

Wilmslow wildlife rescuer aims for charitable status

by Betty Anderson

WILMSLOW wildlife expert Martin Turner who has been rescuing injured and distressed animals for a decade now wants to turn his mission into a charity.

Martin, 44, of Lacey Green is hoping to gain recognition from the Charity Commission so that he can extend his sanctuary to more waifs and strays.

He is aiming to set up a wildlife hospital set in 15 acres at Nether Alderley with incubators, cages, heat lamps and other vital equipment for birds and small mammals which have become casualties of the wild.

The South Manchester Wildlife Rescue has the support of local veterinary clinics and animal welfare organisations and will operate with four trustees.

An animal lover since boyhood Martin, has been giving wild creatures a second chance at life since becoming a full-time

volunteer wildlife rehabilitator at a rescue centre in 1985. He became hospital manager before leaving to start his own sanctuary operating from his home two years ago.

At times it has been a 24 hour a day commitment.

Casualties arriving on his doorstep have doubled since he began and last year he treated and returned more than 150 animals to the wild.

He said: "Branching out on my own has been both exciting and heartbreaking, extremely rewarding. But, working from home is less than ideal.

"I am on call, travelling within a 20 mile radius from home, funding myself and relying on donations from the public who have heard about what I do, and appreciate the service."

By operating as a charity

Martin hopes to attract more donations to help fund running costs, food and drugs expenses and veterinary bills.

He is bracing himself for the arrival of spring when casualties reach a peak.

Most of his calls are from the public who rescue animals in distress including fox cubs, injured birds, squirrels, badgers, bats and other small mammals who are cared for and given respite until they can be returned to their natural habitat.

Martin has become a popular visitor at schools and fetes where he gives talks on his work and he leads a series of country strolls, bat walks and nature rambles.

And why does he do it? "Apart from a love of animals, I believe that every living creature deserves a second chance and, to quote a well known rehabilitator, an animal owns just one thing . . . its life."



Martin Turner with a hedgehog he recently rescued