

Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

Strategic Plan

April 2017-March 2022



Signed off by Board of Trustees - January 19th 2017

ISLES OF SCILLY WILDLIFE TRUST

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022 (updated August 2018)

1. Introduction

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Strategic Plan has been drawn up to answer the fundamental question, what direction will the Trust take over the next five years? It starts by looking at the key external drivers that are likely to shape the environment within which the Trust operates. It considers the purpose and values that underlie the Trusts work, the audiences we seek to target and the programmes that shape our work. And it concludes by setting out our key priorities, and the financial consequences of delivering them.

2. Background

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust is an organisation with a truly enviable brief being based in one of the most beautiful areas of the UK. The Isles of Scilly comprise over 200 granite islands scattered across 200 km², set out in the Atlantic some 45 km south-west of Land's End. Of these islands only five are currently inhabited, namely the islands of St Mary's, St Agnes, St Martin's, Tresco and Bryher. The occupied islands cover a total area of just over 14 km². Only around 50 of the islands have some form of plant life, often just a few tufts of grass and wind-swept sea pink and lichens. The great majority are low outcrops of granite, sometimes barely breaking the surface at high tide. The islands contain 26 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and one Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for a range of geological and biological features, including maritime heathland and grassland, as well as one Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, highlighting the important seabird colonies of puffins, Manx shearwater and terns.

The marine environment between and around the islands is designated as an SAC and a Marine Conservation Zone for the wealth of marine species it supports, from diverse rocky reef to grey seals that breed around the islands.

It is a landscape rich in history, with 900 historic monuments. The most notable features are the outstanding prehistoric monuments of chambered barrows and standing stones of the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. The entire National Character Area has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is recognised as a Heritage Coast.

The natural environment is mentioned throughout the strategic economic plan for the islands, "Island Futures" and current initiatives such as Smart Islands and the Local Nature Partnership, have the natural environment and resource efficiency at their core.

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The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust holds a 99 year lease with the Duchy of Cornwall over 1985 hectares or 64% of the islands, including all of the uninhabited islands and most of the coastal areas of St Mary's, St Martin's, St Agnes & Bryher. This makes the Trust the Duchy's largest leaseholder on Scilly. The Trust manages 24 out of the 26 SSSI's and 100's of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

The next five years will be crucial to the future viability of the Trust; our major funding streams are set to end and with Brexit due to happen within the 5 year period of this plan, the Trust must plan its strategy carefully.

Our vision is:

To be the champion of nature in the Isles of Scilly

As the Isles of Scilly's champion for the natural environment the Trusts mission is:

- To protect, restore and create sustainable, nature-rich habitats on the land and in the seas around us.
- To promote the enjoyment, appreciation, understanding and value of the Isles of Scilly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- To be respected in the Island community and beyond as an exemplar organisation in evidence-based nature conservation.
- To support the Isles of Scilly economy by operating as a viable business, employer and by showing leadership

Our unique Value proposition is:

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust is an independent and locally fun charity that champions, values and manages our landscapes for the benefit of current and future generations of islanders and visitors. Any money raised in Scilly will benefit Scilly.

Our Organisational Values and Culture

We pride ourselves in our expertise, knowledge and experience. We are committed to what we do and the quality of what we achieve. We operate efficiently, flexibly and aim to be carbon-neutral

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3. External drivers

	Threat	Opportunity
Economic	Consequences of Brexit on agri-environment funding	New funding streams emerging post Brexit, Visitor Giving, payment for natural capital
Political	Biodiversity low on the political agenda, anti-regulation culture in government, particularly post-Brexit	Major policy changes post Brexit: replacement Common Fisheries Policy & CAP
Social	Fewer visitors to Scilly & consequences on the economy; e.g. less value might be placed on the natural environment	More niche market visitors, ecotourism
Technological	Keeping up with fast-paced changes within budgetary constraints	Rise in social media, web based campaigning, inexpensive digital filming
Marketplace	Increasingly competitive environment for funds & position.	47 Wildlife Trusts with a determination to work more closely. Seek better partnerships as host.
Legal/ Governance	Lack of suitable skills & interest in being a Trustee from island residents & constitutional limit to 2 mainland-based Trustees.	Recruitment of Trustees from the mainland who bring added skills & experience (requires change to constitution)

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4. Key challenges

The external drivers set out above point to four key challenges for the organisation: -

- Diversifying our income: Brexit has brought serious uncertainty in our funding. Never before has it been more important to diversify away from government grants and find new ways to fund our work.
- Maximising our impact: we will need to focus hard on those activities that really make a difference, grasping new opportunities quickly and refining our approach so that we think in terms of what we achieve, rather than what we do;
- Presence: we need to make the Trust, its land and its work much more visible to the people who visit and live on Scilly. Many benefit from the Trust's work and these benefits need to be recognised.
- Standing out: in an increasingly competitive fundraising world, we need to build our reputation on what makes the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust special and what we do best. We are well placed to do this.

5. Programmes of work

While projects are subject to funding and are generally time-limited, programmes are wider ranging and longer lived. They reflect the principal threads of the Trust's activity over five years and beyond. These work programmes will therefore be our focus and will provide the basis from which funded projects will flow. The national body, the Wildlife Trusts have three programmes: Living Landscapes, Living Seas and Living with Nature, which the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust will adopt.



5.1 Living Landscapes

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Living Landscapes is based on the Wildlife Trusts' pioneering work into conserving wildlife at a landscape scale in the terrestrial environment, responding to the challenges of fragmentation and climate change. Arguably, the Trusts work on Scilly is at a landscape scale due to the size of the landholding. Priorities over the five years will be: -

- Developing our knowledge base of habitats and species on Scilly and a framework for survey, monitoring & evaluation of our land management
- Proving the case for investing resources in targeted conservation land management and communicating this effectively
- Carrying out high quality and cost-effective conservation land management on our leased land
- Working effectively for biodiversity with other land managers
- Proving the case for investing resources in the identification of ecosystem services & their value to the economy of Scilly

5.2 Living Seas

Living Seas encompasses the Wildlife Trusts' growing influence in the marine environment, in which approximately half of UK biodiversity resides. With the seas around Scilly designated as MCZ's, it is vital that these areas continue to be protected and monitored. Our work will encompass: -

- Understanding, enjoyment, appreciation and safeguarding of Scilly's marine environment
- Working proactively with other stakeholders to ensure protection of Scilly's MCZ's.

5.3 Living with Nature

Living with Nature encompasses the Trust's work with people. The aim of all our work within this programme will be to build on the sense of community ownership which can be found in Scilly, particularly on the off-islands, and to change hearts, minds and behaviour so that people take decisions in the best interest of nature. Priorities over the next 5 years will be to help all people who have a stake in Scilly, whether they are local residents, visitors or business, to value the natural environment. Our work will include: -

- Increasing everyone's understanding, enjoyment & appreciation of Scilly's landscapes
 - Working with stakeholders to understand the economic and social value of Scilly's natural and cultural environments.
 - Improving physical access across Trust leased land
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- Working with stakeholders to improve both physical and intellectual access for visitors including maps, interpretation and signage.
- Engaging Scilly's young people in our work across all programme areas including exploring options for apprenticeships and work experience
- Work with stakeholders to explore options for environmental tourism

6. Our assets

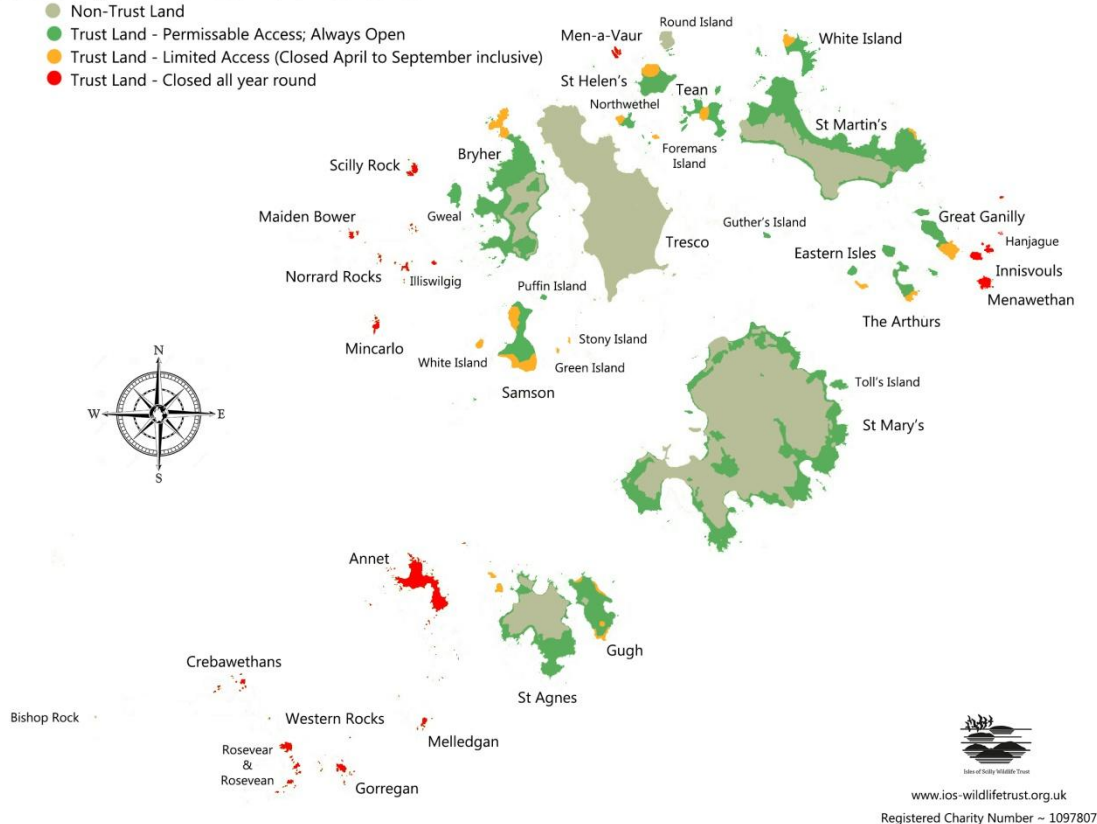
Our assets are all the things we have at our disposal to deliver the Trust's mission – our leased land, our buildings, our paid staff, volunteers, trustees and our financial resources.

6.1 Inspiring Places

Our leased land is our most obvious selling point. This is the way by which most people come into contact with us and are the most tangible evidence of the Trust delivering its mission.

Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust - Land Boundaries

- Non-Trust Land
- Trust Land - Permissible Access; Always Open
- Trust Land - Limited Access (Closed April to September inclusive)
- Trust Land - Closed all year round



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Our leased land must inspire people to love nature through the power of the messages we put across and the quality of the experience we offer. It also needs to be very clear to visitors that this land is looked after and accessible because of the Trusts work. Over the next five years we will: -

- Make it obvious, though not intrusive that the land in question is managed and looked after by the Trust and leased from the Duchy of Cornwall.
- Have better representation in significant places such as the TiC, Quay, Museum, travel centre on St Mary's and significant places on the off-islands such as the waiting rooms and other local signage.
- Make more of Trust leased land, using it for events and other profile raising activities.

6.2 Effective team

Our team spirit will reflect the organisation's working culture, and our team structure will be based on functionality, carefully balancing ambition with affordability. In such a small place, the team must include all Trust "people" including Trustees, any honorary officers and wider volunteers. Priorities include: -

- Significantly growing our unrestricted income so that we can always have a minimum core staff team. Ensure succession planning is at the forefront of future strategy.
- Maintaining our flexibility so that we can share staff with other Trusts or local organisations, where appropriate
- Fully supporting the Board of Trustees to act as advocates of the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust and champion its work in the community and beyond.
- Ensuring that the highest standards of governance are achieved at all times
- Investment in a staff training plan to develop our people and the organisation
- Evaluating our ability and need to engage volunteers

6.3 Viable business

The Trust has a regular source of (EU) grant income in the short term. However, we need to be prepared for the situation to change at any time, particularly due to the uncertainties surrounding Brexit and our reliance on EU funding. We have a very low level of unrestricted income which makes us vulnerable to sudden, unpredicted changes and limits

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our ability to invest in new ventures. There are opportunities for the Trust to secure new, more sustainable income streams and to move away from a reliance on grant income.

Over the next five years we will focus our efforts on: -

- Securing professional external assistance with our fundraising strategy to ensure we are making the most of the opportunities available to us.
- Diversifying our income streams: possible sources are major donors, legacies, visitor giving and corporate support to reduce our reliance on grants
- Exploring the opportunities for commercial income generation; for example events, environmental consultancy, different uses of tenanted land.
- Monitoring developments in the area of payments for ecosystem services.
- Wise use of legacy income to grow our resources and maximise our outputs
- Evaluating membership as a way to secure support; our membership is and always will be low due to the limited population on Scilly. However, there are other models which we could adopt.
- Developing our identity; our brand and marketing materials could be viewed as outdated and requiring a refresh

7. IoSWT within a wider partnership

In shaping our future we need to bear in mind the potential strength of the partnership of 47 Wildlife Trusts, but also the time and effort that it can take. The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust will engage constructively with the partnership at neighbouring, regional and national levels. We will seek to get actively involved in national activities where we have specific skills to contribute and we will seek to push the partnership forward in ways that will improve its effectiveness. We will be open to working with other Wildlife Trusts outside formal structures where there is reason to do so. We will strengthen our work with Cornwall Wildlife Trust as our nearest neighbour, making the most of economies of scale and the lack of ability to recruit skilled staff onto the islands.

Locally we will work towards a common purpose and outcomes for the Trust and nature and landscapes on Scilly with stakeholders & businesses. For example, the Council of the Isles of Scilly, Duchy of Cornwall, local farmers, Tresco and Islands Partnership and national & regional organisations such as Natural England, RSPB, Environment Agency, National Association of AONB's, Cornwall & IOS Local Nature Partnership, LEP and the Health and Wellbeing Board. We will continue to work alongside the AONB Partnership and actively deliver elements of the AONB Management Plan which has very clear synergy with this plan.

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8. Financing the plan

The Trust's Strategic Plan sits alongside a rolling three year financial forecast. The plan assumes that the Trust attempts to operate on a break even budget or a small surplus in any year and that the majority of our grant income is secured until the end of the plan period. However, not all income will be secured at the start of the year and we need to have clear plans as to how any unsecured income will be raised before committing to expenditure. The plan will be based on the following principles:

- Matching income and costs
- Using any legacy income wisely (which may mean showing a deficit budget)
- Allocating core costs so that we know the full costs of all our operations and so that we charge accordingly
- Building up our cash reserves over time
- Starting the year with a clear idea of income secured and unsecured, and only anticipating income where we have a clear idea of where it might come from.

9. Strategic priorities - what will the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust look like in five years time?

If the Trust succeeds in delivering this plan, we will be an organisation that: -

- a) is **financially secure**, with significantly more unrestricted income
- b) has a **robust ecological monitoring framework** which underpins our **high quality land management operation**, and creates a more **wildlife-rich** Isles of Scilly.
- c) enjoys a **strong visual presence** across the islands and at major entry points on the mainland
- d) is supported by a strong, **motivated team** of people who support the Trusts values and have a clear sense of why they work or volunteer for the organisation
- e) is underpinned by a significantly **larger supporter base** both on the islands and from visitors; financially and morally
- f) understands the **economic value** of the natural and historic environment of the islands including the **ecosystems services** our leased land provides and in turn the value of our work to the visitor economy

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10. Strategic Objectives

1. We will be leaders and active deliverers of a resilient island and marine environment
2. We will educate people about the internationally important and unique natural environment of the Isles of Scilly and provide opportunities for access and enjoyment
3. We will ensure that the Trust is a robust, dynamic and well-recognised organisation within the Islands
4. We will manage our charity as effectively and efficiently as possible
5. We will invest in raising income to become financially resilient

The strategic objectives are delivered through a strategic action plan owned by the Board of Trustees and which set the targets in each annual work plan for the period.