



MWT Land Acquisition Policy

Approved by MWT Trustees at a Council meeting on 11th September 2023

Purpose: this Policy sets out the decision making process for acquiring land, whether that is offered to MWT or MWT is seeking specific areas of land. The potential for Nature's Recovery, Nature-based Solutions and Engaging People with Nature are equally important criteria for acquiring land.

1. Introduction

The impetus for updating MWTs' Land Acquisition Policy stems from the strategic direction of The Wildlife Trust, outlined and discussed in many TWT staff webinars and in a series of Land Classification workshops held with MWT staff in 2021. The consensus view is that, despite TWTs' (and MWTs') management of superb Nature Reserves, species abundance and diversity is still declining across the UK and on Island and there therefore needs to be a change of approach to address this serious situation. TWT (and MWT) is adopting a "Team Wilder" approach across its work including in respect of land acquisition and this requires a focus on (1) acquiring and restoring/conserving more land for nature and (2) encouraging more people to engage with nature, including on Nature Reserves. The target is to have 25% of the Island's population taking action for nature and 30% of its land forming part of a Nature Recovery Network by 2030.

MWT owns a number of areas of land which cover a variety of habitat types. Their ecological value varies, with some being designated as Areas of Special Scientific Interest whilst others may be community-orientated urban sites. The naming of MWT sites is covered in a Policy for Branding and Interpretation of sites.

2. Criteria for acquiring land

Land may be offered to MWT to purchase or lease, it may be donated or bequeathed or MWT may wish to acquire specific areas of land. Land acquisition carries with it a range of responsibilities including staffing and management costs. Whilst MWT has limited resources, this should not of itself be a limiting factor when considering an acquisition.

Land acquisition offers many opportunities to realise MWT's Vision and strategic objectives: Nature's Recovery, Nature-based Solutions and Engaging People with Nature. It also provides valuable opportunities for fundraising including sponsorships and corporate involvement.

3. Process for considering offers of land or searches for land

When land is offered to MWT or it wishes to acquire land, a staff assessment team will complete a Land Acquisition Proposal form in respect of it. This includes a recommendation to acquire the land or not.

The Land Acquisition Group (LAG), made up of MWT Chair, MWT CEO and LAG Chair, will review the form and score the findings as:

A =All positive

B = Mostly positive but minor concerns

C= Acceptable but concerns noted

D = Unacceptable and major concerns noted.

An overall Recommendation will be made and the form then referred to Finance Committee for their comments, followed by referral to Council for a final decision.