicated to improving the fortunes of 37 priority species around Scotland's coasts and islands.

Butterfly Conservation is leading efforts for species including New Forest Burnet, Transparent Burnet, Marsh Fritillary, Small Blue and Northern Brown Argus from the Inner Hebrides to the East coast. Our shared work includes supporting actions for a range of plants, birds, bumblebees and other species, as well as community engagement that helps local people enjoy, understand and protect the special nature where they live.

This year we have delivered habitat management work parties, coordinated volunteer surveys, hosted the national launch of the Species on the Edge project and held a series of creative events using art to explore what nature means to people.



Northern Brown Argus  
by Will Langdon

## NATUR AM BYTH!

2023 saw the start of a major project in Wales, 'Natur am Byth!', which translates as Nature Forever! This species recovery collaboration brings together nine conservation organisations, Natural Resources Wales, and local partners, working on species at risk of extinction and of particular importance to Wales. It combines species recovery actions with an outreach programme celebrating Cynefin – the distinct natural heritage that underpins communities across Wales.

Much of our work here focuses on High Brown Fritillary in its last stronghold in Wales, the Alun Valley. As well as supporting volunteers in managing the bracken and scrub mosaics the butterfly depends upon, the project has allowed us to use no-fence collars to facilitate cattle grazing on these complex sites.

Beyond Wales, we've been able to bring together our conservation experts from across the High Brown Fritillary's range in England to look at progress so far, share ideas on monitoring and habitat management, and ensure that what we learn here can benefit the butterfly at a UK level. We've also worked with Buglife and the Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales to improve habitat condition for the highly restricted Silky Wave moth on the Gower.

Both Species on the Edge and Natur am Byth! are supported by grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, as well as a host of other funders.



High Brown Fritillary  
by Bob Eade





## WORKING WITH LANDOWNERS

Part of our work explores how existing funding mechanisms available to landowners can be geared towards species recovery. In England, our team work closely with Natural England staff to achieve suitable management for a range of butterflies and moths over large landscapes. In Kent, for example, our staff and volunteers support Natural England staff through advice and monitoring. This has shown how extensive restoration of arable farmland to species-rich grassland is delivering results for Duke of Burgundy and Black-veined Moth.

In the Cumbrian uplands, we help farmers and landowners access agri-environment schemes to fund habitat management for Duke of Burgundy, Marsh Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Chestnut-coloured Carpet and many more. Together we have developed a method of assessing sites, bringing landowners on board with the management work (including grazing and scrub control), monitoring results, and investigating the most effective management solutions.

These approaches offer the best hope that rare butterflies and moths can move around the landscape, adapt to changes in land-use and climate, and thrive into the future.



# TACKLE THREATS TO NATURE



Dark Bordered Beauty  
by Lindsey Bowes

## COOL MOTHS

Species adapted to cooler UK climates are at high risk of extinction due to climate change. They are already restricted to higher latitudes and elevations, reducing their ability to move and track climate change. Around a tenth of the macro-moth species in Britain are naturally restricted to areas and habitats with cooler climates, and of these cool-adapted moths with GB distribution trends, 84% declined between 1970 and 2016, with climate change considered a possible cause.

Research led by Butterfly Conservation, in collaboration with Northumbria University, used records from the National Moth Recording Scheme over a 40-year period to identify how cool-adapted moths have shifted their distributions over time, and whether these changes are linked to temperature and precipitation. The analyses showed that the distributions of cool-adapted moths had, on average, shifted to higher latitudes and in a north-westerly direction, mirroring changes in temperature and precipitation.

These moth species were more likely to have been lost from the warmest areas of Britain but, notably, where rainfall was also high, cool-adapted moths were more likely to have survived. This highlights the importance of considering water availability in the landscape as part of climate change adaptation for biodiversity.

Changes in management, such as reducing overgrazing, increasing tree cover, slowing rivers, and blocking drainage ditches on peatlands, could help retain water and benefit cool-adapted moths and other wildlife, as well as increasing carbon capture and reducing flooding.

As climate change worsens, more areas in Britain will become characterised by high temperatures making interventions to increase water availability even more important to safeguard such species from extinction. This research also highlights the value of volunteer moth recorders, who have collected data over the past 40 years enabling such vital research to be undertaken.



## REACHING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATORS

Butterfly Conservation's 9th International Symposium, 'Conserving Lepidoptera in a Changing World,' was the biggest ever. It drew over 130 speakers and posters from 23 countries. The Symposium covered a wide range of topics, not just on the conservation of butterflies and moths, but also topics like public engagement, key drivers of declines, and using new technologies like remote moth traps and automatic photographic identification.

We followed this in July with a section of the 9th Biology of Butterflies Conference in Prague, Czech Republic. This focussed on butterfly monitoring, trends and indicators to support our work on developing a preliminary Global Butterfly Indicator describing the state of the world's butterflies.

The aim is to gather global butterfly monitoring datasets and publish an index in the Living Planet Index and/or Living Planet Report. Researchers and conservationists across Europe, and in countries such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, St. Eustatius and Vietnam, have shared data. The project has highlighted a lack of existing data in some of the world's most biodiverse areas. This work is being done in collaboration with the IUCN Butterfly & Moth Specialist Group, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, de Vlinderstichting, the Zoological Society of London, and Butterfly Conservation Europe.

Through the EU-funded SPRING Project, Butterfly Conservation and our partners in Butterfly Conservation Europe have been able to support and expand butterfly monitoring across the continent. New schemes have emerged in Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Greece. The importance of this work has been recognised with the adoption of an EU grassland butterfly indicator to assess progress made in implementing the new Nature Restoration Law.



# MANAGE LAND SUSTAINABLY

## A NEW MENDIP SUPER RESERVE

Two of our reserves, Westbury Beacon and Stoke Camp, have been designated as part of a new 'Super' National Nature Reserve. This includes 29 sites encompassing over 1400 hectares of land running across the south-facing mosaic of grassland and woodland habitats of the Mendip Hills.

Sustainable management of Westbury Beacon could only truly be achieved with the aid of conservation grazing. Attempts over many years to install an internal water supply had been unsuccessful. But in 2023, working with a neighbouring landowner, 250 metres of pipe was laid to finally connect the site to the main. At a total cost of more than £20,000, the work was funded by a Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant from the Mendip Hills AONB.

## ENHANCING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

For butterflies and moths to thrive, we need to find ways to improve the built environment and land management. Testing practical solutions is at the heart of our work in this area. In 2023, we worked with National Highways to sow Kidney Vetch and Horseshoe Vetch seed - foodplants for the Small Blue and Chalkhill Blue - along a 500m section of the new A6 Houghton Regis bypass, which was left as bare chalk. This created a landscape scale connection between chalk pits in Bedfordshire with known colonies of these butterflies. Funding for the seed came from Highways Agency and the Bedfordshire branch of Butterfly Conservation.

In the east of England, the grassy banks of extensive drainage channels provide another opportunity for habitat enhancement. Four-spotted moth colonies were found along the south facing bank of the Maxey Cut, a flood relief channel near Peterborough. We are working with Langdyke Trust and the Environment Agency to manage the Cut by a combination of scraping bare patches and getting the timing of mowing right. The Maxey Cut is unusual habitat and there is potential for more colonies to be found along the numerous banks and ditches across fenland Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire.



Silver-studded Blue  
by Matt Berry

# THRIVING SPECIES

## PREES HEATH COMMON, SHROPSHIRE

Prees Heath Common is the only site in West Midlands to support a large, thriving Silver-studded Blue population. Management at Prees Heath includes heathland mowing/cutting to retain a diverse age structure, management of undesirable species, scrub/tree management and bell-heather seed collection. These seeds will be scattered in 2024 as part of heathland restoration works, funded through Butterfly Mosaics, part of Severn Trent Water's Great Big Nature Boost. This follows the success of turf strip plots, created in 2019/20, where heathers successfully germinated.

As part of Butterfly Mosaics, we are also working with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust to ensure the Silver-studded Blue continues to grow at the neighbouring site, Prees Heath East, where small numbers of individuals have been recorded.

## GRAFTON WOOD, WORCESTERSHIRE

In 2018, 20 Wood White adults were reintroduced to Grafton as part of a National Lottery Heritage Fund project. The success of the Wood White at Grafton Wood is the result of targeted conservation effort.

Volunteer work parties are held weekly at Grafton Wood between end of August and early March. During 2023, almost 530 hours of volunteer time focused on ride management to benefit Wood White and other priority species. 163 volunteer hours were spent focusing on blackthorn management to benefit Brown Hairstreak, along with a joint Butterfly Conservation and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust work party.

Over the last couple of years, contractors have managed additional areas of woodland ride within Grafton, as well as clearing sections of blackthorn in the adjacent privately owned SSSI orchard. Following blackthorn management in February 2023, 203 Brown Hairstreak eggs were found later that year in the orchard – the highest count for 18 years. All contractor costs have been funded through our Severn Trent Butterfly Mosaics project.

## ADULT SILVER-STUDDED BLUE POPULATION:

Prees Heath Common, Shropshire

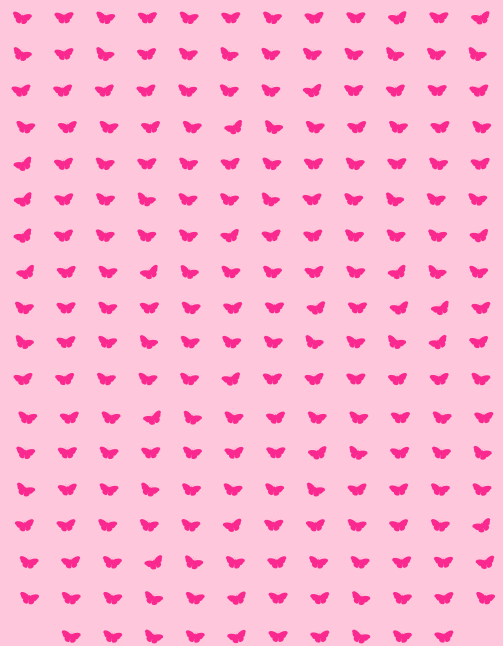
# 341

2009



# 2136

2023



♥ = 10 Silver-studded Blues



# ENABLERS: THE PLATFORM OF SUCCESS

## SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

We've continued to develop our individual giving programme with some notable successes. The Big Green Match Fund appeal in April was awarded £30,000 Champion Funding to support our Landscape Programme and raised a total of £63,185 plus Gift Aid - one of our biggest single appeal successes to date.

We also launched a Butterfly Conservation Weekly Lottery. This raised £18,000 in 2023/24 and we believe it has great potential for future growth.

Membership remains at the core of our support and, after recovering from a Covid dip in 2023, has remained at historically high levels. Encouragingly, our member retention rate was at the highest level since 2014.

## INSPIRING COMMUNICATIONS

Big Butterfly Count 2023 saw a 46% increase in participation on the previous year, with an incredible 94,229 people spending 15-minutes in a sunny spot recording the number and type of butterflies and day-flying moths they saw. This important citizen science project has now been running for 13 years.

More than quarter of a million people now follow Butterfly Conservation through social media. When we ask, many of our supporters tell us they would like to do more campaigning – they want to help us have a stronger voice for butterflies and moths.

In February 2024 we launched a campaign on the impacts of light pollution on moths. There was information on the science behind the impact of light pollution, examples of actions people have taken, and advice on how individuals could both assess their own impacts and work to minimise the damage.

## MORE THAN £2MILLION

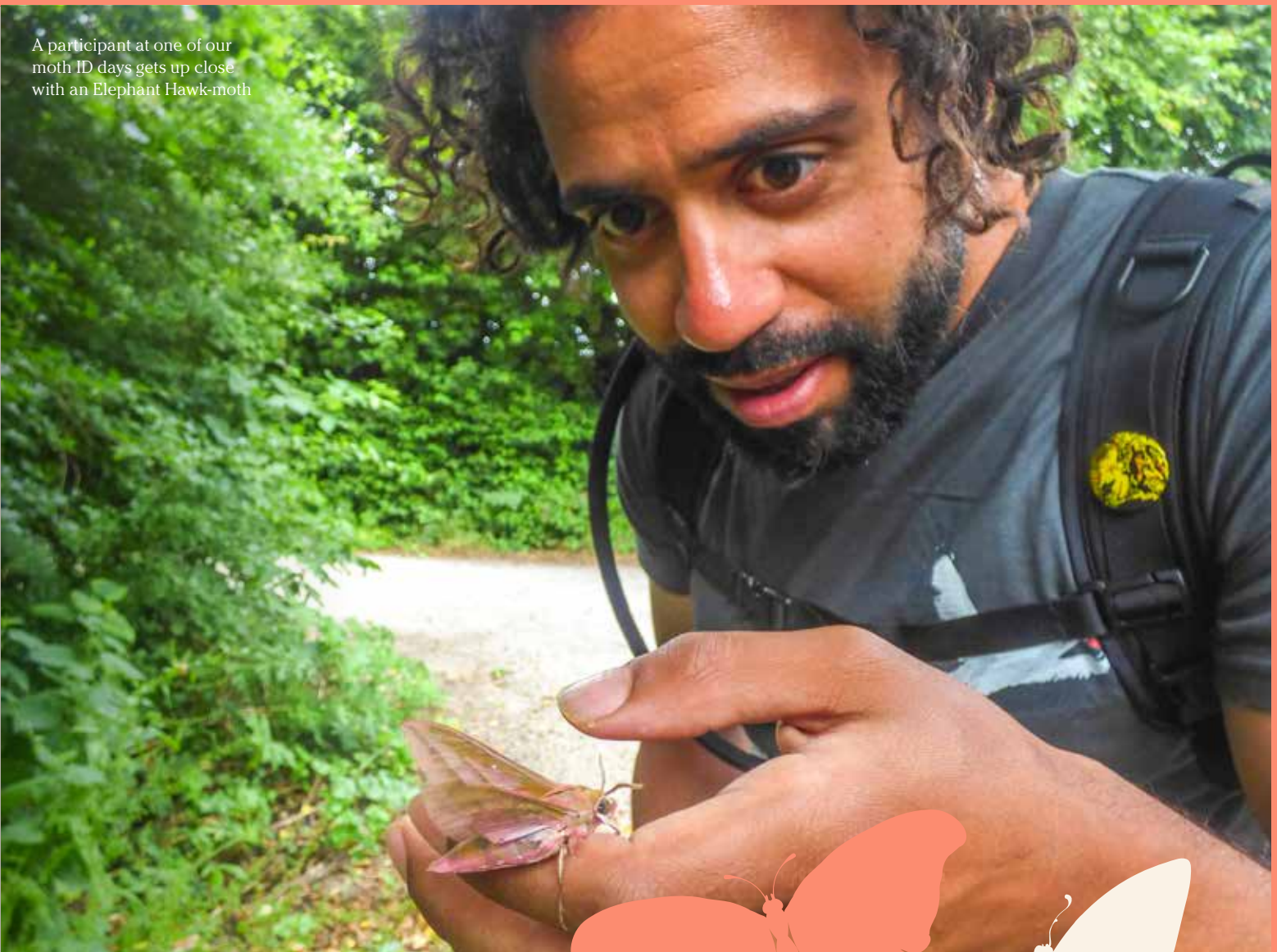
Generously donated  
as gifts in Wills in 2023.



Dr Amir Khan and Chris Packham in conversation  
at the launch of Big Butterfly Count 2023.



A participant at one of our moth ID days gets up close with an Elephant Hawk-moth



## A HIGH PERFORMING TEAM

Towards the end of 2023, we launched a new web portal just for volunteers - Assemble. The system helps us provide the best support possible for our volunteers and streamlines processes, meaning as much money as possible goes to conservation rather than administration. It also allows us to share news and training resources directly with volunteers, and to organise events for those who so generously give their time to benefit butterflies, moths, and the environment.

The 2023 Volunteer Awards were revamped to better reflect our volunteer community both present and future. The Awards now have six categories celebrating everything from community engagement to those who have made a substantial impact on a species or landscape. The Marsh Charitable Trust have been extremely supportive of our review and have increased the prize money for winners. Very well done to all those who won or received a Highly Commended certificate this year!

## LEAN AND SCALABLE ORGANISATION

This year saw the launch of our Wild Spaces and Volunteer digital platforms. We've done extensive work to define what and how we need our supporter platform to work, and to examine available options. We identified improvements we need to make around General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance and have begun a review of the data we hold. We also undertook market research to inform the tender specification for a new Land Management Hub. This will be an online resource for land managers and advisors across the UK, giving easy access to our expert advice to help them improve their land for butterflies and moths. Time spent making the right decisions now will future proof the new systems and processes we introduce.

# FUTURE PRIORITIES

## 2024 - 2025

### THREATENED SPECIES REVIEW

To inform our work over the second half of the decade, we will use the most up-to-date data to ensure our conservation work stays focussed on the species most in need and is targeted where it can make the greatest impact.

### BROADENING OUR COMMUNITY

We will monitor changes in our diversity through our work, in particular our success in reaching three target audiences – young people (aged 16-34), people from a minority ethnic background, and people experiencing green space deprivation.

### DIGITAL INNOVATION

We will roll out a new customer management system, a Land Management Hub and a new finance system. These will enable staff, volunteers and partners to use all our data in the most efficient ways possible while ensuring it is secure and the systems we use are fit for purpose.

### WILD SPACES

We plan to develop and launch new projects in Northern Ireland and Wales, and will continue to work with partners including City Councils, NGOs and community organisations to help spread the word and increase the impact of Wild Spaces.

### LANDSCAPE RECOVERY

We will develop new landscape recovery collaborations in areas including Wales and Northern Ireland, to improve our UK coverage and tackle species declines more effectively.

### YOUTH PANEL

We will establish our first ever youth panel, and co-create the full remit with participants. Made up of ten 16-24 year olds, they will be supported and encouraged to not only contribute to the work of Butterfly Conservation, but also to lead it. They will ensure young people feel valued, inspired and included in our work to save butterflies and moths.





# 2025 - 2027

## LAUNCH OUR REFRESHED STRATEGY

We will launch our refreshed strategy to ensure Butterfly Conservation remains relevant and engaging and continues to build on our ambitious vision over the next five years.

# BEYOND 2027

## ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

We will review our advocacy work, looking at the impact it makes and the subjects we cover, to ensure they meet our needs in the political arena and take account of what the latest science tells us.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The members of Council confirm that these summarised financial statements are a summary of information from the full financial statements, which were approved by Council on 17 July 2024.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE COUNCIL OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

We have examined the summarised financial statements of Butterfly Conservation for the year ended 31 March 2024.

## RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL AND THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

The Council members are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable UK law and the recommendations of Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities. As auditors our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with full financial statements. We also read the other information summarised in the annual impact report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

## BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and applicable law.

## OPINION

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements of Butterfly Conservation for the year ended 31 March 2024 and comply with the applicable requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and regulations made thereunder.

## BUZZACOTT LLP

Statutory Auditors – 130 Wood Street, London, EC2V 6DL. 2 August 2024.

A copy of the full financial statements of the charitable company, upon which the auditors have reported without qualification, will be delivered to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies House. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of Butterfly Conservation. Further information and the full accounts are available at [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org) or may be obtained free of charge from the charity.



# FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income increased by 5.9% to £6.62m (2023: £6.25m). Grant funding increased by 10.2% to £1.37m (2023: £1.24m). We are extremely grateful for a significant legacy. Income from donations and legacies increased by 3.8% to £3.00m (2023: £2.89m). Despite the challenging financial and political climate, we continued to have a good response to all our individual appeals and general donations (including Gift Aid). Membership subscription income reduced marginally to £1.24m (2023: £1.27m).

Expenditure increased by 22.8%, to £6.82m (2023: £5.56m). During the year we increased our average headcount by 15 - building capacity in the staff team was a strategic action to ensure we can deliver Butterfly Conservation's ambitious strategy.

The result was a net income of £0.13m (2023: £0.39m) and the closing total net assets were £12.83m (2023: £12.70m).

The balance on our endowment fund increased by £0.32m to £5.61m (2023: £5.28m) due to gains on investments.

## FUNDRAISING POLICY

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and comply with the key principles embodied in their Code of Fundraising, as set out in our Fundraising Promise (available on our website).

Several safeguards are in place for our supporters. We include data protection permission options and a three-point 'Our promise to you' on all fundraising materials. A detailed Supporter Guarantee can be found on our website.

All fundraising is conducted in-house and we monitor activity to ensure it adheres to our strict guidelines. No external professional fundraiser or third-party organisation is engaged in fundraising activities on behalf of the charity.

Corporate businesses have agreements in place to use Butterfly Conservation's logo for promotional purposes. All agreements can be terminated with immediate effect if the commercial partners do anything that could bring our reputation into disrepute.

Butterfly Conservation operates a strict opt-in policy for all direct marketing in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All direct mail fundraising communications sent out are covered by active, informed and specific permission by the individual. Supporters are offered the opportunity to revise consent preferences in each communication. We also monitor the level of asks sent out to ensure unreasonable requests are not made to any individual.

All staff adhere to our Policy for Supporters in Vulnerable Circumstances, which provides guidance to help identify vulnerable individuals and ensure that all supporters are treated fairly.

Butterfly Conservation has received one complaint regarding aspects of our fundraising during the year. This complaint was fully investigated, appropriate action was taken, and a detailed response was sent to individuals within seven days. We received one notification from the Fundraising Preference Service during 2023/24 and this were dealt with immediately.



## INVESTMENT POLICY

Our investment income is derived from an Endowment Fund intended to provide the charity with a permanent source of income. We are bound to invest this to seek a balanced return from income and capital growth. We aim to grow in line with inflation (CPI) over the long term. To achieve an appropriate balance between risk and return, we invest in a diversified portfolio of equities, bonds and alternative assets – a breakdown of investment holdings is given in Note 15. We invest through pooled funds and third-party managers.

On 31 March 2024 our Endowment Fund had a market value of £5.61m (2023: £5.28m). The Trustees have appointed Cazenove Capital Management as professional investment managers to manage the Endowment Fund in accordance with the investment policies.

At their meeting on 10 June 2020, Council passed a resolution to invest on a Total Return basis. The initial value of the trust for investment and the initial value of the Unapplied Total Return were established on 31 March 2020. The initial value of the Trust for investment was determined at £3.09m by reference to our records – the Unapplied Total Return was calculated as the difference between that value and the portfolio value at 31 March 2020. To ensure that we meet our obligations to balance the needs of current and future beneficiaries, trustees agreed a policy annually to allocate 3.25%, after fees, of the portfolio value to income and any remaining balance of the Total Return to be reinvested in the Endowment Fund. The percentage allocated to income is agreed each year with the investment managers, Cazenove Capital Management.

Council has further resolved that we should follow the principles of socially responsible investment. We will do so by holding sustainable assets, in particular those that support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We seek to engage, through our investment managers, with companies to encourage changing behaviours to reduce consumption and emissions. We have no direct and de minimis indirect exposure to companies with fossil fuel reserves (0% at 31 March 2024). We identified both ethical and financial reasons for taking this approach. A further consequence of this policy is a significant reduction in the carbon footprint of our portfolio.

## FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

At 31 March 2024 Butterfly Conservation had total funds of £12.83m (2023: £12.69m), which is made up of:

- Permanent Endowment fund at 31 March 2024 of £5.61m (2023: £5.28m) which was given to be retained for the benefit of Butterfly Conservation as a capital fund and to provide income for the Charity.
- Restricted funds at 31 March 2024 of £0.40m (2023: £0.72m) to be applied to the specific purpose(s) intended by the donor.
- Unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2024 of £6.82m (2023: £6.69m) available to be applied at the discretion of the Trustees to any of Butterfly Conservation's charitable purposes, made up of:
  - General funds i.e. free financial reserves of £4.37m (2023: £3.99m).
  - Tangible fixed assets of £1.37m (2023: £1.39m) and Retained profits from Butterfly Conservation Trading of £20,000 (2023: £20,000). Both funds are central to Butterfly Conservation's charitable activities and not available to meet immediate future contingencies should they arise.
  - Designated funds of £1.06m (2023: £1.30m) to support our Branches and two funds to enhance our science and research work.



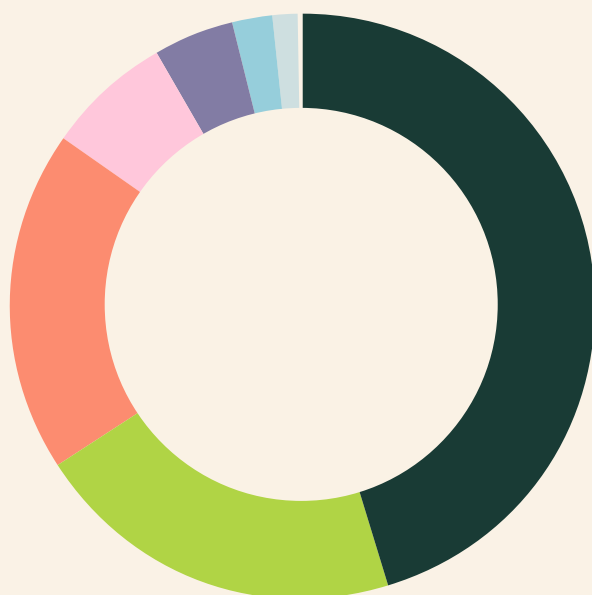
General funds i.e. free financial reserves are held to ensure that Butterfly Conservation:

- maintains sufficient levels of working capital to allow for seasonal fluctuations of our natural patterns of activity
- protects its essential conservation activities in the event of shortfalls in grant and general income within the next financial year
- maintains funds to respond to conservation opportunities.

These funds equate to approximately six months' operating costs. Council has reviewed the charity's Financial Reserves Policy with the designation of this money and has also taken into consideration the continued reduction in statutory agency funding and the need to invest financial resources into achieving our 2026 Strategy. Considering these factors, Council has calculated that the amount of financial reserves it needs to hold is £3.5m (2023: £3.5m). The members of Council are therefore satisfied with the year end reserves position. In 2024/25 we will continue to implement our Fundraising Strategy to maintain our conservation effort and financial reserves to the target level. However, ongoing uncertainties may have some negative impact on our finances during the next few years. Positive action is planned to mitigate potential reduction in income during this period.

## HOW WE RAISED OUR FUNDS

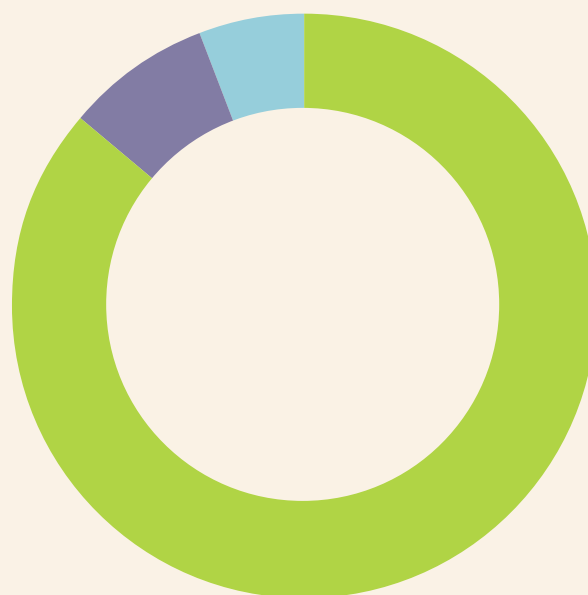
Total Income £6.62m  
(2022/23 £6.25m)



● Donations and legacies	£3.00m
● Conservation activities - grants	£1.37m
● Membership subscriptions	£1.24m
● Contracts and royalties	£0.46m
● Investments	£0.31m
● Primary purpose trading	£0.13m
● Other trading activities	£0.11m

## HOW WE SPENT OUR FUNDS

Total Expenditure £6.82m  
(2022/23 £5.56m)



● Conservation	£5.89m
● Membership services	£0.54m
● Raising funds	£0.39m

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES, YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2024

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	Endowment funds £'000	<b>2024 Total funds £'000</b>	2023 Total funds £'000
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	2,948	50	—	<b>2,998</b>	2,888
Other trading activities	105	—	—	<b>105</b>	31
Investments & interest receivable	109	15	183	<b>307</b>	228
Charitable activities					
· Conservation activities – grants receivable	101	1,264	—	<b>1,365</b>	1,239
· Contracts and Royalties	437	26	—	<b>463</b>	499
· Primary purpose trading	135	1	—	<b>136</b>	95
· Membership subscriptions	1,242	—	—	<b>1,242</b>	1,268
<b>Total income</b>	<b>5,077</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>6,616</b>	<b>6,248</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
· Raising funds	380	—	11	<b>391</b>	289
Charitable activities					
· Conservation	4,521	1,372	—	<b>5,893</b>	4,824
· Membership services	540	—	—	<b>540</b>	444
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>5,441</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6,824</b>	<b>5,557</b>
<b>Net income (expenditure) before investment gains (losses)</b>	<b>(364)</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>(208)</b>	<b>691</b>
Net investment (losses) gains	—	—	338	<b>338</b>	(302)
Net income (expenditure)	(364)	(16)	510	<b>130</b>	389
Transfer between funds	486	(300)	(186)	—	—
Net movement in funds	122	(316)	324	<b>130</b>	389
Reconciliation					
Total funds brought forward at 1 April 2023	6,695	718	5,283	<b>12,696</b>	12,307
<b>Total funds carried forward at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>6,817</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>5,607</b>	<b>12,826</b>	<b>12,696</b>



# BALANCE SHEET, 31 MARCH 2024

	Group		Charity	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Intangible fixed assets	20	40	20	40
Tangible fixed assets				
· Freehold land	1,343	1,343	1,343	1,343
· Other tangible fixed assets	8	10	8	10
· Investments	5,607	5,283	5,607	5,283
	<b>6,978</b>	6,676	<b>6,978</b>	6,676
<b>Current assets</b>				
<b>Stocks</b>	<b>8</b>	6	<b>8</b>	6
· Debtors	2,408	1,363	2,455	1,389
· Cash				
· Short term deposits and interest bearing accounts	1,189	2,914	1,189	2,914
· Money market accounts	1,797	248	1,797	248
Current accounts	969	2,125	903	2,083
	<b>6,371</b>	6,656	<b>6,352</b>	6,640
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(523)	(636)	(524)	(640)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>5,848</b>	6,020	<b>5,828</b>	6,000
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>12,826</b>	12,696	<b>12,806</b>	12,676
<b>Funds of the charity</b>				
· Capital funds				
· Endowment funds	5,607	5,283	5,607	5,283
· Income funds				
· Restricted funds	402	718	402	718
· Unrestricted funds				
· General fund	4,371	3,983	4,371	3,983
· Non-charitable trading funds	20	20	—	—
· Tangible and intangible assets (including freehold nature reserves) fund	1,371	1,393	1,371	1,393
· Designated fund	1,055	1,299	1,055	1,299
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>12,826</b>	12,696	<b>12,806</b>	12,676

# THANK YOU



We are extremely grateful to all our members, supporters and funders, and the organisations that have generously continued to support the charity in 2023/24, including all donors who wish to remain anonymous.

On behalf of Butterfly Conservation, thank you to everyone who supported our work. Unfortunately, we do not have space to name all funders individually but would like to acknowledge the following, who provided support of £1,000 or more:

## CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

D G Albright Charitable Trust  
DFN Charitable Foundation  
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
Goldman Sachs Annual Giving Fund  
Henocq Law Trust  
Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust  
Kilpatrick Fraser Charitable Trust  
Lady Eda Jardine Charitable Trust  
Marsh Charitable Trust  
The Chalk Cliff Trust  
The David Family Foundation  
The J & J R Wilson Trust  
The Leslie Mary Carter Charitable Trust  
The Orr Mackintosh Foundation  
The Valerie Ayton Charitable Trust

## GRANT FUNDERS

Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape  
Cairngorms National Park Authority  
Carmarthenshire County Council  
Ceredigion County Council  
Cotswolds National Landscape  
Exmoor National Park Authority  
H D H Wills 1965 Charitable Trust  
Hampshire County Council  
National Heritage Lottery Fund  
National Trust  
Natural England  
Natural Resources Wales  
NatureScot  
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
North York Moors National Park Authority  
Northern Ireland Environment Agency  
Pembrokeshire County Council  
Rural Payments Agency  
Severn Trent  
South Downs National Park Authority  
The Amber River Foundation  
The Botanist Foundation  
The Britford Bridge Trust  
The Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust  
The Highland Council  
The Hiscox Foundation  
The John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust  
The Lawson Trust



## CORPORATE MEMBERS

The Botanist Foundation  
Highland Titles Nature Reserve  
CJ Wildlife Limited  
Northumbrian Water  
Landscaping Solutions Limited  
The Bathurst Estate  
Nurture Landscapes Group  
Propology Boutique Properties  
Mariposa Nature Tours  
Stowe Family Law LLP  
Integrated Utility Services  
Gaia's Garden  
Chiswick Park  
Castelli Milano 1938 Limited  
Hallgarten Wines Limited  
Valley Provincial (Chalcraft Nurseries)

## CORPORATE PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

FatFace  
Gilbert-Ash Limited  
Habitat Aid  
Henocq Law Trust  
South Downs Natural Park  
The Craignish Trust

## LEGACY GIFTS

Much of our successful conservation work is underpinned by the generosity of supporters who have left a gift in their Will. All gifts, whatever their size, are hugely valuable, making a lasting difference to butterfly and moth conservation. We would like to thank our generous benefactors for these important gifts:

Eileen Marjorie Allen  
Nigel Bachman  
Cordelia Banner  
Barry Stuart Barnacal  
John Bates  
Margaret Joyce Bristow

Richard Colin Scott Burgess  
Edmund Burke  
Lady Lucy Bertha Chandler  
Ronald Colenso  
William John Farley-Hills  
Margaret Caroline Field  
Michael James Yates Foley  
Norah Margaret Harper  
Derek Michael Stanford Head  
Jessie Hill  
Sonia Hinton  
William Arthur Howard  
Dennis William Hudson  
Michael Bernard Jones  
Brian Lawrence  
Jacqueline Makinson  
Roger John Martin  
John McLennan  
Jane Wyatt Paul  
Gillian Peachey  
Dr Malcolm Pines  
Kathleen Potterton  
Susan Roberts  
Terence John Robertson  
Marian Rushton  
Sylvia Ryman  
Edna Veronica Salmon  
Clem Shaw  
Roger Smith  
Trevor Standing  
William Stevens  
Phillip William Strachan  
Margaret Taylor  
John Lawrence Vetterlein  
George Weir  
Michael Richard White  
Nicholas James Williams

If you would like to find out more about leaving a gift in your Will, please email:

Alison Adams  
[aadams@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:aadams@butterfly-conservation.org)

# GET INVOLVED

There are lots of ways you can get involved to help save butterflies, moths and the environment.



Northern Brown Argus  
by Ivan Lynas

## DONATE

Support our conservation work to secure the future for butterflies and moths. Every penny counts.

## JOIN

Become a member and join our community of people passionate about protecting butterflies and moths.

## MAKE SPACE FOR NATURE

Create and register a Wild Space to help transform the UK into a haven for these beautiful creatures

## REMEMBER BUTTERFLIES IN YOUR WILL

Help us make sure future generations can experience the joy of seeing butterflies and moths in the wild.

## MONITOR

Take part in the Big Butterfly Count or volunteer with your local Branch to help us track the health of butterfly and moth populations.

## VOLUNTEER

Give the gift of your time. We need volunteers of all ages and abilities.

## FUNDRAISE

Open your garden to visitors, join in with our fundraising activities, or help us promote our appeals.

## CAMPAIGN

Use your voice to help us create a wilder, healthier future for butterflies, moths and our people.

## FOLLOW US

We're on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X as @savebutterflies.

## FIND OUT MORE

For more information, visit [butterfly-conservation.org](https://www.butterfly-conservation.org).

