



## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013-2014



***“Our vision is to ensure that our communities and countryside are rich in bumblebees and colourful flowers, supporting a diversity of wildlife and habitats for everyone to enjoy.”***



**“The year 2013-14 has been an exceptionally good one for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Over the year we have been busy rolling out our flagship project *Bees for Everyone* which is helping to spread the word about what you can do for bumblebees at home, in your community, towns and cities, as well as the broader countryside. Another important project, *BeeWalk*, also gained ground, providing support and training to hundreds of volunteers keen to identify and monitor bumblebees. This report explains in more detail what we have achieved with the funding and support you have given us. None of this would have been possible without your assistance and for that I would like to say an enormous thank you! I hope you enjoy sharing our success.”**

## Highlights of the year

- Over 3,500 hectares of land has now benefited from our habitat management advice and our conservation staff have engaged with over 370 farmers and landowners.
- The first Short-haired bumblebee, *Bombus subterraneus*, worker to be seen in the UK for 25 years was spotted in June 2013.
- The recording of 26,000 bumblebees by our BeeWalk volunteers, covering 171 transects, provided us with our second full year of data. In addition, 12 BeeWalk training days were attended by 272 volunteers.
- We have expanded our membership by 1,700 bringing the total to 7,478 individual members by the year end.
- The distribution of 80,000 leaflets, posters, factsheets and bumblebee ID guides, and the delivery of 387 events, has increased public awareness and encouraged 300,000 different users to visit our website.
- We have achieved widespread media coverage with nearly 30 interviews on national, regional and local TV and radio stations, as well as written articles in the press. Our use of digital media also increased with 17,500 followers on Twitter and 23,000 ‘likes’ on Facebook.
- BBC Radio 4’s serialisation of BBCT founder Dave Goulson’s book “A Sting in the Tail” - which features a chapter on how and why he set up BBCT - saw over 100 people join the Trust in just one day.
- At least 500 volunteers were actively involved in Trust activities – in particular BeeWalk - contributing in excess of £42,000 worth of time. This included carrying out 240 walks, talks and events.
- We developed our new five-year strategic plan which informs our staff, volunteers, members, partners and funders about what we aim to achieve by 2020.
- We were involved in the development of the Welsh Government’s Action Plan for Pollinators in Wales, which was launched in 2013, and a draft National Pollinator Strategy for England.
- As part of our commitment to the Welsh Pollinator Plan, we hosted a very successful workshop at the Newport Wetlands Reserve which was attended by Welsh Assembly Member Lindsay Whittle.
- We hosted a conference at the Royal Holloway University London which was attended by 100 delegates from a wide range of sectors, as well as individual landowners keen to provide habitat for bumblebees.
- Our continued involvement in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) State of Nature partnership. The group’s first report into the state of the UK’s wildlife was launched by Sir David Attenborough in May 2013.
- We have worked in partnership with more than 70 organisations, including businesses, local authorities, community groups, other conservation charities, environmental NGOs, trade bodies and associations, federations, government departments, academic institutes and public bodies.
- We increased our overall income by 35% to £669,129 in the 2013-14 financial year, with unrestricted income, including income from corporate support, public donations and Charitable Trusts, rising to £358,079 (60% of overall income).

## Our new strategic aims

As part of our strategic review we have redefined our strategic aims. Going forwards, all of our work will:

- Support the conservation of all bumblebees, rare or abundant.
- Raise awareness and increase understanding about bumblebees and the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits which they and other pollinators provide.
- Ensure BBCT is sustainable, fit for purpose and able to respond quickly to challenges and change.



## Successes and the road ahead...

Our work falls into five distinct work areas which define our charitable objectives. In the following pages we look at our achievements and our plans for the future in each of these areas.

### 1. Building Evidence

This work area helps us to understand what is happening to the UK's bumblebee populations. This is crucial for informing our work, influencing government policy and the work of others, and for defining how and why we engage with the general public.

During the year, our time was spent working with computer experts to develop the new BeeWalk website and improve the functionality of the BeeWatch photo survey tool.



- Our new BeeWalk tool allows recorders to upload their bumblebee data quickly and simply online. This massively reduces the time we need to spend manually entering data and reduces the potential for human error in the process.
- The recording of 26,000 bumblebees by our BeeWalk volunteers, covering 171 transects, has provided us with our second full year of data.
- In addition, a total of 12 BeeWalk training days were attended by 272 volunteers this year.

#### Our plans for the future...

- Re-launching BeeWalk and continuing to extend the scheme across the UK to gain good coverage of all areas.
- Helping to lead the way in the development of a new national monitoring scheme for pollinators.
- Working with the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society (BWARS) and others to strengthen our data recording schemes and ensure they operate to exemplary standards.

***“BBCT is the only conservation charity in Europe solely dedicated to reversing the decline of native bumblebees.”***

## 2. Building influence and advocacy

This area of work ensures that the evidence and research BBCT undertakes or is involved in, is used to influence and shape external policies and plans. At the heart of this is the need to ensure policy interventions are based on the best evidence available and are both rational and balanced.

During 2013-14 our Chairman, CEO and Conservation Manager engaged in four priority policy areas:

- **National Pollinator Plans for England and Wales:**

We contributed to the consultation process for both strategies, advocating that landowners and the general public be provided with advice and help in increasing the amount of habitat for pollinators and that the government invest in research to examine: the effects of pesticides out in the field; gain more knowledge about the effects of importing bumblebees for commercial purposes; and develop and invest in effective monitoring schemes for pollinator species.

- **Commercial bumblebees:**

We continued to work with leading scientists on understanding more about the impacts of importing bumblebees for commercial purposes.

- **Neonicotinoid pesticides:**

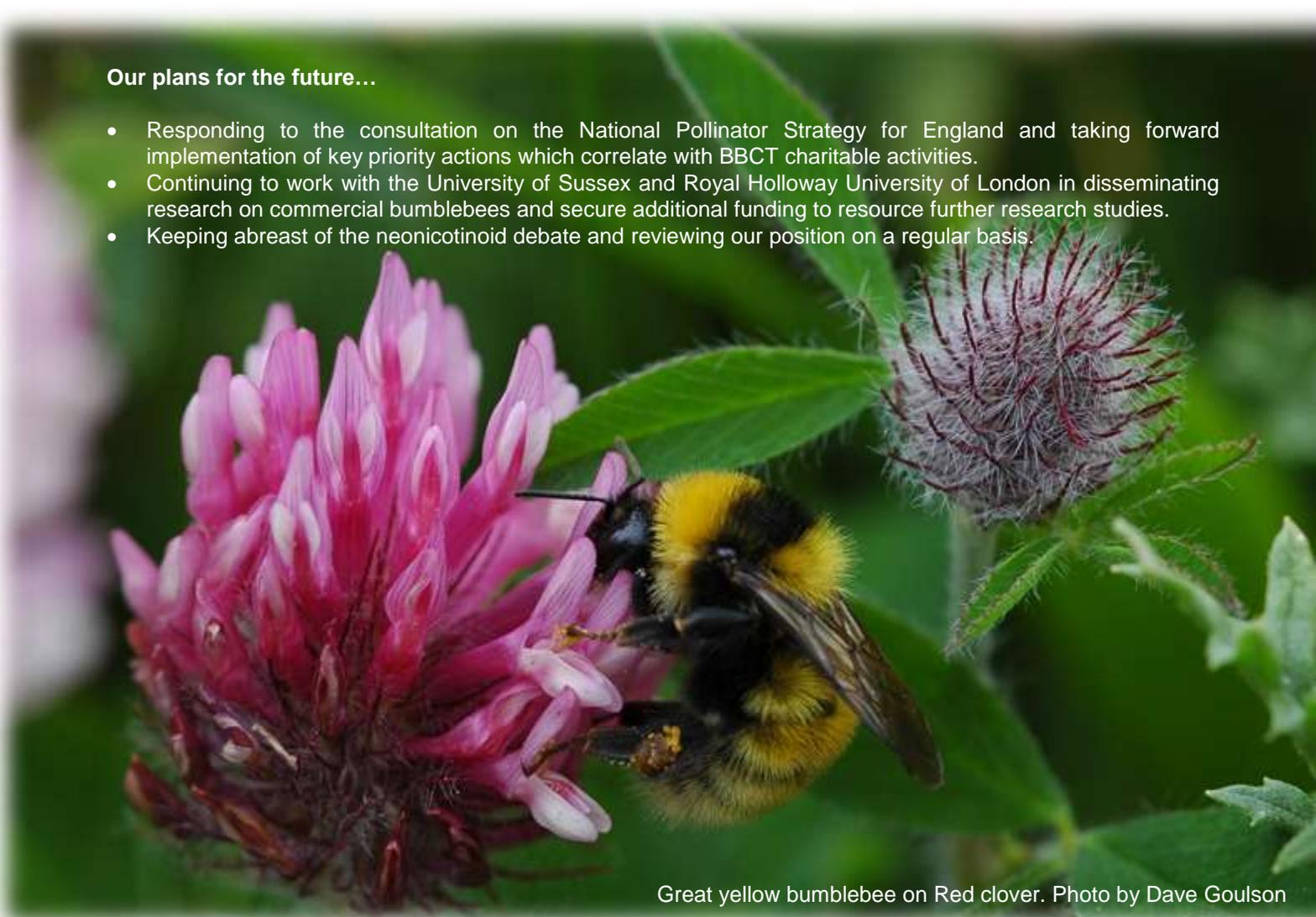
BBCT supports the temporary ban on neonicotinoids believing that they are one of the reasons why our pollinating insects are in decline. We also believe that more comprehensive testing in the field is needed to better understand the effects of dose and exposure. This includes the agrochemical companies making public the results of their risk assessment trials.

- **Biodiversity 2020:**

Dave Stewart, MSP for Highlands and the Islands, adopted the Great yellow bumblebee as part of the Scottish Government's Species Champion scheme. We engaged with biodiversity partners to encourage a similar approach to Species Champions in England and Wales.

### Our plans for the future...

- Responding to the consultation on the National Pollinator Strategy for England and taking forward implementation of key priority actions which correlate with BBCT charitable activities.
- Continuing to work with the University of Sussex and Royal Holloway University of London in disseminating research on commercial bumblebees and secure additional funding to resource further research studies.
- Keeping abreast of the neonicotinoid debate and reviewing our position on a regular basis.



Great yellow bumblebee on Red clover. Photo by Dave Goulson

### 3. Fostering habitat provision

To date our conservation work has focused on supporting the conservation of rare bumblebees, in particular the Shrill carder bee, *Bombus sylvarum*, and the Great yellow bumblebee, *Bombus distinguendus*.

This was achieved by focusing our conservation work in specific 'hot-spot' areas - shown in red on the map - where these species are known to exist. As a result over 3,500 hectares of land has now benefited from our habitat management advice and our conservation staff have engaged with over 370 farmers and landowners. Furthermore, farmers and land managers were engaged through the delivery of seven farm based workshops.

We have also been actively involved in the exciting Short-haired bumblebee reintroduction project, which is supporting habitat creation in the South of England.

The Short-haired bumblebee reintroduction project is led by Dr. Nikki Gammans and Natural England with input from, BBCT, RSPB, Hymettus, and Royal Holloway University of London. In June 2013, 49 queens from Sweden were released in Dungeness and one month later the first *Bombus subterraneus* worker to be seen in the UK in 25 years was spotted foraging on red clover in South Kent. This represented a successful milestone in the project.



***“BBCT’s work focuses on the conservation of bumblebees and the creation of flower-rich habitat both in urban and rural landscapes.”***

#### Our plans for the future...

Going forwards our work will complement the work of government Pollinator Action Plans and will focus on all species of bumblebee across the whole of the UK.

This will include:

- Developing our first landscape-scale project called *Making a Buzz to the Coast*, which spans 300 miles of the Kent coast in order to increase habitat for the Shrill carder bee and many other pollinators.
- Developing *Thurso: Gateway to the Great Yellow* – a community focused project which aims to increase awareness about one of our very rarest bumblebees and help create additional flower-rich habitat.
- Developing projects in Wales, Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK as funding opportunities arise.
- Continuing to engage with those farmers and landowners who have benefited from our land management advice over recent years and encouraging new farmers and landowners to take forward habitat improvements.
- Continuing to work with the Mineral Products Association, Ministry of Justice, Chippendale Foods, and Solarcentury to improve their land for biodiversity and build case studies to encourage other businesses and organisations to do more for bumblebees.



HMP Maidstone - photo credit David Sargeant

## 4. Fostering public awareness

The public interest in bumblebees and our work is huge, as demonstrated by the rise in our membership this year. We engage with people every day through our website and social media channels, magazines and news articles, as well as in person at shows and events, walks, talks and training courses.

Our target audience is the general public, but more specifically, landowners, businesses, statutory bodies, decision makers, policy advisers, local authorities, teachers, community groups and other conservation charities. Following the launch in May 2012 of *Bees for Everyone*, our popularity as the 'go to place' for information about bumblebees has continued to grow.

### Successes this year...

- Over the course of the year over 80,000 leaflets, posters, fact sheets and bumblebee ID guides were distributed. Our website was visited by 300,000 different users, who collectively viewed over 1.6 million pages of information. A further 20,000 people used our Bee kind tool, which advises people on what garden plants are good for pollinators and gives their garden a score based on its current plants.
- The use of digital media is an important part of our awareness raising and 2013-14 saw an unprecedented rise in followers on Twitter - now 17,500. Some 23,000 Facebook 'Likes' were recorded over the twelve months.
- Staff and volunteers ran 387 events nationwide which enabled us to engage directly with at least 20,000 members of the public.
- 2013 also saw the media awash with stories about bumblebees. These stories, whether focused on the banning of neonicotinoids or on the reintroduction of the Short-haired bumblebee, all helped to raise our profile and increase membership. The media's interest in bumblebees and BBCT led to many of our staff receiving specialist media training and resulted in over 20 interviews on national, regional and local TV and Radio.



### Our plans for the future...

- Appointing a specialist Information Officer to enable us to respond quickly to the growing number of enquiries about bumblebees.
- Improving our public reach by appointing the services of a PR company to increase our public reach through local, regional and national media.
- Continuing to attend shows and events with the support of BBCT volunteers and continuing to provide support and training for these volunteers.

***“As a small charity with big ambitions the Trust has been determined to highlight its cause to a wide range of different audiences and establish itself as the ‘go-to-place’ for bumblebees.”***

## 5. Building capacity

Growing BBCT as a business and a charitable organisation underpins everything that we do. A strong healthy and robust organisation is fundamental to our future success.

Volunteers are the life blood of the Trust and many of our outreach activities would not be possible without the dedication and support of these people. At least 500 volunteers were actively involved in Trust activities during this year, contributing in excess of £42,000 worth of time. This included time spent carrying out 240 walks, talks and events.

As our volunteer army continues to grow it becomes increasingly important to ensure they we look after and nurture these individuals. Specialist training and continuous feedback provided by staff, as well as the development of a long term strategy which identifies the ongoing resources to do this, were key activities taken forward during the year.



### Our plans for the future...

- Continuing to build the Trust's membership, and raising more sustainable funds for bumblebee conservation.
- Hosting a summer membership event and extending the AGM to attract and engage members.
- Reviewing our system for supporting volunteers and developing new ways to engage and reward volunteers.
- Improving administration and membership systems to ensure that we offer an exemplary and cost effective service.
- Investing in IT solutions to improve internal communications and business efficacy.

***“BBCT has now raised more than £2.5 million for the conservation of UK bumblebees.”***

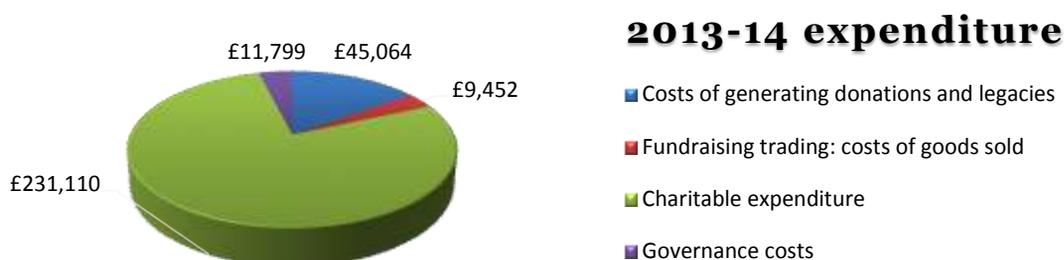
# Financial Review

## Income

Overall, income increased substantially by approximately 35% to £669,129 in the financial year ending 31 March 2014. Restricted income remained stable at £311,050 as we implemented the second year of our Bees for Everyone project. Funds raised for unrestricted purposes grew substantially and totalled £358,079.



Overall a surplus of £62,424 was generated and our fund balance at the year-end was £340,315. 42% of this (£142,323) is restricted grants to be carried forward in 2014-15 and the remaining 58% (£197,992) unrestricted funds which will be held in reserve.



## Fundraising Strategy

Plans to increase unrestricted income and diversify funding during 2013-14 were very successful, with targets for corporate support, public donations and charitable trusts exceeded. Of particular significance was the income from commercial partnership agreements and one-off corporate donations which exceeded forecast by £42,000. Our unrestricted income currently represents at least 50% of overall income which means that core activity is not dependent on restricted grants. The Trust will continue to grow and strengthen our unrestricted income - investment in this area is essential. Furthermore, with the launch of a new strategic plan, which identifies over £5m of projects we would like to implement between now and 2020, we have recently taken steps to appoint a part-time Fundraiser, who will work with our CEO to secure awards from grant making trusts and foundations.

## Reserves policy

Our Trustees have determined that BBCT should maintain a reserve equivalent to four months' operating costs. For the financial year ending 31 March 2015, the required reserve is forecast to be £192,000, which we will be able to cover.

**Charity Registration No. 1115634**  
**Scottish Charity Registration No. SC042830**  
**Company Registration No. 05618710 (England and Wales)**

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