



Plantlife Annual Review

2023-24



Contents

Words From Our Deputy CEO	04
Words From Our Chair	05
Our Impact	06
Our Focus:	
Temperate Rainforests	08
Grassland	09
Species Recovery	10
Our Work in England	12
Our Work in Scotland	14
Our Work in Wales	16
Ein Hefffaith: Cymru	18
Our Work Globally	19
Thank You To	20
How We Spent Your Money	22



Words From Our Deputy CEO

As the global voice for wild plants and fungi, we continue to drive change and influence, protect and restore important habitats and empower people to care for the rich and varied environment around them.

Our vision is a world rich in wild plants and fungi and I'm proud of our community of passionate advocates, which includes experts in botany, grassland and temperate rainforest conservation. Together, they champion a plant-rich world to policymakers, decision-makers and communicators, who share our story with audiences far and wide.

At the same time, our supporter and partnerships teams play a key role in engaging and nurturing our members, raising vital funds and collaborating with a diverse range of partners to maximise our reach, influence and impact.

The growth of our membership and finances provides a solid foundation for our work to help the conservation of many important plant habitats. We now own 24 nature reserves spanning 4,500 acres across England, Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man, managing them directly or through valued partner organisations such as local Wildlife Trusts.

The statistics on page 6 of this annual review offer a glimpse of the scale of our projects and their conservation impact. They also represent the hard work carried out across different territories, protecting a wide range of species, engaging with numerous communities and venturing into new areas.



Thank you to our supporters; if you aren't one already, I warmly invite you to join us to tackle the greatest challenge of our times. By working together, we will enable nature to provide solutions to the environmental and societal challenges we face.

Nicola Hutchinson, Deputy Chief Executive

We now own 24 nature reserves, spanning 4,500 acres of the UK.



Words From Our Chair

Our focus is to build resilient ecosystems, reverse habitat declines and restore our connection to nature by expanding our influence and encouraging people everywhere to be part of the solution.



I have joined Plantlife at an exciting and challenging time and I'm delighted to take up the position as Chair as we continue our mission to secure a world rich in plants and fungi.

Through my work in the international development and humanitarian sector, I have seen the immense and urgent challenges facing communities around the globe that are linked with the state of our planet, whether due to drought, flooding or extreme heat.

As environmental pressures mount, I'm looking forward to working with our passionate experts to continue the progress being made on every front. What is already apparent is the sheer depth and breadth of expertise within the team – a driving force able and intent on changing the outlook for vulnerable wild plants, habitats and ecosystems.

Building our presence at global conferences such as COP28 in Dubai has been hugely valuable, not only to promote Plantlife's

global work, but also to broaden our networks and establish productive partnerships.

It is vital for us to present an authoritative voice for plants and fungi, ensuring the conservation of plants connects the whole of society. A combination of diverse skills, good strategic relationships and an increase in income has allowed us to deliver more projects on the ground and increase our impact. We've also purchased our first new nature reserve in many years, which you can read more about on page 12.

Plantlife is a special charity with a vital cause. With our highly effective team, we will continue to recover nature in the UK and beyond.

Thank you for your ongoing support and I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming year.

David Daniels, Chair

It is vital for us to present an authoritative voice for plants and fungi, ensuring the conservation of plants connects the whole of society.

Our Impact

626

hectares of Grassland surveyed and/or management plans written.

43

plant and fungi species protected and restored out of our 100 species target by 2030.

20

temperate rainforest sites worked on with partners.

2,947

Important Plant Areas globally in 48 countries.

7,600+

people joined the No Mow May movement.

29%

increase in Plantlife membership, from 17,723 to 22,814 members.

100,000+

visitors to Ranscombe Farm Nature Reserve annually, making it our most visited reserve.

1,500

volunteers gave us 14,810 hours of their time.

10,679

people took part in 235 learning opportunities.

239,366

Social media engagements, with over six million impressions.

Our Focus:

Temperate Rainforests

Our Rainforest Lichen Recovery Project is helping to protect threatened lichens and mosses in temperate rainforests across southwest England.

Britain's temperate rainforests are facing severe threats from climate change, air pollution, invasive species, a lack of appropriate land management and tree diseases.

These wild and wet ancient woodlands are home to internationally important species and yet urgent action is required to stop them from disappearing altogether.

One of our key projects to preserve the biodiversity of these special habitats is our Rainforest Lichen Recovery Project. Working in partnership with The Woodland Trust and the National Trust, our experts are using rainforest restoration techniques to protect 20 species of threatened lichens and mosses at 12 sites across Devon and Cornwall.

These temperate rainforest sites have been specially selected as hosts of the target species, with the necessary infrastructure to enable long term management and monitoring.

Work to remove threats to the lichen and moss habitat has included managing dense holly scrub at three sites and removing conifers at two sites. We diversified the habitat through pollarding, halo thinning and glade management, introduced no fence collars to livestock to control grazing and created new habitats with protective fencing at two sites.

The project team also discovered new records of *Ramonia nigra* lichen at one of the project sites.



Wistman's Wood © Cecile Chastre



Angie Cruse, Rainforest Advisor South West © Adam Thorogood - Plantlife

20

species of threatened lichens and mosses are the focus of the project.

12

sites have been selected for the rainforest restoration techniques.

Our Focus:

Grassland

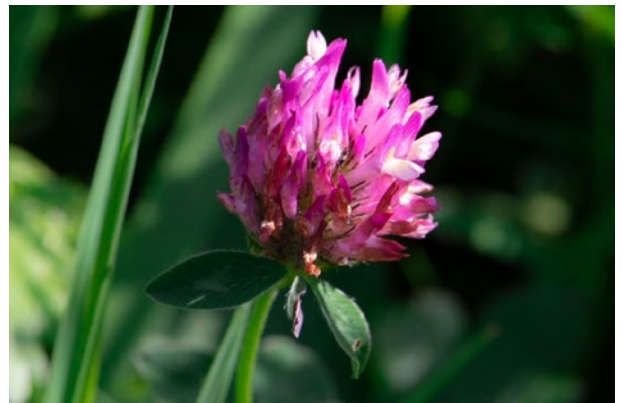
Our Meadow Makers partnership with National Highways is protecting and restoring over 100 hectares of species rich grassland habitats.

England and Wales have lost 97% of wildflower meadows since the 1930s. Intensive agricultural practices, development and changes in land use mean only small, fragmented areas of species-rich grassland remain.

Restoring these natural spaces is a vital part of meeting the urgent challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and human health.

After receiving a record-breaking £8 million from National Highways, we are working with landowners to restore and create, as well as monitor and manage, more than 100 hectares of species-rich meadows over 15 years. Over the coming years we will not only continue to work with seed suppliers and a variety of contractors, we will also be adding value to the programme by exploring educational visits, scientific research and citizen science projects. This project will contribute towards our wider goal of restoring 10,000 hectares of species-rich grassland by 2030.

As part of the Meadow Makers project, we began restoration work of Warren Farm in Herefordshire and our Greena Moor Nature Reserve in Autumn 2024. Our specialist advisers completed botanical surveys at a further 14 sites across England, with a view to do more restoration work in the future.



Red Clover © Pip Gray – Plantlife

Alongside our work on the ground, we campaign for greater protection of grasslands in the UK. In the last year, we have continued to engage with politicians from England, Scotland and Wales through site visits and events, inspiring them to speak up for grasslands in their parliaments. This has helped to drive policy changes, including an uplift in government payments for farmers managing species-rich grasslands in England.

In our campaign for greater protection of grassland we contributed to the Welsh government policy consultations, ensuring that species-rich grasslands receive greater protections from development following an update to Welsh Planning Policy.

In total, 23 partner organisations joined our campaign calling on the UK Government to commit to developing a Grassland Action Plan. We also reached hundreds of land managers, farmers, and policy professionals through media opportunities and webinars. These included presentations on grassland advocacy to members of Herefordshire Meadows and the Nature Friendly Farming Network, along with a directorate from the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs.

15

years funding from National Highways, to protect and restore species-rich grassland.

Our Focus:

Species Recovery

Our new species recovery programmes are helping to conserve key threatened species, including Scottish Primrose, Juniper and Pasqueflower.

As part of our ambition to protect or restore 100 species by 2030, work began to conserve key threatened species, including Scottish Primrose in Scotland and arctic alpins in Wales.

In England, we sowed 120,000 Juniper seeds across five sites to promote the species' recovery. Following a successful germination trial, we also sowed 17,200 Pasqueflower seeds across 10 sites in southern England and Yorkshire.

In East Anglia, we recorded the highest counts of Prostrate Perennial Knawel at four reintroduction sites, thanks to the work of Plantlife's volunteers from the Breckland Flora Group, who provide advice to landowners and support the conservation of threatened Breckland species.

We have also completed successful translocations of both Twinflower and One-flowered Wintergreen in Scotland, and the lichen *Bryoria smithii* in Dartmoor.

Nationally, our management advice continues to deliver wide impact. This has included bespoke advice to Forestry England for 17 key species across 187 sites in Breckland, along with 240 lichen species assessments and detailed actions for 120 vascular plant species for Natural England.

355

surveys submitted to help us understand waxcap and grassland fungi.



Our Work in England

This year saw the addition of another nature reserve to our UK network and record recordings at others.

One of this year's highlights was the addition of Three Haggas Woodmeadow to our growing network of nature reserves around the UK. This 10-hectare site near York is a fantastic example of a woodmeadow habitat that supports an abundance of plants and invertebrates.

At our other reserves in England, we completed assessment and management for Wood Bitter Vetch at Greena Moor Nature Reserve and Narrow-leaved Water-dropwort at Lugg Meadows Nature Reserve.

Other successes included the highest recording of 897 Clustered Bellflowers at Ranscombe Farm Nature Reserve, along with the second highest recordings of both Man Orchid and Meadow Clary.

We also recorded 135 Pheasant's-eye plants at a reintroduction site adjacent to Ranscombe Farm.



Summer at the Crombie Roundhouse © Woodmeadow Trust

Our newest reserve, Three Haggas Woodmeadow, supports an abundance of plants and invertebrates.





Photos left to right, top to bottom:
 Ragged Robin at Three Hagges Woodmeadow © Laurie Campbell
 Meadow Buttercups at Three Hagges Woodmeadow © Laurie Campbell
 Boroughbridge Primary School at Three Hagges Woodmeadow © Mike Cowling
 Crombie Roundhouse at Three Hagges Woodmeadow © Laurie Campbell

Our Work in Scotland

Our new Species on the Edge project is helping to protect many of Scotland's most threatened species.

After years of planning and development, we finally launched our partnership project Species on the Edge in 2023. This collaborative project, led by NatureScot and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aims to protect and restore 37 of Scotland's most threatened coastal and island species.

We are leading the activity on Scotland's north coast, and our project team carried out habitat management, species surveys, engagement activities and work with land managers in this wild and spectacular region of Scotland.

With funding from NatureScot, we also brought together a wide range of organisations interested in securing the future of Scotland's threatened grasslands, led workshops and discussions and produced a publication, *Machair to Meadows: Making the Most of Scotland's Grasslands*.

Other successes across Scotland include our management of Munsary Peatlands in Caithness, which resulted in a good flowering season for the rare Marsh Saxifrage.

In the Cairngorms, we continued our pioneering Twinflower translocation work and engaged with local farmers to understand the barriers to species-rich grassland management and



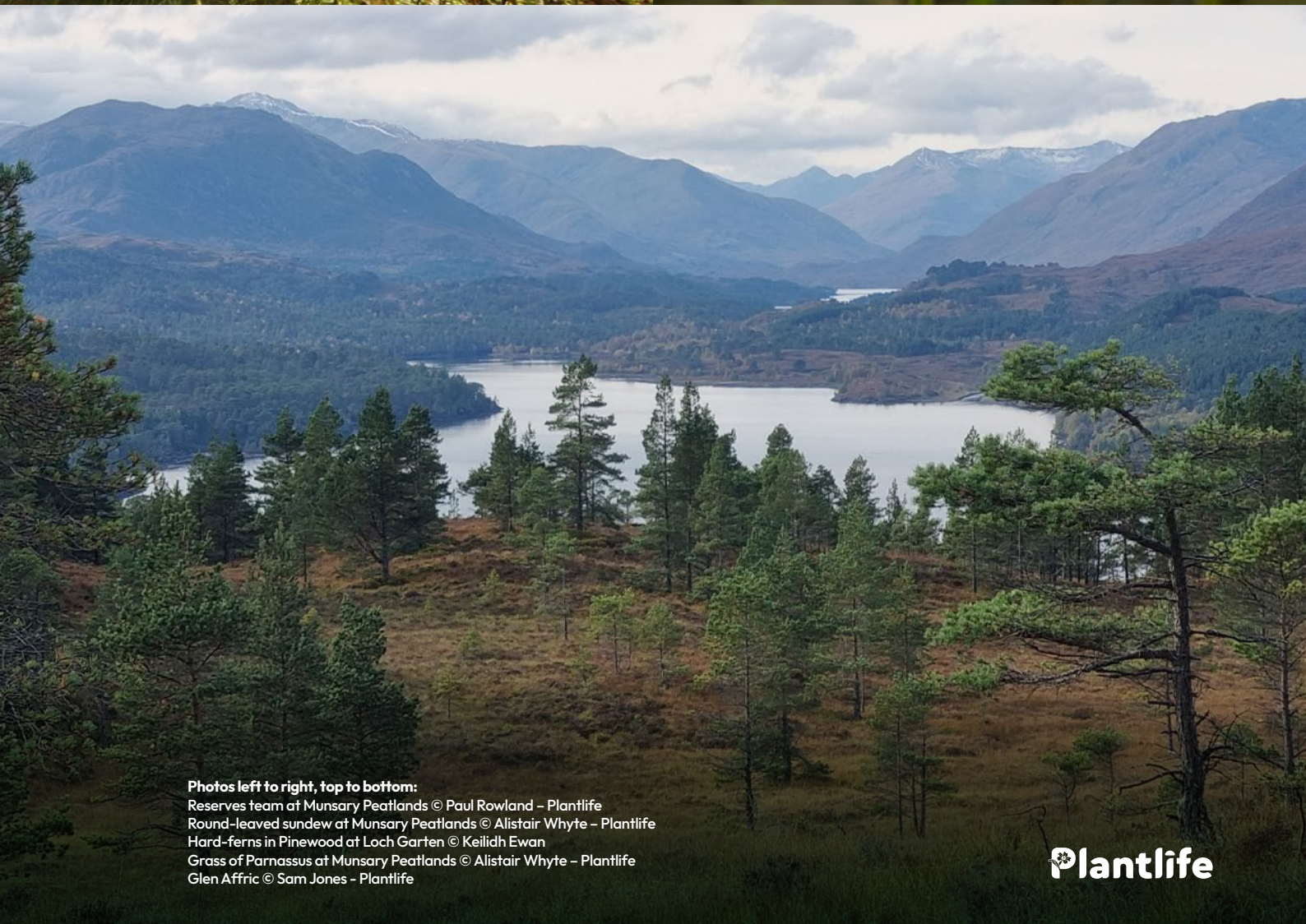
Marsh Saxifrage at Munsary Peatlands © Alistair Whyte – Plantlife

restoration. At the same time, we continue to lead the Saving Scotland's Rainforest programme to restore and expand Scotland's rainforest by 2045, which we are delivering in partnership with the Woodland Trust Scotland.

Throughout the year, we have engaged with decision makers and Members of Scottish Parliament to influence nature legislation and policy, including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Scottish Plant Strategy.

Following the Species on the Edge project launch, our team carried out habitat management, species surveys and exciting engagement activities.





Photos left to right, top to bottom:
Reserves team at Munsary Peatlands © Paul Rowland – Plantlife
Round-leaved sundew at Munsary Peatlands © Alistair Whyte – Plantlife
Hard-ferns in Pinewood at Loch Garten © Keilidh Ewan
Grass of Parnassus at Munsary Peatlands © Alistair Whyte – Plantlife
Glen Affric © Sam Jones – Plantlife

Our Work in Wales

Welsh nature is benefitting from the launch of two major projects: Natur am Byth! and Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn.

In 2023, we worked with nine partners to launch Natur am Byth (Nature Forever!), an £8m species recovery programme and the largest ever partnership of its kind in Wales, running until 2027.

This project is designed to drive resilience across the Welsh environment sector, save species from extinction in Wales and support communities committed to protecting and cherishing their natural heritage.

At the same time, work began on Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn (Resilient Grasslands), a £1m project launched in partnership with North Wales Wildlife Trust and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Welsh Government.

Due to run until 2026, this project is designed to improve grassland monitoring and management at protected sites, including Important Plant Areas and Important Fungus Areas across Wales. We are also working closely with the commercial farming sector to encourage more sympathetic use and care of grassland habitats.

In August 2023, we revealed a new sculpture representing the wildlife and diversity of the sand dunes, as part of the Dynamic Dunescapes project, which is now in its final year. To celebrate the project work, an

exhibition of photographs and films of the dunes was held at the Ucheldre in Holyhead, with special activities and crafts.

As part of our efforts to protect our environment and shape national policy on nature, we contributed to the Sustainable Farming Scheme design proposal by the Welsh Government. In collaboration with Wales Environment Links and other partners, we highlighted key conservation areas where we need farming communities to help conserve wild plants and fungi.

Among the Members of the Senedd we're working with are species champions Julie Morgan and Carolyn Thomas, who have both raised key conservation issues and questions in the Welsh Parliament.

Another timely opportunity to lobby politicians about the critical action needed for nature's recovery was provided by the launch of the State of Nature report at the Senedd in September 2023.

Our Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn (Resilient Grasslands) project will run until 2026 on protected sites across Wales.





Photos left to right, top to bottom:
 Bryologising at Stanner Rocks © Ellie Baggett – Plantlife
 Crymlyn Burrows Sculpture © Andy Davies – Dynamic Dunescapes
 Cwm Idwal © Robbie Blackhall-Miles – Plantlife
 Crymlyn Burrows Sculpture launch © Andy Davies – Dynamic Dunescapes
 Wildflower meadow in north Wales © Matt Pitts – Plantlife

Ein Gwaith ni yng Nghymru

Mae byd natur yng Nghymru yn elwa o lansiad dau brosiect mawr: Natur am Byth! a Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn.

Yn 2023, fe fuon ni'n gweithio gyda naw partner i lansio Natur am Byth, rhaglen adfer rhywogaethau gwerth £8m a'r bartneriaeth fwyaf erioed o'i bath yng Nghymru. Bydd y rhaglen yn weithredol tan 2027.

Nod y prosiect yma yw sbarduno gwytnwch ar draws sector yr amgylchedd yng Nghymru, achub rhywogaethau rhag difodiant yng Nghymru a chefnogi cymunedau sydd wedi ymrwymo i warchod a gofalu am eu treftadaeth naturiol.

Ar yr un pryd, cafodd gwaith ar brosiect Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn ei ddechrau. Mae hwn yn brosiect £1m a lansiwyd mewn partneriaeth ag Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Gogledd Cymru ac sy'n cael ei gefnogi gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri Genedlaethol a Llywodraeth Cymru.

Mae'n fwriad i'r prosiect yma bara tan 2026. Ei nod yw gwella'r gwaith o fonitro a rheoli glaswelltiroedd mewn safleoedd gwarchodedig, gan gynnwys Ardaloedd Pwysig i Blanhigion ac Ardaloedd Pwysig i Ffyngau ledled Cymru. Rydyn ni hefyd yn gweithio'n agos gyda'r sector ffermio masnachol i annog gofal a rheolaeth o laswelltiroedd sydd yn fwy cyfeillgar i fyd natur.

Ym mis Awst 2023, fe wnaethom ni ddadorchuddio cerflun newydd yn cynrychioli bywyd gwyllt amrywiol twyni tywod, fel rhan o brosiect Twyni Deinamig, sydd yn ei flwyddyn olaf bellach. I ddathlu gwaith y prosiect, cynhaliwyd arddangosfa o ffotograffau a ffilmau o'r twyni yng Nghanolfan Ucheldre yng Nghaergybi, gyda gweithgareddau a chrefftau arbennig.

Fel rhan o'n hymdrechion ni i warchod ein hamgylchedd a dylanwadu ar y polisiau cenedlaethol ar gyfer byd natur, fe wnaethom ni gyfrannu at ddylunio'r Cynllun Ffermio Cynaliadwy gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Mewn cydweithrediad â sefydliad Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru a phartneriaid eraill, fe wnaethom ni dynnu sylw at ardaloedd cadwraeth allweddol lle mae arnom ni angen cymunedau ffermio i helpu i warchod planhigion gwyllt a ffyngau.

Ymhlith Aelodau'r Senedd rydyn ni'n gweithio gyda nhw mae'r hyrwyddwyr rhywogaethau, Julie Morgan a Carolyn Thomas, sydd ill dwy wedi codi materion cadwraeth a chwestiynau allweddol yn Senedd Cymru.

Cafwyd cyfle amserol arall i lobio gwleidyddion am y camau hollbwysig sydd eu hangen ar gyfer adferiad byd natur yn lansiad yr adroddiad Sefyllfa Byd Natur yn y Senedd ym mis Medi 2023.

Bydd ein prosiect Glaswelltiroedd Gwydn ni'n weithredol tan 2026 ar safleoedd gwarchodedig ledled Cymru.

Our Work Globally

The last year has seen our team attend several important global events to champion plant and fungi species recovery.

It is vital for us to present a loud voice for plants and fungi, ensuring their conservation connects the whole of society globally.

The adoption of the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022, in Montreal, Canada, provided the platform to draft a new Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC). The purpose of this new strategy was to set out a series of complementary plant conservation actions to support the implementation of the GBF.

In November 2023, members of our team travelled to Dubai for COP28, speaking up for grasslands and ensuring plants were part of the climate mitigation and adaptation conversations.

Our team then represented the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation at an international event in Nairobi, Kenya.

Having a presence at these big global conferences has been hugely valuable, not only to promote Plantlife's global work, such as Important Plant Areas, but also to reconnect with other organisations and find new partners for future collaborations.

Our team travelled to Dubai for COP28 to ensure plants were part of the climate mitigation conversations.

Thank You To...

President

Philip Mould OBE

Vice President

Rachel de Thame

Our Members

This financial year, we saw our membership grow from 17,723 to 22,814 members. It was wonderful to welcome so many new members, whether that was at one of our fantastic fundraising events or on a call with our telephone team, and we're grateful to those using their passion for plants to grow Plantlife's voice.

In June 2023, we welcomed some of our members on a stunning walk around a section of Muker Meadows, led by former Plantlife Chair, Professor David Hill CBE. These are some of the finest meadows in the Yorkshire Dales, which run along the banks of the River Swale and support a wide range of wildflowers and grasses.

We were also excited to welcome our members to a Virtual Online Members' Day in September 2023. This included a series of talks followed by a Q&A session on Plantlife's role in policy and advocacy.

We also ran two fundraising campaigns that raised £183,161. In the summer, we encouraged supporters to become Grassland Guardians, raising vital funds to support our grasslands programmes, then in December we took part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge, shining a light on our wonderful lichens.

Thank you to everyone who donated or shared a campaign this year.

Our Volunteers

At a time when our natural world needs our help more than ever, every contribution helps. Just in the last year, Plantlife's incredible community of volunteers contributed over 14,800 hours of their time to support our work.

Our dedicated volunteers are currently active in 24 different volunteering roles, across 17 different projects and areas of Plantlife, with many working in teams that are new to volunteering. From our reserve-based volunteers and seed collection volunteers in the field, to those supporting our comms and advocacy teams, our volunteers are having a huge impact across the whole organisation. Thank you to every one of you.

233

people took part on Members Day.

Our Funders

We are extremely grateful to all our members, supporters, funders, partners and other organisations that so generously supported us in 2023/24, including all donors who wish to remain anonymous. Unfortunately, we do not have space to individually name all our supporters, but on behalf of everyone at Plantlife we would like to acknowledge the following who provided support of £1,000 or more:

Grant Funders

WWF-UK, through the Air Wick and
WWF Partnership
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Chilterns National Landscape
Cranbourne Chase National Landscape Forestry
& Land Scotland
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
EU LIFE Programme
FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes)
Groundwork UK
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park
National Lottery Heritage Fund
National Highways
Natural England
Natural Resources Wales
NatureScot
North Wessex Downs National Landscape RSPB
Scottish Environment LINK
Scottish National Heritage
South Gloucestershire Council
Veolia Environmental Trust
The Welsh Government
The Woodland Trust
Wiltshire Council

Trusts and Foundations

Banister Charitable Trust
The Daniell Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
George E T Salvesen Charitable Trust
Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust
The Ian Addison Charitable Foundation
John Coates Charitable Trust
John Ellerman Foundation
John Feldberg Foundation
John Muir Trust
King Charles III Charitable Fund
The Linbury Trust
The Lyon Family Charitable Trust
The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust
MW Tops Wildlife Conservation Project
National Philanthropic Trust
Norman & Evelyn Proffitt Trust
People's Trust for Endangered Species
Scott (Eredine) Charitable Trust
The Swire Charitable Trust
Whitley Animal Protection Trust

Corporate Partners and Supporters

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Bramley Products
Fera Outfitters
Formula Botanica
Ground Control
J&P Plant
Laurent Perrier
Mitie Landscapes
Maidstone Distillery Ltd
Thakeham Homes
The Grass People

Legacy Gifts

Much of our work is underpinned by the generosity of supporters who have included a gift to Plantlife in their will. These gifts, no matter the size, are incredibly valuable and make a lasting impact on our mission to secure a world rich in plants and fungi. We would like to thank all our generous benefactors for their significant contributions.

How We Spent Your Money

We have enjoyed another successful year, doubling our income to enable us to deliver greater impact now and in the future.

Our total funds have increased, with the majority restricted for use directly on the conservation and improvement in biodiversity of a wide variety of important plant habitats.

By joining forces with other partner organisations, we have ensured our money, influence and impact has a wider reach than we could achieve alone.

our total
income for
2023/24

£11.3m

our total
expenditure
for 2023/24

£9.15m

Income

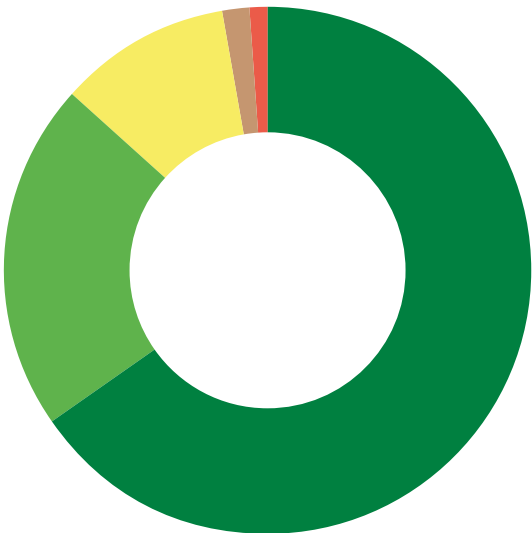
Our total income has more than doubled to £11.3m this year, up from £5.5m in 2022/23. The biodiversity enhancement programme funded by National Highways contributed £5.7m of restricted income this year. The long-term nature of this funding will enable us to continue progressing our Meadow Maker programme for the next 15 years. Working on our own reserves and in partnership with other landowners, we will implement management plans to ensure we achieve considerable long-term improvements to the biodiversity on that land.

Expenditure

As in previous years, the majority of our expenditure was on our conservation work. This year we spent £6.8m on our conservation projects, up from £3.1m in 2022/23. Progress continued in our work with our priority habitats of grasslands and species, and new funding has enabled us to begin more comprehensive work in temperate rainforests and fungi conservation. Further grants were made under the biodiversity enhancement programme, enabling more third-party landowners to participate in the programme and adding over 100 hectares of grassland to the scheme.

Where our income came from

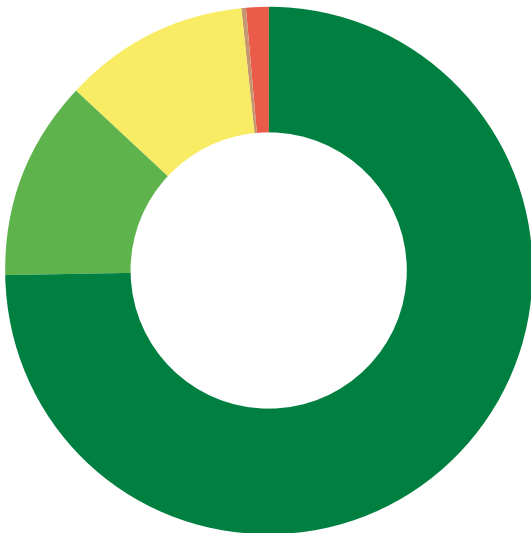
Total income
£11.3m



Conservation Activities	£7.4m
Donations and Legacies	£2.4m
Membership Income	£1.2m
Investment Income	£0.2m
Other Trading Activity	£0.1m

How we spent our funds

Total expenditure
£9.15m



Conservation Activities	£6.86m
People/education/membership	£1.12m
Raising Donations and Legacies	£1.04m
Investment Management	£0.02m
Other Expenditure	£0.11m



Our mission is to secure a world rich in wild plants and fungi.

Wild plants and fungi underpin the health of our environment. They can help us to resolve the climate, ecological and societal challenges which we face.

Protecting them will lead to a world full of colour, beauty and life while allowing the plants and the animals which depend on them to thrive.

Plantlife

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Patron HM King Charles III

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