



An organisational strategy

Marwell
2035

Our heritage



L Read

Laura Read
Chief Executive

Marwell Estate, our home, has a heritage that dates back to before William the Conqueror landed on the shores of Great Britain.

The 300 acre estate, and in particular, Marwell Hall, has been cited in historical documents as a place of importance, a seat of influence and a coveted jewel in the crown of Hampshire.

Once home to historical figures such as the Bishop of Winchester and Henry Seymour, the estate has always held significance.

But it is in recent history, the last 50 years in fact, that the reach of Marwell has extended from its spot, nestled in the South Downs National Park, much further, to the dunes of the Northern Sahara, the tropical islands of French Polynesia, the jagged peaks of the Himalayas and the remote plains of Northern Kenya. It has done this through one man's vision of what it means to be a conservation zoo.

John Knowles established Marwell Zoological Park in 1972, with the aim of showing people species in wide open spaces, rather than small cages; animals from all corners of the world, with a particular sway towards equids and antelopes. Marwell became famous as a hoofstock zoo and its commitment extended from keeping insurance populations through to affirmative actions that made a difference to these species in the wild as well.

Marwell has driven in-situ conservation projects since the early 1980s; some of which, such as the work to reintroduce scimitar-horned oryx to North Africa and sand lizards in the UK, have saved species from extinction. Long-term commitment to such projects has made Marwell a highly regarded and trusted partner, an increasingly valuable position we will always fight to maintain.



Marwell today

Fast forward fifty years, Marwell Zoological Park and Marwell Preservation Trust have become Marwell Wildlife, a charity that still holds wildlife conservation, science and education at its beating heart. We are committed to our hands-on approach to conservation projects, often in areas of the world which are challenging, filling the gaps and working where others are not, to give species in need the best chances against the growing pressures from human activity.



Marwell Zoo remains one of Hampshire's best loved visitor attractions. We operate a zoo that has a modern approach to animal husbandry, placing our emphasis on giving animals natural habitats, cognitive challenges and most crucially, a positive life experience which enables them to display natural behaviours.

Our innovative evidence and research-based approach to animal care stands us in great stead to be able to move forward confidently with whatever changes and challenges are facing the zoo industry in the coming years. We will keep innovating in this space and keep connecting our guests, staff and students with the animals that they love.

Marwell Zoo has led the way in terms of sustainable operations, using innovative solutions such as our 'zoo-poo' fuelled heat network, to reach net zero status in 2023.

We now look to the future and to how we can go further, with our goal of reaching true net zero, covering all of Marwell Wildlife's operations and supply chains in the UK and abroad, by 2035.

However, despite our strengths, Marwell Wildlife is at a pivotal point in its long history. Following the turbulence of Brexit, the global Covid-19 pandemic, inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis in the United Kingdom, the financial health of Marwell Wildlife is not as it has been previously.

It is time to look to the future and lay out a clear, considered, yet ambitious pathway for how Marwell Wildlife is going to grow, and evolve.

Our mission

Connect

Connecting people with nature will inspire them

Protect

If people care about nature, they will want to protect it from harm

Thrive

Once protected and restored, nature will thrive

Restore

Once nature is protected, it can recover and restore

Hands-on conservation:
Supporting nature's recovery

Six strategic objectives

1 | Diversification of revenue streams to ensure financial fitness



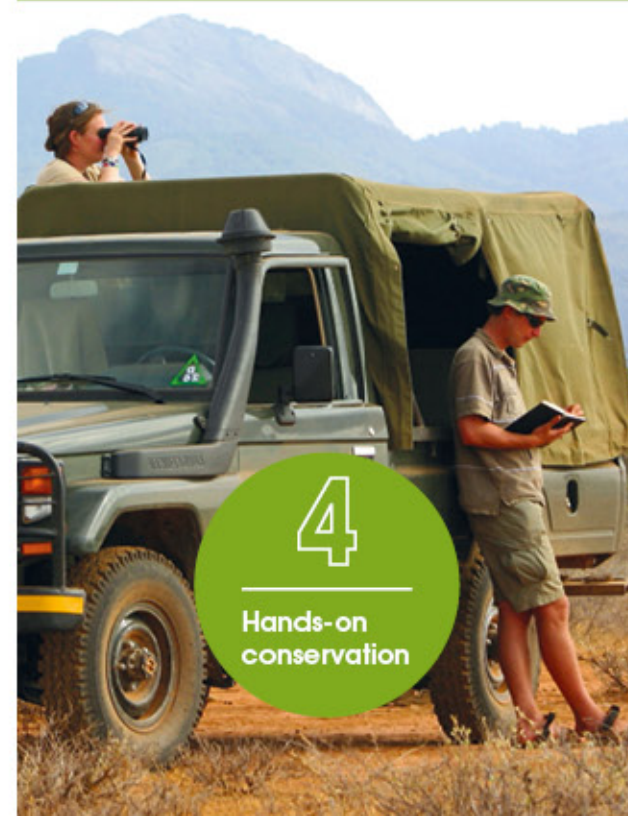
2 | Guest driven success



3 | Maximise the impact of our animals, plants and landscapes



4 | Hands-on conservation



5 | Tell stories



6 | Enable our people to flourish



Diversification of revenue streams to ensure financial fitness



Why?

For over 50 years, Marwell Wildlife has been working for nature's recovery.

To ensure the continuation of that legacy and to expand our impact, we must ensure long-term financial stability. The zoo industry presents inherent challenges, including high fixed costs and unpredictable trading patterns often influenced by the weather. Recent pressures from inflation, rising energy and labour costs, and post-pandemic economic strain on households have further compounded these challenges.



What?

Through disciplined financial management, innovation, and diversification, Marwell Wildlife will evolve into a resilient, thriving charity that continues to protect and restore nature while inspiring and engaging future generations.

We will grow sustainably and have set our goal as true net zero. Once financial stability is achieved, surplus funds will be allocated strategically:

Guest experience enhancement:

Investing in new revenue streams and core attractions through our zoo masterplan, including lodge accommodations and nature-based experiences.

How?

We will de-risk financial reliance on gate revenue by ensuring a balanced portfolio of income streams. Examples for income diversification are wide ranging.

Consultancy services:

Marwell Wildlife will leverage its expertise in ecosystem management to establish a consultancy service by 2026.

Long-term fundraising goals:

To offset high fixed costs associated with animal care and conservation efforts, we have set an ambitious annual fundraising goal of £1 million.

Reserve building:

Strengthening reserves to safeguard against unforeseen events such as pandemics or geopolitical instability.

Charitable expansion:

Increasing the scope and reach of conservation projects and exploring new opportunities to restore natural ecosystems.

This will be achieved through diverse channels, including grants, legacies, individual giving, targeted campaigns, and events such as the Marwell 10k and gala dinners.

Functions and events:

In addition to events aimed at driving footfall and regular gate income, we will expand the range of experiences on offer, e.g. Summer Evenings with Marwell, early morning bird walks, art exhibitions, heritage-based events in Marwell Hall, murder mysteries, themed evenings, private hires and eventually reintroducing weddings, as a significant offer.



Why?

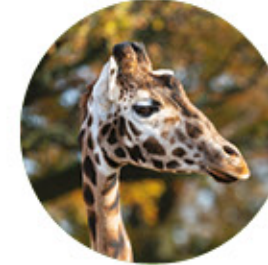
In a world where choice is abundant, life is played out in an increasingly public arena, and you can live or die by your last review, the guest or customer experience you are offering needs to be excellent. There is increased demand for the leisure spend and, due to inflation, there is an increased amount of choices of how to spend time and money within a single cost bracket.

A better guest experience will lead to higher visitor and membership numbers, will make the organisation more financially secure as we drive revenue through a range of strands and aim to evolve our financial model. Ultimately, this will secure Marwell Wildlife's future and help us to grow our charitable impact.

What?

One of the major goals of the Marwell 2035 strategy is to grow our annual footfall to 1 million people a year. Enhancing the guest experience and growing our reputation, both regionally and nationally, will be central to achieving this. We want Marwell Zoo to offer something different to the fast-paced 'always-on' environment of modern life. A chance to escape and enjoy, a chance to slow down and experience nature.

Our key aim of this strand of our strategy is to ensure that everyone who visits us at Marwell Zoo will leave feeling satisfied by their experience and that they have enjoyed themselves.



How?

Warm welcome that extends all day:

Experiences for the senses - our visitor attraction experience will be shaped by a range of touchpoints that will set Marwell Zoo apart - dynamic habitats, immersive experiences and a range of sights, smells, sounds and tastes, giving the guest more than they expected. This will be developed in line with our zoo masterplan.

More guest facilities:

Toilet provision, play areas aimed at a wider age range, a quiet room, multi-faith prayer room and the addition of guest accommodation.

Food glorious food:

We will put food at the centre of the experience. More and more, what people eat and how they feel when they eat it is central to any guest experience. Through the introduction of different catering offers e.g. afternoon teas, locally-sourced breakfast and brunch offerings, food festivals, pop-up bars, gourmet evening events in Marwell Hall, aspirational event catering and themed street food outlets we will put Marwell Zoo on the map as a foodie destination in its own right.

Upweighting our memberships:

The introduction of tiered membership, from a simple annual pass model, through to an option, which engages our members with conservation talks, special events and behind-the-scenes experiences will aim to not only retain more of our current members, but also grow our membership, building lifelong support of our charity.

Opening our estate, to offer guests even more:

The establishment of a nature reserve within the Marwell Estate, bringing people closer to nature in another way.

Maximising the impact of our animals, plants and landscapes



Why?

At Marwell, our animals, plants, and landscapes are at the heart of who we are, providing unparalleled opportunities to achieve both commercial success and charitable goals. We have both a moral and legal obligation to ensure good welfare for the animals in our care. High standards of animal welfare and clear links between the zoo and our conservation work are also both crucial to ensuring the continuation of our social licence to function.

Our landscapes and animals create spaces where guests can enjoy meaningful learning experiences while gaining a deeper understanding of the intricate relationships sustaining life on earth.

What?

Marwell Zoo will actively maximise the impact of its animals, plants, and landscapes by delivering direct conservation action, managing sustainable populations, and advancing research that supports wildlife protection.

We will enhance visitor experiences through immersive learning opportunities, interactive conservation education, and wellbeing-focussed nature connections. We have developed a zoo masterplan, which tells the story of our conservation strategy, provides interactive and dynamic habitats for a range of species, illustrates a range of ecosystems through a collection of different gardens and landscapes and incorporates new guest facilities and offers.



How?

Using advancing animal welfare and husbandry:

Central to achieving excellent welfare is an evidence-based approach to animal care and a culture of continuous improvement. Species selection and management will be aimed at ensuring that animals thrive at Marwell.

Promoting nature conservation and sustainability:

We aim to maintain sustainable animal populations with the purpose of contributing to assurance populations, reintroduction programmes, education and the development of expertise. As we implement our species plan, we will build sustainably and use the opportunity to demonstrate the latest in sustainable technology.

Promoting the benefits of nature for health and wellbeing:

Using the five pathways of nature connection (beauty, emotion, contact, meaning and compassion), we will explain how people can use nature to benefit physical and mental health throughout the guest journey.

Growing the next generation of nature champions:

Marwell Wildlife's education strategy will be delivered in the second half of 2025 and will establish a comprehensive, tiered learning framework that engages individuals from early years through to postgraduate education.

Knowledge exchange and innovation:

We will work with academic partners, other zoos and industry partners, using our microcosm of interactions between animals, landscapes and people, to find evidence to support nature-based solutions to some of the world's problems.

Marwell Master Plan: Telling our conservation story



Masterplan

Our zoo masterplan sets out a guest journey that will be structured to deliver a fun and informative message that follows the three key themes of our conservation strategy.

At the point of arrival, we want to create a feeling of anticipation in our guests, provide facilities for guest comfort and begin scene-setting. Guests will be introduced to Marwell and our conservation strategy at the entry to the zoo so that by the time they reach the red pandas, they will have a good understanding of Marwell's purpose and the purpose of a modern zoo, the concept of Conservation Health and the themes of the strategy: Health, Connection, Knowledge Exchange & Innovation.

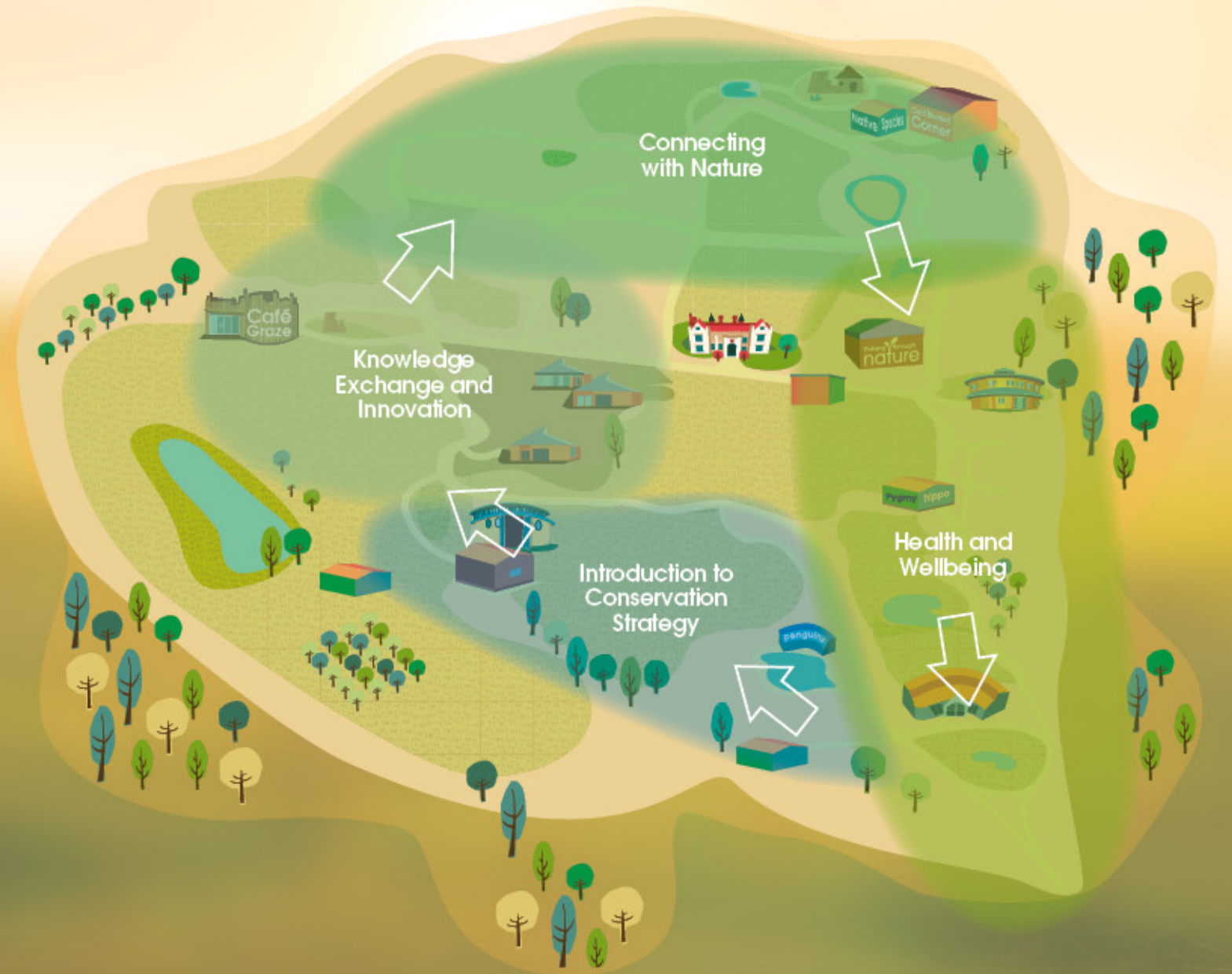
Using the interpretation displays in Wild Explorers, Aridlands and Amur tigers, our guests will be introduced to our conservation programmes in Kenya, Tunisia and Bhutan. Through careful communications, we will pose questions for our guests to consider while on their journey to help them understand what our work means to them.

When they reach the north-east corner of the zoo, guests will be introduced to the five pathways to connecting with nature and encouraged to experience these as they make their way through several walkthroughs including Energy for Life: Tropical House, Walkthrough Aviaries and Wallaby Walkthrough before coming to the UK Native Species Zone.

The entire guest journey will aim to surprise and delight with opportunities for play, experience, art, 'instagrammable moments', excitement interspersed with moments of serenity and calm to encourage reflection and promote wellbeing.

On the final part of the journey, the concept of how connecting with nature can improve health and wellbeing will be introduced. This will lead on to the One Health concept with supporting examples of how the health of people, animals and ecosystems are linked. As guests approach the exit, we want them to think about the highlights of their visit, the memories they've made, what the experience means to them, how they can change their behaviour to make a difference to both wildlife and themselves and then finally leave the zoo with a sense of satisfaction.

We want our guests to understand that we are a charity whose primary purpose is the conservation of biodiversity and that a balance between people and nature is needed for both to thrive. We want to educate and inspire our guests and for them to experience that time spent in nature is good for their health and wellbeing.





Why?

Our continued focus to present Marwell Wildlife as an exemplar of a modern conservation charity, using our zoo as an instrumental driver of change, allows us to develop wider impacts around the globe.

In an increasingly connected world, which brings wildlife and people into ever closer contact, we require new adaptive solutions to upcoming challenges. Fundamental, yet critically threatened interactions between biodiversity and ecosystems, health, food, water and human insecurity demand that conservation addresses an increasingly broad perspective.

What?

Through our existing and future conservation projects we will amplify and address the following critical needs:

Empowerment of indigenous peoples:

Sustainably manage environments, with a focus on young people and particularly of women and girls.

Engage and connect people, bringing new perspectives on the benefits of conservation activities to communities.

Unifying old and new technologies:

Combining the cutting edge technology with centuries of community expertise to drive hope for some of the planet's most threatened species.



Development and utilisation of soft-power environmental diplomacy:

Shift scenarios from problems to positive outcomes (e.g. megafauna in North Africa; Grevy's zebra range expansion in Kenya, Ethiopia, S. Sudan and Horn of Africa; snow leopard transboundary conservation; tiger iconography for positive change).

Develop the means to deploy advanced technologies:

For the benefit of communities in remote and forgotten areas. Highlight emblematic species who exemplify innovative solutions both at home and abroad through an 'Expand-Connect-Simplify' approach.

International collaboration:

Working with other NGOs, conservation authorities, and universities in the countries we have projects in as well as linking them with those of other countries provides increased expertise and know-how for today's conservation challenges.

How?

Linking Marwell's species plan to conservation impacts, including the health and welfare of wild animals:

Continuation and growth of long-term projects:

North Africa Megafauna project (focused on Tunisia), Grevy's zebra conservation in Northern Kenya, snow leopard population and range assessment using UAVs, Bhutan project exploring cultural connections to big cats with a focus on tigers, sand lizard breeding and re-releasing sand lizards to suitable habitats in the UK.

Establishing new projects at Marwell Zoo:

With the opening in 2025 of our new white-clawed crayfish breeding facility, we will aim to support this species recovery through a breed and re-release programme, with the potential to set up an ark site on Marwell's estate.

Working in the blind spots:

We will continue to monitor the global landscape and to work closely with partners to identify and respond to priorities and needs that are not being otherwise adequately addressed. This is where Marwell Wildlife's impact can outstrip its size and stature on the world stage. Growing our conservation portfolio is desirable. We have demonstrated huge impact with species we have committed to over long periods of time.



Why?

The public perception of Marwell Wildlife is a tale of two halves. Regionally, Marwell Zoo is well known as a visitor attraction. Within the zoological and conservation sector, Marwell's reputation is for leading animal husbandry practice, scientific innovation, research and a conservation programme that punches well above the weight of a medium-sized regional zoo. We have fantastic stories to tell, from whimsical tales of the animals in our care to those steeped in the heritage of our estate conjuring images of Tudor royalty or the bravery of the British Royal Airforce during World War II. We also have stories that convey the serious message about the state of planet earth and the depletion of wildlife laced with the optimism of the solutions that we are putting in place to help. And we want to make sure that everyone hears them.

What?

Moving forward, we will focus our efforts on getting an unavoidable message out to the public - that we are here for wildlife and all the benefits that being in proximity with the natural world can bring. We will also promote the message that we are a charity, dedicated to nature and animal care, as well as highlighting our leadership in sustainability practices and our progress towards reaching true net zero. We will ensure that these stories are weaved throughout the guest experience, from the first interaction with us, and build an ongoing engagement with our brand and our mission, so that people feel like they are on a journey with us and can celebrate our successes.



How?

Digital, digital and digital:

An evolution of our website will place greater emphasis on our conservation credentials, nature-based experiences and modern outlook to animal care. We will also expand Marwell's presence on a number of media formats such as broadcast, radio, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram and including the introduction of the use of Marwell's own podcast series and video blogs.

Partnership working to amplify our messages:

We will actively broaden the scope and depth of our partnerships including corporate, academic and community-based groups and charities, to ensure our storytelling reaches diverse audiences with greater impact. We will prioritise strategic alliances with media partners, influencers, and content creators who share our passion for wildlife and conservation.

Interpretation, events and art - dynamic storytelling to captivate all:

We will use the zoo experience (signage, talks, volunteer hubs, podcasts and events) to present a cohesive story that aligns with our conservation strategy so that guests leave us with a feeling of understanding and satisfaction about what Marwell Wildlife is working for.

Marwell Wildlife arts strategy:

We will define how we can introduce visual art throughout the park, connecting people to nature through the pathways of 'beauty' and 'emotion'. It will also define how other art forms such as performance art, dance and music can be used to tell stories through our events programming, education programmes and community outreach.

6

Enable our people to flourish



People and nature thriving together: One health

An organisation is only as good as its people; They are our greatest asset.

What?

We will make a career at Marwell Wildlife a sought-after and well rewarded option both for those already here and for the team members of the future. We want people to feel, by working for Marwell, they have not only made a difference to nature, but for themselves as well. By giving people the right tools to flourish, they will be able to achieve their career ambitions and feel rewarded.



How?

Engrain well-defined values-led behaviours:

Values have been defined by the team as a collective, as representative of how they believe Marwell Wildlife should be. Officially launched at the end of 2024, our value-led behaviours will be our guide for how we act, to each other, our partners and our planet, as we seek to grow our impact and handprint locally and regionally.

Great people, achieving great things:

With a correctly structured team with resources in the right places, a well-defined career pathway, and a robust performance appraisal system, there will be clarity in how to achieve your career goals at Marwell.

Bringing your own brilliant self to be part of our herd:

We commit to embedding EDI into the heart of our organisation through training, ongoing policy review, affinity groups, the establishment of a Next Generation Board and a culture of acceptance.

Giving people the right tools to do the job:

We recognise that Marwell has an ageing infrastructure and that staff facilities are way behind some of our peers. We aim to upgrade these, in line with the zoo masterplan, including, but not limited to new staff welfare provisions, more veterinary facilities, upgrades to maintenance and facilities departments and introduction of digital platforms for health and safety management.

The Marwell values-led behaviours

We Care

about people, nature, and our planet. Inclusion is at the heart of our organisation, ensuring everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to contribute to our mission, striving to make Marwell Wildlife accessible and welcoming to all.

We Commit

We will be steadfast in our mission of working for nature's recovery. We will keep our promises and make long-term commitments to projects that we believe will make a real difference to people, animals and ecosystems.

We Act

We will cultivate a vibrant, enthusiastic culture where our team is inspired to make a difference every day. By staying agile and open to change, we will ensure our organisation remains relevant, impactful, and future-focussed in an ever-evolving world.

We Trust

Inspired through a culture of respect, openness and honesty.



Marwell 2035: Connect, protect, restore, thrive

Marwell Wildlife's 2035 strategy is an inspiring vision for growth, impact, and connection. It's about transforming our charity into a hub of conservation excellence, where every guest, learner, and partner becomes part of our mission to restore nature.

We're aiming high: doubling our visitor numbers to one million annually, offering world-class educational opportunities from toddlers to postgraduates, and expanding our conservation reach to protect wildlife and ecosystems both locally and globally. We have worked hard to present a vision for Marwell 2035, distilled down to ten goals.

1. Engage over 1 million people a year with Marwell Wildlife
2. Diversify our Income model Including Increasing fundraising to £1m annually
3. Deliver an annual surplus to provide long term financial sustainability
4. Reach true net zero by 2035
5. Establish a nature reserve on the Marwell Estate
6. Deliver our zoo masterplan, with new species and new guest facilities
7. Deliver our current conservation strategy and continue our long-term projects whilst exploring expansion of our portfolio
8. Impact over 100,000 children and young people through our education programmes
9. Deliver an art strategy which sees Marwell become a hub for nature inspired creativity
10. Improve our employee engagement through our behaviour led culture, empowering great people to have great careers





...Final thought

Our journey will be guided by bold innovation and a commitment to our people, our animals, our projects, our guests and to growing sustainably, aiming for net-zero operations while creating unforgettable experiences that bring people closer to nature.

From immersive zoo exhibits and new accommodation to empowering our team and fostering inclusivity, Marwell will be a place where people, animals, and landscapes thrive together. With determination and passion, we will inspire change, champion biodiversity, and lead the way in creating a future where nature flourishes for everyone.

Thank you

We would like to offer our ongoing thanks to all those who support Marwell Wildlife. From our dedicated teams who are passionately committed to our mission, to our board of trustees who give their time and skills so generously. Also to our community of members and supporters who have remained so loyal over the years. We hope you will all join us in our excitement for the next stage of Marwell's journey.



For further information

**[marwell.org.uk/
conservation](http://marwell.org.uk/conservation)**

To access our
publications

**[marwell.org.uk/
publications](http://marwell.org.uk/publications)**

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