



Cheshire and Warrington
**Sustainable and Inclusive
Growth Commission**



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust

Case Study

 **Sustainable Land Use**

Saltersford Farm Habitat Bank

This case study demonstrates how creating and maintaining habitat banks will help to guarantee nature's restoration for 30 years, which aligns with aspirations in Cheshire and Warrington to become a sustainable and inclusive economy.



Biodiversity Net Gain supporting and enhancing our natural environment.

Delivery of biodiversity net gain (BNG) for planning development will become mandatory in January 2024.

This means that all developments will be required to assess the impact of their works and compensate for any residual on site loss of habitat through the purchasing of biodiversity units off site.

Habitat banks are areas set aside for nature where investment in habitat creation and restoration results in measurable biodiversity uplift which can be converted in biodiversity units that can be sold into the biodiversity net gain market. Such banks ensure the planning system delivers net gain in biodiversity and contributes to wider local and national targets for nature's recovery.


Cheshire East Council established a biodiversity net gain policy ahead of the mandatory requirement, thus creating a need for biodiversity units in the Borough. Cheshire Wildlife Trust responded to this by locating its first habitat bank in Holmes Chapel.



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Theme:

 Sustainable Land Use

Location:

 Holmes Chapel, Cheshire East

Challenges addressed:

-  Delivering sustainable development in the planning system
-  Addressing the nature and climate emergency



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Key objectives

- Acquire new land for nature and fund restoration and maintenance for 30 years paid for through nature based financing.
- Explore the potential of biodiversity net gain to deliver Cheshire Wildlife Trust strategic goals.
- Pilot new nature-based services which could generate unrestricted income for Cheshire Wildlife Trust.
- Enhance Cheshire Wildlife Trust's reputation as the go-to organisation for nature conservation in Cheshire.
- Ensure that biodiversity net gain is delivered to the highest standards.
- Offer a demonstration site to illustrate best practice to partners and other stakeholders in the biodiversity net gain market.

Outcomes

Establishment and long term management of a new 19ha nature reserve, funded through novel nature-based solutions income:

- 19ha of land at Saltersford Farm, near Holmes Chapel purchased in 2021 with a loan from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and donations from supporters.
- Initial baseline habitats were low nature value arable and grassland (image overleaf).
- Restoration plan for a blend of investible habitats – grassland, woodland and scrub created (image right).
- Sales of biodiversity net gain units to local developers and carbon to local authority inseting has enable the repayment of the loan and the establishment of a fund for the 30 year restoration and management of the site within two years.

- The result is the mitigation of loss of nature at development sites, plus an area of new land for nature (10% uplift on BNG); carbon sequestration from woodland.
- Sales to date of 39 biodiversity units totalling £546,000.
- Various site visits and presentations delivered on the Saltersford case study.
- Developing relationships with local authorities and developers around providing technical advice on biodiversity net gain advice.

The reserve will become a new core site for wildlife within the nature recovery network, providing an important refuge for amphibians, pollinators and birds which in turn helps support nature's recovery.

Learn more about how CWT are using nature-based solutions to address local and global issues :

The Wildlife Trusts' Nature-based Solutions Showcase 2023




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Find more about
Saltersford Farm





Theme:

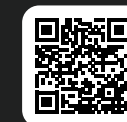
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