The Big
Bear

In 2010 **Mark Hughes** and his wife **Kathryn Hughes** were given ten cider apple tree saplings. These were planted in a three acre field opposite their property. This small start lead to them creating a full orchard with four hundred and fifty apple trees of twenty two varieties, and thirteen hundred native hedging plants to surround the site.

Mark loves craft cider, and what started as a hobby swiftly became an obsession! An old gravel pit was bought and turned into a second orchard with a further three thousand trees planted. The soil was improved by the addition of tonnes of organic matter and went from having no worms, to having a thriving worm population.

The trees began to fruit and Essex Cider was lovingly made in the barn in the orchard. Juice from the apples is fermented, blended and packaged on site.

A brand was created, named after Mark who is fondly known as '**The Big Bear**' The name of their ciders come from the nickname for gravel, which is known colloquially as "Essex Gold".

Sustainability has always been important to the company and cider is the most sustainable of all alcoholic drinks. The Big Bear Cider is now available in environmentally responsible cans and is canned and packaged on site. Apple to Can!

The Big Bear Cider recognises the importance of biodiversity and feels that working alongside Essex Wildlife is a brilliant fit. Sustainability, particularly nature conservation, protecting wildlife and encouraging biodiversity, is one of the biggest issues our generation faces and one that The Big Bear is tackling head on. The Big Bear Cider Mill believe that working with Essex Wildlife Trust to protect and improve the habitats of animals and birds is the right thing to do, both morally and for the future of their business.
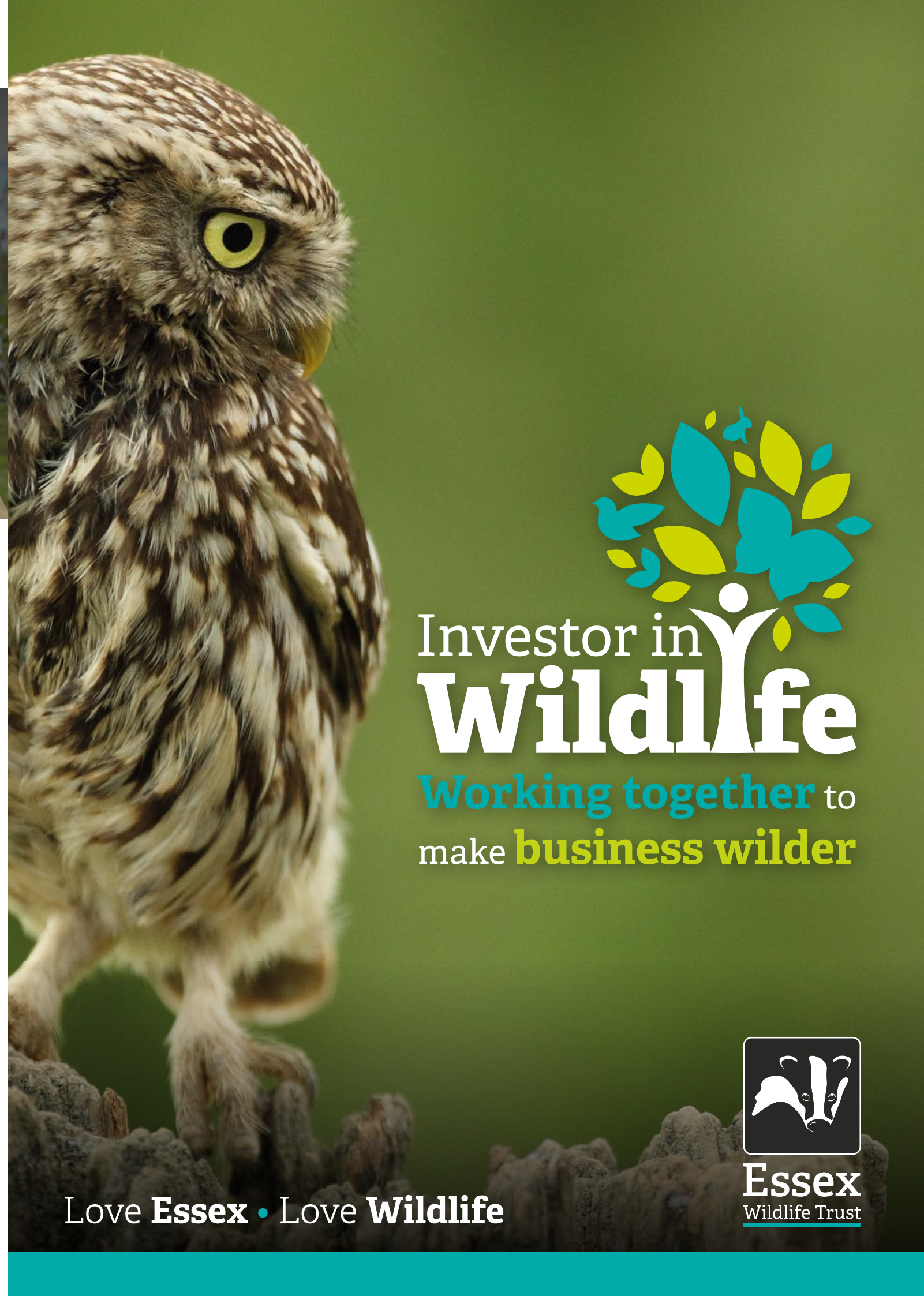
The Big Bear apple trees are grown without using pesticides: they deal with any unwanted insects using natural, traditional methods. Birds and ladybirds love aphids!

The result – Delicious Essex Cider – Naturally sustainable

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thebigbearcider.co.uk

Investor in
Wildlife
Working together to
make business wilder

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