



Looking to the Future

Our Strategic Plan
for 2018-2023



Executive Summary

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust (RLWT) is a Lewes-based charity which aims to inspire all members of the local community about the importance of nature, conservation and environmental sustainability by helping to manage the Railway Land Local Nature Reserve and running educational and community projects from its base at the Linklater Pavilion.

The RWLT has strong physical and people assets, and the nature reserve is widely appreciated locally, however it is financially vulnerable and has been over-dependent on grant funding in the past. The Trust needs to build local partnerships and increase local recognition to fulfil its role in maximising the current interest in the environment and outdoor learning. In times of political and funding uncertainty, the Trust needs to achieve a sustainable level of income to maintain its assets and have the capacity to fulfil its mission.

Over the next five years the Trust needs to:

- Increase our **influence** with key stakeholders, as measured for example by our number of partners and feedback from members and visitors;

- Get more local people, community groups and schools **involved** with the Trust, as measured for example by our number of members and attendance at events;
- Provide **inspirational** and innovative learning activities and events as measured for example by the number of educational events and volunteers;
- Improve our **infrastructure** and resources as measured for example by the proportion of core income achieved.

Our Vision

We want to enable all members of the local community to experience and value the natural environment on their doorstep and beyond. We want to allow local people to clear their minds and get their hands dirty and see and learn what conservation means in practice. We want to create inspirational outdoor learning and activity opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, and raise their understanding of environmental sustainability.





Our Mission

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust inspires environmental sustainability by bringing nature to the heart of Lewes through:

- Interpreting, conserving and caring for the Railway Land Local Nature Reserve in partnership with the local authority
- Providing inclusive outdoor learning and community events
- Running the Linklater Pavilion as a community hub
- Providing a thriving membership scheme and accessible volunteering opportunities.



Our Current Situation

The RWLT has strong assets, particularly its location on the nature reserve near the town centre, its ownership of the Linklater Pavilion, its small but dedicated and skilled staff and group of volunteers, its long history of involvement with the town and its solid relationship with the local authority which owns the reserve. However it is a small charity which is financially vulnerable. It has been over-dependent on grant funding from local authorities and others in an era when such funding has become particularly tight. The Trust currently has limited sources of independent income. It is dependent on a few key people, needs to develop more local partnerships and increase its level of recognition as an organisation among the local population, especially given the current interest both in the environment generally and outdoor learning in particular. There is a deep local appreciation of the reserve on which the Trust is based which, given the local affinity for community action, could be turned into more material support (eg in terms of membership and volunteering). The Trust needs to have a clear long-term vision about how it can fulfil its aims, become more financially secure and nurture its assets in times of general political uncertainty, change in local authority structures and continued restrictions on public spending.



Our Strategic Goals 2018-2023

In order to fulfil our mission over the next five years we need to:

- Increase our **influence** with key stakeholders
- Get more local people **involved** with the Trust
- Provide **inspirational** and innovative learning activities and events
- Improve our **infrastructure** and resources



Influence

We will increase our influence with relevant organisations and stakeholders within the local and wider areas through

- Developing our relationships with key strategic authorities, including Lewes and Eastbourne District Council, Lewes Town Council, South Downs National Park Authority.
- Lobbying to be a statutory consulted body with local authorities and the National Park.
- Developing stronger links with other potential partner organisations and relevant community groups





Involvement

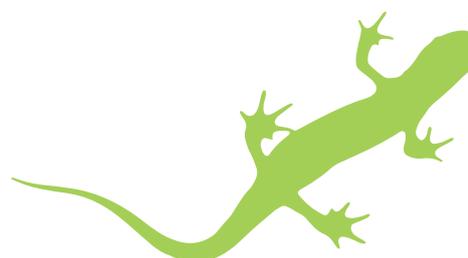
We will significantly increase our engagement with local people and encourage them to be involved in the activities of the Trust through:

- Launching a new RLWT membership scheme, the 'Friend of the Railway Land' scheme, and maximising the number of members.
- Providing a programme of activities which engage all members of the local community, including marginalised groups.
- Helping to manage the Nature Reserve so that it is accessible for community use.
- Recruiting more volunteers from local communities and under-represented groups
- Gaining feedback from users of the Linklater Pavilion and the Nature Reserve
- Enabling volunteers and members to play a more active role in the development of the Trust's work.
- Increasing local awareness through publicity in local press and online sites

Inspiration

We will inspire greater understanding and involvement in environmental sustainability and conservation through:

- Developing an attractive educational offer for primary, secondary and tertiary pupils and students, including disadvantaged groups.
- Providing a programme of activities, using innovative technology and approaches (including remote viewing, webcams etc.) within the Nature Reserve.
- Developing a range of inspiring educational materials.
- Assembling a pool of trainers, consultants and volunteers to deliver the RLWT educational and events programmes.

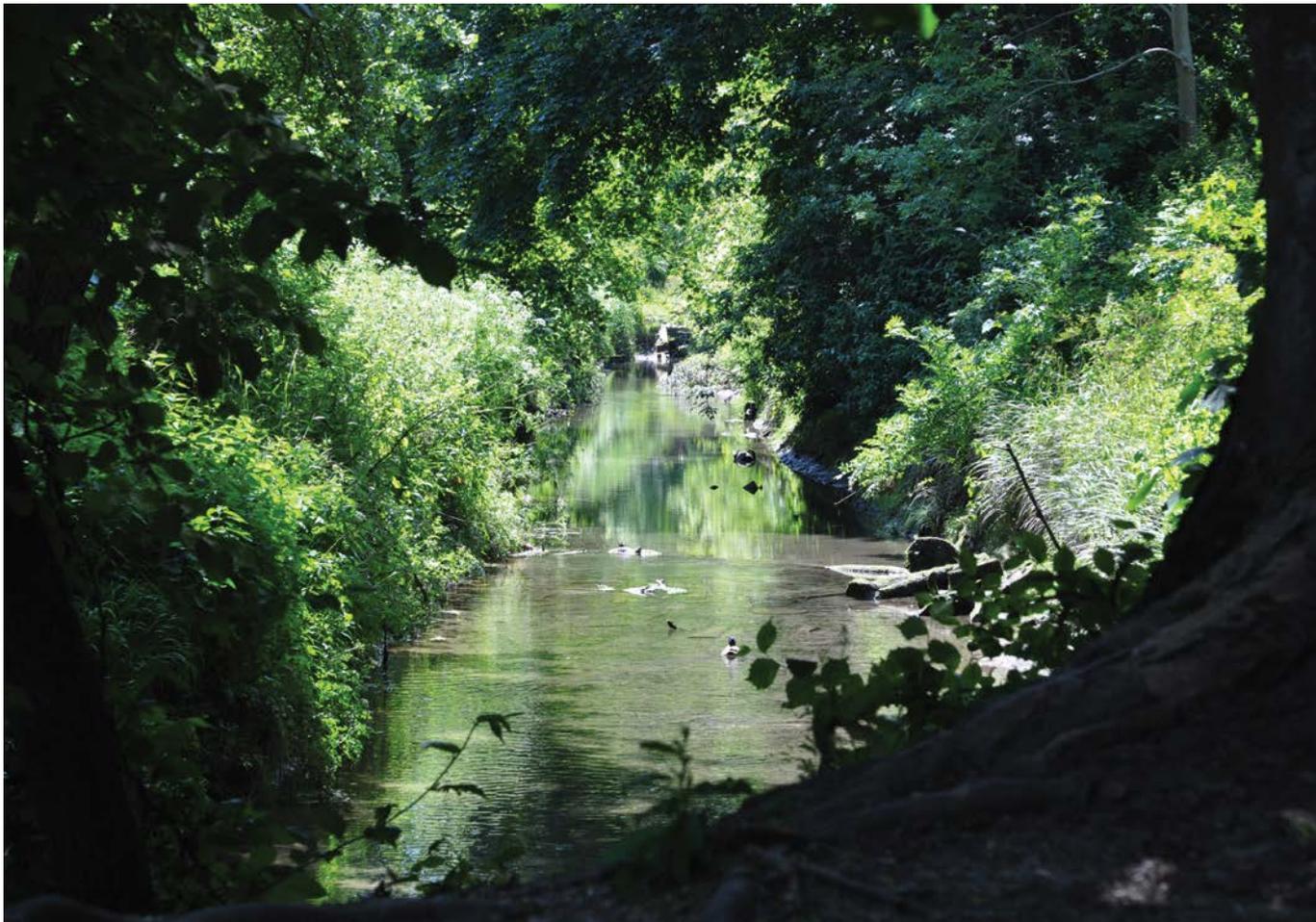


Infrastructure

We will ensure we have sufficient funds and resources to enable the Linklater Pavilion and the Nature Reserve to be properly managed and maintained and the future of the Trust is assured by

- Developing a broad, sustainable income base from:
 - a) Increasing individual/family membership
 - b) Developing a corporate membership programme
 - c) Maximising the income from letting of the Linklater Pavilion.
 - d) Running a viable series of fund-raising events and activities
 - e) Applying for short and long term grant funding for projects and programmes which support the aims of RWLT
 - f) Running a self-financing programme of educational activities for local educational institutions.
- Strengthening the skills and knowledge of the Trustee Board by carrying out a trustee skills and knowledge audit, providing training and recruiting trustees to fill any major skill gaps
- Developing an appropriately resourced team of appropriately skilled staff and volunteers
- Ensuring our policies and systems are up to date and operated effectively
- Assembling a team of skilled independent contractors to supply additional support and expertise where required.





Key Performance Indicators

To monitor how we are progressing, we will be looking at measures such as:

- Actions taken to engage diverse stakeholders
- Increase in membership
- Attendance at events
- Increase in active volunteers
- Increase in schools involved in educational visits
- Increase in self-generated income
- Maintenance of a strong Board in terms of both numbers and skills



Lewes District Council

To find out more about our work,
please go to railwaylandproject.org

To find out about school visits and holiday clubs,
email education@railwaylandproject.org

To find out about booking the Linklater Pavilion and becoming a
Friend of the Railway Land, email admin@railwaylandproject.org

For all other enquiries including volunteering and partnership
work, please contact coordinator@railwaylandproject.org

Social media tabs:



@RailwayLand



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