



BSBI Strategy

2021 to 2024

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1. Who we are and the difference we seek to make

1.1 Our origins, history and impact to date

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland originated as the Botanical Society of London in 1836 when the emphasis was on discussing, identifying and exchanging both views and specimens of plants. Today we still enjoy discussion and identification, especially in the field, but the emphasis on collecting specimens has changed to collecting records, and providing and interpreting botanical data.

This is undertaken by an ‘army’ of intrepid volunteers, whose common characteristic is a love of plants. The collection of over 1.5 million records by over 1500 volunteers between 1954 and 1960, which led to the publication of the first *Atlas of the British Flora* in 1962, is one of the first examples of what we now know as ‘citizen science’. The technological advances pioneered by the Atlas were revolutionary, using distribution maps combined with an authoritative text, showing the status of every plant species growing in the wild. Many other researchers and societies throughout the world now use this technique, which is proving crucial in illustrating change, in relation to our climatic and population trends.

The BSBI also publishes scientific papers on-line through *British and Irish Botany*, free to both authors and readers. BSBI Handbooks, which provide definitive guides to identification of particular plant groups, are valued and used by both beginners and more experienced botanists.

In recent years we have employed staff, which has enabled us to make a much greater contribution to botanical recording and knowledge throughout Britain and Ireland. Many government agencies, societies, consultants, universities and students, value and use the robust data and information that we gather.

The BSBI is a society for all those interested in plants, whether they be amateurs or professionals, and each person can play a part, contributing to past, present and future studies of botany.

1.2 Our vision, purpose and values

BSBI’s **Vision** is **A world where wild plants thrive and are valued**. This is our ‘big picture’ of the world that we would like to see, one in which there is understanding and appreciation of wild plants and the need for their habitats to thrive at a time of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change. We share this vision with others.

BSBI’s contribution to our **Vision** is set out in our **Purpose: To advance the understanding and appreciation of wild plants and support their conservation in Britain and Ireland**.

Our Purpose reflects BSBI’s unique contribution and strengths in:

- providing high quality, impartial data and scientific analysis
- education, training and skills to sustain and develop a diverse community of botanists
- public engagement and dissemination of information, to drive a passion for plants

Our Policy on nature conservation sets out the way in which BSBI supports and encourages collaborative working at policy, strategic and tactical levels to support nature conservation.

BSBI's **Values** are: **A love of plants, Inclusive, Inquisitive, and Intrepid.** Our values reflect who we are as a community now and how we aspire to be in the future:

- **A love of plants** - Our love and appreciation for wild plants underpins all that we do
- **Inclusive** - We seek out and engage with others with respect and sensitivity
- **Inquisitive** - We are committed to botanical & organisational learning & sharing knowledge
- **Intrepid** - We go out in all weathers and terrains to pursue our passion for plants

1.3 Our decision-making criteria

We will use these decision-making criteria to screen all existing work and any new case for a centrally funded/resourced project or investment, to ensure everything we do both fits with the strategy and ensures our long-term resilience.

We can also use the criteria as the basis for a business case template, to guide our thinking when we are preparing a case for change.

In practice, it may be that a proposal does not meet a particular criterion, but we will have considered it and made a conscious, strategic decision if we proceed none the less. For example, our preference is to work in partnership with others, but an initiative may emerge that we wish to pursue independently and if so, we will be required to present the reasoning why.

Criteria	Detail
Fit with Purpose	The activity is within our scope, delivers to one of our goals and contributes to our vision. It fits within our strategy map
Financially viable	The activity is financially viable and planned sufficiently far in advance to be budgeted. If there is no budget, the task is important enough that we should seek funds/ partners/ use reserves to achieve it and make it viable
There is a partnership opportunity	There is an opportunity to work with others and they are willing to do so
We have the time and capacity to manage and govern	We are able to give the activity the time and attention it needs or are able to find funding to buy-in capacity or expertise. Volunteers are given the steer and support they need, as required
We have the capability and know-how	We have the capability and expertise in house or can buy it in or work with others to bring it in. This could include using training opportunities
Opportunity	The activity will offer useful leads or future opportunities, and safeguard BSBI's established position within botany
Risks are understood	The risks to the activity are understood, especially the risk to brand / reputation / integrity – we have a huge scientific reputation to maintain
We can evaluate our contribution	We can evaluate our activity and demonstrate added value; that we have made a difference. We will get due credit for our contribution and be able to flag up our achievements.

2. The environment in which we operate

2.1 The opportunities and threats in our environment

In discussion with current and potential partners, we have analysed the trends and drivers in our external environment. This analysis reveals a wide range of both generic and specific opportunities and threats, which have been central to the development of this strategy. We believe the following have the greatest significance to us:

- **Climate change, biodiversity loss, land use change and globalisation of trade bring many implications:** species loss; new pests and diseases; pressure on land and resources; habitat destruction; rising sea levels; invasive species; population movement, and not least for us more people interested in botany and conservation and the need for new policy and the creation of new funding opportunities
- **Increasing awareness of environmental issues, combined with the health and well-being agenda mean greater opportunity to attract new volunteers** and develop an interest in botany and the key role that plants play in the functioning of ecosystems
- **The drive to open access to all data has both opportunities and threats;** by making our data more readily available we increase its usefulness and therefore our visibility and relevance, but this must be balanced with respecting the views of the volunteers who collect it and covering the costs we incur in generating and managing it
- **The lack of plant content in education** is leading to poor skills in educators and influencers, the risk that young people may be disconnected from nature, and potentially a reducing graduate pool for plant science posts
- **Changing demographics affecting volunteers:** an increase in members over 70; fewer younger members with sufficient time for volunteering
- **Technological advances,** especially around data capture and analysis, and DNA and RNA sequencing.

2.2 The partnership environment

BSBI is committed to working with others who share our Vision; indeed, we are convinced that we will only be able to create the change we seek by working alongside other individuals and organisations to pool resources, share ideas and skills. We are already in partnership and/ or work closely with key agencies including the statutory nature conservation bodies in the UK and Ireland, the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC), the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) and many local record centres, Plantlife, the Wild Flower Society, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM), county Wildlife Trusts and the Botanic Gardens at Kew, Edinburgh, Dublin and elsewhere.

The potential partnership opportunities identified during the development of this strategy include:

- Training and education of professionals and the general public; botanical and habitat identification skills and biodiversity net gain training
- Citizen science projects for habitat surveys, including urban and suburban surroundings
- Applications of molecular systematics
- Digitising herbarium specimens
- Monitoring spatial and temporal change in the distribution of our flora, and investigating the causal factors
- Strengthening local and national government policy on plant conservation

3 Our strategy map and pathway to resilience

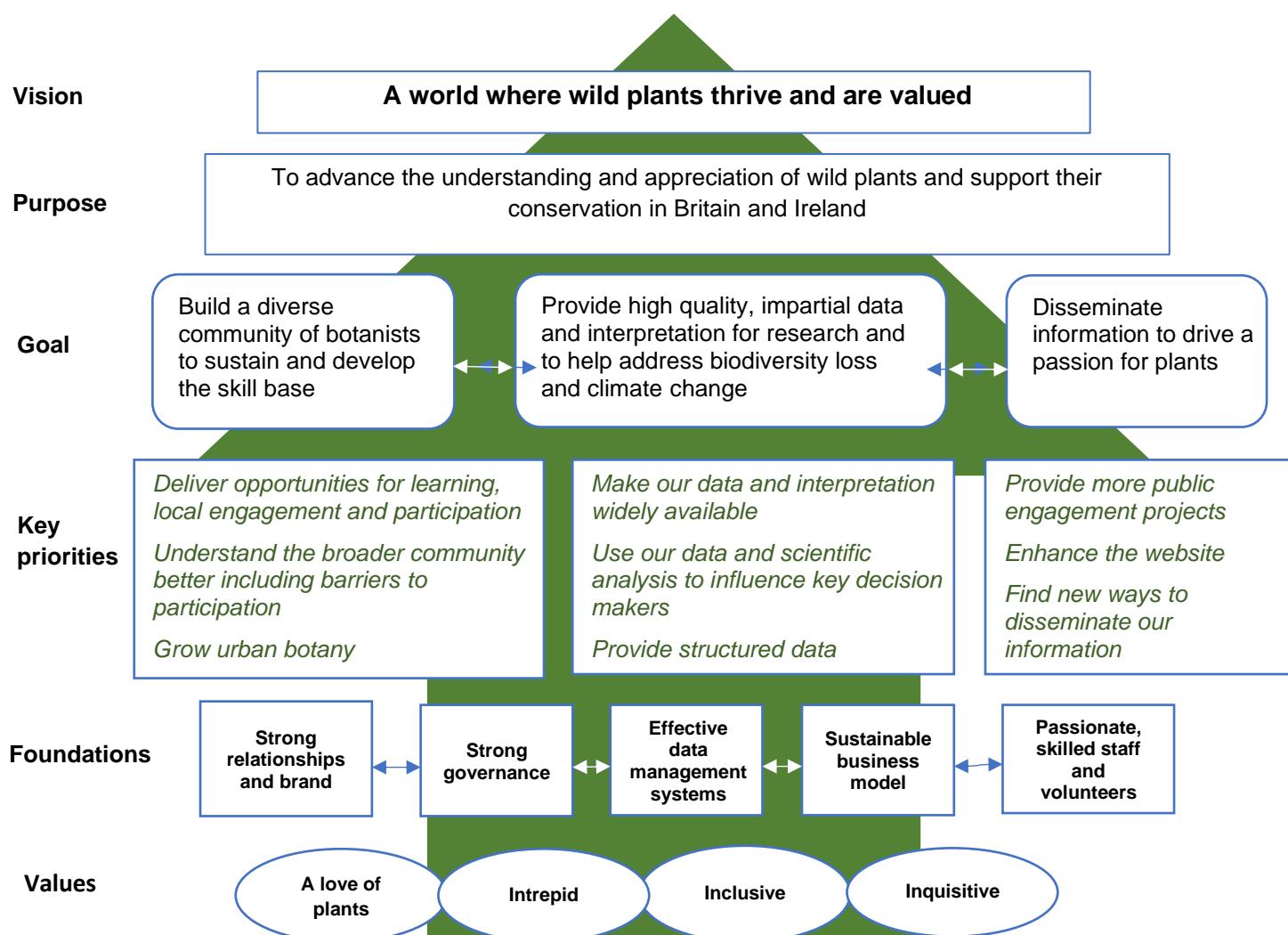
3.1 Strategy map

Our Strategy Map starts with our Vision, which we know is shared by many other organisations. Our Purpose defines our contribution to achieving this Vision, and how we will work with others to deliver it. The three Goals then set out our ambitions and our key areas of focus.

We expect that this Vision, the statement of Purpose, and the three Goals will be the focus of our strategy for many years. The Key Priorities will be our focus for the next three years, and we will review these annually to make sure that they remain relevant.

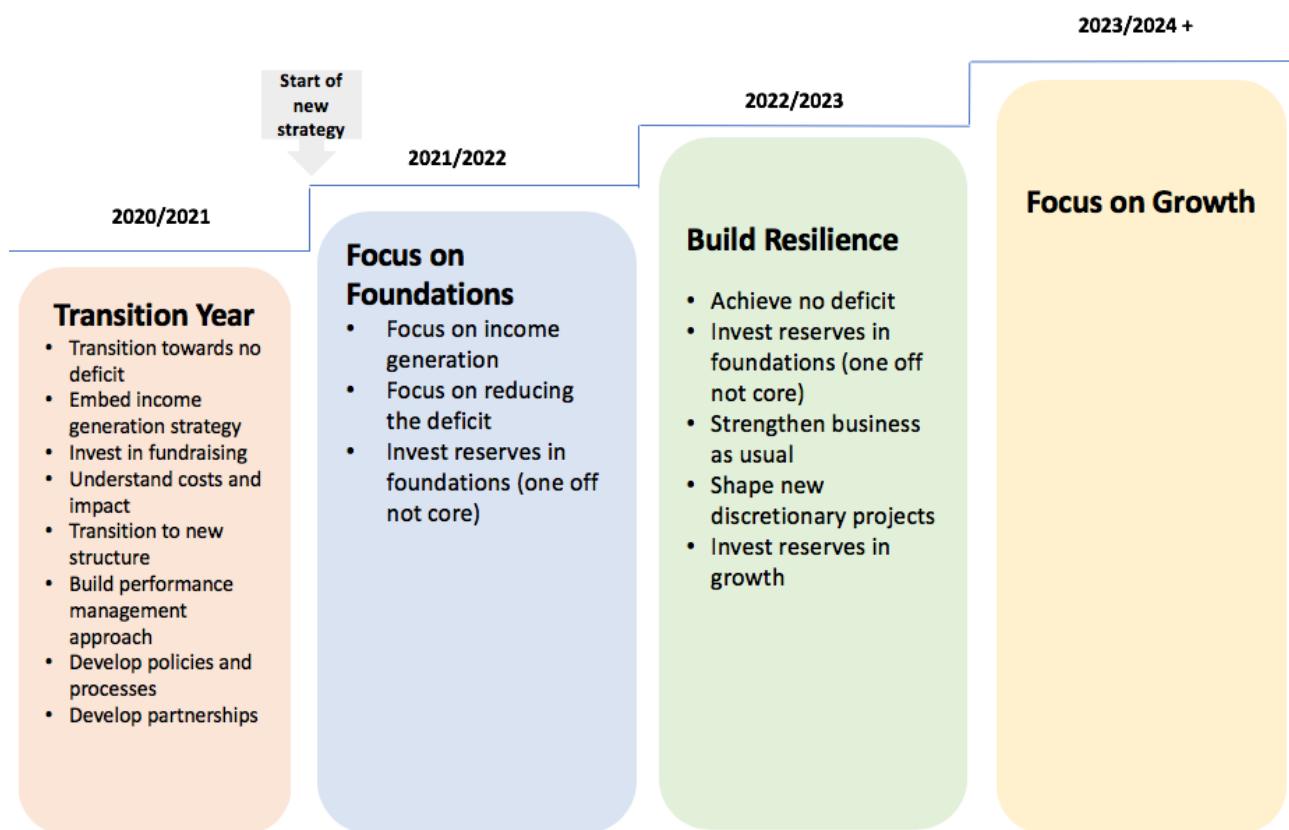
We have defined a set of Foundations which will underpin our strategy and ensure both our effectiveness and our long-term resilience. Each of the Key Priorities and Foundations have a set of success measures and a range of activities associated with them which are set out below. The Board of Trustees will use these measures to evaluate our performance, and our workforce (volunteers and staff) will use the activities to plan their work and define the results we expect of them.

The Values will drive our behaviour and are central to everything we do as we deliver our strategy.



3.2 Business model development

The focus in the first two years of this strategy will be on continuing to build resilience, strengthening our foundations and ensuring we shift to a position where we have a small surplus. We have a range of ‘discretionary projects’, which, when the Board feels the time is right (resilience is secured), we will commission. This is expected to start in 2022. From 2023 we will have secured our firm foundations and will be ready to focus on growth:



The Board will use the following indicators to help define the stages of resilience:

- Reserves within policy levels
- Strong partnership arrangements in place with appropriate partners
- Sufficient diverse new projects in the approval pipeline
- Diverse range of income sources
- Length of contracts with key agency funders

3.3 The Principles that govern our work

These principles guide us in doing what we do:

- We are knowledgeable about botany
- We are collaborative, preferring to work with others
- We are objective and evidence based
- We are dependable and the integrity of our data can be trusted
- We will be forward thinking in our work
- We will be influential and work with others to create change

4 The deliverables and our three-year plan

4.1 Our three strategic goals, their priorities and key activities

Our three strategic goals and their priorities define our core strategy for the next three years. The key activities associated with each priority defines the agenda for all our centrally resourced work done by staff, committees and volunteers. We recognise that our volunteers will additionally wish to pursue local, regional and national projects that will not require any central resource. These projects will come under the management of our four national committees, alongside their other work to deliver this strategy. We want to encourage a wide range of different ways people can get involved to meet our shared vision.

We have included discretionary projects that we would like to develop but trustees must be satisfied that they meet the decision-making criteria before they can commence.

Goal 1: Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base

Key Priority: Deliver opportunities for learning, local engagement and participation in a range of botanical activity

- Enhance the provision of local training opportunities at all skill levels across Britain and Ireland so that all training needs are met
- Provide a vibrant and varied programme of field and indoor meetings that provides something of interest to all audiences
- Support and enhance our network of experts (e.g. Vice-County Recorders (VCR's), referees etc.) so BSBI and our volunteers, members and others have local and skilled botanists to call on as needed
- Provide a range of membership materials, ensuring that they provide a range of content, cater for a range of abilities and are produced via a variety of media so that our membership offer remains enticing and good value for money
- Engage with the public by answering enquiries and providing information on our activities and products so that BSBI is recognised as both the formative source of botanical knowledge and a supportive and welcoming organisation
- Provide grants to support plant training and study to allow those finding it difficult to access appropriate training to do so

Key Priority: Understand the broader botanical community better including barriers to participation

- Produce a policy and set of procedures on Diversity & Inclusion so that BSBI can attract and retain a wider range of participants in our activity
- Encourage local groups and their meetings to consider the topic of diversity and inclusion in order to attract and retain a wider range of participants in their activity

Key Priority: Grow urban botany as a topic of interest to BSBI

- Work with partners who already have/ would like to establish projects covering urban areas (e.g. Botanical Society of Scotland) so similar/ complementary studies can be carried out in other countries
- Include urban areas in our projects and activities (field meetings, recording projects etc.) as a means of encouraging participation by bringing the study of plants to centres of population

Discretionary projects for Goal 1

- Produce an online plant identification guide in partnership with others as an easily accessible tool to improve plant identification skills and promote BSBI and our products and activities to a wider audience
- Establish a project to reach out to and enhance connections with local botany groups, providing support they may require in order to improve BSBI's reach across Britain and Ireland and to provide a local source of activity to members

Success indicators for Goal 1

- Retention levels and growth in membership by the end of the strategy (provisional target of 10%)
- Collect data from new members to allow BSBI to monitor our performance in diversity and inclusion
- Begin monitoring engagement with people with a broader profile (diversity, including age, knowledge level)
- Monitor the volunteer to member ratio for an indication of voluntary activity levels
- Monitor the distribution levels of our newsletters and other material
- Monitor the number of training events held (including Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISCs)), the attendance at each and how participants heard about it
- Participation levels in projects (New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH), new projects etc.)

Goal 2: Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change.

Key Priority: Make our data and interpretation of data widely available

- Collect high quality distribution data for all plants growing in the wild in Britain and Ireland, maintained within an online database, that can be shared widely for the benefit of plant conservation, education, land management and research
- Keep track of all species that occur in the wild in Britain and Ireland, including new additions, so that we know what we have and how our flora relates to the rest of the world
- Periodically assess how threatened our flora is, by producing Red Lists (using IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) criteria) and national distribution atlases, so as nations we can objectively define our priorities for plant conservation and amend national policies accordingly

Key Priority: Use our data and scientific analysis to influence key decision makers

- Through the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS), improve our understanding of how and why our flora is changing and use these scientific data and findings to raise awareness amongst key decision-makers of the major drivers affecting plant biodiversity and support its conservation
- Ensure that our data are used in research into key factors affecting the British and Irish flora (e.g. invasive aliens, climate change, eutrophication, biodiversity loss, pests and diseases etc.) either internally or with external partners so that research is informed and correctly focused
- Provide small grants to support research into all aspects of the British and Irish flora in order to further our goals

Key Priority: Increase the provision of structured data

- Ensure that BSBI collects data in a reliable and structured way that seeks to minimise uncertainty / bias in the results, so that decisions impacting botany are made using the strongest science possible and our solid reputation for accuracy grows even further
- Undertake targeted surveys of species and habitats that are seen as a priority for conservation, land management and research, so that our efforts and outputs are as relevant and useful as possible

Discretionary projects for Goal 2

- Develop a structured grid-based recording scheme that builds on the successes of the Monitoring Scheme and Local Change and complements plot-based National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS). The aim would be to monitor a small sample of grid-squares using a structured (unbiased) method in order to add further value to these two studies
- Develop a targeted survey of species of national importance and those for which Britain and Ireland hold internationally important populations in order to provide information to support the conservation of these species, which will be of interest to our partners

Success indicators for Goal 2

- Periodic stakeholder survey to assess use of BSBI data and analysis outputs
- Monitor citations and altmetrics results for outputs including BSBI science
- A majority of BSBI records available to global aggregators (e.g. Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)) by 2021
- Establish baseline and method for measuring usage
- Establish qualitative as well as quantitative measures for monitoring use
- Monitor views/ downloads of our web material

Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants

Key Priority: Provide more public engagement projects

- Operate the New Year Plant Hunt and participate in #wildflowerhour in order to further extend our reach and inform and communicate with a wide variety of people, including those not able to attend events and meetings in person

Key Priority: Enhance the website

- Redesign the website to make it more attractive, easier to use and navigate
- Move to best practice system for viewing documents, pdfs etc so that the information it contains is accessible to all devices and easily picked up by search engines
- Maximise opportunities for paying/ joining BSBI and receiving membership material via electronic means in order to make transactions smoother for members, more cost effective for BSBI and more ethical for the environment

Key Priority: Find new ways to disseminate our information

- Investigate options for recording and live streaming our indoor events to make a permanent record of them that can be accessed by those not in attendance
- Publish distribution atlases, identification guides and books of general botanical interest to improve knowledge of the British and Irish flora using hard copy and electronic methods as appropriate in order to increase our reach and utilise cost-effective options
- Increase our media contacts and coverage so that we maximise the number of people aware of the BSBI and our activities and products and their engagement with us

Discretionary projects for Goal 3

- Establish a Bee Orchid recording project to engage with the wider botanical community and general public, especially in urban areas. This would underpin work to understand the impacts of climate change in a positive way
- Establish a European or International conference to discuss issues of shared interest/concern (e.g. Atlantic Arc, rewilding, climate change etc.)

Success indicators for Goal 3

- Increased volume of book sales/ downloads (explore suitable targets)
- Number of participants at our events up by 5% per year
- Attendance data at local events and participation in online activities
- Number of website and social media views/ downloads

4.2 Our foundation enablers: critical to success and resilience

Foundation 1: Strong Relationships and Brand

- Produce a Communications Strategy that includes sections and guidance on working in partnership with others, engaging the public and use of BSBI's 'brand', so all elements of BSBI can contribute effectively to maximising impact and furthering our reach
- Regularly remove or archive out-of-date, duplicated or unnecessary information from our website to make it easier to find more important and useful information

Success indicators for Foundation 1

- Explore commissioning a survey of brand perception and establish a baseline to continue monitoring against

- Monitor the number of collaborative projects, papers and funding bids and investigate ways of assessing their quality

Foundation 2: Strong Governance

- Implement strategic performance management practices based on this strategy – ensure all staff and committees are clear about the results expected of them; Board to receive regular reports on progress against the plan to ensure progress and learning
- Embed the structural change implemented through 2020 and review at the end of year 1 the extent to which it is reaping the expected resilience, efficiency and effectiveness results
- Test the process for screening new ideas and ensuring both resilience and growth
- Succession plan in place for key roles, with transition, recruiting to a skills analysis, providing training and ensuring greater diversity
- Organise getting closer to BSBI external and internal stakeholders by arranging a programme of learning sessions and visits ensuring that key stakeholder needs are understood and woven into governance and strategy

Success indicators for Foundation 2

- Agreed structure actively bought into by all committees and staff by end of 2021
- Succession plan in place and operating by end of 2023

Foundation 3: Effective Data Management Systems

- Ensure our data and the database is secure, reducing the risk of data being lost or hacked or unavailable due to technical faults and that disaster recovery plans are in place and well-communicated
- Ensure we can capture data from multiple platforms, which will allow us to receive data from a wide range of sources and keep up to date with evolving technology
- Ensure our database is user-friendly and intuitive to increase the number of people using it and enhance their experience of it
- Produce a user manual to enhance user experiences but also as a back-up should staff positions change
- Open access to our database - the data and the underlying code - making the information we hold more widely available but also access to our expertise in constructing botanical databases and mapping systems, which may also reduce our risks in relying on one individual for it

Success indicators for Foundation 3

- New data input system in place within three years
- Collect and monitor statistics on record entry and validation and data enquiries & requests
- Need for new member of staff justified and in post when funding allows
- Include a question on local use of data in annual Vice-County Recorder (VCR) survey

Foundation 4: Sustainable Business Model

- Increase the variety of grants received and ensure core costs are covered within them

- Establish a system for approving new projects to ensure activity originating from any part of BSBI is only progressed when all our decision-making criteria are met
- Implement our Income Generating strategy as a priority, which will then allow us to build our foundations and develop new activities
- Ensure adequate time is allocated to projects so they can be delivered smoothly and expectations can be met
- Ensure a strong volunteer and staff base, from which all our activity will be delivered

Success indicators for Foundation 4

- Income generation plan by September 2020, including major donor programme and other fundraising options
- Decision making criteria approved by March 2020
- Balanced accounts (no Operating Deficit) by March 2023
- Reserve levels determined in an annually reviewed Reserve Policy

Foundation 5: Passionate and skilled volunteers and staff

- Undertake thorough staff and key volunteer recruitment and succession process reviews and ensure their working environment is supportive and fair (e.g. effective probation periods, adequate support, continuing professional development opportunities, undertake salary reviews etc.)
- Produce a volunteer strategy to set out how we engage with, support and develop our volunteers, who deliver the majority of our work, to ensure their commitment and sustainability
- Produce a Code of Conduct for volunteers and staff to follow so expectations of behaviour, interaction and inclusion are clear and there are processes to follow if standards slip
- Undertake key volunteers' skills audits

Success indicators for Foundation 5

- Staff development plan and trustee skills audit by June 2020
- Members & volunteers counted and activity recorded
- Staff sickness, absence and turnover data collated
- Succession plans, inductions and exit interviews in place for staff and trustees
- Conduct staff remuneration review by Dec 2020

4.3 Our key performance indicators

Goal 1: Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base	Goal 2: Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change	Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants
Retention levels and 10% growth in membership	Periodic stakeholder survey to assess use of BSBI data and analysis	Increased volume of book sales/ downloads (explore suitable targets)
Collect data from members to monitor diversity and inclusion	Monitor citations and altmetrics results for outputs including BSBI science	Number of participants at our events up by 5% per year
Monitoring engagement with people with a broader profile	A majority of BSBI records available to global aggregators (e.g. GBIF) by 2021	Attendance data at local events and participation in online activities
Monitor volunteer to member ratio	Establish baseline and method for measuring usage	Number of website and social media views/ downloads
Monitor the distribution levels of our material	Establish qualitative as well as quantitative measures for monitoring use	
Monitor training provision	Monitor views/ downloads of our web material	
Participation levels in projects		

Strong relationships & brand	Strong governance	Effective data management systems	Sustainable business model	Passionate and skilled volunteers and staff
Explore commissioning a survey of brand perception and establish a baseline to continue monitoring against	Agreed structure actively bought into by all committees and staff by end of 2021	New data input system in place within 3 years	Income generation plan by Sept 2020, inc. major donor programme and other fundraising options	Staff development plan and trustee skills audit by Jun 2020
Monitor the number of collaborative projects, papers and funding bids and investigate ways of assessing their quality	Succession plan in place and operating by end of 2023	Collect and monitor statistics on record entry and validation and data enquiries and requests	Decision-making criteria approved by Mar 2020	Members and volunteers counted and activity recorded
		Need for new member of staff justified and in post when funding allows	Balanced accounts (no Operating Deficit) by Mar 2023	Staff sickness, absence and turnover data collated
		Include a question on local use of data in annual VCR survey	Reserve levels determined in an annually reviewed Reserves Policy	Succession plans, inductions and exit interviews in place for staff and trustees
				Conduct staff remuneration review by Dec 2020

5 The risks we foresee and how we will overcome them

Risks	Mitigators
As a result of loss of funding there is a need to reduce spend leading to a loss of staff and services to members	Diversify funding sources; maintain good relations with key funders so they see the value of our work; work jointly with partners where this brings new income; maintain an appropriate Reserves Policy.
As a result of BSBI becoming more centrally controlled there is a greater dependence on staff with a loss of volunteer commitment and influence	Staff focus on supporting volunteer activity; communications to volunteers are prioritised; the need for volunteer involvement is promoted across the work of BSBI; volunteers are provided with learning opportunities for their work for BSBI
As a result of a lack of buy-in to the new Strategy there is a risk that behaviours do not change and BSBI does not move forward	Vision and strategy are clear; BSBI values are embraced by everyone; a code of expected behaviour is promoted to all staff and volunteers; governance structure allows faster decision-making
As a result of reduced visibility of BSBI work we lose members and supporters leading to reduced activity around our key priorities and loss of influence on our goals	Vision and strategy are clear; we target communications on the breadth of our activities, meetings, training, and publications to members and supporters; we target communications on findings based on our science and data to policy makers;

6 Change leadership and management

BSBI has much to be proud of over the past decade. Just some of our achievements are:

- Building up a database of over 46 million plant records
- Developing online distribution maps for all to use
- Completing a UK-wide project investigating our most threatened plants
- Producing 7 handbooks and 5 other books on British & Irish botany
- Launching our online, open access scientific publication *British & Irish Botany*
- Holding countless indoor and outdoor events and citizen science activities involving thousands of people across Britain and Ireland in order to expand and share our knowledge and love of plants.

We have also grown in size through our increased membership, the number of volunteers participating in our activities and in our complement of staff. Our external profile is increasing, resulting in external stakeholders approaching us to collaborate with them coupled with a rapidly growing interest in environmental issues amongst the general public. There are huge opportunities for BSBI should we be in a position to take them. However, we also face significant challenges:

- We are not yet on a sustainable financial footing, still needing to use our investments to pay for core costs - this prevents us from being able to invest in new developments.
- We have a complex management and committee structure requiring a great deal of administration - the present lines of authority result in confusion, slow decision-making and occasional friction.
- BSBI is at a point of change in terms of its activity – we are shortly to complete a large and resource-heavy project, Atlas 2020, while being presented with rapid developments in both technology and statistical analysis.
- BSBI is operating in a political landscape that is likely to change significantly over the coming years - this may well present us with opportunities, but we must be agile enough to grasp them.
- The emergence of coronavirus/ Covid-19 hampered BSBI's field meetings and indoor events in 2020 and could continue to impact our activity and finances for years to come. We need to be agile to respond to such threats but also to seize any opportunities they may present for new ways of working
- We need a clear direction of travel – this will enable us to engage with the challenges of loss of biodiversity and a changing climate.

This Strategy will strengthen BSBI by putting in place the foundations we need to move forward in a sustainable and resilient way. We now have a plan that gives us the proper avenues for innovation to flourish and ensures that our resources will be used in the best possible way, so we can make the biggest difference to the understanding and appreciation of our wild plants. The goals and actions contained within the plan address and harness the challenges outlined above and allow us to feel confident that we can deal with whatever comes our way.

Having explained the need for change, it's important to point out what will remain the same. Volunteers will remain central to all we do. BSBI is entirely reliant on, and extremely grateful for, the volunteer effort, time and skills received from members and supporters. That will not change as a result of this plan. What will be different is that our volunteers will be fully aware of BSBI's goals and planned activities and exactly how they can contribute towards delivering them and fulfilling

BSBI's potential. The foundations BSBI relies on for our work – strong relationships and brand, strong governance, effective data management systems, sustainable business model and passionate, skilled volunteers and staff - will be improved and strengthened in order for BSBI to deliver even more, and to do so more effectively in the future. Our volunteers are at the heart of these endeavours and we intend to provide them with all the necessary tools and functions to support them in their activities.

The way we have designed our plan means that the great ideas that come from members and volunteers now have the means to get on the agenda. This ensures that we can make the most of and harness the hard work that takes place locally and across Britain and Ireland.

Inevitably there will be some changes required to get us to where we want to go and these will be planned carefully with those involved, guided and steered by the Board of Trustees and supported by the staff team and our committees. We do not have a large staff team, so the plan will help us to prioritise and focus; a more detailed operating plan for this and in turn subsequent years will give greater detail and will guide us in our work year on year.

We will make sure that our partners, other relevant organisations and key individuals working outside BSBI will be given a clear picture of who we are, what we stand for and what we want to do, increasing the chances of successful partnership working. We recognise that we cannot achieve what we want to achieve alone and that working with others will enable us to have a greater impact.

In a changing world, our wild plants have never been more in need of the support, understanding and appreciation that BSBI is uniquely placed to provide. Since 1836 BSBI has repeatedly re-focused and re-structured so that we could meet the demands of the times. We've broken new ground and pioneered new approaches while building on a solid base: our reputation and influence, our heritage and our many achievements over the decades. Now it's time for us to change again so we are ready to meet future challenges.

