



Thames Valley
Environmental Records Centre
END OF YEAR REPORT
APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Each year in my foreword I reflect on the incredible number of records collected and maintained by the organisation, in 2019/20 we passed yet another milestone and now hold well over 3 million records which is a fantastic achievement.

TVERC is once again at the heart of new developments in thinking about biodiversity nationally with the work which has been done to help define a draft Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire. Given the ever-increasing pressures on the natural environment TVERC has been instrumental in helping local authorities in Berkshire to develop their policies by providing robust evidence base for developing their respective Local Plans.

None of this work would be possible without TVERC's dedicated staff who have provided an excellent service throughout this year whilst adapting seamlessly to the challenges of homeworking brought about by CV-19. It is with some regret that we will be saying goodbye to Camilla who has steered TVERC from a period of uncertainty when she started through a period of steady growth over the last few years. Camilla's energy, enthusiasm and sense of humour will be missed by staff and members of the steering group alike.

The planned separation from Oxfordshire County Council has sadly had to be postponed, in part due to the challenges caused by CV-19, but this also reflects changes in attitude at the host authority. Hopefully the next year will see the situation clarified within OCC and TVERC will be able to set off on a new more stable direction under the leadership of a new Director.

Dominic Lamb MCIEEM
Countryside Officer, Planning
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2019-20 has been another busy year full of achievements and we have been working hard to meet the goals set out in our Business Plan. Everything we do is helping to achieve our tenth goal that “We live in a better environment in Berks and Oxon as a result of decisions made using our data and information.”

This will be my last year as the TVERC Director as I have accepted an offer to be the Director of Wild Oxfordshire and will be starting there on 1st June 2020. I will continue to be advocating for the importance of data-led decisions and the essential work TVERC does whilst at Wild Oxfordshire. I also very much hope that Wild Oxfordshire and TVERC will work even more closely together in future.

Thanks to everyone at TVERC, both staff and volunteers, and all of the individuals, groups and organisations in Oxfordshire and Berkshire who have helped us achieve so much. I am going to really miss you! The TVERC team of staff and volunteers are a brilliant bunch of hard-working, friendly and knowledgeable people, highly dedicated to conserving our natural environment. Thank you for everything - it's been a genuine pleasure to work with you.

- 1. Be independent** – We made good progress with preparing for the set-up of TVERC as a Community Interest Company during 19/20 but in light of the CV-19 situation OxonCC have decided that they are unable to make a decision on this matter for the foreseeable future due to HR and Legal being engaged with redeployment of staff and decision-making capacity being reduced. OxonCC would like the situation to be reviewed sometime in 2021 so for now work on this has been shelved.
- 2. Maintain and continue to expand a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information** - We now hold over 3 million records of flora and fauna in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, 668,127 of which are protected and notable, and 561,627 are from the last 5 years. In 2019-20 we received 514 data sets (which is a big increase in the usual 300-400) and added 573,684 species records to the database.
- 3. Maintain and engage with a broad customer base** - In 2019/20 we secured over £49k from customers other than local authorities, ecological consultants and the Environment Agency. This is about £20k more than we've secured in the previous three years and is a great achievement.
- 4. Develop and offer creative solutions to interpret natural environment data** – We created new data search packages for ecological consultants about great crested newts and swifts. These innovative reports contain information on both positive and negative records, relevant habitats (i.e. ponds for GCN) and risks zones/hotspot maps.
- 5. Collaborate or lead on research and innovation to drive our development** – We hosted 6 university micro-internships from Reading and Oxford Universities. We also worked with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology on a project to provide biodiversity enhancements to social housing projects in Bracknell Forest.

- 6. Be a respected partner in providing evidence base for policies** – We carried out 53 Local Wildlife Surveys and used the updated LWS Selection Criteria. We also gave Oxford University advice on biodiversity enhancements for Old Road Campus and surveyed Spiceball Park & Hanwell Brook in Banbury for BBOWT, Clay Hill in West Berkshire, and District Wildlife Sites in Cherwell.

We assessed sites in the emerging Local Plans of West Berkshire and Wokingham to establish the net number of biodiversity units for each and to assign an outline cost for delivering a measurable net gain for biodiversity. The estimated cost of offsetting the units in West Berks is between £21.4 million and £203.6 million, and between £59 million and £290 million in Wokingham. We also assessed the value of trees in Slough. We carried out a similar assessment for Eynsham Garden Village in West Oxfordshire.

We worked with a wide range of stakeholders to identify a draft Nature Recovery Network in Oxfordshire and on a smaller scale, identified habitat networks in Wokingham.

We also provided analysis for local authorities on the number of Local Wildlife Sites in positive management and reported on a number of environmental indicators to help local authorities monitor biodiversity within their area.

We received 738 requests for data searches in 2019-2020 which was a slight increase on the previous year of 735. The total income for data searches and licences was £126.5k in 2019-2020, which was slightly lower than the previous year. We also worked on automating our data search system using in-house resources and simplifying the process, which we will launch later in 2020.

- 7. Remain at the centre of a network of recorders.** TVERC provides the secretariat for the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and the Oxfordshire Environment Board. TVERC also sits on the Oxfordshire Environment Board, the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group, the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and the Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.
- 8. Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.** We provided funding, via Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment to two projects, totalling £1,000. We ran three training courses and four field days in addition to the Autumn and Spring conferences. TVERC provided assistance to The Oxford Swift City Project, Caring for God's Acre and the OOS. We also had a meeting with Butterfly Conservation to discuss data-management and sharing, and loaned equipment to Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. We gave a lecture to students at Reading University and training to Bracknell Forest staff on QGIS.
- 9. Employ valued and respected staff who retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge.** We were fully staffed for much of 2019-20 which was very helpful! Our 10 office volunteers contributed 114 days of their time to help us with data management and other tasks.

Camilla Burrow, MCIEEM
TVERC Director

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WHO ARE TVERC?

MISSION STATEMENT

TVERC is the only organization in Berkshire and Oxfordshire providing a comprehensive ecological information hub through which critical knowledge can be shared to support scientific research and responsible decision-making.

TVERC is at the centre of a network of recorders and data-users in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and is the regional delivery node of the National Biodiversity Network.

TVERC is a not-for-profit organisation run by a partnership. All those contributing to TVERC help manage our environmental resources sustainably for current and future use.

Data 	We collect wildlife information from a wide variety of sources in a coordinated way; enabling information-sharing between recorders and decision-makers.
Information 	We are a specialist team with the skills, knowledge and dedication to make complex data understandable and available to all who need it.
Knowledge	This constantly improving, high quality resource is accessible by everyone so they have the knowledge they need to carry out scientific research and make responsible decisions.

WHAT IS A LERC?



Local Environmental Record Centres are “Not-for-profit organisations that collect, collate and manage information on the natural environment for a defined geographic area. LERCs support and collaborate with a network of experts to ensure information is robust, and make information products and services accessible to a range of audiences including decision-makers, the public, and researchers”

Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC)

VISION

TVERC is an independent source of high quality comprehensive environmental information. Our broad customer base means we are financially sustainable and are able to provide strong evidence for environmental issues into the next generation.

TVERC is a leader in its field known for its creative solutions in interpreting the natural environment for a broad range of organisations and individuals who understand and value the work we do. Research and innovation as a result of collaboration drive our development so that we are a respected partner in providing an evidence base for policy.

TVERC is at the centre of a network of recorders and users providing valued support as part of a partnership and engages with a future generation of recorders.

Our team maintains strong connections with volunteers, recorders and partners. Together, we have the skills, expertise and knowledge to promote the recognition and value of local data in decision-making at all levels.

Our environment is better as a result of decisions made using our data and information.

GOALS

Working towards and ultimately achieving the following goals will ensure we achieve our future vision for TVERC.

1. Be independent
2. Maintain and continue to expand a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information
3. Maintain and engage with a broad customer base
4. Develop and offer creative solutions to interpret natural environment data.
5. Collaborate or lead on research and innovation to drive our development
6. Be a respected partner in providing evidence base for policies.
7. Remain at the centre of a network of recorders
8. Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.
9. Employ valued and respected staff who retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge.
10. We live in a better environment in Berks and Oxon as a result of decisions made using our data and information.

1. BE INDEPENDENT

During 2019/20 we found a new office location at the Manor House, Little Wittenham which was unanimously agreed by all staff. Our plan was to be separate by the 1st of December 2019, moving into the office in October to allow for testing of IT systems etc. The separation date was pushed back to 1st April 2020, due to a lack of resources within OxonCC to facilitate the formal decision-making and separation process.

The delay allowed for more detailed consultations with the Steering Group and other stakeholders on the governance options, and on the options for service provision (e.g. Legal, ICT, HR, Finance, Pensions) for the new Community Interest Company.

Just before the end of 2019/20, CV-19 arrived in the UK. In light of that, OxonCC have decided that they are unable to make a decision on this matter for the foreseeable future due to HR and Legal being engaged with redeployment of staff and decision-making capacity being reduced. OxonCC would like the situation to be reviewed sometime in 2021 so for now work on this has been halted.

2. HOLD A DATABASE OF HIGH QUALITY COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

We now hold over 3 million records of flora and fauna in Berkshire and Oxfordshire plus information about Local Wildlife and Geological Sites, NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance (previously called UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats) and Ecological Networks (Conservation Target Areas and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas).

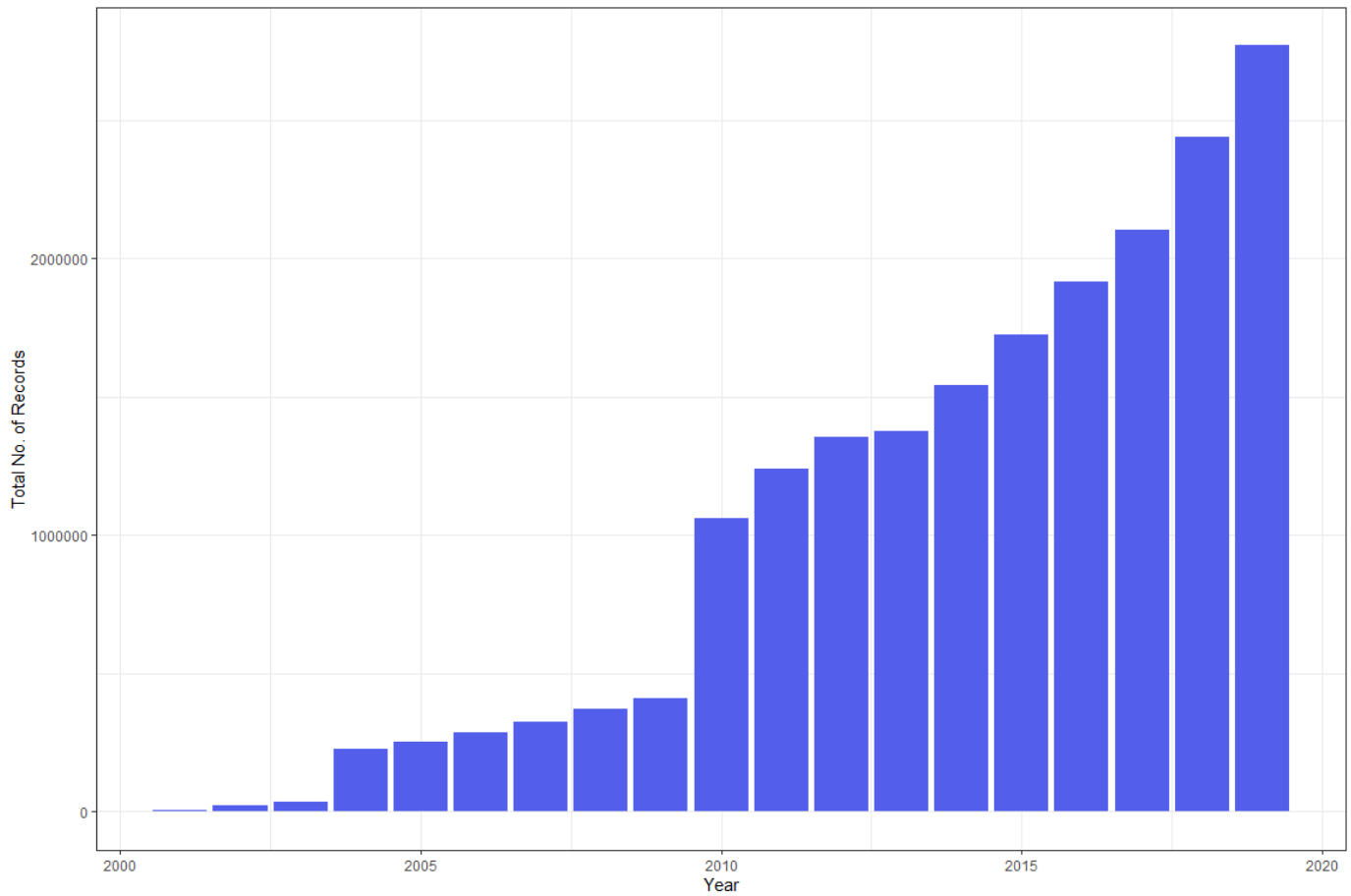
We collect data from the general public, skilled volunteer/amateur recorders, professionals working for wildlife charities (BBOWT and RSPB), professionals working for government agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency & local authorities) and ecological consultants. The cost to TVERC to collect, check and process data is about 25p per record, which means we prioritise datasets which are recent and include protected & notable species for data management.

In 2019-20 we added 573,684 species records to the database, 38,454 of which were protected and notable species. The big increase in records added to the database is due to 216,000 Berkshire Bird Club records being imported in March 2020.

We have a total of 668,127 protected and notable species in our database, which is about 22% of our data.

SPECIES RECORDS

NUMBER OF RECORDS



YEAR	RECORDS ADDED	TOTAL NO. OF RECORDS	YEAR	RECORDS ADDED	TOTAL NO. OF RECORDS
2019	331,958	2,768,728	2009	36,601	408,307
2018	334,110	2,436,770	2008	46,893	371,706
2017	186,291	2,102,660	2007	37,065	324,813
2016	192,049	1,916,369	2006	35,222	287,748
2015	185,144	1,724,320	2005	24,913	252,526
2014	162,195	1,539,176	2004	193,545	227,613
2013	24,904	1,376,981	2003	11,116	34,068
2012	110,811	1,352,077	2002	18,945	22,952
2011	180,791	1,241,266	2001	4,007	4,007
2010	652,168	1,060,475			

CURRENCY OF RECORDS

In 2018, approximately 442,000 (17%) of the 2.4 million TVERC species records were historic records more than 30 years old (pre-1989), with the remaining 83% being recorded in the last 30 years and 15% being recorded in the last 5 years.

At the end of this financial year (2019/20) we had:

- 488,467 historic records (recorded before 01/04/1990) - about 16% of our records.
- 561,627 recent records (recorded in the last 5 years) – about 18% of our records.

5 YEAR SUMMARY	NO. OF RECORDS	% OF DATA
Pre 1989	442,299	17%
1989 - 1993	242,154	9%
1994 - 1998	245,379	9%
1999 - 2003	336,872	13%
2004 - 2008	414,355	16%
2009 - 2013	553,480	21%
2014 - 2018	397,873	15%

CURRENCY OF RECORDS	CUMULATIVE NO. OF RECORDS	% OF DATA
Over 30 years old	442,299	17%
Last 30 years	2,190,212	83%
Last 25 years	1,948,058	74%
Last 20 years	1,702,679	65%
Last 15 years	1,365,807	52%
Last 10 years	951,452	36%
Last 5 years	397,972	15%

DATASETS

TVERC received 514 data sets in the financial year 2019-2020. This a considerable increase on the previous financial year in which 390 data sets were received. This probably reflects the increasing awareness of TVERC among both recording community and public. Another contributing factor is the increased number of consultancy reports being obtained by TVERC, 319 in the 2019-2020 financial year, an increase of nearly 100 on the previous year. We believe that this reflects a growing awareness of the importance of the data held in these reports in addition to hard work on behalf of TVERC volunteers who check planning portals.

DONOR CATEGORY	NUMBER OF DATASETS	NO. RECORDS ADDED TO DATABASE
CGO	7	9,139
Consultants	319	6,852
Individual known Wildlife Recorder	77	44,480
Local Government Surveys (carried out by)	3	263
Local Wildlife Groups	30	29,470
Members of the Public	30	46
National Wildlife Groups/Recording Schemes	12	45,315
Utility Companies	1	0
Wildlife Charities/Groups	12	1562
Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)	7	35,686
TVERC (not LWS Surveys)	9	379
Other	1	174

In addition to the above, the local and district wildlife surveys in Berkshire and Oxfordshire that are carried out by TVERC staff and volunteers contributed a further **8511** records.

DATA AGREEMENTS

Each year, TVERC negotiate with the wide range of recorders and recording groups in Berkshire and Oxfordshire to ensure we can access new data.

<p>New data agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Caddis Recording Scheme • Naturespace Partnership • South Midlands Newt Conservation Partnership • Long Mead Local Wildlife Local Wildlife Site • The Mammal Society • British Trust Ornithology • Bat Conservation Trust • Stuart Mabbutt 	<p>Renewed/amended data agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfordshire Badger Group • Fungus Survey Oxfordshire • Earth Trust • Binfield Badger Group • BBOWT
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Groups which supplied TVERC with data:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashmolean Natural History Society• Banbury Ornithological Society• Bat Conservation Trust• BBOWT• British Dragonfly Society• Berkshire Moth Group• Binfield Badger Group• British Lichen Society• Berks & South Bucks Bat Group• BSBI Oxon VC23 County Recorder• British Trust for Ornithology• Butterfly Conservation• Caring for God's Acre• Cherwell Swift Project• Friends of the Emm Brook• Friends of Milham Ford Nature Park• Field Studies Council• International Otter Survival Fund• Long Mead Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower Windrush Valley Project• Moor Green Lakes Group• Naturespace Partnership• Opiliones Recording Scheme• Oxfordshire Badger Group• Oxfordshire Flora Group• People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)• River Thames Conservation Trust• RSPB (including Oxford Swift City Project)• Soldierflies & Allies Recording Scheme• Salmon and Trout Conservation• South Midlands Newt Conservation Partnership• The Conservation Volunteers (Reading)• UK Caddis Recording Scheme• Weevil & Bark Beetle Recording Scheme• West Oxfordshire Farmland Bird Project• Worton Bird Group• Wychwood Flora Group |
|--|---|

3. ENGAGE WITH A BROAD CUSTOMER BASE

Our data are used by a diverse customer base, but within this, TVERC is currently reliant on a small number of customers for the majority of our income. We are seeking to diversify our income stream by increasing income from other sectors such as community groups, conservation NGOs, university researchers, land management advisors and Parish & Town Councils. In 2019/20 we secured over £49k from customers other than local authorities, ecological consultants and the Environment Agency. This is a great achievement which we hope to build on in subsequent years.

TVERC Customers	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Local authority (incl. contractors)	£186,415	£175,095	£171,825	£170,561
Ecological consultant	£107,649	£129,460	£117,516	£97,249
Environment Agency	£15,104	£17,280	£17,280	£17,280
Natural England	£0	£2,663	£0	£825
Conservation charity	£9,725	£10,380	£12,678	£1,050
Other	£7,283	£3,570	£7,138	£8,448
Utilities company	£5,250			
Individual recorder / recording group	£1,572	£2,682	£4,375	£3,267
Community / Parish Group	£0	£995	£3,593	£950
Landowner	£22,925	£1,310	£1,830	£3,170
AONB	£0	£0	£642	£0
Scientific Researcher	£1,800	£135	£0	£0
Member of the public	£635	£455	£75	£390
TOTAL	£358,358	£344,025	£336,952	£303,190
Total for "Top 3" customers	£309,168	321,836	306,621	£285,090
Total for all others	£49,190	£22,190	£30,331	£18,100

4. USE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO INTERPRET NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DATA

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

GREAT CRESTED NEWT DATA SEARCH PACKAGE

We created a new data search package for great crested newts that includes details of both positive and negative records for newts, pond habitats and information on the risk zones created by the NatureSpace Partnership (currently for Oxfordshire only). This new package provides all of the background data required to assess the likelihood of needing great crested newt surveys or license for a development. Feedback from consultants at a recent event was positive and stated that this could be useful in persuading clients of the need for surveys or mitigation.

SWIFT DATA SEARCH PACKAGE

We created a swift package for data search customers. This package consists of a map of swift nest records, a swift hotspot map that shows areas of high swift activity and advice on the provision of swift nests in new builds or refurbishments. This emerged from work TVERC did for the RSPB-led Oxford Swift City project.

5. COLLABORATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DRIVES OUR DEVELOPMENT

TVERC believes that working closely with the fantastic science and environmental organisations in Berkshire and Oxfordshire is essential in order to maximise the impact we can collectively make on improving our environment.

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

We have links with Imperial College London (Silwood Park), Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University and Reading University. These links work well for attracting student volunteers to carry out data management and project work, particularly for the 'Consultancy' modules in the MSc courses run by both Reading and Oxford Brookes Universities.

TVERC offer a variety of benefits to students in addition to the experience of volunteering, such as free data, as well as discounted entry to our conferences and training courses. In order to raise awareness of these benefits and the work TVERC and record centers do in general, several members of the team have given lectures to under- and postgraduate students at Oxford Brookes and Reading University.

In 2019-20 TVERC hosted the following placements:

- June 2019 - Oxford University staff internship on pollinators
- June 2019 - Oxford University student micro-internship on hedgerows
- September 2019 - University of Leeds MSc student project on tree mapping
- November 2019 - University of Reading placement student exploring UAV applications
- December 2019 - Oxford University micro-internship on hedgerows
- December 2019 - Oxford University micro-internship on hedgehog distribution

CEH HOUSING ASSOC NERC AWARD

TVERC are supporting CEH in a project to provide biodiversity enhancements to social housing projects in Bracknell Forest.

Julie Kerans, our biodiversity officer carried out some baseline surveys of a Southern Housing Group site in Bracknell to identify features of value for wildlife and, in collaboration with CEH staff, made some recommendations on possible enhancements that would increase the site's wildlife interest. This included advice on plant species that would be suitable for the site. TVERC was also present at the Bioblitz where we had the opportunity to engage with residents, offering wildlife gardening advice (and some plants) and led a plant walk to highlight some of the species growing locally.

We have also provided a data search for the site and some of the recommended enhancements would provide habitats for species that have been recorded recently in the area (such as stag beetles).

This project has been extended with further work taking place in 2020.

6. WE ARE A RESPECTED PARTNER IN PROVIDING AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR POLICIES

Making policy relies on a robust evidence base. TVERC already provide trusted and scientifically robust evidence on which others base policy. We will continue to do so, as well as developing new products and services, based on sound science, that are trusted and respected by our partners and customers.

ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS AND MANAGEMENT ADVICE

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

Local Wildlife Site surveys are one of the core services that TVERC continues to provide across the two counties for the majority of the Local Authorities. We carried out a total of 53 LWS surveys in 2019-2020. Thanks to the help of our volunteers, specialist species group surveys were completed on several sites for birds, invertebrates and rare plants. Survey reports were produced and taken to the site selection panel. The full detail of these is in appendix I. TVERC also carried out a major review and update of the LWS selection criteria. The updated criteria were used in the selection panels at the beginning of 2020.

OXFORDSHIRE SURVEYS

This year TVERC carried out surveys of 37 existing and proposed Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS) in Oxfordshire. Thanks to the help of our volunteers, specialist species group surveys were completed on several sites for invertebrates and rare plants. Species data entry is almost complete with over 5400 records added.

Areas surveyed this year included a particularly botanically rich site adjacent to the River Glyme near Wootton. It has dry calcareous grassland banks dominated by upright brome with quaking grass, salad burnet, common bird's-foot-trefoil, dwarf thistle, rough hawkbit, lady's bedstraw, black knapweed, common restharrow, cowslips, wild thyme, hoary plantain, mouse-ear hawkweed and fairy flax. Lower lying ground by the river has fen dominated by a mix of meadowsweet, rushes, pond sedges and grasses including reed

canary-grass with marsh marigold, southern marsh orchids, common marsh bedstraw, fen bedstraw, water mint, bugle, common meadow rue, marsh thistle, tufted vetch, flag iris and greater bird's-foot-trefoil. There is one patch of the water avens, which is scarce in Oxfordshire.

As well as being a Local Wildlife Site, Ewelme Watercress Beds is a Local Nature Reserve. It consists of areas of traditional cressbed situated along the course of a chalk stream, that have been restored by a local group. It also includes areas of reed sweet-grass swamp and scrub. Stream water-crowfoot is also found on the site, along with a range of other wetland plants such as bulrush, hard rush, square-stalked St. John's-wort, flag iris, purple loosestrife, blue water-speedwell, brooklime and water figwort. The local group have created an area of meadow adjacent to the watercourse with meadowsweet, black knapweed, oxeye daisy, pyramidal orchid, betony, devil's-bit scabious, yellow rattle and cowslip. This area was considered as an extension to the LWS at the selection panel meeting.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD OLD ROAD CAMPUS

The University of Oxford's Biodiversity Strategy 2016-2020 outlines how it will ensure biodiversity on University land is both protected and enhanced. The University commissioned a Biodiversity Assessment Report which identified four sites that will provide the main focus for activity during this period. The University of Oxford have asked TVERC to provide advice and recommendations for biodiversity enhancements that could be implemented on Old Road Campus.

This project has been completed successfully. A report was been submitted to Oxford University detailing the current site conditions and proposals for biodiversity enhancements. Two workshops were held with estates and heads of department staff at Old Road Campus.

WILD BANBURY SURVEYS

As part of their Wild Banbury project, BBOWT requires botanical surveys for two sites in Banbury (Spiceball Park and Hanwell Brook Wetland). TVERC will carry out botanical surveys of the two sites and will provide details of the type of habitat, species present and how the vegetation differs from that recorded in the 2017 surveys.

The field work for this project has been completed and a report submitted to BBOWT.

BERKSHIRE SURVEYS

In 2019 a total of 11 existing and 5 proposed Local Wildlife Sites were surveyed in Berkshire. A variety of habitats were surveyed across these Berkshire sites, including ancient woodland, recently created grassland, wet fen and parkland.

Some highlights of the season were:

- A network of small to moderately sized ancient woodland LWS near Bucklebury Common, which have not been surveyed for many decades. Many plant species indicating long-established woodland have persisted, including pignut, moschatel, wood sorrel and wild strawberry.

- Peacock Meadows proposed LWS in the outskirts of Bracknell, which is a large grassland site extensively enjoyed by the public. This site is an example of successful wildflower meadow creation, and the species established include quaking grass, oxeye daisy, hairy tare and common sorrel.
- Wargrave Marsh LWS to the south-east of Henley-on-Thames is an interesting mixture of wet woodland, fen and grassland, owned by passionate local people. It supports good faunal diversity, and during the survey a variety of damselflies and butterflies were observed, in addition to birds including reed bunting, sedge warbler and bullfinch

INTERPRETING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DATA

WEST BERKSHIRE AND WOKINGHAM BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council are currently preparing a new Local Plan and as part of that process, a number of proposed development sites have been identified. To be able to make decisions about where development is best located, councils require information about the potential impacts of developing these sites. TVERC have produced a Biodiversity Impact Assessment calculator, based on the DEFRA metric, but specific to Berkshire and Oxfordshire. This calculator enables development sites to be assessed to see whether they are delivering measurable net gains for biodiversity. It calculates the number of biodiversity units on the site before and after proposed development to derive a net position in biodiversity units.

West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council have asked TVERC to assess each of the sites in its emerging Local Plan using this calculator to establish the net number of biodiversity units for each and to assign an outline cost for delivering a measurable net gain for biodiversity in West Berkshire and Wokingham.

This project has been completed successfully. An assessment of 276 Local Plan in West Berkshire sites found pre-development biodiversity units between 5,599 and 16,797 and post-development units between 3,219 and 9,658, meaning a net loss of between 2,379 and 13,577 units. Based on DEFRA biodiversity unit prices of between £9,000 and £15,000 units, the estimated cost of offsetting these units is between £21.4 million and £203.6 million

In Wokingham, TVERC calculated the minimum and maximum number of biodiversity units for 311 Local Plan. There are over 2,500 hectares of habitat on these sites, generating between 6,444 and 19,332 biodiversity units. Based on per-unit costs published by DEFRA in the biodiversity net gain consultation document, these would be worth between £59 million and £290 million.

WOKINGHAM HABITAT NETWORK MAPPING

As part of the process of preparing their new Local Plan, one of the key part of evidence for deciding where the best development locations will be are the location and extent of existing ecological networks.

Wokingham Borough Council have asked TVERC to analyse the distribution of habitats in the borough and map existing habitat networks to provide an evidence base to assist in the decision-making process for promoted sites in the Local Plan.

Initial outputs have been shared with Wokingham Borough Council. TVERC is awaiting comments from Wokingham BC before finalising the outputs.

SLOUGH TREE MAPPING

Slough Borough Council is currently preparing a Local Plan. As part of this work, the Council is assembling supporting information and evidence to support policies in that Plan. The Council is therefore interested in understanding the contribution of trees in both the public and private realms to supporting a vibrant and healthy community and economy. Slough Borough Council have asked TVERC to carry out a study to estimate the coverage of trees in Slough and to quantify the benefits that they provide to the residents and businesses in the Borough. These data will enable Slough Borough Council to write policies to protect and enhance trees and the benefits that they supply.

An initial assessment of tree cover has been carried out. TVERC is awaiting tree data from Slough to be able to complete this project.

WEST BERKSHIRE SITES ASSESSMENTS

Baseline biodiversity assessment for additional Local Plan sites in West Berkshire.

This project has been successfully completed. TVERC carried out site assessments for 45 Local Plan sites to provide information in the species, habitats and sites on or near Local Plan sites and assign a RAG level based on these findings.

OXON NRNS AND CTA REFRESH

TVERC are leading a collaborative approach to identify as Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire. This will be submitted as part of the evidence base for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to inform the pattern of development in the county up to 2050.

A draft NRN has been submitted to Oxfordshire County Council. Feedback has been received from various stakeholders. A proposal for the next stage of developing a NRN and a strategy will be discussed by the Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Advisory Group (OxBAG) in January. A proposal for a Berkshire NRN has been sent to the Berkshire LPAs and the Berkshire LNP and will be discussed at meetings in January.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE NET GAIN SUPPORT

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) are introducing a biodiversity net gain system for planning applications. TVERC have been asked to provide support to WODC in implementing this system.

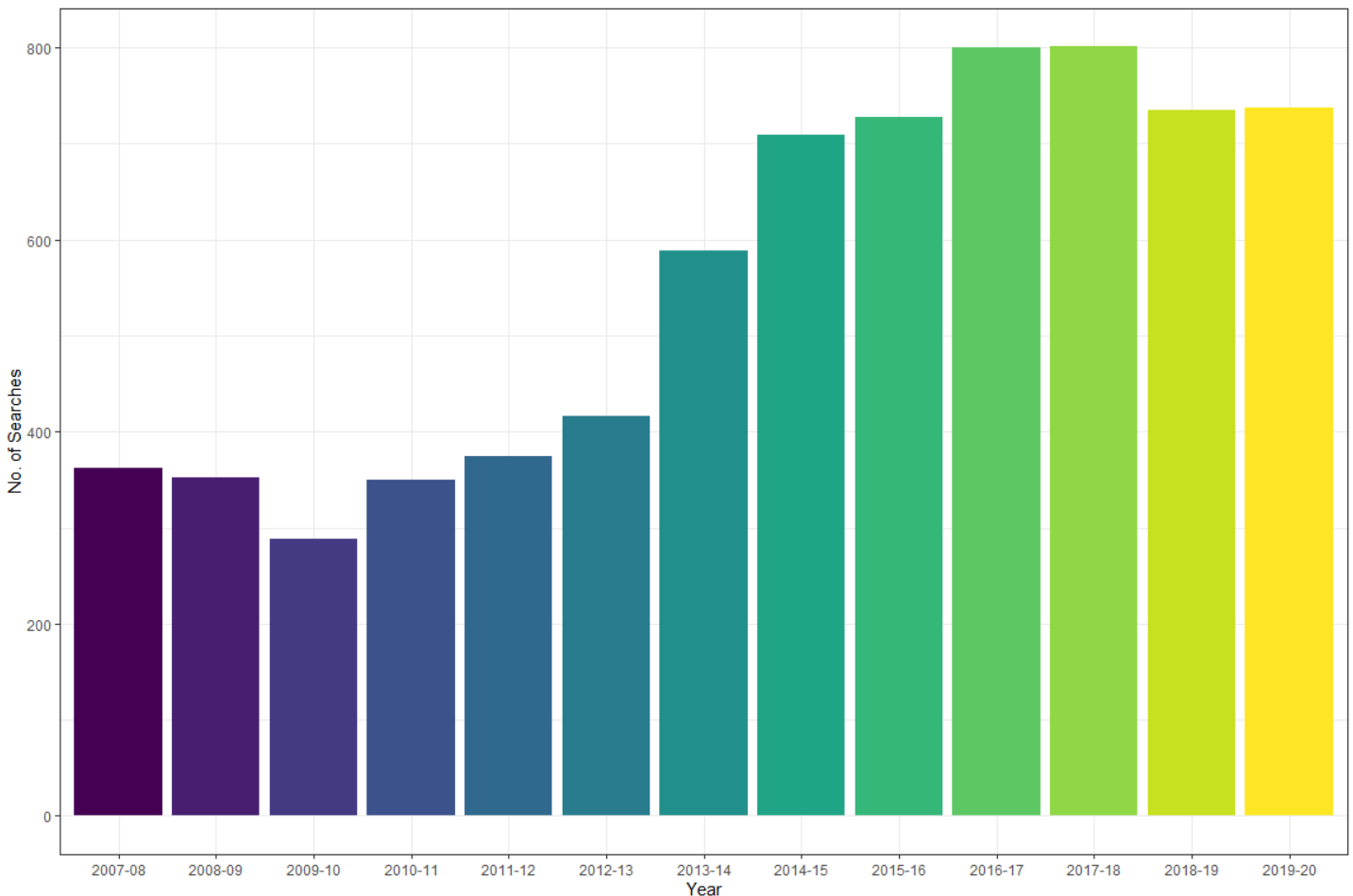
TVERC has delivered training to WODC staff on biodiversity net gain. Follow up training may be arranged once the scheme has begun. TVERC are yet to carry out any calculations. In addition, TVERC has provided guidance on standards for data submitted as part of applications to facilitate net gain calculations.

CLAY HILL, BURGHFIELD BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

West Berkshire Council have asked TVERC to carry out a biodiversity impact assessment for an application site subject to appeal. This work has been completed.

DATA SEARCHES

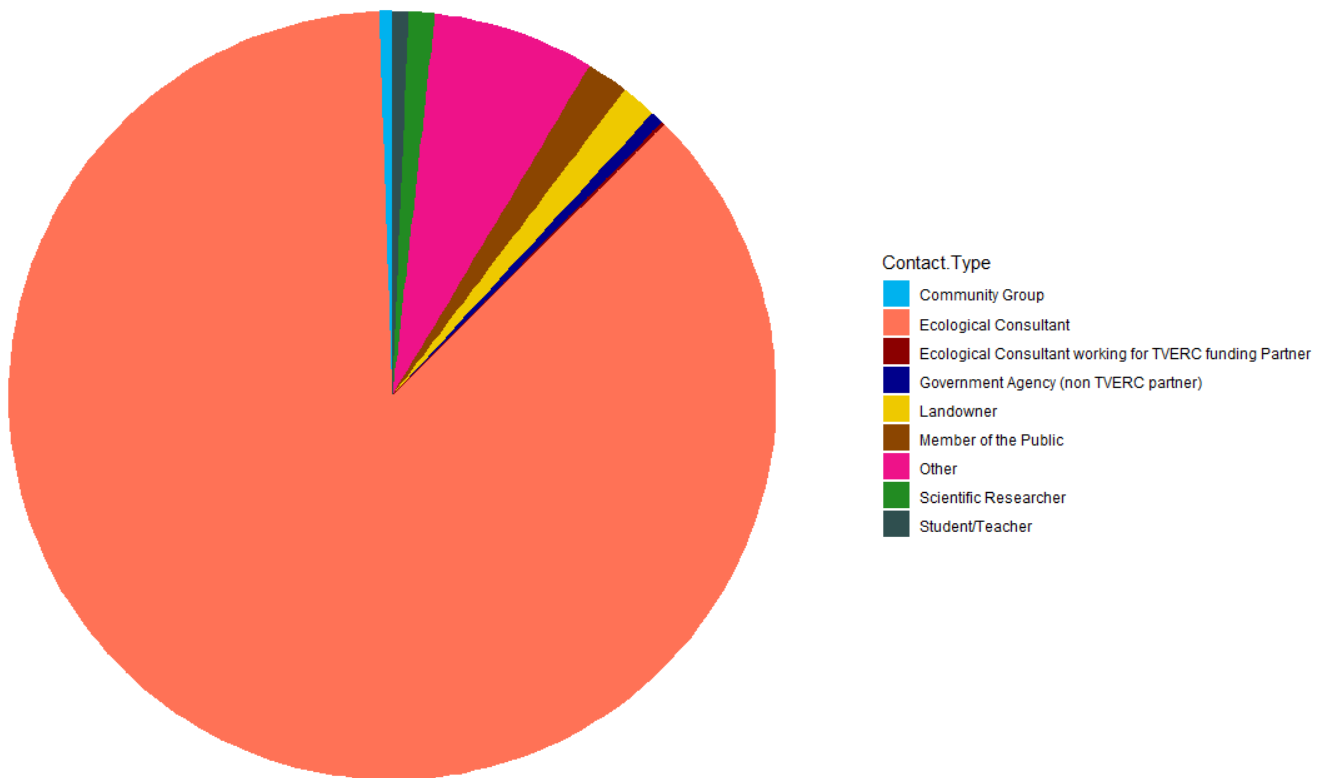
We have continued to improve our data search processes to automate many of the tasks for extracting and supplying data. We are now spending less time on these tasks, only hours from timesheet days this year compared to 193 in 2018-2019, which leaves more time for collating, checking and importing data. We have moved to a clearer charging structure for the most commonly requested data searches that doesn't require a quote to be issued by TVERC and signed by the requestor which should save even more time and allow requestors to instantly see the cost of their search report. The new online form allowed us to add more options for requestors for additional datasets (e.g. SSSI risk zones and Ancient Woodland Inventory sites). TVERC carried out 738 data searches in 2019-2020. This was about a slight increase on the 2018-2019 when we carried out 735 data searches.



End of Year Report 2019-20

TVERC charges for data searches based on the time to extract and present the data and a contribution towards the annual cost of collating and managing the TVERC database. TVERC waive this charge for data searches for individuals, landowners and conservation organisations where the data will be used solely for conservation purposes. In these cases, a donation is requested, to cover the costs of extracting and presenting the data. We also waive the fee for initial single species & bat searches, so although we carried out 738 data searches, a charge was made for only 640 of these, bringing in a total income of £121,257 for 2019-2020. We also supplied data to Thames Water under their five-year agreement with us.

A variety of customers request data searches, and the vast majority come from Ecological consultants, 638 this year. The proportions can be seen in the graph and table below.



End of Year Report 2019-20

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Community Group	7	4	4
Ecological Consultant	689	656	638
Ecological Consultant working for TVERC funding Partner	0	5	1
Government Agency (non TVERC partner)	0	1	4
Landowner	14	14	11
Local Recorder/Recording Group	0	2	0
Member of the Public	0	8	13
NGO/Government Agency (TVERC partners)	0	1	0
Non-Government Agency	0	1	0
Other	90	36	50
Scientific Researcher	0	3	8
Student/Teacher	0	7	5

Our data is requested for a variety of purposes, and an outline of these can be seen below.

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Comment on a Planning Application	0	8	7
Conservation/Research of a Single Site	0	9	4
Education or Research	17	12	14
Land Management	30	0	0
Land Management (For Conservation)	0	14	18
Land Management (Other)	5	10	10
Neighbourhood Plan	0	3	8
Other	71	32	23
Planning Application/Development	658	614	611
Utility Maintenance	19	36	39

DATA PROVISION TO PARTNERS

TVERC provided updated datasets to our partners. These are essential to ensure that our partners comply with planning policy and wildlife legislation and that sound decisions are made about where to focus conservation effort, how best to manage land and where to direct development to minimise impacts on the natural environment.

The updated datasets TVERC provided to partners were:

- Protected & notable species (July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020)
- Buffered protected species & notable (July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020)
- House sparrows, starlings and swifts (July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020). Rebranded “Birds in Buildings” with the addition of house martin nest records in March 2020
- Swift Hotspot Maps (provided to all partners from March 2020, previously only Oxford City)
- Local Wildlife Sites (May 2019)
- UK Priority Habitat (NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principle Importance) (December 2019)
- Invasive non-native species layer (July 2019, November 2019, January 2020)

There were no changes to the following datasets:

- Conservation Target Areas / Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Local Geological Sites

IMPROVEMENTS TO EVIDENCE-BASE

WEST BERKSHIRE AWI

Revising the AWI will have a number of important benefits and enable sound decisions to be made about the acceptability of proposed developments, identifying preferred locations for strategic sites and infrastructure, directing biodiversity conservation work in the most effective way, climate change adaptation and mitigation, wood fuel initiatives and historic landscapes. TVERC will review West Berkshire ancient woodland.

The final checking of woodland parcels is underway before presenting the final results to West Berkshire Council.

CHERWELL DISTRICT WILDLIFE SITES

There are currently several different designations for sites of importance to wildlife with differing degrees of protection through UK and European wildlife and planning law. These include sites of European importance (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas), national importance (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and county importance (Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)). To help inform the local authority planning process, some district and unitary councils have also identified sites that have significance for their authority at a more local level. TVERC was commissioned by Cherwell District Council to carry out additional surveys of some Cherwell DWS.

All field work has been completed for this project. Report writing is currently underway. It was proposed to have a panel meeting to review these sites in Jan 2021, following further field work in 2020.

NATIONAL TRUST DATA AGREEMENT 2019-20

Producing a summary report of habitat species and sites on National Trust property in South East England.

This project has been completed and data sent to National Trust, after a considerable delay. As a result, National Trust have decided not to renew the licenses for data across the south-east and instead will pursue individual licenses with LERCs where they feel the data has the greatest value. DC will meet with NT representatives to discuss the project and the issues. South-east LERCs will discuss this at a meeting in January.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE GARDEN VILLAGE

WODC are preparing an Area Action Plan for the proposed West Oxfordshire Garden Village, located near Eynsham. This will set out how the new development will be taken forward, what it will look like and how it will function.

In order to support the delivery of the garden village principles, WODC asked TVERC to provide some analysis of habitat connectivity for key species and provide guidance on, and potential locations for, the creation of habitats on both on and off the garden village site. TVERC has completed this project.

MONITORING CHANGE

BERKS SINGLE DATA LIST 160

TVERC provide an analysis of the SDL 160 for each of the Berkshire unitaries. Site management data is collated to calculate the number of local sites that are in positive management for the 6 Unitary Authorities. Local authorities are required to report to DEFRA on the SDL 160 each year as a measure of their success of protecting the biodiversity in their area.

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

TVERC analyses environmental data and produces an annual monitoring report to Local Authorities in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The AMR reports on a number of environmental indicators that help to monitor biodiversity within their district including changes to Local Wildlife Sites, Priority habitat and Priority Species, the status and distribution of water vole or farmland birds, SSSI condition and non agri-schemes habitat creation and management.

7. WE REMAIN AT THE CENTRE OF A NETWORK OF RECORDERS

TVERC has good relationships with local recorders and recording groups who are a key source of our data. We will strengthen these relationships so that TVERC remains the hub for biological recording in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

We said goodbye to Joanna Clark, our Biological Recording Co-ordinator in February "Being part of the TVERC team has been an amazing experience! It's great being able to work with a team of similar minded people,

who all have their own expertise and work together so effortlessly. I've enjoyed getting to know our local recorders at events, such as the TVERC conferences, field days and courses, and working with them to ensure we are providing them with the support they need. I am now making the move down to Australia for the next chapter of my life and I hope to continue to work within wildlife conservation. I'd like to thank the team for making my time here so enjoyable, I will miss everyone at TVERC!"

It was with regret that TVERC decided to withdraw the vacancy for a Biological Recording Coordinator and halt the recruitment process. The CV-19 restrictions in place around social distancing and isolation meant that it would be very difficult for the successful candidate to start their role and collect the equipment that they would need. The role requires considerable 'in person' contact with a range of our stakeholders and that is not possible within the current restrictions. TVERC's income is also likely to temporarily decline, placing a strain on our finances. We very much hope to be able to re-advertise the role once things return to "normal".

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The TVERC Director sits on the Oxfordshire Environment Board and Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group. The TVERC Projects Manager sits on the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and attends the Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.

BERKSHIRE LNP SECRETARIAT

The Combined Board & Steering Group of the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership agreed that there was insufficient budget and no line management structure in place to support the employment of another LNP officer and that the work plan was too ambitious for a part time officer to manage. It was agreed that until such time as sufficient funding and line management was available that there was little value in recruiting another LNP officer. TVERC was approached to provide the secretariat for the group. As such the LNP will act as a networking partnership for those working in nature conservation, business and health & wellbeing to share best practice, highlight work by other LNPs and advertise funding opportunities.

OXFORDSHIRE ENVIRONMENT BOARD SECRETARIAT

At the meeting of the Oxfordshire Environment Board on Thursday 28th March 2019, those present agreed that they would like to see a proposal from TVERC to provide the secretariat for the group. No other organisations on the OEB steering group were able to offer this service. OxEB have commissioned TVERC to undertake this work.

8. PROVIDE VALUED SUPPORT TO, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH, CURRENT AND FUTURE RECORDERS AND PARTNERS

Biological recorders are essential to the future success of TVERC and to evidence-based decision-making. Much of the data in the TVERC database comes from volunteer recorders and so supporting them is an essential part of the work TVERC carry out.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

We provide technical support for recording groups who are collecting and analysing data across Oxfordshire and Berkshire. In 2019-2020, TVERC provided assistance to: The Oxford Swift City Project, Caring for God's Acre and the OOS. We also had a meeting with Butterfly Conservation to discuss data-management and sharing.

FSC BIOLINKS REPORTS

Provide the Field Studies Council BioLinks project with information on the number of records of their target groups submitted to TVERC over the lifetime of the project. This will form part of the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

TVERC has completed a report for the FSC on the number of new records for specific taxa added to the TVERC database. TVERC will provide annual reports for the next 4 years.

EQUIPMENT LOAN

We have survey equipment and books available to loan to recorders, and this is advertised on our website. In 2019/20 we loaned 25 small mammal traps to Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

RECORDING GRANT

At the beginning of 2016, we reinstated our Recorders Grant Scheme to support projects that improve the quality, quantity and/or coverage of voluntary species recording in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The fund is administered by Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE). Applications may be standalone grants to support better recording or they may be linked to a larger biodiversity application to TOE (www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk). In 2019/20 we funded the following projects:

11/06/2019 (see Appendix II) Year 3 of High Park Biodiversity Survey £500.00

31/10/2019 Benson Nature Group surveying equipment £500.00

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

TVERC organise a local Recorders Conference to share information amongst volunteer recorders and increase their knowledge so they can provide us with even better data. We also provide training courses and talks to local groups.

TRAINING COURSES

To help increase identification skills, surveying techniques and encourage wildlife recording within Berkshire and Oxfordshire through running a number of day training courses on a wide range of species and habitats.

In 2019/20 we carried out three training courses on:

- Introduction to GIS at BBOWT Nature Discovery Centre (June 2019) – Led by Dan Carpenter
- Hedgerow Surveying at BBOWT Chimney Meadows (September 2019) – Led by Julie Kerans
- Otter Ecology and Surveying at RSPB Otmoor Reserve (October 2019) – Led by Ellen Lee

This year we also hosted four field days in Oxfordshire and Berkshire taking place between May and September. These were held at **Braziers Park, Dinton Pastures** and two at **Waltham Place**.

The field days are a chance for local naturalists and volunteers to come together for a day of informal, peer to peer learning. This is one of the most valuable parts of the field day as everybody who attends has the opportunity to teach as well as learn. We bring a selection of nets, pots and identification books and see what people find!

Braziers Park near Wallingford, was the first field day to take place this year, we had several volunteers and staff members from the grounds joining us. We surveyed parts of their grass fields, woodland areas and a vegetable patch where we found a mint moth (*Pyrausta aurata*) much to everyone's delight!

TVERC held a joint field day with the FSC BioLinks project at Dinton Pastures Country Park near Wokingham. Eight people attended with a mixture of skills and experience in invertebrate sampling and identification, on a hot day in July. Our focus for much of the day was the former golf course. Dinton Pastures is a well surveyed site and many species have been recorded there. Highlights of the day were a Heather ladybird (*Chilocorus bipustulatus*) swept from scrub and an Alder Signal moth (*Strathmopoda pedella*).

The first field day at Waltham Place had a grasslands theme. We were given access to one of the grassland fields where we surveyed for invertebrates and their associated flora. The second field day we recorded flora and fauna in the new pond. We hope to revisit this site over the next few years to monitor it as the pond becomes established so we can see how the species diversity changes over time.

UNIVERSITY OF READING LECTURE

Dan Carpenter was invited to give a lecture to undergraduate students on how nature conservation is carried out in the real world. It covered landscape scale approaches to conservation, such as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)s and Conservation Target Areas (CTAs), the Lawton review and Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing (GCN DLL). It also covered new and emerging trends such as ecosystem services and natural capital and biodiversity net gain.

BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL QGIS TRAINING

Bracknell Forest Council have asked TVERC to provide some training for Parks & Countryside staff in the calculation of habitat connectivity to support a project to design and create a greenway running through the heart of the Bracknell. This will enable the service to modify existing habitat data based on work that they carry out and connectivity analyses to measure project success in improving habitat connectivity.

AUTUMN RECORDERS CONFERENCE – BERKSHIRE

Our Autumn conference was held on the 28th September and was hosted by Oracle, Thames Valley Park in Reading. We had over 40 people attending the conference, many who were members of local organisations keen to share their work and hear what other local groups have been doing over the summer. (see Appendix III)

SPRING RECORDERS CONFERENCE - OXFORDSHIRE

We had our Spring Recorders' Conference the 7th March at Cheney School in Oxford. We had 45 people joining us who were all keen to hear from and learn about the work other local wildlife groups have been doing and preparing for 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 some of these activities have been put on hold.

9. OUR VALUED AND RESPECTED STAFF RETAIN AND DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS, EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE

OFFICE STAFF

We are a team of ten people, but as some of us work part-time, this is equivalent to 8.7 full-time staff.

Camilla Burrow, Director - Development and delivery of the TVERC service.

Dan Carpenter, Projects Manager – Delivering services to our local authority partners in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and developing and managing project work.

Katherine Lister, Biodiversity Data Manager - Data management, analysing and presenting data for commercial customers and project work.

Ellen Lee, Biodiversity Data Services Officer – Data management, analysing and presenting data for commercial customers and project work.

Julie Kerans, Katherine Holmes and Caitlin Coombs, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Biodiversity Data Officers - Surveying local wildlife sites with the help of volunteers, analysing and presenting data for project work.

End of Year Report 2019-20

Yolanda Vazquez, Biodiversity Projects Officer - Surveying local wildlife sites (KH maternity cover), analysing and presenting data for project work.

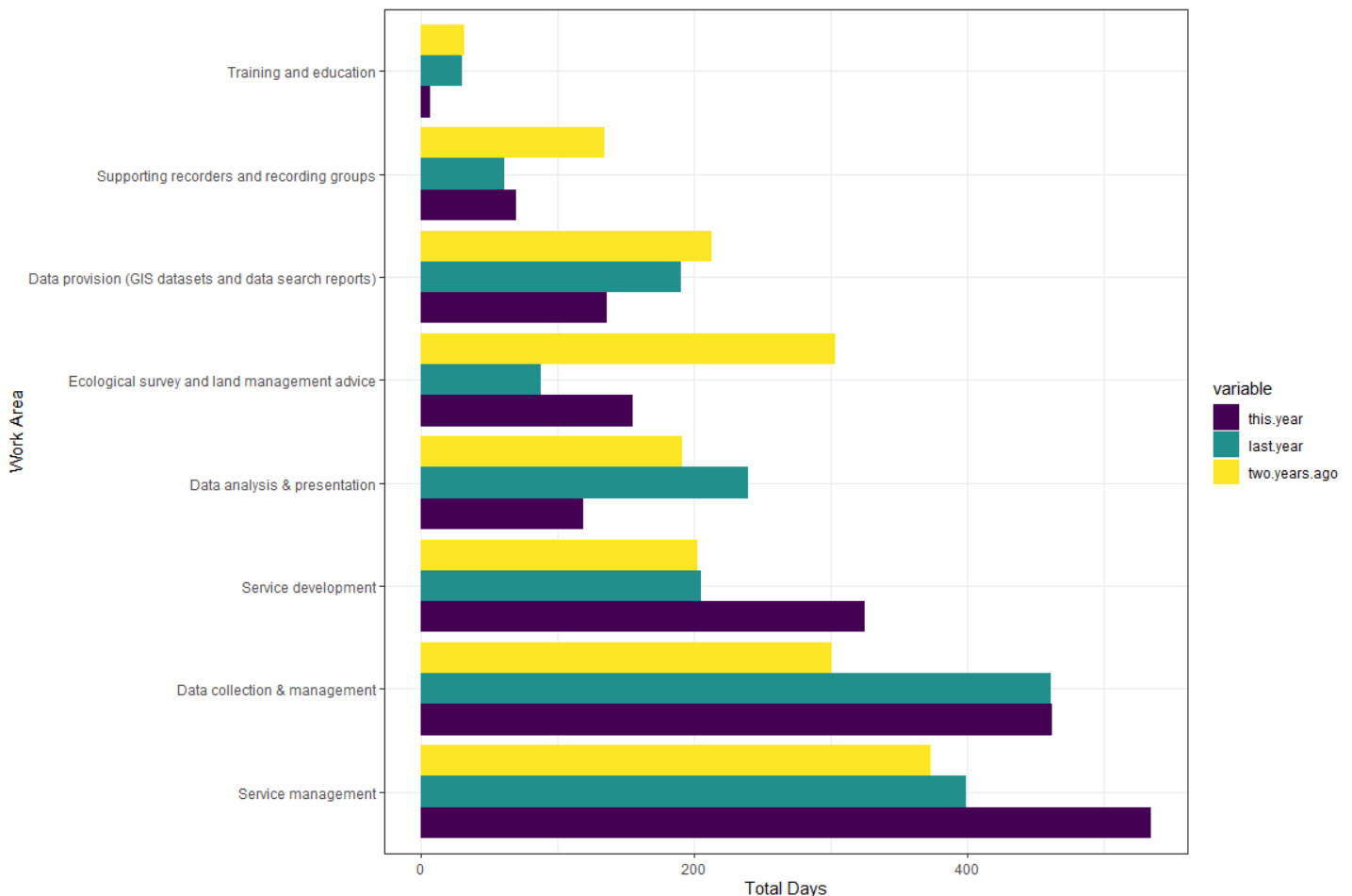
Joanna Clark, Biological Recording Coordinator – Working with TVERC volunteers and recording groups to increase the quality and quantity of wildlife records and build up the volunteer network.

Filipa McGuinness, Admin Officer - Finance, admin & promotional tasks to ensure the smooth running of a busy office.

Robbie Still, Biodiversity Data Assistant - Data management, presenting data for commercial customers and project work.

STAFF TIME

The chart and table below illustrate the time spent by the TVERC team on different elements of the TVERC work programme over the last three financial years. The majority of staff time was spent on Service management (534 days), Data collection & management (462 days) and Service development (325 days). 70 days was spent on Supporting recorders and recording groups and 7 days on Training and education.

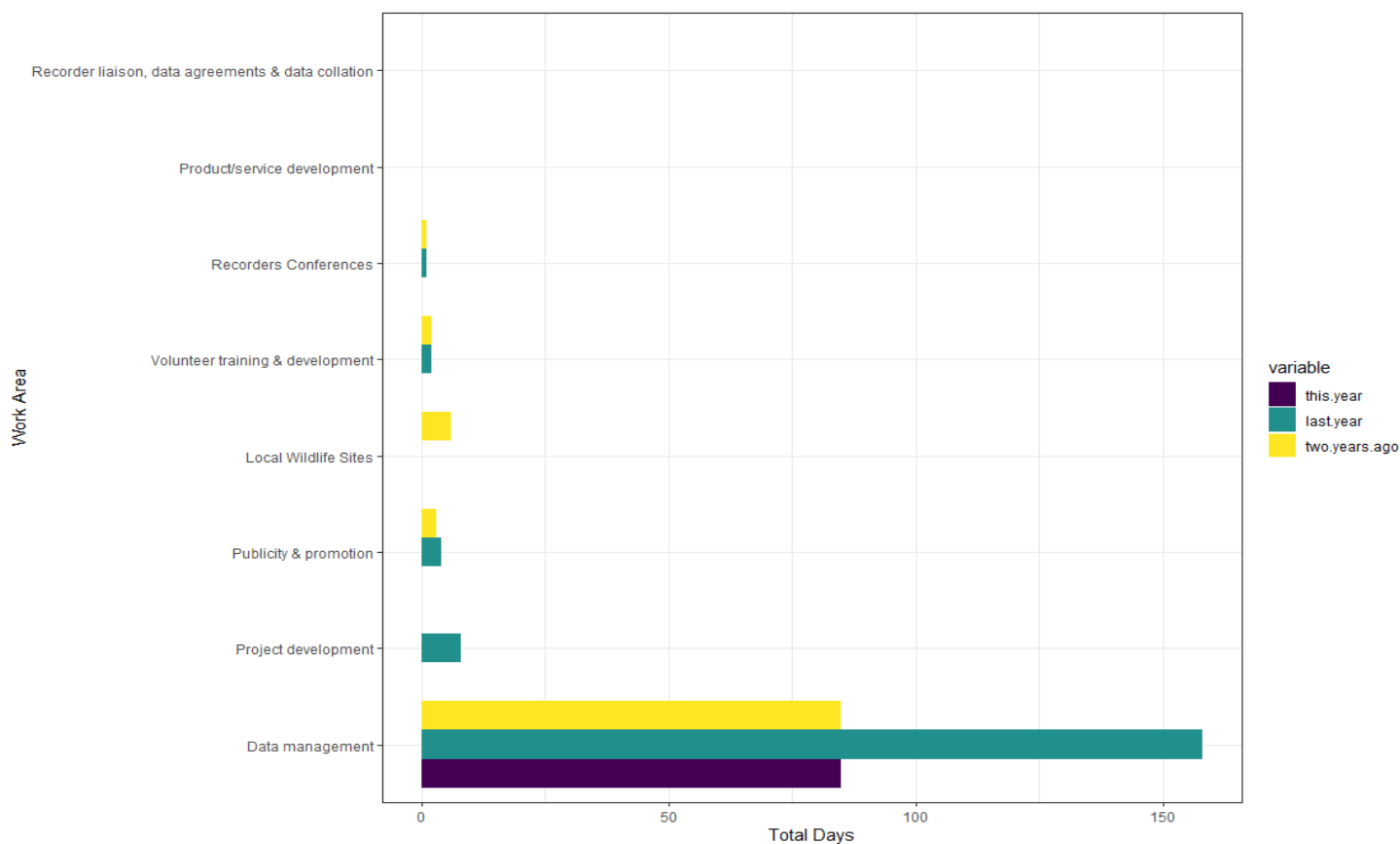


End of Year Report 2019-20

Work Area	2019-20		2018-19		2017-18	
	Days	Percent	Days	Percent	Days	Percent
Service management	534	30%	399	24%	373	21%
Data collection & management	462	26%	461	28%	301	17%
Service development	325	18%	205	12%	202	12%
Ecological survey and land management advice	155	9%	88	5%	304	17%
Data provision (GIS datasets and data search reports)	136	8%	191	11%	213	12%
Data analysis & presentation	119	7%	239	14%	192	11%
Supporting recorders and recording groups	70	4%	61	4%	135	8%
Training and education	7	0.5%	30	2%	32	2%

VOLUNTEERS

TVERC are fortunate to get the help of volunteers to carry out some data processing, species recording and site surveys. We also rely on help from volunteers to manage and input data into our database, and this is where the majority of their time was spent, 100% this year. In 2019-2020, 10 office volunteers carried out 114 days of voluntary tasks. If this work had been carried out by paid staff, it would have cost TVERC over £11,400.



End of Year Report 2019-20

Work Area	Days		
	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Data management	105	158	85
Local Wildlife Sites	6	6	6
Project development	0	8	0
Publicity & promotion	0	4	3
Recorders Conferences	3	1	1
Volunteer training & development	0	2	2

FINANCE

TVERC is a 'not-for-profit' organisation so any surplus income over expenditure is re-invested into the service, except for that which is held in the Reserve. TVERC is an internal trading unit within OxonCC meaning that our budget must balance to zero each financial year, but we can hold funds in a separate Reserve account.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that sufficient income is obtained each year to cover the costs of running the TVERC service. Financial forecasts are reviewed monthly, with reports to the Steering Group every three months. Charges may be increased or decreased differently than is forecast here, depending on the future situation. TVERC will work to ensure that any fee increases are kept to a minimum for all our customers by ensuring our processes are as efficient as possible.

The biggest expenditure is on staff salaries. However, staff time is also the biggest asset TVERC has, as it is the staff time spent on projects, data searches and data licenses which bring in the income.

In 2019-20 we drew down on our Reserves as planned, on preparing for the separation from OxonCC.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Starting Reserve balance	£230,619	£295,788	£203,234
Expenditure	£372,386	£313,113	£312,344
Income	£358,358	£344,025	£336,952
Year-end balance	-£14,028	£30,912	£24,608
Year-end Reserve balance	£187,729	£230,619	£295,788
Redundancy costs	£55,000	£57,125	£46,000
3 months running costs	£92,000	£90,500	£80,000
Allocated (RIA)	£32,053	£55,412	£63,613
Enabling fund	£8,676	£27,582	£106,175

INCOME

TVERC is funded via a number of ways, as shown in the table below. All of these funding streams contribute to the annual cost of collating and managing the TVERC database, resulting in economies of scale for our customers.

Income	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Local authorities SLA	£132,790	£138,753	£126,899
Environment Agency SLA	£15,104	£17,280	£17,280
Commercial data searches	£111,827	£113,684	£116,143
Commercial data licences	£14,680	£23,056	£12,545
Projects - LA funded	£51,325	£36,343	£44,926
Projects - NE / EA funded	£0	£0	£0
Projects - other funded	£31,060	£13,774	£17,998
Donations	£1,572	£1,137	£1,160
TOTAL	£358,358	£344,025	£336,952

Projects 2019/2020	Revenue (net income)
West Berkshire AWI	£0.00
Cherwell DWS	£3,300.00
West Berkshire Biodiversity Impact Assessments	£3,000.00
Old Road Campus Survey	£2,940.00
National Trust data agreement 2019-20	£3,025.00
Berks SDL160	£5,345.00
Berks and Oxon AMR	£7,154.00
Wokingham Biodiversity Impact Assessments	£2,750.00
Wokingham Habitat Network Mapping	£4,950.00
AMR Oxfordshire CC	£1,425.00
Slough tree mapping	£0.00
Wild Banbury surveys	£550.00
CEH Housing Assoc NERC award	£1,650.00
Berkshire LNP secretariat	£1,250.00
Oxon Environment Board secretariat	£1,125.00
West Berkshire site assessments	£2,200.00
Oxon NRNs and CTA refresh	£14,003.47
TVERC BIAC update	£275.00
LWVP biodiversity baseline update	£1,100.00
West Oxon Garden Village	£3,575.00
Bracknell Forest Council QGIS training	£550.00
FSC BioLinks reports	£400.00
West Berkshire site assessments vol 3	£550.00
Bird Aid training	£0.00
West Oxon net gain support	£1,375.00
Clay Hill, Burghfield biodiversity assessment	£825.00
Training courses	£0.00

EXPENDITURE

The majority of TVERC's income is spent on staff (including volunteer expenses). Our staff and volunteers are the biggest asset TVERC has, as it's the staff time spent on projects, data searches and data licenses which bring in the income. Our staff and volunteers also work continuously to improve the TVERC service and data products we can offer our funders.

Expenditure	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Staff (salaries, expenses, training)	£315,429	£278,099	£263,562
Project expenses	£19,068	£834	£5,199
Overheads (equipment, printing, postage etc.)	£5,894	£1,809	£764
Premises (paid 'in kind' by OCC)	£16,500	£16,500	£16,500
Recorders Conference	£4,486	£3,614	£3,383
Investment in service (data tools, website etc)	£3,375	£12,257	£22,936
Investment in service (Separation and CiC set-up)	£7,634	£0	£0
TOTAL	£372,386	£313,113	£312,344

MANAGING FINANCIAL RISK

Due to Oxon CC accounting rules, the Business account must balance to £0 at the end of each financial year, but 'surplus' monies or deficits can be moved into or out of a Balancing account.

The TVERC Reserve is also kept in the Balancing account. The TVERC Reserve mitigates TVERC from financial risk. The policy that the Reserve covers the costs of staff redundancies plus three months running costs was agreed by the Steering Group in the September 2012 meeting.

The enabling fund consists of the 'surplus' monies which we will use for investment in TVERC services, such as our plans to separate from OxonCC and set up as a Community Interest Company.

At the end of 2019/20, there was £187,729 in the TVERC Balancing Account.

The table below outlines the allocations.

Project funding RIA (to be carried forward to 19/20)	
P19-13 Oxon NRN	£3,500
P20-05 Oxon CC project	£18,900
P15-14 Cherwell DWS	£3,603
P19-10 Berks LNP secretariat	£3,575
P19-11 OxEB secretariat	£2,475
Reserve	
Redundancy costs	£55,000
3 months running costs	£92,000
Enabling fund	
Move & independence costs	£8,676.00

APPENDIX I – LWS SURVEY AND SELECTION

Panel decision	Meaning
Retain	Existing LWS resurveyed and designation as LWS confirmed
Accept	Proposed LWS surveyed and designated as LWS
Deselect	Existing LWS resurveyed and de-designated as LWS
Reject	Proposed LWS surveyed and not designated as LWS
Deferred	Insufficient information to make decision
Denotify	

OXFORDSHIRE SURVEYS

The following sites were taken to panel in 2020.

CHERWELL

Site code	Site name	Decision
62F05	Church Fields at Cutter's Bridge	Retain
62G01	Field by Beacon Hill Ditch	Accept
4.30E+04	Field at Broughton Grounds Farm	Retain
6.10E+08	Field by River Ray	Retain
6.10E+09	Field south of River Ray	Retain
41V02	Loop Farm Flood Meadows	Retain
62A02	Meadows NW of Blackthorn Hill	Retain
43B06	South Newington Meadow	Retain
52M01	Trow Pool	Retain
51P03	Warmough Copse	Retain
41Q11	Cassington to Yarnton Pits East Extension	Accept

WEST OXFORDSHIRE

Site code	Site name	Decision
31Y09	Bridgefield Bank & Brake	Retain
41F01	South Freeland Meadows	Retain
41F02	City Farm	Retain
31F03	Maggots Grove Wood	Retain
31F04	Manor Farm meadows	Retain
31F05	Minster Lovell Bank	Retain
31F07	Minster Lovell Meadows	Retain
32J02	Priory Mill Ponds (south only)	Retain
31A06	Pumping Station Meadow	Retain
41J13	Worcester Hill Bank and Marshes	Retain
32K05	Taston brook and springs	Additional info only

VALE OF WHITE HORSE

Site code	Site name	Decision
29N01	Buscot Park	Accept
29N01/2	Buscot Park Lake	Defer
29G03	Coleshill Park	Accept
50B06	Limekiln Copse and Valley	Retain
28V01/3	Middle and Hailey Woods	Retain
38M02	Pigtrough Bottom	Retain
28V01.4	Upper Wood	Retain
29N01	Buscot Park	Accept
29N01/2	Buscot Park Lake	Defer

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

Site code	Site name	Decision
59M03	Clifton Hampden Meadows	Retain
69F03	Ewelme Cress Beds	Retain
69F03	Ewelme Cressbeds Proposed Extension	Accept
78A08	Flowercroft Wood	Accept
78C02	Highmoor and Lower Common Wood	Defer
78C01	Holly Grove	Retain
78F04	Kents Hill	Retain
50F08	Lower Farm Bottom Hay Meadow	Retain
NA	Nettlebed Puddingstones	Accept
59X01	Dorchester Gravel Pits Complex	Retain

BERKSHIRE SURVEYS

The following sites were taken to panel in 2020.

BRACKNELL FOREST

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU86N06	Peacock Meadows	Accept
SU86N04	West Garden Copse	Retain
SU97A04	Round Copse & Weycroft Copse	Retain
SU86G04	Edgbarrow Hill and Heath	Retain

READING

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU77T11	Dingley Dell (part)	Do not accept

WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU88F02	Ashley Hill Forest & Dellars Copse	Retain
SU98Z01	Battlemead Common	Do not accept
SU87X06	Hogoak Lane	Name change

WEST BERKSHIRE

Site code	Site name	Decision
S57F03	Bushnell's Copse	Retain
SU57F06	Malthouse Wood & Oaken Copse	Retain
SUF7F07	Sermon's Copse & Hunter's Hill Wood	Retain
SU57F10	Overall Copse	Retain
SU57F11	Andrew's Copse	Retain
SUF57F17	West Wood	Retain
SU57G02	Adam's Land Copse	Retain
SU57F08	Ridge Hill Wood, Stonecroft, Homefield - proposed extensions	Amend boundary
SU58V02	Streatley Golf Course	Retain
Geology	Old Kiln Quarry, Chieveley	Deselect

WOKINGHAM

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU77T12	Blue Coat School Woodland	Accept
SU86E04	Cantley Park	Accept
SU78V03	Wargrave Marsh	Retain
SU76Y06	Brook Farm Meadow	Retain
SU76T04	The Coombes	Retain

Geology	Longwater Road Gravel Pit	Deselect
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APPENDIX II - HIGH PARK BIODIVERSITY SURVEY, BLENHEIM

Description - To describe all aspects of High Park, beginning with geology and soils, then archaeology, history, the landscape, the trees (especially the ancient and veteran oaks and also other ancient trees on the site), the other flora including vascular plants and bryophytes, mycology including lichenised and non-lichenised fungi, the fauna including invertebrates (e.g. molluscs, spiders, insects especially saproxylic beetles but also butterflies and moths as well as Diptera, Hemiptera and Hymenoptera) and vertebrates (amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals among which bats and deer, with a history for the latter from park deer to feral and wild) and concluding with management and conservation of this most important site for ancient oaks in England and an SSSI as well as part of a World Heritage Site.

The aim is to conduct a survey of all macro-biodiversity across the Animal, Fungal and Plant Kingdoms in the SSSI of High Park (c. 120 ha) within Blenheim Park, Oxfordshire. Information about its geology, history and past management will also be gathered. The data collected are to be submitted to TVERC and will be used to describe High Park in a book to be published in collaboration with Blenheim Park, Natural England and possibly other sponsors. The book will be multiple-authored and edited by Aljos Farjon.

The funds are used to support travel costs for the volunteers.

Outcomes - The survey started in February 2017 and is being carried out over a four year period with input from a large number of volunteers. Survey work that took place on 2017 was built on in 2018 with groups such as butterflies, beetles, amphibians and reptiles, which had been under recorded in 2017, strengthened with more volunteers and better recording techniques. In all three years the team had full access from February to July but (very) limited access from August to December. This has caused a reduction of potential records, possibly in the order of 20%, because many organisms will only be found between August and November. Despite these limitations, a total of 2,908 species of fungi, plants and animals in High Park were recorded. In a meeting with management in January 2020 it was agreed to arrange access on specified days for the period August-November (two days per month) in an attempt to catch up on missed species.

APPENDIX III – ANNUAL AUTUMN AND SPRING CONFERENCES

AUTUMN RECORDERS CONFERENCE - BERKSHIRE

Our Autumn conference was held on the 28th September and was hosted by Oracle, Thames Valley Park in Reading. We had over 40 people attending the conference, many who were members of local organisations keen to share their work and hear what other local groups have been doing over the summer.

The day started off with the 'TVERC in Action' presentation by Dan Carpenter. He explained the services TVERC provide by taking raw data and turning it into information for people to make evidence-based decisions on land management and conservation. He also gave an overview of some projects TVERC have been working on this year, such as completing the review of AWI for RBWM and valuing trees in Slough.

The main speakers for the event were Simon Mortimer from the University of Reading and Ed Peveler and Wendy Morrison from Chilterns AONB. Both talks focused on LiDAR as the main surveying technique they were using in their projects. Simon's talk was titled '**Surveying Hedgerow Condition from the Ground and Air**', where he gave an overview of the hedgerows in the area and how he has used LiDAR data in his projects to help him survey hedgerow condition.

Ed and Wendy's presentation was titled '**Beacons of the Past, Citizen Science and LiDAR: Shedding light on the Chilterns Landscape**' and is a project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. They talked to us about the history surrounding these historic features and how LiDAR has helped identify areas of interest.

There was a wide ranging selection of workshops for people to attend during the afternoon. **Identifying Site Features Suitable for Invertebrates** was hosted by Julie Kerans and Yolanda Vazquez from TVERC, they wanted to find the most important site features for invertebrates that could be included in recording sheets for the future. **Badger Detectives! A workshop on identifying, recording and protecting badgers in Berkshire and Oxfordshire** was run by Barbara Witkowski and Julia Hammet from the Oxfordshire Badger Group and Karen McCoy & Andy McCoy from the Binfield Badger Group. This workshop was designed as a refresher on spotting badger signs and activity to help people submit accurate information to their local recording group. Robbie Still and Ellen Lee spoke about **How TVERC use your data to give and overview of the data services and management** that have been going on at TVERC. Finally, Brian Clews led a **What's about? Walk** by the river for people to practice their identification skills and learn the importance of recording everything we find.

SPRING RECORDERS CONFERENCE – OXFORDSHIRE

We had our Spring Recorders' Conference the 7th March at Cheney School in Oxford. We had 45 people joining us who were all keen to hear from and learn about the work other local wildlife groups have been doing and preparing for 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 some of these activities have been put on hold.

As usual, to kick start the day, we heard from Dan Carpenter who gave a presentation on 'TVERC in Action' explaining the services TVERC provides and projects we have been working on this last year, such as completing the review of AWI for RBWM, Providing advice to University of Oxford on biodiversity enhancements on the Old Road campus site, identifying habitat networks in Wokingham and working on a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire.

Our main speakers of the day were Keith Cohen from Keith Cohen Ecology and Barbara Witkowski and Debbie White from the Oxfordshire Badger Group.

Keith Cohen gave a wonderful talk on ***"Bats, Trees and Roosts - an introduction to how and where bats use roosts in trees, and the surprising variety of cavities that bats have been found using"***

Barbara and Debbie gave us an insight on ***"Vaccinate to Protect - Oxfordshire Badger Group's badger vaccination program"*** they run.

Throughout the day there were speed updates from local recording groups – covering project news, survey initiatives and interesting species recorded.

We held four fantastic workshops in the afternoon which gave everybody a variety of topics to attend. **Identifying Site Features Suitable for Invertebrates** was hosted by Yolanda Vazquez from TVERC, they wanted to find the most important site features for invertebrates that could be included in recording sheets for the future. **Know your brachiopoda from your pelecypoda: a guide to invertebrate fossil identification** was run by Owen Green from Oxfordshire Geology Trust and Lawrence Bee. Some of us had the amazing opportunity to try and ID real fossils. In **A Nature Recovery Network**, Camilla Burrow and Dan Carpenter led a discussion on our ambitions for nature and set targets for nature's recovery. The popular **Track & Sign – Ancient skills that can transform modern mammal recordings** was led by Bob Cowley from Oxfordshire Mammal Group showed us how to recognise the tracks and signs mammals leave behind!



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