

About our new chief executive

Richard Park is the new Chief Executive of Gwent Wildlife Trust and takes over from Julian Branscombe who is moving to new pastures in the Orkney Islands. Ironically, Rick is moving down from Scotland with his wife and baby daughter, having led a team of ecologists in the Marine Section of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Rick says, "I have a genuine passion and underlying sense of wonder for the natural world and a strong determination to protect and enhance our wildlife for the future. Despite the extraordinary pressure on the wildlife of Gwent, GWT is clear where conservation priorities should lie and where actions are required. I really look forward to working with such a dedicated and enthusiastic team and making a difference."

Rick has always been closely linked with the natural world and is bringing strong leadership, management and a breadth of experience to the Trust. He studied zoology and marine biology

at Bangor University in the early 80s and then worked as a freshwater biologist for the Welsh Water Authority. Specialising in things marine, and following his love for the sea, this led to a PhD at Edinburgh University and work as a marine biologist at SEPA. Rick is a keen wildlife artist and has also had the good fortune to travel widely, experiencing many habitats from rainforests to remote coral reefs to the less exotic but equally beautiful habitats of the UK and continental Europe, easily matched by the stunning wildlife and habitats of Wales.



Dr Rick Park, New GWT CEO
rpark@gwentwildlife.org

Farewell to Julian – David Leat, GWT Chairman

Julian Branscombe has led this Trust, as our Chief Executive Officer, for the last eight years. He came with hope and enthusiasm and developed a strong, active wildlife trust, of which the movement, as a whole, can be proud. He has made a considerable difference to the way we deliver our objectives, by developing the organisation in a very businesslike manner.

Above all, Julian has led staff and volunteers through the exuberance of his knowledge of the natural world. His enthusiasm for life from the smallest to the largest organism has inspired us all and given that extra dimension to make involvement with Gwent Wildlife Trust such a pleasure.

We shall miss his effervescence and his ability to think a dozen things at once. He has campaigned in Gwent and beyond and 'rattled the cage' on a number of occasions. Thank goodness for that. Society needs challenge and that is what Julian has provided.

Julian has achieved so much in his time with us, but two things stand out. One has been his leadership of the Campaign against the Gwent Levels Motorway, a long running battle, now withdrawn by the Welsh Assembly following publication of its National Transport Plan on 16th July 2009. The other has been the bold concept of Wyewood

Common: a project on a grand scale, to create a joined up Living Landscape for future generations to enjoy. The Trust is privileged to have had such an able and dedicated leader.

Thank you, Julian, for all you have done in Gwent. Enjoy your future, living life 'on the edge' in Orkney.

No New M4 – Sorrel Jones, GWT Conservation Officer

Instead of a demand of our government, it's now a fact. I am delighted to be able to tell you that the plans for the new M4, which would have cut through and decimated the wonderful Gwent Levels, have been scrapped – an honour that should really have fallen to Julian Branscombe. The deputy first minister, Ieuan Wyn Jones, announced that the plans were dropped, primarily on account of cost, as the price tag of the new motorway had risen to a billion pounds. The announcement formed part of the launch of a new five year National Transport Plan, which is very focussed on improving public transport and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

The Campaign Against the Levels Motorway (CALM) alliance will continue for a short while, at least, in order to respond to the consultation on the National Transport Plan and support the decision to drop the scheme. We will be asking our supporters to do the same in the near future. For the moment, the most important thing for me to do is to thank

those who have written to their assembly members, donned yellow t-shirts, given out leaflets, put stickers in their cars, attended our events and the successful protest last year, signed our petition and donated to the campaign. Your support has been unwavering and invaluable.

Driving Force Appeal – Richard Bakere, GWT Reserves Officer

It has been a very exciting time for us. I was expecting to be looking for the right vehicle just now. Instead, we've been donated a second-hand pick-up, in excellent running order, by Mandarin Stone, thanks to the owners of the company, Alma & Stephen Small, receiving our appeal letter.

Not only were we donated a vehicle but hundreds of members contributed generously to the appeal, too, and the money raised will cover the running costs of the vehicle for the first year, including insurance, tax, and fuel and there should be enough to cover the occasional hire of another vehicle when we need a very heavy maximum towing weight.

Already we are putting the vehicle to good use, taking new field gates to Magor Marsh. The other week, I even took a small boat down on the back of the pick-up, so we could get out onto the pond and cut the reeds in front of the Chris Renshaw Hide, in preparation for the recent Magor Marsh Open Day.



Rick & Richard with Alma & Stephen Small, from Mandarin Stone

It means a great deal to us to know our members are behind us so strongly, whilst the cash is invaluable to cover our running costs at a time when the Trust particularly needs it.

We are all extremely grateful for your support.

To appeal or not to appeal... – Richard Park, GWT CEO

Appeals are very important to our work, be they for acquisitions, equipment or projects. The Driving Force appeal has been vital to the work of our reserves team, and a great success as described so clearly above. We know many members appreciate appeal letters, whether or not they feel able to support them each time, because they want to know more about our work and they also want to have the opportunity of giving this support directly when it is needed most. We also know that some members do not wish to receive appeal letters, and indeed we did have two complaints as a result of this recent appeal. We would like to stress that if members do not wish to receive appeals, we will make sure this is the case if you let us know. Please ring the office, or e-mail info@gwentwildlife.org if you wish to be excluded from any further appeals.

AGM notice – Rachael Daniels, GWT Administration Officer

A date for your diaries – the GWT AGM will be held on Wednesday 7th October 2009, at the Glen-yr-Afon House Hotel, Usk, at 7pm. We're delighted to have Professor Simon Haslett from the University of Wales, Newport, to be our guest speaker. He will be giving a presentation on 'The Severn Estuary: Its Past and Future'. You will also have the opportunity to meet our new CEO, Dr Richard Park, who will speak on the Challenges and Opportunities for Gwent Wildlife Trust.

Welsh Wildlife Partnerships: delivering the vision – Amy Mulkern, Partnerships Development Manager

Welsh Wildlife Partnerships (WWP) is our Wales-wide corporate membership scheme and we'd like to give our members a round up of some of the many things we've been doing with local companies to deliver our vision of a Gwent rich in wildlife for the enjoyment of all.

We now have nineteen Welsh Wildlife Partners from one end of the county to the

other, covering sectors as diverse as consulting companies through to accountants, farmers and manufacturers.

We are incredibly proud of the work of our partners and grateful to them for their support. Their corporate membership helps us to carry out our day to day work and without them, as with our individual members, we would simply cease to exist. But our members give us a lot more than cash: they give us our mandate to work so hard for wildlife and they are the lifeblood of the Gwent Wildlife Trust. The Welsh Wildlife Partners have been playing an increasingly active role in the work of the Trust and here are just a few examples from the last year (and don't forget to look out for the BAE Systems article in the winter edition of Welsh Wildlife!)

Uskmouth Power – inspiring the next generation

This year has seen the support for our education work at Magor Marsh continue with a donation to support our in service training for teachers and the annual open day. As always, we are grateful to Uskmouth for the support they give to our work inspiring this and future generations.

In addition, the Severn Power side of the business has also been supporting our work, looking at the feasibility of the reintroduction of beavers to Wales. Thanks to their sponsorship, we were able to take a group out to Bavaria last year on a fact finding mission to look at how re-establishments in Europe have been handled. The results should help to inform the feasibility study the Wildlife Trusts are undertaking with support from Countryside Council for Wales (CCW).

Solutia – a premier reserve for the new millennium

2008 saw the completion of one phase of work at the Solutia Reserve on Great Traston Meadows, and, we are delighted to announce, the confirmation of more to come!

A new nature trail was opened by David Leat, Chairman of GWT and Wildlife Trusts Wales, at Great Traston Meadows, in Newport, celebrating a successful collaboration between the Wildlife Trusts, Solutia (UK), Newport City Council and Caldicot & Wentlooge Levels International Drainage Board (IDB) to create a fantastic place for people and wildlife. The new nature trail and reopened reens are the latest in a series of practical conservation tasks the organisations have carried out together.

The expertise in water level management that the Board can bring to nature conservation in these wetland areas is invaluable. Without the know-how of the Board, GWT would struggle to restore this vitally important habitat. We're all really keen to see species such as Lapwing returning to these areas.

It is also great to see the Board demonstrating their long term commitment to wildlife conservation and the Gwent Levels by becoming a Platinum Welsh Wildlife Partner. "This goes to show that the man with the digger can be one of nature's champions!" said Jessica Morden, MP (Lab), Newport East.

We have received £10,000 from Solutia (UK) to carry out a further ambitious programme of reen clearance, matching the funding from the Environment Agency for capital works which will allow us to make a huge difference to the site.

A key focus of the management plan for the reserve is to reinstate overgrown reens, to restore the traditional grazing marsh landscape of the Levels and improve the delivered benefit to the local community through engagement with schools and community groups including Kaleidoscope, the provision of bridges and interpretation panels and links to the Newport City Council Walking for Wellness programme. There is great potential for this reserve to be used for educational purposes particularly as reen/pond dipping is always an added attraction for schoolchildren. There is also potential for university research students as the reserve has had so few surveys carried out that any data collected would be beneficial.

To make this happen, we will be re-casting stretches of overgrown reen and seeking advice concerning gravity drainage, sluice installation and culvert installation; clearing and managing scrub and trees and carrying out some low pollarding of selected willows which will all reduce the shading of the reens as well as supporting populations of assorted invertebrates.

Advanced Elastomer Systems – Newport Youth Group and ExxonMobil join forces for otters

At the end of October last year, children from the Beaufort Youth Group joined up with staff from the Advanced Elastomer Systems (AES) factory in Newport to work with Gwent Wildlife Trust for a day of conservation work.

The aim of the day was to create an otter holt on the bank of one of the reens at the Solutia reserve. The reserve is known to be used by these well-loved creatures and it is hoped that providing places for them to rest and sleep in safety will help them to thrive for this and future generations to enjoy. Otters have made a comeback in recent years but their numbers are still low and they are a priority species protected under European and UK law.

The day was made possible thanks to sponsorship by AES, through the ExxonMobil Day of Caring programme. They provided all the equipment, waterproofs and boots as well as supporting Gwent Wildlife Trust in preparations for the day.

Marshalls – paving the way to success for business and nature

Marshalls Mono, the brickworks at Newport, has recently donated block paving, sand, and more importantly, their expertise, for the Greenkey volunteers. The sand and paving will be used to help create a wildlife garden at Magor Marsh giving examples of the many and varied habitats that can be found at the reserve. This will enable everyone to get a snapshot of the kinds of species to be found in the wetland and drier areas of the reserve away from the boardwalks.

Julia James – new local corporate contact

Many of you will know Julia from her work as a trustee of Gwent Wildlife Trust, or through her long standing commitment to volunteering with our local group, Wildlife in Newport Group (WING). She has also been involved with the community liaison panel at Solutia (UK) for years and was instrumental in securing GWT's lease on the Solutia reserve.

Julia has kindly agreed to look after the Gwent based Welsh Wildlife Partners helping to make sure that we are making the most of the partnerships for both parties and supporting our Wales-wide work. She's planning corporate events for our members and offering to help companies manage their land for wildlife, find out about employee volunteering or offset their biodiversity impact by getting involved with species and habitat work on our reserves. Julia will be in contact with all the Wildlife Partners to introduce herself and Welsh Wildlife Partnerships would like to take this opportunity to thank Julia for her help and to welcome her to the team.

For further information on Welsh Wildlife Partnerships or if you know of a company that might be interested in working with the Trust, please contact us on 02920 480070 or email info@wildlifepartnerships.org.

Current WWP Partners (* new for 2008)

AES*, Arvin Meritor, AU Partnerships*, BAE, Caldicot & Wentlooge Levels IDB, Carillion, Cogent Orb, Corus, DS Smith, Frank Sutton, Johnsey Estates*, LaFarge, Marshalls*, Peacheys*, RDP, Solutia (UK), Tarmac, Welsh Power (Uskmouth Power Station).

A Tribute to Sue Bentley: Springdale Farm Reserve's First Warden – Steven Rogers

Teacher, potter, amateur naturalist, lover of life, Sue moved into Post Cottage, which is right next to what is now Springdale Farm Reserve, in 1992. She instantly fell in love with the gently managed farmland and woodland and would wander for hours enjoying their special qualities.

In 2000, Sue discovered that the land was for sale and was desperate to ensure that its unique qualities were protected – but how? The local Wildlife Trust was the answer and pretty soon negotiations for its purchase were underway. With the land secured, the Trust needed someone to act as a Warden. Sue was the obvious choice and she was happy to accept the voluntary role. Her unique knowledge of the area was invaluable when making plans for the management of the land. She took her role as warden very seriously and soon built up a team of volunteers who met regularly for working parties on the site.

Sadly, Sue became ill and died at the age of 68 from lung cancer in January 2009. She is missed hugely by everyone who knew her well but she will always be remembered for who she was and for all of her good works.

One particular spot on the reserve gave her immense pleasure and huge spiritual comfort while she was ill. She coined the name 'the

magic trees' for this particular cluster of oak trees. As an artist, there was something 'special' that she saw in their situation and form and on many occasions she would sit beneath them with her partner Steve, Bruno the dog and a good bottle of Burgundy, to watch the sun set over the Black Mountains. Observing her wishes, Sue is now buried in the orchard at Post Cottage and she has a wonderful view over the reserve and the Usk Valley beyond.

This reserve is a treasure and we are all so lucky that it is in the care of Gwent Wildlife Trust. We should be forever grateful that it was Sue who made its acquisition possible.

Steven Rogers, Sue's Partner and GWT Conservation Officer (2001 – 2005)

Reserves Roundup – Lauri MacLean, GWT Reserves Manager

Cuhere Wood

The Trust has recently taken over a management agreement from the Forestry Commission for a new woodland reserve – Cuhere Wood near Llanvair Discoed. The agreement covers a relatively undisturbed area of broadleaf woodland which forms a small part of the total woodland area. The majority of the site is still planted with commercial conifer plantation and is in the process of being felled. The reserve is mixed ash woodland becoming a mosaic with beech wood on base-rich soils, with wonderful mature yew trees in places. Due to the lime-rich soil, there is a particularly rich and interesting ground flora including bird's nest orchid. This unusual plant can be found in the darkest woods as it does not need sunlight to thrive. It depends on a fungus surrounding the roots to aid absorption of nutrients from rotting leaves. The flowers and stem are brownish yellow in colour and it is named after the densely matted roots at the base of the solitary stem. Other unusual plants found at Cuhere Wood include spurge laurel and an impressive population of herb Paris.

Call for Help – Tracked Power Barrow!

With the beautiful sunny weather at the start of this season, the reserves department has been able to sell more of its sustainable barbecue charcoal than ever this year. The charcoal is produced as a by-product of our coppicing programme – a traditional form of woodland management introduced at our Croes Robert reserve to benefit dormice and other woodland wildlife. Unfortunately, this upturn in sales coincided with the final disintegration of our tracked motorised wheelbarrow – this barrow has been at Croes Robert for more years than any of us can remember and has only survived for so long due to the time and care of our warden! We are now turning to our members in the hope that someone may know of a replacement – we are looking for a tracked power barrow with a carrying capacity of 500 – 1000Kg in good working condition. We have found that this type of barrow is most suitable for the movement of loads of wood around the steep, muddy tracks at Croes Robert and minimises impact on the woodland wildlife.

If anyone can help, please contact the office or our Woodland and Charcoal Reserves Officer, Jan Kinchington on 07738 231155. Many thanks!

Cleaning up the mud! – Mat Holloway, Secretary Wentloog Wildfowling & Conservation Association

The Wentloog Wildfowling and Conservation Association recently organised a foreshore tidy-up, thanks to a grant from Keep Wales Tidy and help from members of the Trust. A huge skip load of metal, plastic and rubbish was collected along with over 50 car tyres.

"It's shocking to see the amount of rubbish that ends up on the tide line," said Mat Holloway, secretary of the Club. "We've been cleaning up the foreshore for years but the grant from Keep Wales Tidy has enabled us to expand our operation. It can be depressing to see more rubbish arriving on the next tide, but if we don't move it, it's there for ever, and we consider ourselves to be custodians of this section of the foreshore."

Wentloog Wildfowlers formed in 1981 to control 'cowboy' shooting on the foreshore between Cardiff and Peterstone. The club has around fifty members, many of whom live in Rumney and have known the marshes and foreshore all their lives. The Wentloog Wildfowlers have recently offered to restrict shooting in an area looked after by the Trust, to provide a safe haven for wildfowl.



*The rubbish mountain grows...
Glyn Ryland*

Volunteer Vacancies May 2009 – Val Jackson, GWT Volunteer Coordinator

Working parties

Working parties meet at many of our reserves throughout the year. For more details, please contact the relevant leaders (see centre pages).

Surveys

Nestbox Monitoring team – We need an additional pair of hands at Wyewood Common, and we have no-one at present monitoring the boxes at Strawberry Cottage Wood. Training would be provided. The next session of monitoring will now start in April 2010 but we would like to hear from anyone interested.

Nestbox Monitoring Team Co-ordinator – A co-ordinator is also needed to receive the reports from the monitors and to pass them on to the agency kindly inputting them onto the British Trust for Ornithology database.

Surveys at GWT Reserves and locally – Surveys include Wild Flowers, Butterflies, Amphibians & Reptiles, and Bats. Existing skills are required, but it may be possible to arrange some training.

Gwent's Living Churchyards Project – If you know of a churchyard in Gwent with potential wildlife appeal, would like to learn more or are keen to develop a living churchyards group in your area, please contact:- Rebecca Price, Living Churchyards Project Officer, on 01600 740600 or rprice@gwentwildlife.org.

IT Support

We are interested in finding a proficient IT volunteer to assist on occasions.

Publication Sales

Management of Publication Distribution – Gwent Wildlife Trust publishes information about our reserves, membership leaflets, and the Yearbook, which includes the events guide for the year. The management of the distribution of these publications across the many districts covered by the Trust, via a team of enthusiastic volunteers, is a very important role, currently unfulfilled.

Management of Book Sales – A volunteer is needed to ensure that our publications are regularly distributed to bookshops at local tourist locations, and there is a potential for book sales at all appropriate GWT events.

Fundraising

Community Fundraising – There is great potential for community fundraising, through raffles, sponsored walks, sponsored bird-watches, etc. We can provide the support but need help liaising with schools, community groups, Rotary Clubs, etc. GWT is *the* local wildlife organisation for these groups.

Administration

South East Wales Biological Records Centre submission – GWT has survey data from our reserves that needs to be submitted to SEWBRc. A volunteer is needed to make a list of the paper surveys (date, type, location, approx size), by working systematically through the files in the main office in Dingestow. An extension of the job for any volunteer would be to start photocopying surveys to send to SEWBRc.

Wildlife Watch magazines mailing – Every two months, we post nearly 1000 Wildlife Watch magazines to our junior members. We would like to enrol a small team so that it is more of a social occasion than a chore!!

Manning the phone at Dingestow – We have a team of volunteers who answer the phone at GWT headquarters for a few hours at a time. We are always looking for new members for that team, particularly for holiday cover.

Managing the GWT clothing sales – A volunteer is needed to manage the sales of Trust branded clothing. This would involve negotiating with suppliers, placing orders in response to requests, topping up stocks for events, and managing the receipts.

Filing GWT staff documents – A good understanding of the Trust activities would be required for this, as it is vital that documents are filed correctly. The work will need to take place at Dingestow during office hours.

Education

Education support – There are volunteer opportunities to support current activities and to help develop new ones. Qualified teachers and those with previous experience of environmental education would be particularly welcome.

Education web page support – We are also looking for a volunteer to revise the GWT education web pages on a regular basis to promote the activities and provide enhanced resources. Web design knowledge is not necessary, but basic PC skills would be required.

Presentations

Giving Talks to local groups – GWT has many opportunities to promote our work for wildlife by giving talks to groups like the WI, and local Church groups. Presentation material is available, but we do need people willing to go out and present to these groups, usually on weekday evenings.

Membership

Mystery Shopping – We are looking for volunteers to visit the locations where our recruitment agency is working. We need an on-going assessment of their activities for quality control.

New Members Welcome calling team – We have vacancies in our team of volunteers who ring all new GWT members. See the People & Wildlife report for more details.

Manager for New Members Welcome calling team – A manager is needed for the Welcome Callers team, distributing the new members' lists between the callers, and ensuring that any questions from new members are answered by members of the Trust staff and passed back appropriately.

Membership Recruitment at events – Volunteers are needed at all the GWT public events to talk to visitors and, hopefully, recruit them as Trust members. Coaching can be provided.

Wider Environment News – Sorrel Jones, GWT Conservation Officer

Staff Changes in Wider Environment

In June, we said a temporary farewell to Gemma Bodé, our Conservation Manager, as she goes on Maternity Leave. We would like to send Gemma and Ed our congratulations on the birth of their baby girl and wish them all the best.

This has meant some rearrangements in the Wider Environment department. Gemma's responsibilities and projects are being divided among other staff, with most being taken on by Rebecca Price, who will become our Acting Conservation Manager in Gemma's absence. We are also welcoming Gabrielle Horup, as our new Assistant Conservation Officer.

Gabrielle is joining the Wider Environment team as a voluntary trainee – a placement whereby recent graduates can gain skills and experience and help the Trust in its work. All these changes are going to take a bit of getting used to, but we have an excellent team and a lot of support from other staff, so we're confident that Wider Environment will continue to deliver its innovative projects and important ongoing work.

Greenmeadow Farm is saved – for now

At the end of March, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council refused planning permission for Greenmeadow Farm – a residential development that would have built over seventy houses on top of an important site for wildlife. Gwent Wildlife Trust had made strong representations to the council, stating its importance for local wildlife and its unique and special qualities. Together with representations from the council ecologist and local people, this was enough for the planning committee to refuse permission, in order to protect local biodiversity. Naturally, we are delighted that the council is willing to stand up for wildlife, but it is likely that the case will now be subject to an appeal – so there is more work to do before the site is truly saved.

People and Wildlife – Denis Jackson, GWT People & Wildlife Manager

It's a been a busy few months for the People and Wildlife team and I can't really do much more than highlight some of the more significant things that we've been doing in the space available to me here, so if you've been involved with helping with something and it doesn't feature here this time, please don't be disappointed.

Education Roundup

We're pushing ahead with our new education centre in Ebbw Vale in partnership with Blaenau Gwent CBC and a number of other partners. We have a new member of staff, Veronika Brannovic, who has worked for Torfaen CBC and Groundwork Caerphilly. Veronika started back in April and has already worked with more than 500 schoolchildren and 250 people in local communities and working parties.

Our education work at Magor Marsh continues to be very successful and we are now taking school bookings well into 2010! This year we are continuing with our programme of teacher training, including, once again, our partnership with University of Wales Caerleon Campus through which two trainee teachers undertook part of their assessed teaching practice in the outdoor classroom.

Membership

Despite the recession, I am pleased to be able to tell you that our membership continues to grow and we have recently passed a significant milestone – GWT now has more than 8,000 members for the first time in its history. It's very heartening to know that our members are sticking with us despite the

difficult financial environment that surrounds us and I thank you for that. The pressure on our wildlife and the environment that supports it has never been greater. If each member of GWT recruited just one more member during the year, we could do more... just a thought!

New Member Welcome Calls

I've talked about this in previous editions of the Local News. What we're trying to do is to ensure that all new members get a phone call within a month or so of joining the Trust just to make sure they were happy with the way they were recruited, tell them a little bit about what we are doing, and find out if there's any more information they need... perhaps about volunteering or about their Local Group.

These calls are proving very beneficial and the good news is that only very occasionally has a new member had a problem with the recruitment process that we have needed to resolve. However, we don't have enough volunteer callers.

Can you help us with this? You can call as many or as few new members in the month as you can manage. Each call only takes a few minutes and in most cases, there is nothing to do afterwards. If the member does have a query, we here at the office will deal with it promptly and feed back to you what happened. Please give me a call if you think you can help.

Green Key

Most readers will be familiar with Green Key, our award-winning mental health partnership with the NHS team in Newport. This project works with adults suffering with or recovering from serious mental illness by providing structured, usually outdoor, occupational therapy. The project's clients undertake a wide range of tasks at Magor Marsh and occasionally at other sites ranging from scrub clearance to building paths and fences. One of the most recent activities has been the construction of the paths at the new Wildlife Garden at Magor. More than half of the clients who have come through the project in the last five years are now in work, which is more than double the success rate of other, more traditional schemes.

Despite the success of the project, it is likely that that it will come to an end in September due to lack of funding. We have approached many different grant funding bodies over the last six months without any success. Unfortunately, the majority of funders will not support existing projects no matter how successful they are and much as our NHS partners would like to fund this work themselves, they too have to cut costs and money for this work is simply not available.

We haven't given up and we are working on other funding applications and also looking at how we might modify the project, perhaps by targeting a slightly different client group – which could open up new funding opportunities. Whether we stick with the existing format for the project or change things around a bit, we still have to find the money to keep it going. It costs £2,374 per month to run the Green Key project and we

need to find a way of either funding that through grant income or perhaps through direct sponsorship from a local business or two.

It's a hard fact that one in four of us will suffer mental health problems as we go through life and, for some of us, those problems will change our lives forever. If, as you read this, you can think of any funding sources we could approach or perhaps know of a local business that might be able to help, then please do get in touch with me as soon as you can. It would be a great shame to see such a successful project which has benefited so many people, come to an end.

Local Groups Roundup – Hilary Lee, GWT Local Group Coordinator

As I write, volunteers from the local groups are in the thick of summer events, attending all sorts of shows, open days, fairs and fetes; wherever there are gatherings of people with an interest in the countryside and its wildlife who might be persuaded to join, or contribute to GWT, there we shall be!

Some events will simply be used for dispensing information and raising awareness of the Trust, while some will be fund-raisers, with plant sales being currently the favourite. The Chepstow group's Plant Sale in May raised £800, which is the best result for several years. Many thanks are due to a great number of helpers and growers, including the commercial nurseries Crown Hill Nursery and Gemini Plants, who so generously contribute to the success of this event.



Pictured are Basil's son and grandchildren unveiling the seat

The local groups rely entirely on the dedication of their volunteers. One such well-known volunteer was Basil Evans, a friend to many people in the area. He was a highly respected conservationist, long associated with Monmouthshire and the Trust. The Abergavenny group has installed a seat in Strawberry Cottage Wood dedicated to his memory; Strawberry Cottage Wood is a GWT reserve and SSSI, and was one of many sites associated with him.

Before we know where we are, the autumn programme of events will be upon us again; looking at the listings it is apparent that there is no shortage of interesting talks to be attended again this season. We look forward to meeting up again with many members and friends at these evenings.



Wildlife Warriors

Wildlife Warriors: What a Winner! – Kathy Barclay, GWT Magor Community Officer

"Awesome!" "Cool!" – just some of the words used to describe the Wildlife Warriors meetings at Magor Marsh Nature Reserve. These comments were all the better because they were unprompted and came from two teenage boys. That was all the encouragement we (Tom Rugg and myself) needed to continue working with the 24 children that turned up on the first night!

When I asked two of the members, Aled and Tom, why they came to Wildlife Warriors, they answered immediately " ... because it's not like school. We get to do really cool stuff like shelter building and tool making. Learning about wildlife is really interesting too because we want to do something like that when we're older."

The evenings have covered a wide range of topics from bird ringing to bug hunting, meadow management to shelter building, greenwood crafts, bird box making and first aid. We believe that these young adults are the future of this reserve and they are learning how to enjoy, respect and manage it.

Our thanks go to all our sponsors: BBC Breathing Places, Big Lottery, Wilkinsons and Magor Churchmen. We are indebted to Paul Cawley who has given so generously of his time and fantastic expertise – we really couldn't have done it without you, Paul. We would also like to thank Rodney Morris, Thom Board, Natalie Waller, Richard Waller and James Pinder for their practical help, time and expertise at meetings. The children are keen to continue attending so we hope that once the funding comes to an end in September that the Wildlife Warriors group can remain. If there are any potential backers out there now who would like to help support this venture please contact Denis Jackson at our Head Office.



Bird's nest orchid, as can be found in Cuhere Wood

About the Gwent Wildlife Trust

Gwent Wildlife Trust has a vision of an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. We work to rebuild biodiversity and engage people with their environment. We manage land, campaign for wildlife, promote appreciation of wildlife and foster sustainable living.

Supported by 8,100 members and 7 local members groups, we:

- Manage 30 nature reserves – 900 acres in total – including two farms
- Conserve threatened species such as dormice and water voles
- Identify and help protect Wildlife Sites
- Fight damaging development
- Provide superb educational facilities at Magor Marsh
- Run children's Wildlife Watch clubs
- Run events so people can learn more about nature

We are part of a nationwide network of 47 local Wildlife Trusts. Together we have more than 700,000 members – the Wildlife Trusts are big enough to have a real voice within local and national government.

We can only be truly effective thanks to the support of everyone who cares about the environment. If you're not already a member, please join the Trust today.



About the Gwent Wildlife Trust

Please complete in block capitals

Title and Full Name
 Title and Full Name
 (Joint applications)
 Address

 Postcode Telephone
 Email DOB

Below are the minimum membership subscription rates; we welcome additional support and donations.

Please tick appropriate box:

| | Annual | Monthly |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Individual | £24pa <input type="checkbox"/> | £2.00 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Joint | £30pa <input type="checkbox"/> | £2.50 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family* | £36pa <input type="checkbox"/> | £3.00 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reduced rate** | £12pa <input type="checkbox"/> | £1.00 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Amount of your choice £ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (to be no less than minimum subscription rates) | | |
| Life | £350 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Corporate – Please contact us on 029 2048 0070 for details | | |

- * Family Membership includes membership of Wildlife Watch for all children living at the same address.
- ** Reduced rate membership is intended for people who, for whatever reason, cannot afford the standard rates

Children of family member

Name DOB M/F
 Name DOB M/F
 Name DOB M/F
 Name DOB M/F

Method of payment (please tick)

- Direct Debit (please complete form opposite)
- Cheque for £

giftaid it If you are a UK taxpayer, Gwent Wildlife Trust can reclaim the tax paid on the money you give. Your support will achieve much more – at no extra cost to you.

Title and Full Name of taxpayer
 Signature Date

I wish Gwent Wildlife Trust to treat all donations I make, including membership monies from today's date, as Gift Aid donations, so enabling the Trust to reclaim the tax until I notify you otherwise. I understand that the tax reclaimed by the trust must not exceed the total amount of income tax and capital gains tax which I pay in any tax year.

Help us make Gwent a better place for people and wildlife

Join by Direct Debit using the form below and receive a free welcome gift: a copy of GWT's Nature Reserves Guide worth £6.

Wildlife Trust Membership also includes:

- A welcome pack full of information about your Trust.
- A copy of our Natural World and Welsh Wildlife magazines, together with our informative local newsletter, three times a year.
- Substantial discounts on all GWT courses and events.
- Most of all, the knowledge that you are doing something positive for local wildlife – helping to preserve and enhance your local patch for future generations!

Instructions to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit



Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS using a ballpoint pen and return this Instruction to Gwent Wildlife Trust, FREEPOST NE218, Seddon House, Dingestow, Monmouth NP25 4ZX

Service User Number

| | | | | | |
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Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society

Address

 Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

| | | | | | |
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Bank/Building Society A/C Number

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Membership reference number (office use only):

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Gwent Wildlife Trust Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Gwent Wildlife Trust and, if so, details may be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature(s)
 Date

Bank and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

The Gwent Wildlife Trust will keep your details on a confidential database, which will not be shared with any third party. This information will be used to let you know about the Trust's work, to maintain your membership records, and to inform you of activities which we think may be of interest to you. All information is correct at the time of going to press. Gwent Wildlife Trust reserves the right to alter membership rates and special offers. July 2009.