



About the Land Trust

The Land Trust is a charity that is committed to the long-term sustainable management of open space for community benefit. Our vision is to improve the quality of people's lives through the creation and management of sustainable, high quality green spaces that deliver real and lasting, environmental, social and economic benefits.

We currently have ownership and responsibility for over 2,500 hectares of open space across the country. Our diverse portfolio includes amenity spaces, country parks, SANGs, SUDs, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, nature reserves and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

What is Biodiversity Net Gain?

Biodiversity net gain is a mandatory approach to development that ensures biodiversity is left in a better state than before. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity it requires developers to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected. It is intended that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted and ecological networks can be restored.

Net gain can be delivered either on the development site – potentially reducing development opportunity - or off site. The Land Trust is able to undertake both delivery approaches with several funding models, thereby ensuring that we are a viable long-term delivery body for biodiversity net gain.

Achieving net gain in biodiversity is more than simply outweighing losses with gains, it requires doing everything possible to avoid losing biodiversity in the first place. It requires the gains in biodiversity to be valuable locally, and to make important contributions towards regional and national priorities for nature conservation.

The government is currently in the process of making 10% biodiversity net gain mandatory through the planning process. It is vital that you as the developer are considering the impacts that this will have on your future projects.

The key to getting this right is working with the right body. This is where the Land Trust can help you, by managing and delivering benefits to the new communities, and taking a strategic approach that is most cost effective for you.



The Land Trust: Biodiversity Net Gain



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How the Land Trust can help you

We are a well-established land management charity with 15 years' experience of managing green spaces with a variety of different objectives and challenges. We are ideally placed to help you manage the challenges of biodiversity net gain, keep your costs to a minimum and protect the investment you have made in your development.

We work with industry leading ecologists and can offer a variety of different approaches to deliver net gain, including:

- Sale of offsetting credits from our existing sites
- Management of net gain required for a single development
- Delivery of strategic habitat banks for multiple developments in a region.

The Land Trust's unique selling point is that by working with communities to deliver biodiversity net gain, we can also enhance community engagement, health and well-being, the local economy and education. This provides a sustainable approach to net gain that delivers social value and environment, social and governance credentials.

Our Charitable Objectives – Environment and biodiversity

One of the Land Trust's five key charitable aims is environment and biodiversity and we strive to ensure our parks and green spaces

are as diverse as possible. We manage our sites to create great places for the trees and flowers, bugs and birds as well as our visitors to enjoy.

These rich spaces need careful management and as many of our sites have had an industrial or development history, it can sometimes take a long time to establish the desired habitats, but our work has shown that if you create the right conditions, nature will develop and flourish.

The Land Trust position on mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain

The Land Trust has been delivering biodiversity enhancements on our sites for 15 years and we know that for net gain to be successful the designated areas must be appropriately funded and managed by a competent body with suitable safeguards and experience.

We are very supportive of the net gain principles and we would like to see mechanisms put in place to ensure the local community becomes engaged in the process. Our model demonstrates that local green spaces and natural areas managed in collaboration with the community will be better looked after and more successful in the long term.

Principles of Biodiversity Net Gain

- **Apply the mitigation hierarchy:**
Do everything possible to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity
- **Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere:**
Avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity
- **Be inclusive and equitable:**
Engage stakeholders early and involve them in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the approach to net gain
- **Address risks:**
Mitigate difficulty, uncertainty and other risks to achieving net gain
- **Make a measurable net gain contribution:**
Achieve a measurable, overall gain for biodiversity and the services ecosystems provide while directly contributing towards nature conservation priorities
- **Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity:**
Use robust evidence and local knowledge to deliver:
 - Compensation that is ecologically equivalent in type, amount and condition
 - Compensating for losses of one type of biodiversity by providing a different type that delivers greater benefits for nature conservation
- Achieving net gain within the development while contributing to nature conservation priorities at local, regional and national levels
- Enhancing existing or creating new habitat
- **Be additional:**
Achieve nature conservation outcomes that exceed existing obligations (ie, do not deliver something that would occur anyway)
- **Create a net gain legacy:**
Ensure net gain generates long-term benefits by:
 - Engaging stakeholders
 - Securing dedicated funding for long-term management
 - Designing net gain for biodiversity to be resilient to external factors, especially climate change
 - Mitigating risk from other land uses
 - Avoiding displacing harmful activities from one location to another
 - Supporting local level management of net gain activities
- **Optimise sustainability:**
Prioritise biodiversity net gain, optimising the wider environmental benefits for a sustainable society and economy
- **Be transparent:**
Communicate net gain activities in a timely manner, sharing the learning with all stakeholders.

Did you know?

Since the end of World War Two, 97 percent of our wildflower meadows have been lost leaving many important species such as bees in trouble. We are helping to create and enhance meadows to support these important species.



Case Study – Wellesley Woodlands

The objectives of SANGs and the Land Trust's approach to their management share many parallels with the principles of BNG. Both initiatives focus on ensuring that residential developments do not irreversibly damage the local biodiversity. Our experience with SANG across the country, makes us an ideal body to deal with the challenges of net gain.

The Land Trust's site at Wellesley Woodlands, is the largest SANG in the Country and forms part of Grainger's 3,850 residential development, Wellesley in Hampshire.

A key challenge for Grainger was the pre-commencement planning conditions which stipulated a requirement for an area of SANG being secured in perpetuity. This was in order to offset any recreational impact the development may have on the Thames Basin Heath SPA.

By transferring the SANG to Land Trust, a long-term management body approved by Natural England, Grainger were able to discharge these conditions and commence the development.

For further information on The Land Trust and our approach to biodiversity net gain please contact Business Development officer, Joe Heath. joeheath@thelandtrust.org.uk