



Green spaces, great places.

The Land Trust Business Strategy

Executive Summary 2014-2024



Foreword

Peter Smith, Chairman



The Land Trust has made great progress in the 10 years since our inception. For our first six years we worked exclusively with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), acquiring and managing restored coalfields, and other surplus land, but in the last four years we have operated as an independent charity, working across a range of sectors with an ever increasing portfolio of sites and partners. We are delighted to have acquired over 50 sites and 2000 ha in that time, despite very challenging economic conditions.

We have ambitious plans for the future and these are exciting times for The Land Trust. We know that we have a unique and important contribution to make in supporting landowners with surplus land and spaces created as part of permitted development. We are confident in our ability to work with our partners to create wonderful green spaces for people, often rich in biodiversity and environmental benefits. Our sites also offer other societal benefits, such as better health, outdoor education, building skills, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and bringing communities together socially.

The Trustees are passionate about our mission and proud of the achievements of the people working for, and with, The Land Trust, not least the 3000 volunteers involved with our sites. We very much look forward to the next 10 years, to implementing this new strategy, and to have even more people benefiting from the work we do.

Peter Smith

Introduction

Euan Hall, Chief Executive



Since The Land Trust became fully independent from the HCA in May 2010, the global financial crisis meant that we had to weather a number of challenges with our investment and property markets. However, despite this we have more than doubled our portfolio of sites, both in number and hectareage over the last three years, as well as increasing our investment funds (endowed) from circa £40m to over £100m. In 2012/13 we acquired our first non-public sector sites with associated funding, as the economy and the property sector continue to emerge from the recession.

These achievements have meant that we have been able to acquire and manage green spaces, using our unique model of funding, which safeguards the long-term future of our sites and ultimately enables us to create green spaces and great places for people and communities.

I am pleased to be able to present this ambitious strategy and have every confidence that the talent and drive of my colleagues at The Land Trust, our Managing Partners and the many volunteers, with the backing of the Trustees, will deliver long-term sustainability for The Land Trust, as well as the economic and social benefits for communities.

Euan Hall

Our vision and values



Vision

To improve the quality of people's lives by creating, improving and maintaining sustainable, high quality green spaces that deliver environmental, social and economic benefits.



Values

Leadership – we work inclusively, imaginatively and professionally with all partners to create the best possible spaces for communities.

Local – we work with local people to find sustainable solutions and create quality green spaces fit for purpose.

Passion – we care about the environment and the communities we work with.

Respect – we work with each other and all of our partners respectfully.

Learning – we actively learn from our and others' experiences and we constantly strive to improve, through an open approach to feedback, constructive challenge and a safe working environment.

Our charitable objectives

We work with our partners to achieve high quality green spaces in order to improve:

Environment – by creating, restoring and managing green spaces to improve the natural environment through increasing biodiversity and enhancing habitats.

Health – by promoting the use of our green spaces for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of communities.

Learning – by inspiring the current and next generation through vocational outdoor education and training opportunities.

Economic vitality – by optimising the economic value of our spaces and the services that they can provide to benefit the communities that are connected with them.

Cohesion of communities and individuals – by involving local people through volunteering and use of our sites, and encouraging emotional ownership of the open space.

How we will run our business



We have a number of business objectives in place to enable us to ensure The Land Trust is economically sustainable over the next 10 years.



Resources – Enable The Land Trust to grow and flourish through the effective management of all our resources: land, people and money.

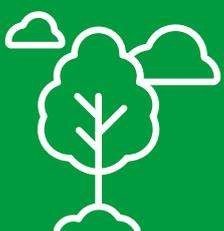
Profile – Be widely recognised and respected as a leading voice in our sector.

Governance – Management and people: ensure that we are efficient and effective, fit for purpose and that we invest in our people.

Exemplar – Be an exemplar of how to create, develop and manage open spaces for public benefit.

Partnership – To be a partner of choice for businesses, delivery organisations, communities and government.

Acquisition – The selection and acquisition of the right land with the right funding, and the right partners offering the opportunity to deliver our charitable objectives.



Enable The Land Trust
to grow and flourish.

Green space for everyone



The Land Trust is built on the belief that green public spaces are a good thing. Good for children and adolescents and for parents, good for residents, for dog owners, good for house builders, and land owners, good for local authorities and local businesses and good for health and social services... in short, good for everyone!

We want to see a future where everyone has access to green open spaces close to where they live and work. We want to see fewer places where green space is non-existent or where unmanaged land is causing social problems. We want to support people in owning their own homes, but in places that have good-quality, well-managed, biodiversity rich green space as an intricate part of the design. We want to see a country where long-term funding and management of green open spaces are planned as part of development.



“ Conservation means development as much as it does protection. I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us. ”

Theodore Roosevelt

Throughout history, we have always recognised and valued green space as an important part of our lives. Green spaces provide hubs for communities to gather in to go walking, running, cycling, playing, or simply to sit and enjoy. But The Land Trust believes that green spaces are so much more than that. The sites we manage provide places for recreation, but they also provide wonderful places to learn and develop new skills, to meet new people and feel part of a community. They provide a platform for us to look after our health and wellbeing, so that we can live longer and better lives. Well-managed green spaces, such as our sites, even help to create new communities, providing a place where people want to live and work, which in turn brings investment and stronger economies. All of these factors create vibrant, valued spaces that people feel part of and proud of, which can even help to eradicate anti-social behaviour and crime.

We believe that everyone should have this in their lives and that this can be a reality with a different approach and a small investment upfront. But regeneration without funding for long-term management or building and developing without thinking about how we create beautiful places will not achieve this dream, only perpetuate the problem.

The Land Trust, and this 10 year strategy exists to help us all move closer to this reality.

How we deliver our charitable objectives



Increasing biodiversity and habitats

Our objective is to promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public by the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and promotion of biological diversity.

We will achieve this through the acquisition of appropriate sites, which either already provide the opportunity for conservation, preservation and protection of the environment, or that could, with some work, provide this opportunity.

We already have significant areas of land that are locally, nationally and internationally important for wildlife, often containing protected species and habitats. In the next 10 years we will work with partners to manage, promote and safeguard our natural sites and their biodiversity.



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We will:

Build the role of our Environment Sub-Group, which involves a range of partners and stakeholders who advise us on environmental and biodiversity issues and on our own practice, outputs on sites, and outcomes for the environment.

Work with partners to ensure that our sites contribute to the ecological networks that comprise landscape scale conservation. We will aim to stop our sites being ecologically isolated and increase their value in the wider landscape.

Work with government, and others, to use the New Environmental Stewardship Scheme to create better environments and habitats on our existing and future sites.

Deliver an action plan for every site, which sets out how we will improve priority species and habitats. Where relevant we will work with our partners to set quality goals for priority habitats and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Establish baseline survey data on our sites so we know what the priorities are and what the potential of the site is. This will help us to develop the most appropriate biodiversity opportunities on site, with our site budgets, as well as through attracting additional income through fundraising.

Increase biodiversity on our sites and help to protect threatened species by improving the quality of existing habitats so they are able to better support larger numbers and more species.

Engage more people in biodiversity issues, helping them to become aware of its value and take positive action.



We will continue to develop health based initiatives on our sites.

Using green spaces to improve our health and wellbeing

Our objective is to provide activities and facilities on our sites which help people to maintain a healthier life through the use of green open spaces. We will encourage people of all ages, through a wide variety of activities, to use our sites to benefit their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

New research is being revealed on a regular basis linking good quality environments that include green open spaces, with positive health outcomes, and unfortunately linking areas of deprivation, and those that have fewer green open spaces, with poor physical and mental health.

Improving the health of the communities around our sites is very important to us, and to do this we will:

Help to create a Green Health Service, with a focus on environmental and natural healthcare actions, projects and treatments that show great benefits to public health and reduced long term healthcare costs. Collaborations between communities and healthcare providers are needed to promote the use of green space as both a prevention against, and treatment for physical and mental ill-health. We will continue to develop health based initiatives on our sites.

Build on the health programmes that are already in place on our South Yorkshire sites, by working with the local NHS services to get people out into their community and use natural spaces to improve health.

Develop strategic partnerships with health organisations such as Mind to explore how we can work together to give people opportunities to use our sites to help to manage, or even prevent long-term health issues, as well as for rehabilitation and mental wellbeing.

Recruit a Trustee with specific knowledge in the health sector to advise and help steer how we can make the best possible difference to people's health and wellbeing. They will help us develop this strategy, identify key partnerships and understand the latest research in this area.

Build the role of our Health Sub-Group, which involves a range of partners and stakeholders who advise us on health and wellbeing issues and on our own practice, outputs on sites, and outcomes for people's health and wellbeing.

Work with more professionals to develop a varied and exciting range of health and wellbeing activities and programmes on our sites.



How we deliver our charitable objectives



Inspiring the next generation through vocational outdoor education and training

Our objective is to advance public education in environmental matters and other ways of conserving, protecting and improving the physical natural environment. We will do this through education, training, or re-training for young people and adults, in particular unemployed people.

Our sites already offer significant educational opportunities, from woodland classrooms to nature trails and physical activities. These start at pre-school and primary school level, up to and including adult education. We also run programmes for skills training, enabling people to get into employment. By acquiring more sites, and enhancing the offer on our current sites, we will increase the opportunities for people of all ages to be involved in learning on our sites.



We will:

Work with our managing partners and education providers to ensure that national curriculum and training requirements are matched to what can be provided on our sites.

Deliver the first pilot phase of our Green Angels project, which provides new training opportunities in the environmental field. We will continue to work with our funder The Big Lottery and will endeavour to roll this innovative project out to other sites.

Attract funding where possible, to improve facilities on our sites for schools, including woodland classrooms and toilets.

Expand the LEAF project on our site in Monkton, Newcastle, which trains people in woodland skills. This project has already provided a stepping stone for 15 of our volunteers into the Level 1 conservation skills course. This training enables volunteers to take a more established leadership or civic role, which may involve leading a small group during business volunteering days.

Expand on the success of our educational programme at Greenwich Ecology Park in London, which has involved many schools in and around the area. Working with IKEA, we will develop an outdoor classroom.

Train volunteers at our site in Canvey to do specialist recording of the wide range of species that inhabit the site so that we can continue to provide the right habitats.



Increased opportunities in learning on our sites.

Involving communities in our sites

Our objective is to promote the voluntary sector for the benefit of the public by supporting local community based individuals and groups to maintain open spaces, woodlands and forests.

Well-managed green spaces encourage community cohesion by encouraging all sectors from within the community to use the space and interact with each other. We want to see more people getting involved in their communities and feeling confident to express their views on how things could work. That's why we involve people in a range of ways in our sites, from simply using the site from time to time, through volunteering occasionally to maintain the sites, or getting involved in events on the site, right through to joining a friends group and making decisions.

We will:

Provide a variety of community activities and opportunities to use our sites, which will draw different sectors of the community together.

Provide opportunities for volunteering across our sites.

Establish an advisory panel to help us to develop our work with volunteers and communities. It will recommend partnerships and ways to improve our charitable performance in this area.

Work with local communities and schools to hold more community fun days on our sites, such as recent events at Silverdale and Rabbit Ings.

Attract funding where we can, to install more community buildings on our sites. Where we already have buildings, such as Rabbit Ings and Fryston in South Yorkshire, Northumberlandia and Greenwich, we will improve these buildings to ensure local communities can put them to good use.

Set up more formal 'Friends of' groups who can apply for funding grants in their own right to improve the spaces that they are involved with.

Using natural environments to create economic benefits

Our objective is to optimise the economic value of our spaces and the services that they provide to communities.

We know from research, as well as our own experience, that when green spaces are maintained well, they generate economic activity and growth. Equally, spaces that aren't well maintained can often fall into a downward spiral of decline, which in turn affects physical and mental wellbeing of communities, as well as community cohesion, anti-social behaviour, and even crime. These negative impacts can be of great cost to communities, local and national public services. Well-managed public open spaces, such as our sites, can have a positive impact by halting decline, as well as bringing new economic opportunities to areas.

Some of the ways that our sites benefit local economies are by employing rangers, providing opportunities for concessions and other businesses to be situated on sites, and the development of social enterprises. An important part of what we do is the development of volunteering opportunities, together with formal and informal training courses which encourage people to build skills and move into employment. It is also well-documented that businesses tend to locate near to well-managed green space and house prices are higher near to our sites.

To deliver even more economic benefits to communities close to our sites we will:

Acquire more sites that provide opportunities to benefit local economies through ranger jobs, more volunteering, and the improvement and management of the public open space.

Increase our use of local apprentices on sites to ensure more people are being trained on the job leading to a better qualified and experienced workforce.

Use local contractors to carry out development and maintenance works.

Facilitate local franchises, such as food and drink outlets, to operate on our sites.

Deliver the first phase of the Green Angels programme at Liverpool Festival Gardens and work with our funding partners including The Big Lottery to investigate the possibility of expanding the programme to our other sites.

Learn from existing research and commission our own, to measure the social benefits of our sites on inward investment, housing development, health and wellbeing.

Our people



Trustees

Our Trustees are an important part of how we safeguard our values, ways of working, and ultimately, the sites we manage for communities. They play a hugely important part in making sure we are running the organisation efficiently and effectively and that our charitable objectives are at the heart of everything we do.

They are:

Peter Smith (Chairman)
Michael Rich, HCA
Lady Jane Garrett
John Handley OBE
Simon MacGillivray
Christina McComb

Walter Menzies
Jeff Moore
Rob Morley
Dinah Nichols
Sarah Whitney

Our members

We have eight corporate members who help us to shape our organisation and have shared interests in our vision, values and objectives.



These are:



The Land Trust people

We have a small head office based in Warrington where many of our people are based. We have more members of staff based at various locations across the UK, including Bristol, London, Scotland, East Anglia and Yorkshire. We expect this to change and grow throughout the 10 year lifespan of this strategy so see our website for a full list of staff.



Managing Partners

Our Managing Partners are local organisations who run our sites on a day to day basis. They provide the much needed local knowledge and expertise and do a wonderful job in working with volunteers and local communities to manage our sites.

Volunteers

We rely on over 3000 volunteers who generously give their time and expertise to help us make our sites the best they can be. Our army of heroes!



We rely on over
3000 volunteers.

Our business strategy at a glance

Our strategy has four main strands and some of the key deliverables are outlined below:

New Business Development	Portfolio Management	Fundraising	New Initiatives
<p>Develop and acquire sites or projects to support the day to day operation of The Land Trust and the management of our land.</p> <p>Acquire a balanced portfolio of land and funding, whilst ensuring financial, environmental and reputational risk is managed.</p> <p>Acquire land and funding at a steady rate allowing the organisation to grow over the next 10 years and beyond.</p>	<p>Ensure that all of the land in which we have an interest is managed safely, to an appropriate quality and delivers charitable outcomes.</p> <p>In doing this, we will make the best use of resources available and ensure value for money.</p> <p>Develop and manage capital projects which improve the charitable outcomes of our sites for the benefit of local communities.</p>	<p>Generate extra income into The Land Trust in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of our charitable objectives. • Boost endowment income. • Help restore sites to the best condition possible for biodiversity and people. • Create opportunities for on-going income generation, funding new staff posts and opening doors with partners. 	<p>Ensure we have an understanding of, and influence on, the key policy areas which affect our ability to become financially viable and to deliver our charitable objectives.</p> <p>Engage in relevant research to enhance our understanding of the benefits of green space.</p> <p>Develop more structured health intervention programmes.</p> <p>Explore a Land Trust Community Fund, and an investment fund in Scotland.</p>

The delivery of these four strands is aided by three support areas as follows:

Communications & Marketing	<p>Through planned and sustained marketing campaigns, identify new business opportunities and leads, and ensure The Land Trust has a profile in the relevant places.</p>	<p>Work with managing partners to ensure our sites are promoted and used by communities.</p> <p>Ensure reputations are managed and our brands are recognised where we operate.</p>	<p>Fulfil the communications activity and campaigns required by funding bodies in relation to successful grants and bids.</p> <p>Support fundraising efforts by co-ordinating campaigns, managing relationships and publicising appeals.</p>	<p>Manage relationships with key individuals and organisations to support our engagement with policy and research.</p> <p>Communicate The Land Trust's position and opinions on key policies and research.</p>
Finance	<p>Support the delivery of the above by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving financial viability by generating profitable activities, supporting the above strategies and exploring other initiatives and income. • Having strong and appropriate financial controls in place, including appropriate reporting, risk management and culture. • Optimising The Land Trust's resources through the investment policy and strategy and the portfolio management and procurement policies. 			
People Strategy	<p>Support the delivery of the above by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our people are equipped to carry out their role with the appropriate training and support. • Taking into account our people's aspirations and ambitions and actively supporting them in working towards these. • Being an organisation whose people are proud to work here and feel engaged and motivated at work. 			



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