



Gwent Wildlife Trust

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Bridewell Appeal

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Protect local wildlife



Bridewell Appeal

Help us buy 81 acres of beautiful and ecologically important landscape on the Gwent Levels.



Please help us to purchase Bridewell Common and create a Nature Reserve, for you and our future generations.

[DONATE ONLINE HERE](#)

Gwent Wildlife Trust have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase Bridewell Common, which is linked to Magor Marsh Nature Reserve. We urgently need your support to help us protect these 81.45 acres of ancient marshland on the wildlife rich Gwent Levels.

The man-made landscape of the Gwent Levels is home to an abundance of wonderful wildlife, from unique water beetles to water vole, warblers, egret and other birdlife and fabulous aquatic plants like the water plantain, with its delicate white flower and the stunning yellow flag iris. Bridewell Common will provide an important habitat for keystone wildlife species like bugs and its meadows will be a carbon store in defence of climate change.

To fulfil our plans, we need your support in helping us raise the funds needed to purchase the land and transform it into a nature reserve. Through this appeal, we are hoping to raise at least £250,000 by July, which, together with funds from the generous legacy left to us by the late Pat Gorvin, could make this possible.

[Donate online here](#)

To donate by phone with a card, please call 01600 740600 during normal office hours.

[Or please send a cheque payable to 'Gwent Wildlife Trust' to: GWT Bridewell Appeal, Sidden House, Dinrenew.](#)

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What makes Bridewell Common so special?

Connected Landscape for Nature to Thrive

Bridewell Common sits adjacent to our most-visited Nature Reserve at Magor Marsh, which has been in our care for more than 50 years. Now we want to transform and enhance Bridewell Common to create a new Nature Reserve, to complement Magor Marsh and increase access for people and wildlife to this wildlife-rich area.

Bridewell Common comprises 81.45 acres of land on the Gwent Levels, sitting within one of the largest surviving areas of ancient grazing marsh, drainage ditch and reed systems in Britain. It is the largest of its kind in Wales and has been likened to the Amazon Rainforest for its biodiversity.

The Wildlife Trusts' vision is for people close to nature and land and seas rich in wildlife. The nature reserves we save are vital refuges for wildlife but they alone are not enough if nature is to thrive everywhere. So we strive to create "Living Landscapes" where wildlife habitats are bigger, better managed and more joined-up.

Gemma Bodé, who manages our Gwent Levels Landscape programme, said, "Bridewell Common is such an important piece in the biodiversity jigsaw that is the unique and precious Gwent Levels. Having these two conservation-managed landscapes so close together will perfectly complement each other and will allow for more endangered wildlife to flourish over a larger area."

A Wonderful Wild Place for People

Every year, thousands of people of all ages from all over south-east Wales visit Magor Marsh to explore the diverse habitats, amongst millions of creatures including rare bugs and beetles and endangered mammals like otters and water voles. We welcome walkers, bird-watchers, photographers, nature experts and amateur enthusiasts as well children coming to learn outdoors, pond-dip or enjoy time with their families in wonderful nature. Bridewell Common will provide a fabulous, expansive, wildlife-rich space for more people to enjoy.

"Sadly, more and more of our important green spaces and wildlife havens are being squeezed out of existence on the Levels. So, when presented with the opportunity to purchase Bridewell Common, we felt we had to secure this important area for protection and enhancement in perpetuity, to the benefit of both wildlife and people. By supporting our appeal everyone can do their bit to help."

A Haven for Important and Rare Wildlife

The fields of Bridewell Common are separated by a series of waterways known locally as 'reens' which create this area's unique historical features and offer a perfect habitat for insects, many rare like shrill carder bees and a multitude of birds, mammals and amphibians. This man-made landscape is home to a wide variety of aquatic invertebrates (bugs living in water!) including around 150 endangered species such as the beautiful silver water beetle. The waterways host the world's smallest flowering plant, *Wolffia arrizha*, and our largest native reptile, the grass snake. Plants like water plaintain, with its delicate white flower thrive in the clear waters alongside floating-leaf plants like water starworts and frogbit.

Our recent wildlife surveys carried out on Bridewell Common have found it is already home to a wide variety of creatures including critically endangered water voles, butterflies, dragonflies and birds including snipe, stonechat and reed bunting. Our conservation work will encourage much more.

Our plans for enhancing Bridewell Common

The area has not been intensively farmed over the years, but has been neglected. To restore this landscape to its full potential, substantial conservation management is needed on the land and the drainage ditches, in order to make it a home for wildlife on a par with Magor Marsh.

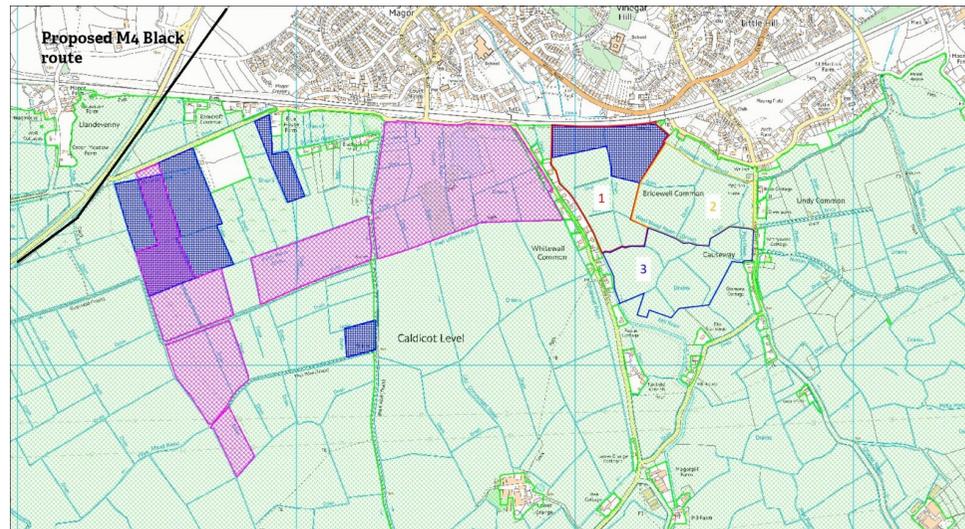
Once purchased, our experienced reserve staff will work closely with volunteers, experts from other organisations and the local area to develop a future management plan for the land. One of the main priorities will be working towards enhancing the dry, scrubbed over field ditches by clearing scrub and re-casting (removing silt and leaf litter). This will

enable them to flourish and provide habitat for water-dwelling wildlife. We'll work towards increasing the variety of flora and fauna in the meadows through grazing, wildflower seeding and traditional hay-cutting techniques. We will also attend to the fabulous pollarded Willows, a wonderful feature of the landscape, some of which are already beautifully maintained with others being in danger of toppling. Their survival will mean the continuation of a vital habitat for insects, birds like tree sparrows and our wonderful water vole.

If you have ever visited Magor Marsh Nature Reserve, you will know how special and vital that reserve is for wildlife, as result of the conservation work by Gwent Wildlife Trust and our loyal volunteers and supporters. Given time and funds we now have this unique opportunity to create another nature reserve on the Gwent Levels and make Bridewell Common as special for wildlife and people as Magor Marsh is.

Will Bridewell Common be affected if the proposed M4 'Black Route' goes ahead?

A few people have called in with concerns about whether the site would be directly affected by the proposed M4 development. This map shows the approximate location of the proposed 'Black Route' and its proximity to Bridewell Common. Numbered (1,2,3) sites to the West of the map are the Bridewell Common 'Lots' we are seeking to purchase.



How you can help

Please help us make this a reality.

There are lots of ways in which you can help us to reach our Bridewell Appeal target of £250,000 which, together with funds from a generous legacy left to us by the late Pat Gorvin, a longstanding member of Gwent Wildlife Trust, could make this possible.

Thanks you, we are truly grateful for any support you can give.

DONATE

[Donate directly to the appeal online here](#) or by card over the phone by calling 01600 740600. Or please send a cheque payable to "Gwent Wildlife Trust", to Gwent Wildlife Trust, Bridewell Appeal, Seddon House, Dingestow, NP25 4DY.

JOIN

If you're not already a member, please consider joining and making an ongoing commitment to our work. [Join online here](#) or by calling 01600 740600. Alternatively, by buying tickets for our [Lottery For Wildlife](#) you will be supporting our Bridewell Appeal, and be in with a chance of winning a monthly cash prize.

FUNDRAISE

Could you hold a fundraiser in aid of our appeal? We can support you with ideas and a fundraising pack to hold your Bridewell Bake-Off! Our fundraising officer Rob Magee would love to hear from you if you think you can help our Bridewell Appeal in any way. Call 01600 740600 or email rmagee@gwentwildlife.org

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