



# News Release

24-Feb-21 Page 1 of 4

**Embarged until 00:01hrs Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021**

## **Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust launches ambitious appeal to help create ‘Beaver Paradise’ at Idle Valley Nature Reserve.**

Hot on the heels of securing the future of its best-known site – the Attenborough Nature Reserve south of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is calling on the public to help create a ‘beaver paradise’ at by far its largest site – the spectacular Idle Valley Nature Reserve in North Nottinghamshire.

Despite the challenges of national lockdowns, many of the Wildlife Trust’s team working from home and restrictions on our volunteering programme, the past 12 months have seen great progress with wildlife projects at the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, situated off North Road, just two miles from the centre of Retford. One of the largest nature reserves in the region, the site which covers 375 hectares along the west bank of the River Idle from which the reserve takes its name, is already a SSSI of high wildlife value, but has huge untapped potential for the restoration of nature at a bold scale.

The charity is seeking to raise £250,000 to support the introduction of beavers, the expansion of its grazing programme with traditional breeds of cattle and other habitat improvements across the vast site as part of its wider efforts to secure nature’s recovery.



The Old Ragged School, Brook Street, Nottingham, NG1 1EA  
Tel: 0115 958 8242 Email: [info@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:info@nottswt.co.uk)

Speaking about the project Chief Executive Paul Wilkinson said: “With its vast open skies and abundant wildlife across wetland, woodland and meadows, the Idle Valley Nature Reserve is by far our most exciting site in terms of its potential for habitat restoration. It is already recognised as one of the richest bird-watching sites in the region and we’re determined to make it even wilder and to put it on the map as a truly inspiring wildlife destination. By harnessing a natural process, starting with beavers and expanding our conservation grazing programme, we can begin to unlock the site’s true potential.”

The charity had planned to create a minimum of a 13-hectare secure beaver enclosure to boost the value of wetland habitats for wading birds and other wildlife, but had hopes that a larger area might be possible. Following a visit from renowned beaver reintroduction experts Derek Gow & Roisin Campbell-Palmer last year, during which they described the site as having ideal conditions for beavers, the charity decided to massively increase the scale of its ambitions and now plans to create a 55ha beaver zone. Whilst many beaver projects have seen the release of just one or two adults, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust now plans to create one of the largest beaver enclosures in England with space for up to three beaver families and hopes to be ready to welcome at least 4 beavers later this year.

Paul explained: “Managing a site on the scale of the Idle Valley Nature Reserve is a real challenge, but we can create the ideal conditions for beavers to help us help other wildlife including the wetland birds the reserve is known for. Bringing beavers back to Nottinghamshire after a 400-year gap will kick-start our efforts to make the site even richer for wildlife and to create a wealth of opportunities for people to see and connect with nature. Our efforts to restore nature at the Idle Valley Nature Reserve and beyond have been given tremendous momentum thanks to the support of Severn Trent Water through their Great Big Nature Boost, and with the backing of our supporters and the public we can achieve so much more.”

Paul continued: “As we embark on a truly ambitious nature recovery mission to establish a wildlife network across Nottinghamshire, with at least 30% of land and water managed for nature by 2030, large-scale restoration of habitats on sites in our care, such as the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, will be vital. We need people to get behind us, just as they did to help secure the future of Attenborough Nature Reserve.



The Old Ragged School, Brook Street, Nottingham, NG1 1EA  
Tel: 0115 958 8242 Email: [info@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:info@nottswt.co.uk)

We're working hard to create a wilder Nottinghamshire for everyone – no matter where you live in the county. Together we can create a beaver paradise right here in our county so we can bring back nature's finest wetland engineer."

Alongside its appeal for donations the charity has launched an online survey to give people the opportunity to have their say on the exciting plans and to record wildlife sightings. The survey will help the Trust gauge the wildlife value of nearby gardens, parks and towns as wildlife corridors linking the Idle Valley Nature Reserve and its other sites across Nottinghamshire. Paul explained: "As we face up to the combined ecological and climate crises, we must think big and deliver bold solutions to restore nature. As we plan for the exciting re-introduction of beavers we want to hear people's views on beavers and other possible future reintroductions."

2021 looks set to be a record year for Wildlife Trust beaver projects with up to 20 animals planned to be released in counties including Dorset and Derbyshire. Details of how you can support the return of beavers to Nottinghamshire and take part in the online survey can be found at [nottinghamshirewildlife.org/beavers](http://nottinghamshirewildlife.org/beavers)

## **PHOTO CALL / INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY**

At 2pm on Tuesday 23rd February, senior staff involved in this project will be available for interview and photographs at the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, North Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 8RQ

Please meet in the car park outside the Rural Learning Centre. The Beaver Zone is approximately 10 minutes drive from the main car park.

**-Ends-**

*For further information or to request interviews please contact Erin McDaid on 07734 573862 [emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk) or Rachel Rutherford on 07519 633236 [rrutherford@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:rrutherford@nottswt.co.uk)*

## **Notes for Editors**

1) The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, a registered charity, manages dozens of nature reserves throughout the county. It advises local authorities, community groups and landowners on nature conservation issues, and makes a major input into decision-making on planning matters and other issues.

# Nottinghamshire

## *Wildlife Trust*



The Old Ragged School, Brook Street, Nottingham, NG1 1EA  
Tel: 0115 958 8242 Email: [info@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:info@nottswt.co.uk)

2) Idle Valley Nature Reserve covers 375 hectares alongside the west bank of the River Idle. A former working sand and gravel quarry, the majority of the reserve is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest because it supports an exceptional diversity of breeding, wintering and passage birds.

3) The Trust is part of a nation-wide network of local Trusts which work to protect wildlife in town and country - The Wildlife Trusts. The Wildlife Trusts now boast almost 800,000 members. For more information please see our website: [www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org](http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org)