



New rewilding charity to give everyone the opportunity to create UK network of large sanctuaries for nature recovery

Heal to use what3words addressing system to inspire involvement

A new rewilding charity which gives everyone the opportunity to help create a network of sanctuaries in the UK for nature recovery launches on Monday 30 March 2020.

Heal has one purpose: to become a dedicated 'rewilding landowner', raising money to buy land in strategic locations as part of wider Nature Recovery Networks, along with associated buildings for accommodation and learning spaces. Heal sites will be places where wildlife can thrive and where regenerating soil, plants and trees can capture increasing amounts of carbon. Former farms on lower-grade land would be among the potential locations.

As such, Heal will be a focus for urgent, practical action nationally in response to the UK's biodiversity collapse and the climate emergency.

The charity has hit upon a novel way to attract support from individuals, using the what3words global addressing system. Called 'Heal 3x3' (#heal3x3), a £20 donation will eventually be linked to a real 3m x 3m square of land being rewilded. The square's location will be identifiable through the what3words map or app, and drone photographs will enable changes over time to be seen.

The charity's founding patron is Ted Green, the national ancient tree expert who since 1999 has been involved with the Knepp Estate, the Sussex-based rewilding project.

The initial aim is to have a fully enclosed foundation project of around 500 acres (200ha) established in a southern English county within two years, which will require up to £7m in funding. This project, called 'Heal South' during the fundraising stage, will become the blueprint for subsequent locations.

'The fastest way to create urgently needed nature sanctuaries at scale is for 'everyone, together' to help make it happen,' says Jan Stannard, one of Heal's founder trustees.

Mental health and learning

As well as being places where wildlife can thrive unhindered, Heal wants its sites to become sanctuaries for people to spend quiet time in nature and to learn about it. 'Our vision is to heal the land, heal nature and heal ourselves,' Jan Stannard continues. 'More than ever, people need the chance to benefit from being in nature, to help their mental and physical health.'



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The charity's plan is to run a year-round programme of workshops and courses for the general public and professionals, on rewilding, ecology, gardening for wildlife, growing food, living sustainably and climate change. These will take place on sites in buildings repurposed as learning spaces, as well as being used for accommodation and staff offices.

Heal 3x3 and what3words

Heal 3x3 is a way for individuals to make a positive difference by contributing directly to rewilding. The funding initiative is based on the what3words global addressing system, which assigns three-word addresses to every 3m x 3m square on earth, in the form ///ground.ripe.closed, for example.

An individual donation of £20 will enable Heal to buy 3m x 3m of land; when a project funding target is reached and Heal acquires a land holding, the what3word addresses covering the area to be rewilded will be compiled. Each square will then be randomly assigned to a personal donor. People will be able to view the exact location of their square, or squares, by entering the what3words address into the what3words [online map](#) or free app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#), using a map or satellite view. Though donors won't own the land, Heal believes this connection will give every supporter a strong sense of being part of a valuable and inspiring rewilding project.

When a site opens for visitors, donors will be welcome to visit and, if their square is in an accessible section, look out from paths over the area which contains it. Heal also plans to program a drone with the what3words co-ordinates so that, for a further donation amount still to be finalised, photographs of squares can be taken and sent to the donor so that they can monitor the progress of the rewilding.

Giles Rhys Jones, CMO at what3words, said: 'There are so many innovative and original ways that people all over the world use what3words and the 'Heal 3x3' fundraising project exemplifies that. This project can help bring us closer to nature and protect it for future generations by pledging support for an exact three meter square. You can then use the what3words address to visit it virtually and eventually discover it in person.'

For further funding, the charity will seek support from companies and charitable foundations, and will approach the Government to discuss securing a share of the Nature for Climate Fund. There are compelling reasons for companies to become involved with Heal, from corporate responsibility to employee engagement and sustainability.



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The team behind Heal, who have backgrounds in business, finance, science and conservation, are all passionate about taking action on species declines and habitat loss in the UK. The founder trustees have spent nearly two years on research and planning, and have gathered input and feedback from dozens of individual experts and organisations in the private and public sectors. They are particularly grateful to Rewilding Britain, who have passed on detailed knowledge and advice, and to Charlie Burrell and Isabella Tree at the Knepp Estate for their support.

Heal is also establishing Heal Future, a young rewilders' network for supporters aged 14-30, led by a panel of young advisors headed by volunteer Hannah Needham, 26. The panel will make sure that the charity's work reflects the views and interests of the next generation.

Urgent and radical

'Setting up Heal is our way of responding practically to the call for urgent and radical action in the face of the environmental and climate emergency,' says Jan Stannard. 'But rewilding is more than another way of using the land – it has become a synonym for hope.'

'In its 25-year Environment Plan, the UK government's aim is for 500,000ha of wildlife habitat to be created or restored. For that habitat to be permanent, the landowners must put nature first, like Heal. We won't buy land and abandon it. We will be actively supporting the processes that lead to an abundance of plants and wildlife. We will also contribute to local economies by creating new jobs and becoming destinations for visitors.'

'These will be places created not just for us but for future generations, and not for profit. Even as we live through the challenges of the coming months, those able to help us have a way to take a simple, positive step to make a difference through Heal 3x3.'

'We also want to empower people to take action in their own communities, so education is a core tenet of the charity. In the early years, when nature is recovering, our sites will be places of learning, where experts in rewilding, ecology, climate change and sustainable living can share knowledge with others, who will take it back with a determination to make a difference where they live.'

Rewilding

While there is no agreed definition of rewilding, Heal is using the one from Rewilding Britain: the reinstatement of natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species, allowing them to shape the landscape and the habitats within, leading to the restoration of fully functioning ecosystems.

More information about Heal is at www.healrewilding.org.uk, 020 3355 2149, @HealRewilding

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