



Earth Trust Impact Report 2021-2022

Covering the period 1 April 2021–31 March 2022

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Wallingford 1155
Wallingford Girl Guides
Wallingford Green Gym
Wallingford Tangent Club
Wittenham Warriors

All of our Earth Trust Friends

Individual donors who made major gifts

Robin Buxton
Lady Audrey Wood
and those who have chosen to be anonymous.

We are very grateful to have received a legacy gift in memory of: Kathleen and David Lucas & their son Stephen

We have been proud to work in partnership with the following in 2021/22

Partners

Agile Property
Atkins
Beard
Church Farm Partnership
Curtins
Dig Ventures
Dr Curt Lamberth, University of Oxford
E Simons Consulting and JCTR Limited
Environment Agency

Friends of Radley Lakes
Hurst Water Meadow Trust
Land and Water Services
Method Consulting
Natural England
OxLEP
Oxford Environment Board
SKP3
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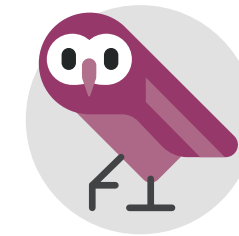
Our Farm Step Tenants

Brightwell Bees
Hedgecraft
Emma's Ewesful Acres
Meadow Plant Nursery
Norton & Yarrow



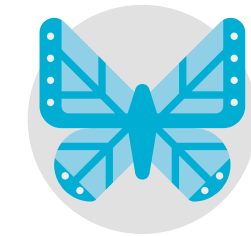
Our Values

Earth Trust champions accessible natural green spaces for everyone, but how we do this is as important as what we do. Earth Trust's values are integral to our culture and work, applying both to how we work internally and externally with others. They define who we are. They act as a compass for decision making – energising change and guiding our decisions.



Learning together

We are all exploring and learning together. Collaborating and sharing expertise makes everyone's understanding of the world better. We embrace differences and enjoy constructive challenge, ensuring we stretch ourselves to deliver our best work at every opportunity. We listen with deep attention and speak up when needed.



Making change happen

We focus our attention on the things that need changing to enable people and nature to live in harmony. We recognize that change happens in different ways and at different paces, and encourage fresh thinking and trying new ideas as an integral part of learning what works.



People at the heart

We seek to build a community of change-makers by fostering meaningful connection and lasting relationships. Everyone has a role to play. By nurturing a warm, respectful and open culture of belonging, based on meeting people where they are, we enable people to actively participate and contribute to change.



Connected to nature

We all have a responsibility to care for nature and understand our role within the ecosystem. But, for people to understand their environment, their place in it and their role in caring for it, they must have the opportunity to experience and nurture a deep connection to nature.

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Introduction

Ian Davidson, Chair of Trustees

The world's natural resources and biodiversity are under increasing pressure and radically declining, yet people's understanding and need to interact with the natural world has increased.

In October 2021, we saw leaders from around the globe convene in Glasgow for COP 26 - the 26th annual UN climate change conference placed climate action on the agenda of government, business and society globally like never before. In the UK, shifts in food and farming policy are claiming to make more space for nature within the farmed landscape, as post-Brexit financial incentives and support are redefined. We have also seen (and been part of) strong calls for the government to include access to nature within its levelling up agenda to "transform the UK by spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of it".

The call for climate action is stronger than ever amongst the public, business and government, and commitments to changing the status quo have exploded in this past year. We must turn these intentions and calls into funding and action on the ground, and we at Earth Trust are ready to work with partners as we have proven with recent projects to deliver real benefits for nature and for the health and wellbeing of society.

As for many organisations and individuals, for Earth Trust, this was a year of recovery from the impacts of the pandemic. Our plans to develop Earth Trust Centre into a gateway to people's hearts, minds and environmental experience were paused, as timeframes for delivery were unavoidably shifted and the costs escalated, but the ambition has not diminished and strategies are already in progress to help us to reach our outcome and impact.

Despite the turbulence of the past year, we were still able to deliver a number of significant – and award winning – initiatives around nature based solutions to climate, biodiversity and health. Throughout the pandemic we kept all of our green spaces open and freely accessible, providing a crucial support for the physical and mental wellbeing of the local community, and we optimised use of our outdoor learning space at Earth Lab, supporting vulnerable children with our outdoor education programme.

2022 is significant for Earth Trust as it marks our 40th anniversary, and the launch of a new strategy. Through 40 years of changing landscape, one constant which has remained is Earth Trust's passion and commitment to bring people and nature closer together – striving for a society where all the living world can thrive.



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Introduction

Jayne Manley, Chief Executive Officer

As I reflect on the past 12 months, I am humbled by how much our staff, volunteers and partners have achieved in what can only be described as turbulent times. I am also reminded of how much more there is still to do if we are to achieve our climate targets and deliver a safe and sustainable future for all.

The urgency for climate action, decarbonising, concerted effort for nature's recovery and the huge challenge of healthy communities drives our ambition to grow communities for change. Disadvantaged communities suffer the most as they have little or no access to green space. It has never been more critical to provide access to green space and to engage people deeply with nature - both for their own wellbeing and to inspire action to protect the planet for the future.

2021 was a challenging year for Earth Trust, as for so many individuals and organisations. The delivery of projects and programmes was disrupted by the national lock down and shifting funding priorities, including our vital green space infrastructure projects. But, this period also served as a catalyst for change. As we embarked upon our 40th year, we recognised that our existing strategy needed to be reviewed and refreshed in light of the sea change needed and we embarked on a programme of horizon scanning to focus on the areas where we can have the most impact. This report has been developed post-launch of our new strategy (Connecting Communities for Change), but the achievements it highlights contain the seeds of this change.

A number of important new initiatives extended and deepened our impact this year:

River of Life II wetlands creation – the largest wetland creation project on the Thames, demonstrating flood plain as well as protected species and habitat nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

Networks for change – Collaborating for change and having impact, including playing a role in the Eco-attractions network, Wildlife and Countryside Link campaigns and influencing for a Future Oxfordshire Partnership.

Earth Lab – completing the design and construction of our award-winning learning building, with nature built in, exploring the journey to net zero

Our commitment to becoming net zero, nature recovery and place shaping and making and engaging sectors and communities to 'build nature in' to people's hearts, minds and lives.

Nature for Everyone campaign – Nationwide lobbying campaign, uniting our voices with others to demand access to green spaces for everyone.

Beyond these examples, our impact has been widespread across all our core areas and this report highlights the range of our achievements of the last 12 months.

We would have not delivered in 21/22 without the tireless dedication and support from our incredible network of volunteers, supporters and staff. I am extremely proud that together we have made such valuable contributions and established solid foundations from which we will build our growing community of change makers in order to influence for greater change and action. We are finding our voice and moving from a quiet organisation that does great things to an organisation that speaks out, creating and engaging in new, interesting and sometimes difficult conversations.

As a charity operating in tumultuous times, I believe that we can take justified pride in how we have put our mission into action over the last year and grown in confidence to speak out and inspire change.

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Championing accessible natural green spaces for everyone

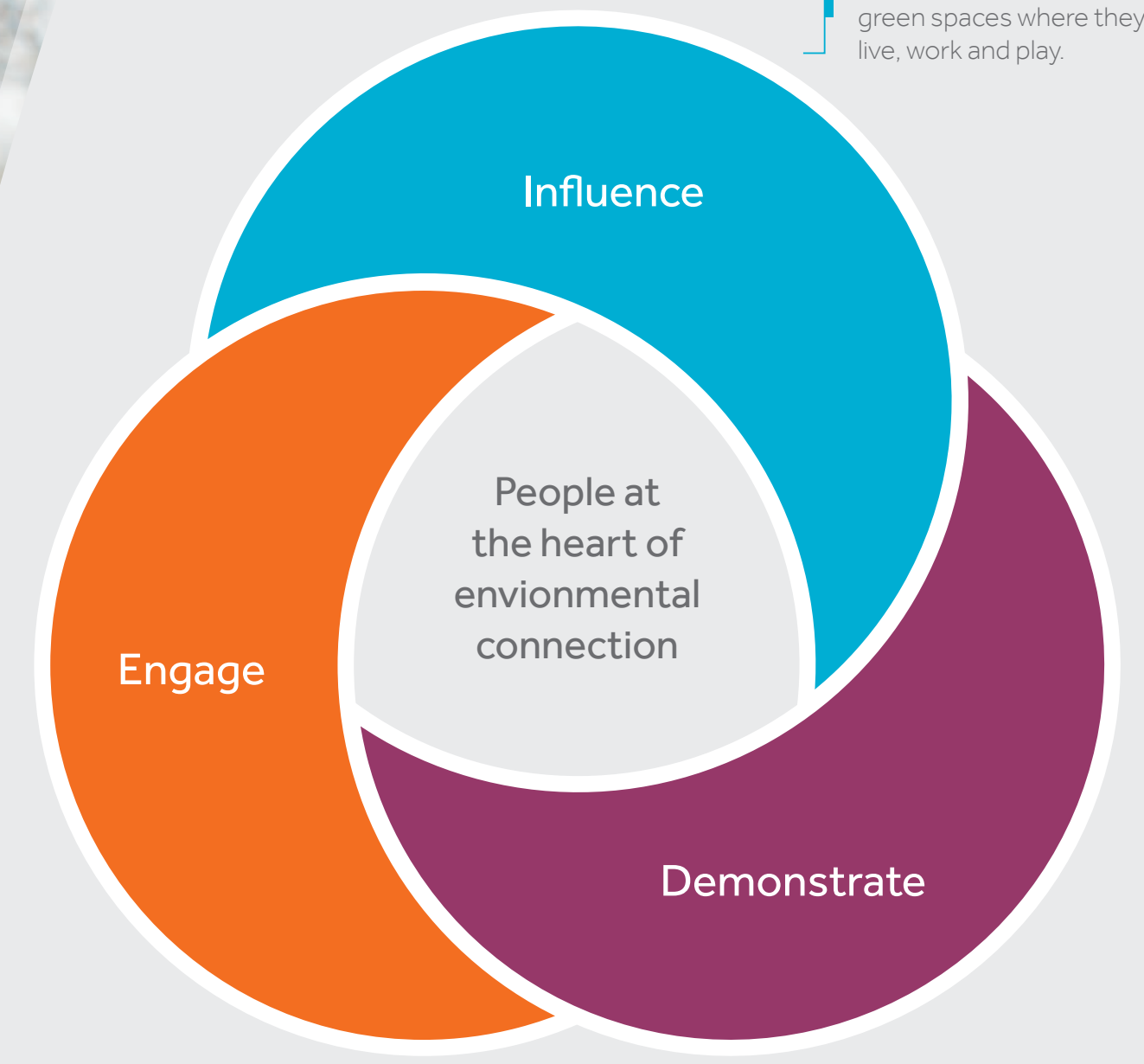
Imagine a society where accessible, engaging green spaces enable nature and people to thrive in balance. Where everyone has access to nature-filled green spaces close to where they live, work and play. Where we all have a deep understanding of our ecosystem, and our role in caring for it.

This is the vision that Earth Trust has been working to for nearly 40 years - inspiring people to address climate change, nature loss and a wellbeing crisis with the power of natural green spaces.

Demonstrate. Engage. Influence.

Together with our supporter community, we are guardians of some extremely special places, rich in nature and heritage. Located in the South East and Oxfordshire – one of the most rapidly developing counties in the UK – Earth Trust is positioned at the sharp edge of creating and managing spaces that enable both people and nature to thrive in balance.

We use the places we care for to demonstrate nature based solutions and the power of engaging people with the natural world, in order to influence for more accessible and better green spaces – leading to people making good decisions for the environment and our planet, at home and through their work.



We influence decision makers so that more people can access and engage with green spaces where they live, work and play.

We engage and inspire people with the environment, empowering us all to make change happen.

We care for and improve the spaces we manage to demonstrate their role in addressing the climate, ecosystems and health crises facing our world



Key Achievements and Impact: April 2021 to March 2022

Demonstrate

River of Life II: New wetland habitat supports climate, people and nature

With the aid of our partners, our River of Life II project successfully created 46,000m² of wetlands in 2021 - the largest wetland habitat creation of its kind - on the banks of the River Thames and Thame. This project aims to demonstrate what can be done to improve other stretches of a canalised river.

With its large ponds and backwaters, the new habitats will keep ecosystems healthy and functioning by attracting a diversity of species, improve water quality by the slowing and filtration of the water flowing back to the river, capture and store carbon from the atmosphere and also act as a natural flood defence by absorbing water. One of the four project locations is within an SSSI and SAC and constructs new ponds for the resilience of amphibian communities which are under threat due to climate change.

The project is generating new evidence, data and research partnerships on the carbon capture potential of wetlands, and biodiversity recovery for new habitats. It also demonstrates how similar projects can benefit the environment and people without damaging farming models.

In addition to the benefits for wildlife, mitigating impacts of climate change and establishing a working flood plain, these new wetland areas are magical places for visitors to explore, extending the appeal of our freely accessible riverside walks.

46,000m² of wetland habitat created (an area the size of six football pitches) including **16 ponds**, seven backwater channels and 1.6 hectares of woodland.

3,800 trees and 11 different tree species planted, in our new wet woodland habitat.



70% of DEFRA's red list farmland bird species observed at Earth Trust.

New species visible in first 6 months – including Kingfishers, otters, yellow wagtails and Whooper Swans.

Our woodland sequesters **1,429 tonnes** of carbon per year.

Pioneers of Biodiversity Net Gain: As the UK's first formal biodiversity offsetting agreement, we provided an early exemplar of how biodiversity loss at one location can lead to enhancement of a rare habitat close by. In Spring 2022, we were shortlisted for (and subsequently won) a Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management award for the biodiversity improvement our maintenance of chalk downland at Bushey Bank.

Engage

Nature connection in challenging times

Connecting with nature, and being outdoors was a lifeline for many people during Covid, but inequalities of access became more apparent than ever.

We developed partnerships to pilot outdoor education initiatives for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children who are referred, and provided subsidised outdoor education sessions for children most affected by the Covid pandemic.

We delivered a range of digital and online initiatives - attracting a global audience - as we uncovered exciting evidence of Iron Age and Roman dwellings, and also piloted a series of wellbeing walks with Oxfordshire Mind to provide nature-based support to the vulnerable.

Our volunteer programme was able to continue – supporting our volunteer community with personal phone calls, regular communications and the facilitation of story sharing via a virtual space for volunteers to connect with each other.



15 public events
attended by 301 participants



1594 school children
received education visits, with 57 Schools participating in our education sessions



75 new volunteers

162 active volunteers during 21/22 – giving **12,809** hours in total

24/7 public access resulting in **200K visits** across our **6 green spaces**

Influence

Inspiring new future thinking with Earth Lab

Earth Lab - our award-winning skills and learning building - is a demonstration of a sustainable future and of the role Earth Trust plays in challenging standard practice in the planning, construction and design industry. The construction of Earth Lab took place in 2020-21 and the building began to welcome learners from June 2021.

Our vision for Earth Lab was to provide a stimulating, interactive and inspirational education space and to inspire new thinking in development. As our 2021/22 financial year drew to a close, we were deep in planning for a special event to convene local authority policy makers, advisory bodies, planners, developers, investors, social enterprises, and non-profits to think differently about what green spaces look like and how people engage with them.

Growing number of **partnerships**

Media coverage including Premier Construction, BBC Radio Oxford, Farming Today, Oxford Mail, BBC South, National geographic, Smithsonian



Earth Lab received **4 awards** this year, including the **Most Innovative and Sustainable Initiative of the Year** at the 2021 OxPropFest Awards.

Using Earth Lab as an exemplar, Earth Trust's Building Nature In project aims to enable cross-sector collaboration, to develop an approach that puts people and nature at the heart of future developments with a view to co-creating design principles that can be applied nationally.

Driving regional change: As Steering Group members of the Oxfordshire Environment Board, Earth Trust is in alliance with other local environmental organisations, working together to ensure a strong voice exists for Oxfordshire's natural environment. We continue to collaborate on significant issues impacting the natural environment (such as the development of the Local Nature Partnership to address biodiversity loss and catalyse nature recovery) and helped establish a county-wide 'Future Oxfordshire Partnership' Environment Steering Group, to tackle climate change and improve health and wellbeing outcomes and ensure new developments have natural green spaces close to where people live.



Milestone summary: Our performance against targets

Our three strategic objectives for the year were:

1. **Financial** - the Earth Trust will move towards financial sustainability in 2024/25
2. **Environmental** - the Earth Trust and its green spaces will be planet positive by 2030 and demonstrating positive, incremental contributions to climate and ecological emergency
3. **Social** - the Earth Trust will be known for engaging people with the environment and with equality, diversity and equity of access.

These were used to establish four milestones to closely monitor our performance – Earth Trust Centre Development, Programmes & Projects, Delivery and Business Effectiveness.



What we said we'd do	What we achieved
Operational recovery for engagement - re-opening our spaces enabling us to reconnect with the public	Our new Earth Lab opened its doors to learners in June 2021. Fison Barn hosted 3 parties and our first post-covid wedding celebration. 5 local businesses hired our corporate space in Innovation Centre.
Undertake a comprehensive review of the Centre's future to clarify its business and funding plans	We actively listened to our partners to ensure funding proposals reflected our collaborative approach. Our five year business plan, with milestones and financial model, clarifies our ambition on how we will resource anticipated growth in visitor engagement activities.
Scope and define the next phase of Earth Trust Centre developments	Since 2020, we resolved to approach future capital projects in a phased way. Following completion of Earth Lab, the next phase focuses on infrastructure required for later works. We reviewed funding opportunities with partners and an updated proposal for plans is due to be submitted to the South Oxfordshire District Council in 2022/23.
Deliver our projects	All fully funded projects were delivered, including a number of smaller projects such as a Farm Carbon Audit and key deliverables against our partnership with the Environment Agency for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. A new process for fundraising has been agreed to help resource future projects.
Complete the River of Life II wetland habitat creation project	Construction was completed on time and within budget. We have secured an ongoing partnership with Bangor University, Environment Agency and Land & Water Services to investigate the greenhouse gas emissions of new wetland creation within a floodplain.
Develop and enhance our engagement and communication activities	Significant research was undertaken and new, enriched strategies have been completed and are being implemented.
Support staff and volunteers with resources to deliver our Plan	Despite a challenging recruitment environment, we retained and recruited a number of staff. A programme of activity to deepen support for our volunteers has been introduced.

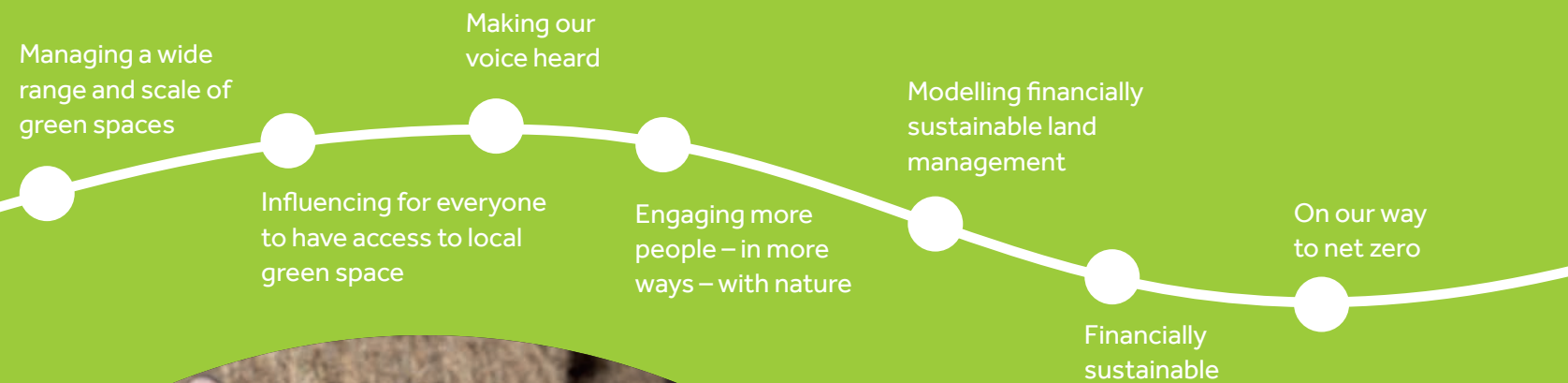
Looking to the future

Connecting Communities for Change 2022-2027

Earth Trust has been championing accessible, natural green spaces for 40 years, but the need has never been more critical than now. Over the next 5 years, we seek to do more than ever to ensure we are making a difference where it counts, prioritising our efforts on the big challenges we face, both nationally and regionally.

In 5 years time..

Earth Trust's connected community of diverse individuals and partners will be:



See Earth Trust strategy for more.



How we will take our strategy forward

Our new 5 year strategy focuses on movement building, influence and cause-led engagement that seeks to drive real-world change. We have identified six specific ways in which our approach will evolve:

- 1 Greater focus on movement building
- 2 More partnership and collaborations
- 3 Living our values
- 4 Using evidence to make better decision
- 5 Being bolder in sharing our learning
- 6 Delivering our own net zero action plan

The year ahead

Our aims for 2022–23

Our renewed strategy provides clear direction and focus for the coming year. 2022/23 is a year of re-building – ensuring that we are growing a healthy, engaged team who live the values of Earth Trust, and are enabling an efficient, effective, smooth-running organisation.

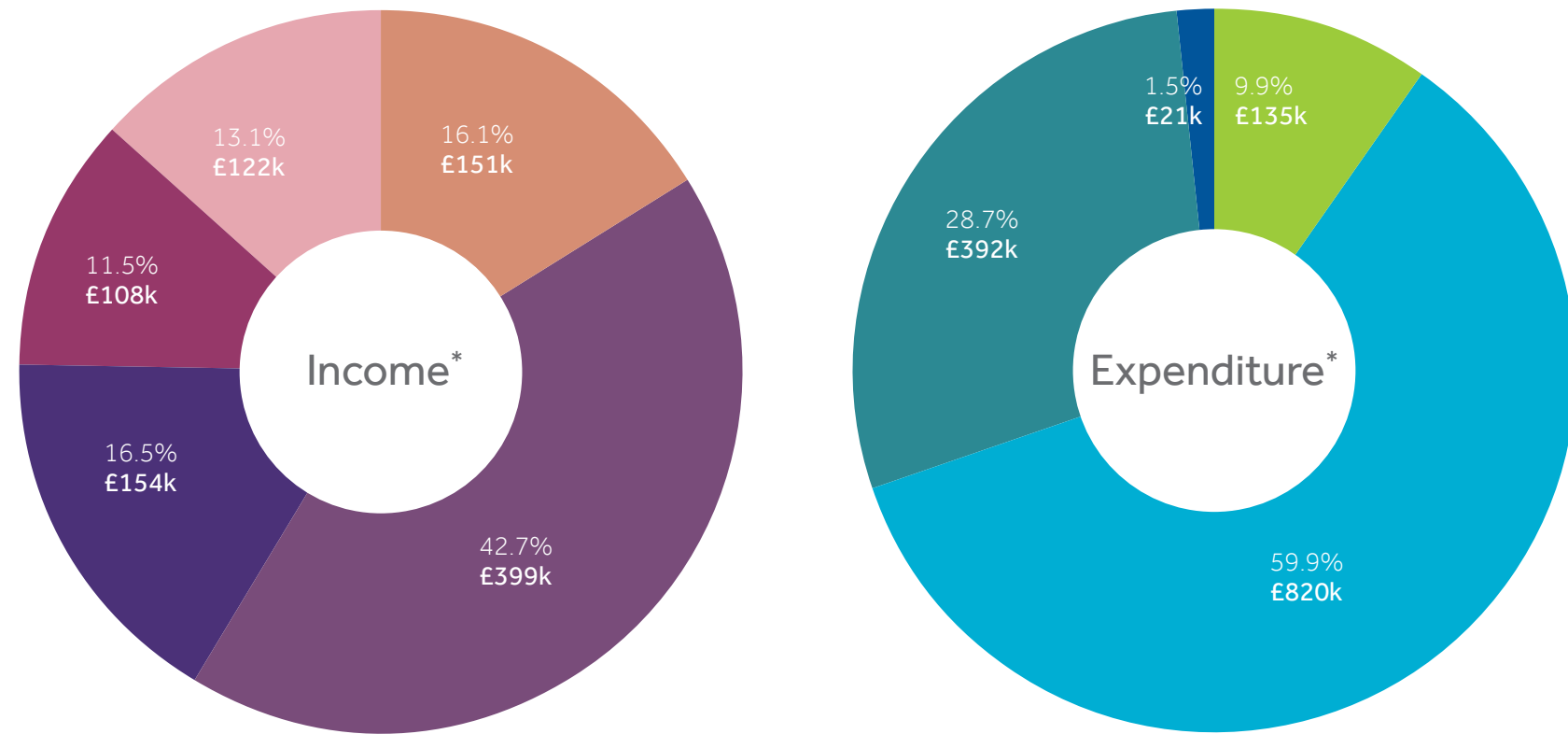
Engaging and growing our community of support and action is vital to the future impact of the trust, and we will be defining the approaches and systems that will help us to support an engaged community and shift from single interactions into lasting relationships – launching a new membership scheme and reaching a wider and more diverse audience.

We are redoubling our efforts to establish a thriving, commercially-active, joined-up Centre for Earth Trust and its Farm – applying for funding for new infrastructure (car park, access track, toilets) and instigating new plans to make our centre and farm more accessible and discoverable to visitors.

But, most importantly, we want to create real world change and are developing the projects and partnerships to enable us to do this. We want to continue to make a noise for nature and ensure that our voice – and that of our supporters – is heard. We will be bolder in advocating for change – participating in campaigns and projects that support access for nature to everyone – no matter where they live or who they are – and in supporting the potential of nature to improve quality of life for all living things and the health of our planet, through addressing climate, biodiversity and health.



Income and Expenditure



The charts above reflect the income and expenditure from our "business as usual" activities and does not include the income and expenditure relating to the River of Life 2 project being, income of £1,472k and expenditure of £1,477k. Nor the income for the purchase of Bessie's Field of £730k received in the year with the acquisition being completed in April 2022.

Grants and Trusts	£151k	Programmes for Adults and Children	£135k
Donations	£399k	Programmes for Landscape and Wildlife	£820k
Farm Income	£154k	Communications, Engagement and Fundraising	£392k
Learning and Engagement	£108k	Governance and Administration	£21k
Enterprise Activities	£122k	Total	£1,368k
Total	£934k		

Financial Summary

Total income to 31 March 2022 was £3.1 million. (2020-21 – £3.43 million). Total expenditure for the same period was £2.8million (£1.42million in 2020/21).

In FY22, a large proportion of our income source was significantly disrupted by Covid 19 and resulting lock downs (for example function hire of room and buildings, events and our pop up café (that runs during major events)). In this financial year, the majority of our income is therefore, restricted project funding (provided for a particular purpose and therefore not available for general use by the charity). Total unrestricted income was £628k compared to £974k in 2020/21.

Nevertheless, we continued to focus on progress towards financial sustainability, working towards a "circuit breaker" budget that enabled us to support core activities and development that will enable us to be more financially sustainable and attract new funding in the future. The Trust's unrestricted general funds for the year to 31 March 2022 were in deficit by £341k (compared with a deficit of £71k in 2020/21).





In memory of Sir Martin Wood 1927-2021 Earth Trust co-Founder

Sir Martin Wood photo credit: Gabriel Hemery

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Martin's love of the environment, his appreciation of the benefits of being close to nature and his desire to make it better for everyone have shaped the Earth Trust into what it is today. Just as he pioneered in science, he wanted to support innovation in thought and action. Alongside this he understood that Earth Trust was a “start-up” charity, bringing with it similar challenges to those faced by small businesses. We are proud to have been founded by such an influential and inspirational figure, who was much loved by staff, volunteers and visitors. He will be missed enormously by all.

Trustees

Ian Davidson (Chair)

Julian Sayers (Vice Chair)

Liz Buckle

Stephen Dance

Jemma Davey

John Harwood

Chris Philips (Safety Committee chair)

Nusrat Shah (Finance & Risk Committee chair)

Robin Tucker

Senior Leadership Team

Jayne Manley, Chief Executive Officer

Ian Nutt, Director of Programmes & Partnerships

Dave Lewis, Director of Operations

Stephen Huggett, Director of Finance

Lee Ann Norris, Head of Fundraising

Paul Hill, Head of Land Management


Verity Warne, Head of Communications

Anna Wilson, Head of Experience & Engagement

Colin Shone, Centre Operations Manager

Sharon Ward, HR Manager

Marianne Meering, Finance Manager



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