

# Surrey Wildlife Trust Ethical Policy

## 1. Purpose of this Policy

In our mission to restore and connect nature across Surrey we are committed to being an organisation that demonstrates clear ethical principles in how we operate and how we work with others. This means leading by example while inspiring and influencing others to contribute to nature's recovery.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for SWT staff and volunteers within which we can ensure our ethical principles are applied consistently in both the overall strategic direction and the day-to-day operations of the Trust.

We note that the issues of working with some organisations are going to be complex. However, we must always be guided by our ethical principles and the positive impact any relationship can have on the local biodiversity, the wider environment and the decision making of those we choose to work with so they continue to do the right thing for nature in the future.

This policy influences many other policies governing how we work and it is supported by internal processes where decision making is particularly complex or challenging.

## 2. Scope of this policy

**This policy covers the following areas of activity:**

### 2.1. Corporate relationships, partnerships and sponsorship, and individual high-value donations:

- Who we work with in the businesses sector and who we accept donations and funding from
- How we use our relationships with businesses to influence their activities towards a positive outcome for nature.
- How we monitor the effectiveness of our corporate partnerships where we are seeking beneficial change.

### 2.2. Investments:

- How we invest our charitable funds to maximise financial return without compromising our ethical principles.

### 2.3. Procurement:

- How we procure goods and services for the organisation without compromising our ethical principles.

### 2.4. Day to day operational decisions:

- how our everyday operations are planned and carried out to always minimise adverse environmental impact.

## 3. Our Mission

Surrey Wildlife Trust is the only local organisation dedicated to ensuring Surrey is a place where abundant wildlife and people can live and thrive together. Guided by a collaborative vision where we all play a part in connecting nature, we provide expert advice and guidance to landowners and managers, making sure the land we look after leads by example, while inspiring and educating people and organisations across the county on what they can do.

By doing this we will create a Surrey that is full of diverse and abundant wildlife, where nature is at the heart of individual choices, corporate decisions and local economic and policy making. One that helps tackle the ongoing climate emergency, while supporting the health and wellbeing of all who live here.

#### **4. Our Values**

Our purpose as an organisation is underpinned by the internal values that we apply to how we work, but most importantly for this policy, our ethical principles too. Among our values are:

- **Respect:** we act with respect for nature, respect for people, and respect for diversity. We work collaboratively and champion inclusion and diversity within our communities, being locally sensitive whilst ensuring that we have impact beyond our borders.
- **Trust:** we seek to find the common ground and always start with the presumption that each other's intentions are good. We accept that difference, competition and conflict exist, but we work openly, collaboratively and with tolerance to resolve them.
- **Integrity:** we are committed to transparency and inclusivity within our actions and projects, co-designing to deliver the greatest impact for nature. We will always uphold our values and beliefs and speak truth to power.
- **Pragmatic activism:** we seek radical change and bold thinking, but we are evidence-led and solution-focused and are convinced that our working with partners and communities is the way to maximise our impact for nature.

#### **5. Our Ethical Principles**

SWT may choose not to engage with organisations or individuals where there are issues of concern that conflict with SWT's mission and values or whose activities pose a reputational risk to the Trust.

SWT will assess any issues of ethical concern when engaging with organisations and individuals on a regular basis. Issues of concern include:

##### **Fracking**

- New fossil fuel development
- Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources
- Manufacture of chemicals that persist in the environment to the detriment of biodiversity
- Projects which we as a group of Wildlife Trusts are opposed to (e.g. Severn Tidal Lagoons)
- Unsustainable crypto currency mining
- Development projects which negatively impact key wildlife sites including Local Wildlife Sites, Nature recovery Networks and sites with legal protection
- Badger culling
- Use of neonicotinoids
- Biofuel production
- Serious pollution incidents and other breaches of environmental law
- Animal cruelty
- All organisations who have a demonstrably poor record on EDI and the general treatment of their employees.

#### **6. Working with others**

**In working with others, we will be guided by the following:**

- Our independence and ability to stand up for wildlife is maintained
- The relationship enhances SWT's reputation
- We will work collaboratively to agree shared outcomes, and the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- There is a clear and transparent strategic purpose for a long-term relationship, including review points
- Any endorsement of an organisation or product is specific, explicit, robust and transparent.

We will work to best apply these principles in all aspects of our operations whilst recognising the complexity of doing so in the real world.

Where the balance between ethical concerns and a potentially positive outcome for nature requires greater scrutiny our decision making will be guided by a SWT Ethics Panel and internal due-diligence processes we have developed to ensure we can make the best judgements against our ethical principles and ethical concerns.

This scrutiny and decision making also includes representatives of SWT members, Trustees and volunteers. The panel will assist SWT staff in evaluating existing and proposed partnerships, contracts, investments and funding opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

## **7. Policy Review**

This policy has been endorsed by the SWT board of Trustees and will continue to be signed off by the Board on an annual basis. A comprehensive policy review will be undertaken every 2 years or more frequently if circumstances require it.

**Dated: 12 September 2022**

**Registered Charity No. 208123**

Surrey Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 00645176.  
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