



Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts 2024-2025

Company Information

Severn Gorge COUNTRYSIDE Trust

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name: Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Charity number: 1004508
Company number: 02647374

Registered Office and Operational Address

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Darby Road
Coalbrookdale
Telford
Shropshire
TF8 7EP

Telephone 01952 433880
www.severngorge.org.uk

Auditors

Muras Baker Jones – Regent House, Bath Avenue,
Wolverhampton, WV1 4EG

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank – Colmore Row,
Birmingham, B3 3BA

Investment Advisers

LGT Wealth Management UK LLP -14 Cornhill
London EC3V 3NR



Contents

Page

Welcome from our Chief Executive & Chair	3
About Us	6
Trustees Report	
Our year at a Glance – How We Made a Difference in 24-25	6
What We Do and How We Do It	7
Sustainability	21
Annual Carbon Calculator	30
Looking Forward	32
Structure Governance and Management	34
Financial Review – How our Finances Look	40
Statement of Trustee’s Responsibilities	50
Financial Statements and Supporting Notes	53
Independent Auditors Report	54
Financial Statements	58
Principal Accounting Policies	61
Notes to Financial Statements	





Message from CEO

Hello and welcome to our annual report, thank you for taking the time to read it.

There is a certain rhythm and cycle to life at the Trust.

Sometimes the Trust follows the farming calendar, our wonderful meadows and Soay sheep relying on the cycle of grazing, lambing, shearing, haymaking and harrowing.

At other times we follow the financial calendar, with quarterly reports to our Trustees, annual Policy reviews, returns to the Charities Commission, pension providers and visits from the external auditors.

The weather increasingly defines the focus of our reactive work. We check culverts after every significant rain event and our riverbanks after flooding. Extremes of weather caused by climate change are increasingly damaging our sites, blowing down trees, increasing flooding and land movement, further increasing our workload. Through monitoring and reducing our carbon emissions as we work towards net zero, the Trust does what it can to be part of the solution.

I remain in awe of our volunteers. In a world with literally thousands of options to choose how to spend time, they CHOOSE to spend THEIR time helping the Trust for the benefit of others.

Sadly, this year we lost a long-standing Trustee, Chris Turley, who had been nominated by Telford & Wrekin Council. Chris had been a Trustee since 2011 and was passionate about the work of the Trust – his support, wise counsel, and good humour will be deeply missed.

Chris was a friendly, hardworking and committed Trustee and is missed by all who knew him at the Trust. Personally, I will always be in his debt as he was a member of the Personnel Committee that appointed me and we often shared chats about our respective allotments.

So I'd like to take this opportunity to say a big THANK YOU, to all our volunteers, be they Trustees, Lookers, Corporate groups, Chris who does our security, those that regularly keep us abreast of issues and interesting observations across our sites and not least the Tuesday Task team and our Thursday Conservation Volunteers, who turn up whatever the weather and make a visible difference to the World Heritage Site.

We couldn't do it all without you and it would be a lot less enjoyable too!

John Paul Brayford
CEO



Message from the Chair



No year is ever the same but this one has seemed a very challenging one for the Trust with several severe storms to contend with. The aftermath of Storm Darragh was quite devastating on Benthall Edge and added much additional work to their regular schedule. The impact of climate change is a key concern of the Trustees and so we have a Climate Change Working Group which regularly meets to support the Trust's ongoing efforts to reduce and offset carbon emissions as we work towards net zero. This is reflected in the Committee of Management supporting the Investment Working Group's decision to ensure that none of the Trusts financial investments are made in companies deriving income from coal or oil extraction.

Close monitoring of the financial position and consideration of alternative income streams due to declining rental income have been a priority of the Trustees. The new contracting arm of the Trust is steadily increasing to bring in additional income to support our core functions.

Community Engagement and Outdoor Learning opportunities are continuing to increase. There are now more courses for the local community, the use of the premises for local classes and events which encourage young people to discover the wonderful woodland around us. They will be the custodians of the future.

On behalf of the SGCT trustees, it is my pleasure to thank the staff and the volunteers for all their hard work this year. I would also like to thank the Trustees for their support of the Trust, knowing that our beautiful woodlands and meadows are being well maintained for enjoyment both now and for future generations.

Maureen Bragg
Chair



About Us

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust is an independent charity, established in 1991 to care for over 289 hectares of beautiful and historically important land within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

This includes ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, river valleys, ponds, heathland, historic structures, and around 25 kilometres of footpaths for the public to enjoy. The land also includes three nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), recognised for their unique wildlife and habitats.

Our mission is not only to protect and enhance this special landscape, but also to inspire people to connect with it. We run a wide range of Outdoor Learning and Volunteering Programmes that encourage local communities, schools, businesses and individuals to get involved with nature. One of our much-loved initiatives is the volunteer shepherd scheme, affectionately known as the 'Lookers', who help care for our rare-breed Soay sheep, essential to managing the meadows.

The land we manage was gifted to the Trust on a 999-year lease from the former Telford Development Corporation. To help meet the costs of looking after this land, the Trust receives 90% of the rental income from a number of commercial properties, managed on our behalf by Telford & Wrekin Council. This income is legally required to be spent solely on land management. While it provides essential support for our work, it does not fully cover the cost of managing such a large and varied landscape, so we continue to seek additional funding through grants, partnerships, and public support.

Through the dedication of our staff, trustees, volunteers, and supporters, we continue to protect this unique landscape for wildlife, heritage, and future generations.



2024/25 OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



OVER 3000 METRES

of enhanced edge habitat completed as part of the Potters Light Gives Life project



48 VOLUNTEER SESSIONS

Were organised across our sites to undertake a variety of tasks, providing **4,510 HOURS** of volunteer time




OVER 100 TREES

dealt with in the aftermath of Storm Darragh, to clear property boundaries, access and rights of way



71 CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

Joined us from 8 companies, giving their time to help us manage the landscape



LAID 150 METRES

of hedge following traditional hedge laying methods

PLANTED 80 METRES

of new hedgerow using native species



RAISED £10,000

Via the Big Give Green Match Fund, towards regenerating ponds within the Gorge



25 EVENTS

Were run as a part of our Outdoor Learning Programme, with a total of 285 attendees

76% UPTAKE



1 NEW POND

For the benefit of wildlife and to be used as an educational resource



52 Sites

managed by the Trust and its dedicated team of volunteers

What we do...

The Trust's key purpose is to promote, protect and conserve the living landscape of the Ironbridge Gorge for the benefit of local people and visitors.

We aim to strike a careful balance between preserving the area's rich natural beauty, protecting its historic and cultural features, supporting public access and enjoyment, and raising awareness of the Trust's role in managing this special landscape.

To help us achieve this, we focus our efforts around five key charitable objectives:

to enhance a living and working landscape that retains its locally distinctive characteristics, habitats and species populations

to conserve and interpret, where appropriate all features of cultural and historical significance

to provide inspiring experiences of the natural world and encourage people to manage their local environment through volunteering opportunities

to provide high quality access for informal recreation for the enjoyment of all and to encourage outdoor activity for the benefit of health and wellbeing

to develop and promote a wider awareness and understanding of the Trust's work

Together, these objectives guide everything we do, from conservation work on the ground to the way we involve and engage people to take part in caring for this extraordinary place.



How we do it...

Examples of activities carried out and impacts and benefits achieved under each of these strategic aims are as follows:



Landscape and Nature Conservation

AIM: to enhance a living and working landscape that retains its locally distinctive characteristics, habitats and species populations

Managing and caring for our sites is one of the most direct and effective ways we can support local wildlife. Each site under the Trust's care is a haven for nature, many of them home to rare and threatened habitats and species. These sites are not only of great ecological importance, but they also provide valuable opportunities for people to connect with the natural environment, offering year-round experiences for both visitors and the local community.

Importantly, all of our land is open to the public, providing opportunities for people to connect with nature. This access plays a vital role in supporting the health and well-being of our community—helping people enjoy the outdoors, engage with, and feel part of the natural world.

Each year, the Trust carries out an extensive programme of land management to protect and enhance the special places in our care. These carefully planned activities help maintain vital habitats and support biodiversity across the Ironbridge Gorge. Examples of recent work include:

- ◆ **Restoring limestone grassland at Patten's Rock Quarry**, where woody growth was cleared to protect colonies of Twayblade, Greater Butterfly, and Common Spotted orchids—species that depend on open, sunlit ground.



- ◆ **Managing the transition zones between woodland, grass, and scrub**, where wild, complex edges provide essential habitats for insects and form the foundation of local food chains.
- ◆ **Clearing scrub from fragile heathland at Dale Coppice**, where small patches of this rare habitat are at risk of being lost without active intervention.

- ◆ **Maintaining species-rich hay meadows and pasture**, using a combination of traditional techniques, specialist contractors, and the Trust's own flock of rare-breed Soay sheep. These methods are well-suited to the small scale and sensitive nature of the sites and are supported by a dedicated team of volunteers.

Through this work, we aim not only to preserve the ecological richness of the landscape, but also to ensure it remains a place people can enjoy and learn from for generations to come.

Ecological Monitoring

Understanding the condition of our landscapes is essential to managing them effectively. Each year, the Trust commissions independent ecological consultants to carry out detailed monitoring across key sites. This monitoring provides us with the critical data we need to track ecosystem changes, identify emerging environmental concerns, prioritise conservation efforts, and evaluate long-term trends.

The insights gained through this process directly inform our land management strategies, helping ensure that our work is evidence-based and responsive to the changing needs of the environment. Reviews from recent monitoring have confirmed the high quality of many of our habitats and the positive impact of our management practices.

Managing such a diverse and dynamic landscape depends on having clear objectives and access to reliable ecological and management information. However, ecosystems are constantly changing, and this natural complexity can present challenges when trying to meet specific conservation goals.

To help guide our approach, we host an annual Ecology Day during the summer months. This event brings together our ecologist, Trust staff, and the Ecology Working Group to visit managed sites, review outcomes, and plan future actions. These collaborative site visits provide a valuable opportunity to align our work with the Trust's broader objectives and ensure our habitats continue to thrive.



Meadow Management

Wildflower-rich hay meadows have been in steady decline across the UK for decades, largely due to changes in farming practices. As these habitats have disappeared, so too have many of the birds, insects, and plant species that depend on them.

The Trust is proud to manage around 9 hectares of wildflower meadow, with our most species-rich sites being Ropewalk Meadow and Wilderness Meadow. These areas are vital refuges for biodiversity and are carefully managed to maintain and enhance their ecological value.

In recent years, meadows at Oilhouse and Crackshall have been brought under similar management regimes. Encouragingly, we are already seeing positive results, orchids are now spreading across all the Oilhouse fields, and Yellow Rattle, a key species in wildflower meadow restoration, is becoming well established at Crackshall. We look forward to observing how these meadows continue to develop over the coming years.

Our approach to meadow management follows

traditional methods. Meadows are allowed to grow, flower, and set seed through spring and early summer. A hay cut is then taken in late July or early August, after which our native Soay sheep graze the fields. This grazing serves a vital purpose: the sheep help disturb the soil with their hooves, creating gaps where new seeds can germinate, and they reduce the dominance of vigorous species that might otherwise outcompete more delicate wildflowers.

Some of the key plant species found in these meadows—typical of unimproved grassland—include Lady's Mantle, Eyebright, Yellow Rattle, Betony, Yellow Oat Grass, and impressive displays of Common Spotted Orchids.

Beyond their biodiversity value, species-rich grasslands provide a range of additional environmental benefits. They support carbon storage, water retention (helping to prevent flooding), and provide vital habitats for pollinators that benefit agriculture. Many meadows are also archaeologically important, preserving layers of human history within their undisturbed soils.



Forestry Works

We manage and develop the woodlands of the Gorge under Continuous Cover Forestry principles and under the conditions of our Forestry Commission approved management plan. We also undertake work to meet the conditions of our Countryside Stewardship Grant which supports the delivery of national climate and biodiversity targets at a local level.

Continuous Cover Forestry aims to create a structurally and visually diverse woodland ecosystem with trees of all sizes and ages. This helps to protect soil, keeps land stable and allows opportunities to increase woodland resilience to climate change.

We continue to look after our veteran and potential future veteran trees across the hedgerows, fields and woodlands of the Gorge.

'Light Gives Life' Habitat Improvement Project

The Light Gives Life habitat improvement project has been completed this year, thanks to generous funding from the Potter Group Landfill Community Fund and the Postcode Local Trust. The project's core objective is to deliver measurable enhancements to biodiversity by developing and strengthening wildlife corridors across six sites within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

By creating a variety of edge habitats, we are not only supporting a richer and more resilient ecosystem but also contributing to the wider economic and social value that healthy natural environments bring.

In total, over 3,000 metres of enhanced edge habitat have been established. Where practical, felled timber is being recovered and repurposed into sustainable products such as firewood, charcoal, sawn timber, and turnery blanks, offering both a practical use and the potential for long-term carbon storage.

Upper Haywood Plantation

Work was undertaken by new contractor Jake Woodhouse to improve conditions along the woodland ride at Upper Haywood. The area was previously heavily shaded under a closed canopy, with limited light reaching the ground. Jake felled over 120 trees by hand, carefully creating a valuable Zone 2 wildlife corridor with minimal site impact. Some timber was extracted using a forwarder, with the remainder scheduled for removal in late summer to avoid ground damage due to wet weather.

The felled timber was mostly firewood grade, with a few millable logs. Jake purchased the timber, and the income will be reinvested into the Trust's conservation work. The transformation of the site has significantly increased light levels, encouraging ground flora and improving habitat for nesting, foraging, and pollinating species. Additional habitat value was created through ring barking to establish standing deadwood.

Dale Coppice Tree Safety Works

Essential tree safety work was carried out in Dale Coppice on Beech trees damaged by squirrels. The works completed by Watch Oak Tree Surgery included reductions, pollarding, and felling to ensure public safety. These actions have improved light penetration, benefiting ground conditions and biodiversity.

No timber was removed from site; instead, all material was retained as deadwood, a vital habitat for invertebrates and overall woodland health.

Deer and Squirrel Management

The Trust manages approximately 120 hectares of woodland, where population control of certain species, particularly deer and grey squirrels has become increasingly necessary to protect woodland health and biodiversity.

Deer have no natural predators in the UK, and rising populations are placing growing pressure on woodland ecosystems. Overgrazing by deer significantly affects woodland structure and plant diversity, damaging the understorey and preventing young trees from establishing. This not only reduces biodiversity but also threatens the long-term sustainability of the woodland itself. High deer densities also negatively affect the deer population's own health, as competition for limited food sources can lead to malnourishment and a higher risk of disease.

Following the Trust's Continuous Cover Forestry system, natural regeneration is the preferred method for restocking woodlands. However, this approach is being increasingly compromised by deer browsing. While the Trust has invested in alternative control methods such as fencing and deer enclosures long-term monitoring shows these measures alone are insufficient.

To maintain a healthy balance, the Trust continues to work closely with a professional deer stalker and neighbouring landowners to manage deer populations responsibly. The goal is to ensure that trees, wildflowers, birds, and other woodland wildlife all have the opportunity to flourish within a balanced ecosystem. Deer management strategies are reviewed annually in response to ecological monitoring and survey results.

In addition to deer, grey squirrels present another significant challenge to woodland regeneration. Grey squirrels strip bark from young trees, particularly oak, beech, and sycamore causing long-term damage and, in many cases, leading to tree death or deformation. This behaviour can undermine decades of conservation work and threaten the structural integrity of future woodland canopies. The Trust uses targeted control measures to reduce grey squirrel populations, in line with national guidance and best practice. Monitoring is ongoing, and management efforts are adjusted as necessary to support the health and resilience of the woodlands.

Ongoing effect of Ash Dieback (ADB)

The effects of Ash Dieback (ADB) continue to have a significant impact on the Trust, both financially and environmentally. Given the high number of ash trees throughout the Gorge, the landscape will inevitably change as the disease progresses.

In line with our Continuous Cover woodland management approach, we are encouraging natural regeneration with a mix of different species. This will help to offset the loss of ash trees and support the development of a more climate-resilient landscape capable of sustaining a diverse range of wildlife. Where natural regeneration is not sufficient, the Trust will plant appropriate native species.

Like many landowners and land managers, the financial and operational burden of managing Ash Dieback is substantial. In the past 12 months alone, the Trust has spent approximately £20,000 on essential tree works to remove diseased ash trees. To date, we have invested over £100,000 in efforts to manage the disease and the resulting public safety issues.

Tree felling across the Ironbridge Gorge will continue to increase as the situation develops. We will work closely with Telford & Wrekin Council on all aspects of tree management and will keep the local community informed of any planned works.



Re-wilding

The Trust is rewilding a number of small sites, mostly areas that are hard to access or too small to manage easily. Each site was carefully reviewed by the Trust's Ecology Group before deciding to reduce intervention.

Grassland areas left to rewild will slowly turn into woodland over time. Without cutting or grazing, we expect to see a mix of plants and habitats develop within about 10 years.

We now have a formal Rewilding Strategy, which helps guide our work, support funding applications, and shows how we're adapting our land management. You can read the strategy here:



If we look at rewilding more sites in future, we will notify the local community and carefully map and monitor any changes.



Telford Treescapes Project – Final Year Update

Launched in 2022, the Telford Treescapes Project saw the planting of 120 large trees, including Elm, Cherry, Lime, and Field Maple, alongside 300 whips along Jiggers Bank, supported by the Local Authority Treescapes Fund in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council.

Now in its final year, the trees are thriving thanks to the ongoing care and dedication of our staff and volunteers, who have carried out regular watering, weeding, mulching, and pruning. Their commitment has played a crucial role in ensuring the young trees establish successfully. In the years to come, this growing treescapes will develop into a striking, biodiverse avenue, enhancing the landscape and providing valuable habitats for a wide range of wildlife.



Countryside Stewardship (CS)

Some of the land managed by the Trust falls under the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme, which provides financial incentives to support environmental conservation. The scheme aligns with Defra's 25-year Environment Plan and strategic goals of creating a cleaner, healthier environment that benefits both people and the economy.

The CS scheme aims to:

- ◆ Increase biodiversity
- ◆ Improve habitats
- ◆ Expand woodland areas
- ◆ Enhance water and air quality
- ◆ Support natural flood management

Under the agreement, the Trust carries out a range of activities, including woodland ride creation and mowing, squirrel and deer control, tree thinning, and meadow management. Capital works have also been completed, such as fencing, gate replacements, and hedge laying, all contributing to the protection and enhancement of the natural landscape.

Zone 2 Woodland Management – Sutton Wood

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance biodiversity, ride-side management was carried out in Sutton Wood to develop Zone 2 habitats. Trees within 3–4 metres of path and track edges were selectively felled to break the canopy, increasing light levels on the woodland floor and encouraging the growth of a shrubby layer.

This new vegetation structure supports a rich variety of wildlife, offering important nesting, nectar, and foraging opportunities for birds, bats, and invertebrates. The work also addressed future tree safety concerns, focusing on poorly formed trees and those affected by ash dieback.

All work was carried out by Trust staff using our own machinery. Felled timber was extracted to the roadside for seasoning, to later be processed into firewood or milled into boards, steps, and fencing materials at the Trust's sawmill, providing a valuable income stream.

While the immediate impact of felling can appear stark, woodlands recover quickly, and by late summer, signs of the work are greatly diminished.



Firewood Production and Estate Timber

The Trust is Woodsure 'Ready to Burn' certified, ensuring that all firewood sold contains less than 20% moisture. In the past year, we sold 40 cubic metres of logs to local residents, generating over £5,000 in income. With the recent investment in a tractor-powered billet saw, we aim to increase production over the next 12 months.

The ongoing removal of ash trees affected by ash dieback presents a reliable source of firewood. The Trust's own machinery enables efficient processing and movement of this timber.

In addition to firewood sales, we continue to make use of our estate timber, producing gateposts, timber treads, and other materials to maintain and improve access infrastructure.



Impact of Storm Darragh

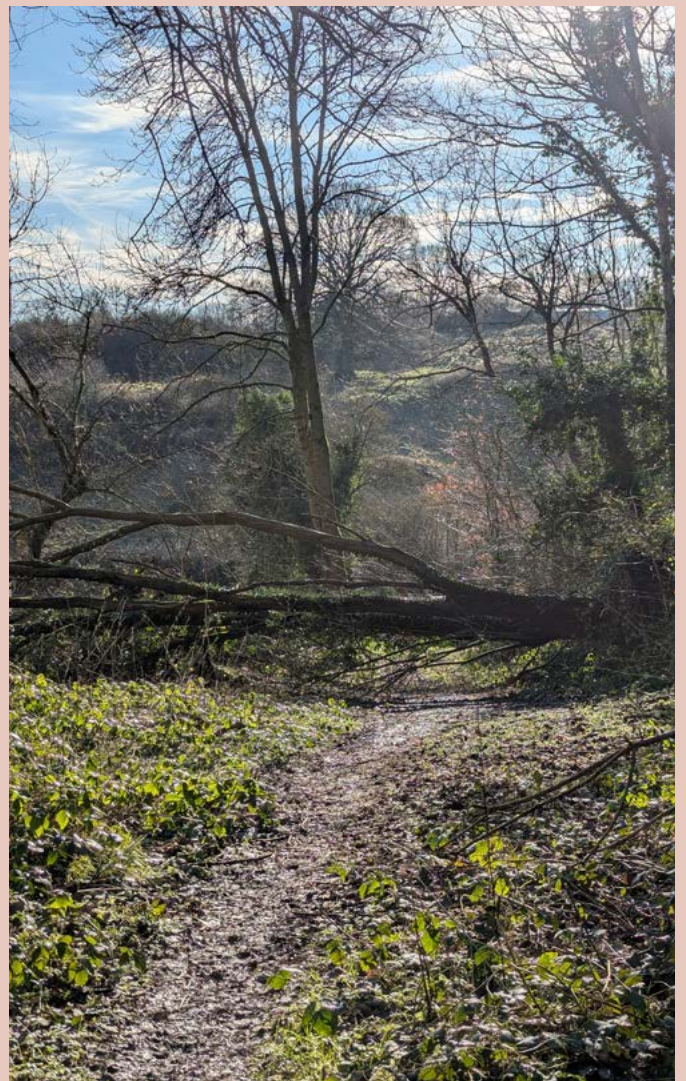
Like the rest of the country the Gorge is having to cope with the increased frequency and severity of storms. This year Storm Darragh hit the Gorge with force. Unlike the usual south-westerly winds that trees in the area are adapted to, Storm Darragh brought strong winds from the north, which tend to cause more damage to our woodlands.

The worst-hit areas were Workhouse Coppice and Benthall Edge, where many large oak trees were blown over, blocking rides and footpaths. In some cases, tree crowns snapped up to five metres above the ground.

Thankfully no one was hurt. A few trees struck buildings and roads, but the majority fell across footpaths. Clearing these has been a key focus for the Trust's team.

Although the damage may look severe, it's part of the natural woodland cycle. The gaps left by fallen trees create space for new growth, offering opportunities for different plants and trees to establish. All usable timber is being extracted for sale or use in-house.

So far, we've cleared over 100 fallen trees from paths and tracks. Given the scale of the damage, we're aiming to have the cleanup completed by the end of summer 2025.





Cultural and Historical Features

**AIM: to conserve and interpret, where appropriate,
all features of cultural and historical significance**

The Ironbridge Gorge is world-renowned for its role in the Industrial Revolution, but its legacy stretches far beyond the Iron Bridge itself. Across the landscape, reminders of the area's industrial past are embedded in the terrain. The Trust is responsible for around 60 historic structures, including lime kilns, mine breathers, adit entrances, and more modest features like brick arches and retaining walls.

To date, the Trust has invested over £300,000 in preserving this industrial heritage. These efforts not only protect important elements of the World Heritage Site but also allow visitors and local communities to better understand the Gorge's significant role in shaping modern industrial society.

Monitoring and Maintenance

To ensure these features are safeguarded for the future, the Trust commissions an annual Structures Inspection Report. Each structure is assessed from fixed reference points to monitor condition changes and identify recommended actions. These are then evaluated using a risk management framework, which considers potential impacts on public safety, nearby highways, high-traffic areas, and neighbouring properties.

All recommended actions are categorised by risk level, ranging from:

- ◆ **Level 0** – No action required

to

- ◆ **Level 4** – Repair required imminently

An **action plan** is then developed each year to address all Level 4 issues, where possible, or to explore alternative risk mitigation in consultation with structural engineers.

We engaged consultant structural engineer Mark Dady of Mark Dady Associates to undertake a comprehensive survey of all our structures. Inspections took place during the summer, and the final report was presented to the Committee of Management in November 2024.

The report made the following recommendations:

- ◆ Potential to stabilise the pipework wall in Bower Yard wall further by filling the pipes with pea gravel, thereby adding weight to the structure. The pipework could then be exposed and retained as an architectural feature.
- ◆ Remove any fallen trees from the safety fencing around structures
- ◆ Reinstate, repair, and stabilise all fencing, including replacing sections where palings are missing.
- ◆ Formally monitor the tension cracking in the ground behind Coalport wall on a monthly basis for 12 months.

This report is submitted for the Trustees' consideration and discussion. Trustees are asked to review the recommendations outlined and assess their potential implications, particularly in relation to health and safety, as well as both immediate and longer-term financial commitments. Any works identified as requiring immediate action will be scheduled into the Annual Work Plan and incorporated into the Annual Budget.

Archaeological Surveys

To protect the integrity of the Gorge's historical landscape, archaeological surveys are commissioned whenever works may impact culturally or historically significant features. Any discoveries made during these investigations are recorded for future reference.





Community Engagement and Outdoor Learning

AIM: to provide inspiring experiences of the natural world and encourage people to manage their local environment through volunteering opportunities

Providing opportunities for people to engage and interact with the environment is a key remit for the Trust.

Our Outdoor Learning Programme is about providing opportunities for people to immerse themselves in the environment through creative workshops and walks. It is about encouraging people to enjoy the simple pleasure of spending time outside in nature or learning a new skill.

Our Volunteering Programme provides opportunities for the local community to learn more about and help with the management of the landscape on their doorstep. Engaging with nature has been well demonstrated to have positive effects on both physical and mental wellbeing. We hope that this in turn promotes the desire to protect and preserve the natural environment, for present and future generations.

Volunteering

The 2024/25 volunteer programme held a total of 48 sessions across 19 different sites. We engaged a total of 57 volunteers throughout the year, 21 of whom were new to volunteering with us. The average number of volunteers at each session reached an amazing 19 (up from an average of 15 in 23/24), giving a whopping 4,510 hours of time to the Trust.

The volunteer team has undertaken a great variety of tasks over the past year, doing wonders to help the Trust achieve more of its objectives. In the Spring, they rejuvenated our pollinator garden and helped us prepare for our plant sale, carried out much needed scrub clearance at Patten's Rock Quarry, repaired steps at Sutton Wood and Captain's Coppice and even helped us root out the few ragwort plants remaining in Wilderness Meadows.

Summer saw the group tackle tree care at Jiggers Bank, giving the newly planted trees the best start, orchid counting in Patten's Rock Quarry, plant surveys in Wilderness Meadows, willow bed maintenance and of course hogweed control and scything at Shakespeare Meadow! The volunteer trip took place in June, and we took them out to the Pontyscyllte Aqueduct for a trip along the canal followed by a meal in Llangollen. The sun shone beautifully for us and it was a great day out to celebrate and thank the volunteers for all that they do for the Trust.

Moving into Autumn, the tree and scrub work picked up again. The group aided St Trinity Church in Coalbrookdale by tackling the overgrown rear church yard, even uncovering some long hidden gravestones from amongst the bramble. We also went to clear some areas of bramble and blackthorn from Church Road Fields, ahead of the sheep grazing in hopes of helping them reach more areas. Coppicing of holly and hazel took place at Jiggers Bank and Workhouse Coppice, and as a change of pace we carried out some footpath surveys of Benthall Edge.

Winter saw us harvesting willow from the willow bed, as well as hedge stakes coppiced from hazel at Benthall Edge and Sutton Wood. After a wonderful Christmas Party (with coffee at the Furnace Kitchen, bring and share meal and awards and quizzes!), and short break, the team returned in January to some hedge laying training with Bob Thurston, before continuing with the work at Crackshall over the following weeks. The volunteers reported that they found the training useful and a great reminder of how to undergo this heritage skill.



The Tuesday Team

The Tuesday Team have continued to support the Trust by giving some of their time to tasks on our sites. They usually meet for 2 hours on a Tuesday afternoon, co-ordinating with our Volunteer and Community Officer, Amber, to determine tasks and sites around the Gorge. They set their own programme each week, with the Trust providing tools, equipment or guidance as required. Over multiple sessions they have worked wonders to cut back huge swathes of laurel within Dale and Oilhouse Coppice, as well as helping with many other jobs. The smaller group size and shorter time period means they are better suited to some tasks that will not fill a whole Thursday for the main volunteers. We are very grateful for the extra time and effort put in by the Tuesday Team, who also continue their work on Beeches and Lodge Local Nature Reserves as well as aiding other community groups.

Corporate Volunteering

The corporate volunteer sessions have continued to expand, with many of the companies arranging repeat visits for their teams. In 2024/25 we had a total of 78 corporate volunteers join us from 8 different companies. They have helped with a wide variety of different tasks, including pond creation, step maintenance, holly cutting, and bird box building.



We will be continuing to grow our corporate volunteering opportunities and relationships, as well as exploring how we can encourage businesses to support us in other ways.

Perfect Pond!

Thanks to funding from the Hilton Jones Charitable Trust and lots of time and effort from our volunteers, we were able to create a brand-new pond behind the office in Coalbrookdale as the start of our Outdoor Learning Area. We were granted planning permission and began digging the hole and shaping the area with help from volunteers. We purchased a large liner as well as aqua compost and planting pots, then asked for any donations of pond plants from local people to get it started. Thanks to additional funding from the Wrekin Community Fund, we were able to add a pond dipping platform, and we fenced around the area with chestnut pale fencing to keep out dogs.

The pond became attractive to wildlife within just a few weeks, with dragonflies spotted egg laying in the summer and pond snails appearing. Since then, it has really begun to flourish, and in the spring we even spotted frog and toad spawn! It will be kept as a wildlife pond and utilised as a learning opportunity for adults and families; a great example of how beneficial even small ponds can be!





Outdoor Learning Programme

During the 2024/25 Outdoor Learning Programme we ran a total of 27 events, including some aimed at children and families. We tried to offer a range of different activities for people to get involved with, including wreath making, bat walks, weaving, and foraging (plus lots more!). Although we sometimes struggled to fill our workshops, we engaged a total of 285 people, and overall uptake was 76%, up from 66% the previous year.

We started off the programme with a Step into Spring Walk, taking a 3 mile loop around Coalbrookdale and concluding with some foraged nettle and wild garlic soup, 11 people joined in total and it was great to share more about the local area. This was followed up by a first-time foraging walk, funded by Telford & Wrekin Council as part of their Telford Walk Week. Due to the funding, it was advertised as a free event, and although 17 people booked places only 5 attended on the day. The second walk funded by the council was a water wildlife family friendly walk, with 23 people attending – going 3 over the stated booking numbers.

“A lovely, pleasant walk in areas previously unknown followed by lovely home-made food afterwards”

As summer set in we began with some more arty workshops, including bluebell woodland needle felting, landscape weaving, and dyeing and upcycling with indigo. These were all well attended and it was great to see everyone’s beautiful creations and the experimentation with such different art forms.

Amber led a series of family friendly walks in the summer holiday, although sadly these were not as well

attended as in previous years or even during other holiday periods. A moth morning session was cancelled due to lack of uptake, and a bat walk scheduled for September instead after multiple families expressed an interest. This was fully booked and Amber was assisted by Cadi Price to take the participants through using the bat detectors and identifying moths.

“It was relaxed and the tutors made it fun and interactive Very helpful too.”

In Autumn we had local artist and printmaker Sophie Woodhouse lead a Gathering Inspiration workshop where attendees used natural and unconventional materials to hone their drawing skills. She also led a festive decorations workshop in November utilising scraps of leather, which was great fun! Our wreath making workshops were once again fully booked months in advance, and it was great to continue teaching people how to use natural materials to make beautiful unique Christmas wreaths.

“Made it all from scratch and were supported all the way”

We concluded the OLP with a willow plant support workshop led by Daisy Askins, utilising some of the willow harvested from our own willow bed, and a lino printing workshop with Rod Sheppard, focused on springtime and new growth.

“The teaching was high quality and relaxed. It was great to learn a new technique using such wonderful colours.”

Wild About Art

Thanks to our successful bid for funding from Envirogrant, we also had the pleasure of running an extra children's art programme in the summer. We held 6 sessions, 4 with external tutors and 2 with led by our Volunteer and Community Officer as an internal tutor. These sessions were all completely free due to the funding and were aimed at children aged 8+. The idea was to explore different art techniques inspired by, or using, natural materials to engage children with the natural world. The sessions were all fully booked very early on, although some attendees that booked would not always turn up. As places were limited, we put measures in place to ensure plenty of reminders went out and cancelled bookings if people regularly did not show up. This enabled us to open places back up. This seemed to help and attendance for most sessions was high.

The theme for each session was different. We started with nature weaving, collecting materials to add in from the nearby woodlands and working them into the woven artwork of each student. We then had a session where children learned to weave a basic willow tray, then using their tray on a walk to collect different natural items. The next session was plant pressing, where each student filled their very own plant press (made from the Trust's own wood!) and created candle holders and cards from pre-pressed flowers. We then had a session exploring nature painting, taking inspiration from the local environment and trying unusual methods of mark making. Print making was the next session, using leaves, flowers, bark and moss as well as recycled materials to create different printed textures and shapes. Finally, we held a session on cyanotype and anthotype printing, very simple methods of photography using UV exposure to 'develop' the prints.

All of these sessions received wonderful feedback from the children and their parents, below are some of the comments we received on our feedback forms:

'So interesting to learn how to make the baskets with Daisy and Amber. Then going for a walk later to use.'

'My 9 year old liked searching through the sticks for the different colours, my 10year old loved trying something new and different. I loved just the right amount of help & encouragement that was given by staff.'

'We liked the freedom the children were given to create whatever they liked. We enjoyed learning lots of new techniques too. It was great that Pam and Amber were so patient and encouraging with children. It was very relaxed and a great environment for the children to try art in a way they probably wouldn't at school.'

'Just a to say a huge thank you for holding the event and providing such fantastic opportunities for the children. My children always come away from the SGCT excited and full of ideas for things they can try at home. It's such a lovely place to learn. Please, please continue!'





Access and Recreation

AIM: to provide high quality access for informal recreation for the enjoyment of all and to encourage outdoor activity for the benefits of health and wellbeing



Research has shown us that spending time in good quality outdoor spaces is good for our physical and mental health and wellbeing. In short, green spaces can make us feel healthier and happier.

The Trust looks after a wide range of habitats so people can explore, engage with and better understand the natural world. The more connected people feel to the natural world, the more benefits they experience for their wellbeing.

Green spaces also play an important role in protecting the environment. They help reduce flooding, absorb carbon emissions, and provide vital habitats for wildlife.

We aim for our sites to feel as natural as possible, so we work hard to balance the need for good paths, signs and interpretation with the need to preserve the very sense of countryside we all head outdoors for. We have tried to remove any unnecessary barriers to people's enjoyment, by removing squeeze stiles and replacing them with kissing gates and providing rest points to pause and savor the fantastic views.

We continue to look for opportunities to improve our footpath network and aim, as far as it is practical, to make the network safe and accessible to all.

Helping people experience and enjoy the natural world is at the heart of the work of the Trust and that is why all our 289 hectares of land is available freely for the public to enjoy every day of the year.

As well as making improvements on the ground, we're also passionate about the quality of the visitor experience, from making sure our walking maps are easy to follow, to providing helpful information and local history in our free leaflets.

The volunteer team have been helping tackle some of the access improvement works on our sites. In the summer they worked in Upper Haywood, fixing broken stiles and adding a new hand rail along the steep bank into the wood. This section is a part of the Monarchs Way and we received a thank you letter from the chair of their association. After Storm Darragh, a section of path in Lydebrook was left damaged. The Tuesday Team went to help install a new handrail and slightly reroute the path to avoid the damaged section, a great help in the aftermath of such a destructive winter.

On other sites volunteers often help repair and maintain many of the flights of steps and sections of boardwalk.

Strategic Access Review

We look after approximately 25 kilometres of footpaths, including over 2,000 wooden steps and 18 wooden boardwalks. The Strategic Access Review, completed in 2015, still helps guide our Annual Work Plan. We also update our Strategic Action Plan every year using information from our twice-yearly footpath surveys. These surveys help us spot any repairs or maintenance that need doing.

We have been working to update the strategic access review and trialled using volunteers to assist with this on Benthall Edge. It worked well as it made it easier to cover the myriad of paths that cross the wood. We made note of any footpath furniture, its location, and condition. It has drawn light onto the fact that many of the entrances to our sites could use some updating, which we hope to focus on in the coming year.

Walking Festivals / Guided Walks

The Ironbridge Walking Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary this year, and we were proud to be involved with the planning process. Our Volunteer and Community Officer (VCO) led 5 walks this year and back marked 1 walk. They all took in sites that the Trust manages and were a great opportunity to highlight the fantastic range that falls under our care. The VCO will continue acting as a committee member with the festival going forward.

We were also invited to partake in the Telford Walk Week once again and offered 3 family friendly walks across the event. Thanks to funding from Telford & Wrekin Council these were offered for free. They all had good bookings, but sadly the bad weather at the start of the week did hamper the turn out! Those who did come along seemed to have a lovely time, and we hope they might join us for more events in the future.

Footpath Repairs

We continue to invest in the paths and access features across the Gorge. More people are using our sites, and wetter winters mean that some paths and boardwalks are wearing out faster than expected. Our regular surveys help us identify sections that need repair. We then prioritise the work and allocate resources based on urgency.

Repairs and maintenance are carried out either by our own team or with the help of volunteer groups. More

and more, we're using timber from our own land, sawn on our own mill, for this work. We're also very grateful to local walkers and visitors who report problems—they act as our eyes and ears, helping us keep the path network safe and open for everyone.

Family-Friendly Activity Walks

The Trust has created four circular 1km family trails, located in Benthall, Haywood, Loamhole, and Maws. Designed with families in mind, each trail follows established footpaths and is part of a fun map series featuring Milly and Orla, the Trust's office dogs, illustrated in cartoon form. Along each route, children and families can enjoy a variety of activities and challenges, making outdoor exploration both engaging and educational.

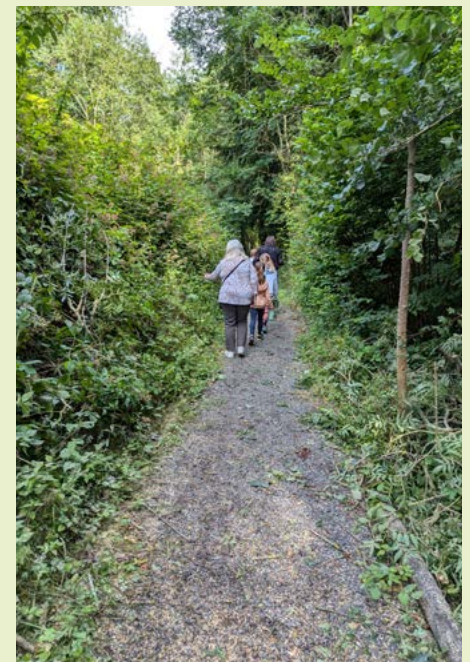
Bounding in Benthall: along past Doris the Dragon, the Lime kiln and Bower yard picnic site

Maws Paws: along the new Tile Trail, Preenshead and Boat Inn meadow path.

Hilly Haywood Adventure: up the zig zag path to Silkin Way and into Haywood Plantation.

Splish Splash Splish in Loamhole Dingle: along the path to the footbridge and stream and through the meadow.

All of the Milly and Orla family friendly walks can be downloaded from our website.





Walking Trail Leaflets

The Trust has produced five free Walking Trail leaflets that showcase some of the best walking routes around the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. The walks provide people with the opportunity to discover some of the hidden gems of the Gorge and learn more about the landscape and history of the area whilst they explore. Visitors can make a day of it by visiting some of the many historic sites and attractions along the walks and stopping for a while for refreshment at one of the many cafés, pubs and restaurants in Ironbridge and the surrounding area.

The leaflets are available to download from our website, from the Visitor Information Centre and from various outlets in the Gorge. The leaflet dispenser in Station Road car park is regularly refilled and around 20,000 leaflets have been dispensed this year.

The route for the 'Iron Trail' links existing paths into a circular walk that includes both built and natural features within the World Heritage Site to encourage visitors to explore beyond the built environment. Its objective is to highlight otherwise unseen heritage such as the remnants and evidence of the iron production process that made the Gorge 'the birthplace of industry' within the natural landscape.

The 'Lime Trail' of Benthall Edge takes the walker through a wooded landscape steeped in the geology which benefitted the past industries of the Gorge. The footpath follows a circular route taking the walker through beautiful SSSI woodland, with iconic viewpoints of the Gorge and Coalbrookdale, before descending to the valley bottom along the Severn Valley Railway.

The 'Sabbath Walks Trail' follows in the footsteps of Richard Reynolds who built the wide footpaths in the 18th Century for his workers and families. This trail takes in Dale Coppice and Lincoln Hill and the viewpoint at the Rotunda with views of the Iron Bridge.

The Ironbridge to Blists Hill Victorian Town Trail is as it says, linking Ironbridge to Blists Hill with a safe traffic-free route through Lloyd's Coppice whilst seeing historic remnants on the past once linked to Blist Hill furnaces.

The circular Trail 'Loamhole Dingle; History under your feet' takes you from Upper Furnace Pool and through the wooded dingle to the Ropewalk where nature meets the industrial past. This walk can also be linked with Lydebrook Dingle as part of the Shropshire Way.

These trails will hopefully encourage more visitors to explore the landscape of the World Heritage Site on foot.

Walks Books

To support people to get outdoors and closer to nature we have published several guided walks books. These will help everyone to visit our sites and enjoy their natural beauty and find out more about the forces that have shaped them – natural and man-made. Each book offers a number of self-guided walks that offer opportunities to explore the history of the area as well as the diversity of landscape, geology and wildlife. All the books can be purchased from the Trust Office, and are also available at Ironbridge Gorge Museum sites, the Visitor Information Centre, and some local shops. Copies of the routes can also be downloaded from our website; www.severngorge.org.uk.





Raising Awareness

AIM: to develop and promote a wider awareness and understanding of the Trust's work

One of the Trust's main goals is to help more people understand and appreciate the work we do to care for local wildlife, landscapes, and historic places. We want to build stronger connections between communities and the natural and cultural heritage on their doorstep, helping everyone feel part of protecting these special places for the future.

To do this, we use a variety of approaches:

- ◆ **Getting Involved in the Community:** We run public events, guided walks, volunteer days, and school visits, giving people the chance to get hands-on and learn more about what we do. These activities make conservation feel approachable, fun, and meaningful for people of all ages.
- ◆ **Bringing Places to Life:** We try to create informative and engaging materials like signs, leaflets, and family trails, that explain the history and wildlife of our sites. Whether you're exploring a woodland or walking through a meadow, you'll discover stories that help you connect with the landscape in a deeper way.
- ◆ **Sharing Our Work Online:** Through our website, social media, newsletters, and videos, we share regular updates, behind-the-scenes stories, and achievements. It's a great way for more people to see what's happening and get involved, wherever they are.
- ◆ **Working Together:** We team up with local councils, schools, community groups, and environmental organisations to raise awareness of the importance of protecting nature and heritage. By working in partnership, we can do more and reach more people.
- ◆ **Welcoming Everyone:** We aim to make all our activities inclusive and accessible, so that everyone feels welcome, whether you're new to nature, a regular visitor, or just curious about what we do.

At the heart of it all, we want to inspire people to care for the woodlands, meadows, and wildlife that make our area unique. By helping people understand the value of these places, we hope to encourage long-term support, pride, and shared responsibility for their future.

Volunteer Lookers

Our volunteer 'Lookers' play a vital role in caring for the Trust's flock of around sixty native-breed Soay sheep, which are used to help manage and maintain our wildflower meadows.

The term 'Looker' goes back many years, when country workers were paid to watch over grazing animals across several farms, often spending most of their time outdoors. Today, the role is far more modern—but still just as important. Our Lookers work on a rota system, visiting the sheep every day to check on their welfare and sharing updates through a WhatsApp group.

The Soay sheep are essential to the conservation of our species-rich meadows, helping to manage the land in a natural and sustainable way. The Looker programme has been running for over 12 years, and our volunteers are skilled in a wide range of sheep care techniques, including handling, ear tagging, and giving injections when needed.

Any ewe lambs born are registered with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST). We are keen to grow our number of registered pedigree ewes to support the long-term future of the Soay breed and help improve its conservation status on the RBST watchlist





Ironbridge Gorge Heritage Festival

In September we saw the return of the Ironbridge Heritage Festival, spanning 2 weeks with different events taking place throughout the Gorge. The Heritage Open day took place on the 14th of September on the Wharfage. The VCO and FOCS had a stand for the day, with a few volunteers coming down to help cover them



at lunch. Overall, the day seemed to be a success, and we engaged with over 150 people throughout the day. As well as some of our charcoal and crafts for sale, we also had some children's activities, and our free walk leaflets available.



Annual Open Evening

The Annual Open Evening offers local residents the opportunity to meet Trust staff, Trustees, and Volunteers, and to learn more about the Trust's ongoing work. It also provides an opportunity for the community to raise questions, concerns, or ideas.

To engage with as much of the local community as possible, the venue for the Open Evening is rotated each year across different parts of the Trust's landholding. This year's event took place on Wednesday 15 July at Coalport Village Hall. We were delighted to welcome local wildlife and landscape photographer, Andrew Fusek Peters as our guest speaker. His talk, *'Butterflies and Beyond'*, was both informative and engaging, and was very well received by attendees.

Trust staff also delivered a brief presentation highlighting recent achievements and upcoming projects. Following this, guests were invited to take part in a Q&A session.

A total of 32 people attended the evening. They had the chance to explore a range of displays showcasing the Trust's work, including our Volunteer and Outdoor Learning Programmes, Woodland Management initiatives, and efforts to address the effects of ash dieback.

Partnership Working

We continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with a wide range of organisations and individuals for the benefit of local communities, visitors and wildlife. Successful partnership working allows us to develop new areas of work, including 'Outdoor Learning,' environmental arts and alternative land management techniques.

- ◆ Barrow Parish Council
- ◆ Broseley Town Council
- ◆ Coalbrookdale Scouts
- ◆ Dawley Angling Society
- ◆ English Heritage
- ◆ Environment Agency
- ◆ Field Studies Council
- ◆ Forestry Commission
- ◆ Harper Adams University
- ◆ Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

- ◆ Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival
- ◆ Ironbridge Meadows and Pastures group
- ◆ Jackie – Lets Flow Yoga
- ◆ Local Community
- ◆ Lodge Field Group
- ◆ Madeley Town Council
- ◆ National Trust
- ◆ Natural England
- ◆ Neighbouring farmers and landowners
- ◆ NHS – CAMHS- BEE U
- ◆ Randlay Primary School
- ◆ Secret Severn Arts Trail
- ◆ Shrewsbury & Newport Canal Trust
- ◆ Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- ◆ Small Woods Association
- ◆ Sutton Maddock Parish Council
- ◆ Telford & Wrekin Council
- ◆ Telford Green Spaces Partnership
- ◆ The Gorge Parish Council
- ◆ The Coracle Trust
- ◆ The World Heritage Site Steering Group
- ◆ Vine Willow Wood
- ◆ Wellbeing with Gemma
- ◆ Wolverhampton University

Tackling Climate Change

As the custodian of over 50% of the landscape in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site we are working hard towards supporting the biodiversity crisis together with addressing the climate emergency.

Our overarching goal is to become carbon neutral in 2030 and we have worked towards this by:

- ◆ Initiating a Carbon Calculator to record our CO₂ emissions and identifying areas we can change.
- ◆ Installing energy efficient lighting.
- ◆ Divesting from all fossil fuel investments

Future plans include:

- ◆ Investigating the installation of solar panels on the office building
- ◆ Investigating a switch from diesel in landscape management vehicles to a more sustainable biofuel

Ongoing ecological monitoring for biodiversity

Continue to transition to electric power tools for landscape maintenance

For more information on what we are doing please visit our website page.



The Trust faces many challenges in its goal to achieve net zero by 2030 include capacity and resources – financial, people and expertise. In particular, upfront capital expenditure is a substantial barrier to the pace of our decarbonisation efforts. For example, purchasing electric vehicles and machinery together with the increased cost of using biofuel as opposed to diesel in vehicles

The Trust will continue to deliver nature-based solutions to reduce emissions from, and capture and store carbon from a diversity of habitats, including woodlands, meadows and ponds.

Below are our annual CO₂ emissions for 24/25

Annual Carbon Calculator

April 2024 to March 2025
Report, Reduce, Change

Summary

The Trust continue to focus on monitoring and reducing carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions arising primarily from the use of fossil fuels, specifically oil, gas and coal. The main sources of emissions remain the gas boiler and the Trust's fleet of vehicles which includes the Valtra tractor, Toyota Hilux, minibus and other staff vehicles used for operational purposes.

Electricity used by the Trust is sourced from a mix of renewable and nuclear energy and its usage is carefully monitored, reduced where practicable and transparently reported. However, gas used for heating is currently supplied from a non-renewable natural gas source.

Emissions Overview

For 2024/25 reporting year

- ◆ Total operating emissions 8.0 tonnes CO₂e
- ◆ Emissions from Soay Sheep: 12.8 tonnes CO₂e
- ◆ FTE staff: 5.75
- ◆ Operational Emissions per FTE: 1.39 tonnes CO₂e

The rise in total emissions per FTE is partially due to the expansion of the Trust's operations following the creation of a new contracting arm, which increased staff numbers and work involving vehicles, machinery and tools.

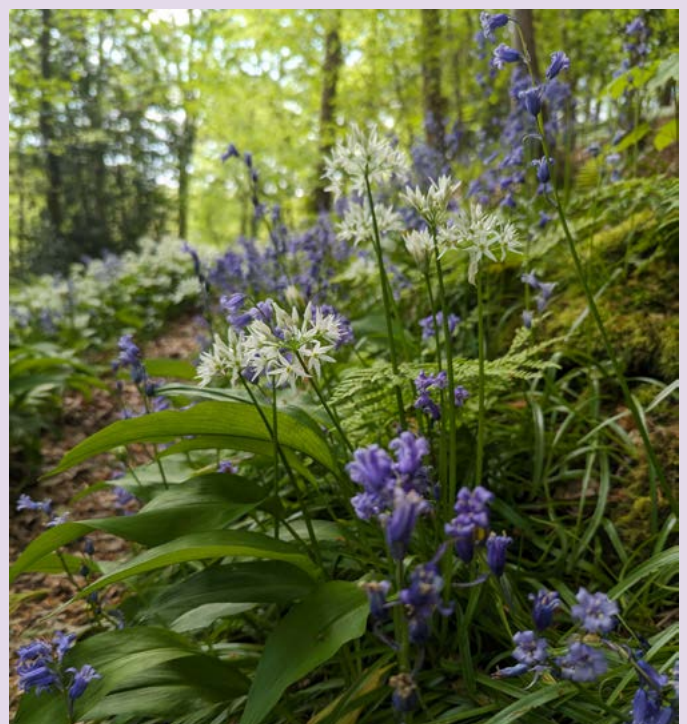
Year on Year Comparison

Year	Operational Emissions	FTE Staff	Emissions per FTE	Sheep Emissions
2024/25	8.0 tonnes CO ₂ e	5.75	1.39 t/FTE	12.8 t CO ₂ e
2023/24	5.3 tonnes CO ₂ e	4.75	1.12 t/FTE	12.8 t CO ₂ e
2022/23	6.2 tonnes CO ₂ e	4.75	1.31 t/FTE	12.8 t CO ₂ e

While operational emissions rose in 2024/2025, the Trust remains committed to minimising fossil fuel use and continues to track the impact of all contributing factors.

To mitigate emissions and increase carbon capture, the Trust continues to apply Continuous Cover Forestry methods in woodland management and is currently rewilding five grassland sites. These progressive land management approaches are expected to increase carbon sequestration year on year, delivering long-term environmental benefits compared to conventional practices.

For further information on the Trust's approach to climate action and carbon reduction, please visit: www.severngorge.org.uk/tackling-climate-change



Scope 1: direct emissions of CO2 (kg) annually from fuel combustion and Trust vehicles (see Notes & Sources)			Scope 2: indirect emissions of CO2 (kg) annually from purchased electricity (see Notes & Sources)			Scope 3: other indirect emissions of CO2 (kg) annually: for example, transport-related activities in non-Trust vehicles, national grid transmission and distribution, outsourced		
Source of Scope 1 CO2 emissions		kgCO2e/year	Source of Scope 2 CO2 emissions		kgCO2e/year	Source of Scope 3 CO2 emissions		kgCO2e/year
Gas boiler - kWh annually	6,669	1,220				Gas grid transmission & distribution	No figures given in Government guidance and it is assumed to be zero	
			Electricity - kWh annually	5,693	0	Electricity grid transmission & distribution - kWh	5,693	104
Wood burners - weight of logs annually	4	185				Water supply & Water treatment - cubic metres annually	120	41
Minibus (diesel, 3960 kg GVW) - annual mileage	518	228				Methane (CH4) produced by Soay Sheep Flock	60 Average head of livestock over year	12,820
Toyota Hilux (diesel, 2730kg GVW) - annual mileage	4225	1,343						
Toyota Hilux (diesel, 2730kg GVW) - annual mileage	143	45						
Fiat 500 (petrol 1360kg GVW) - annual mileage	560	130						
Mitsubishi L200 (diesel 2890 GVW) - annual mileage	838	266						
Dacia (diesel 1090kg GVW) - annual mileage	448	121						
Vauxhall Astra (diesel 1678kg GVW)- annual mileage	178	48						
LFO Vehicle	33	10						
		4,282						
Valtra Tractor (diesel)	1704							
Total emissions (Scope 1)		7,879	Total emissions (Scope 2)		0	Total emissions (Scope 3)		12,965
FINAL OUTCOME:		20.8			tonnes			

Notes and Sources

Renewable energy supplies Electricity or gas supplied from purely renewable sources where the supplier can demonstrate that the energy supplied to customers only comes from renewable sources can be included in calculations as having zero carbon emissions.

Electricity is supplied from 100% renewable sources by OPUS energy on a contract until February 2026. With Opus Advance, our electricity comes from renewable sources including solar, wind, hydro and anaerobic digestion. www.opusenergy.com/our-energy-sources

Gas is supplied by British Gas Lite on a contract until May 2025. The gas supplied to customers is natural gas. This is, broadly speaking, the case for all energy suppliers in the UK.

Wood Burners CO₂e emissions from the two wood burners are included. There is debate about whether CO₂ in wood that is burnt should be included in annual carbon emissions because CO₂ is captured by growing trees and released by burning logs. However, such rapid release of CO₂ is very different to the slow release of CO₂ to the atmosphere during decay and decomposition.

Office building The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust is based in an award-winning sustainable building. The office is timber framed, wool insulated and heated by two log burners. The outside cladding is larch which we harvested from our woodlands. The office has a Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) ventilation system that both supplies and extracts air throughout the office. This system is used to reduce the heating and cooling demands of buildings. The MVHR continually draws and circulates fresh air from outside, pre warmed by heat exchangers capturing heat from the stale air as it is expelled. The roof is made up from approximately ten thousand western red cedar shingles. The office is insulated with sheep wool mixed with recycled polyester; it has remarkable properties, in that during the winter it keeps the building warm and, in the summer, it keeps the building cool.

Soay Sheep the Trust owns a flock of native breed Soay sheep which are used to manage the wildflower meadows. The sheep emit methane which is another type of greenhouse gas. The carbon dioxide equivalent measurement of methane is $1\text{kg CH}_4 * 25 = 25\text{kg CO}_2\text{e}$. Whilst the sheep do emit methane, they are used to graze our species rich meadows as a key means to

enhance their overall biodiversity. We use the Farm Carbon toolkit to calculate the value of the carbon dioxide equivalent of the methane emitted by the sheep. <https://calculator.farmcarbontoolkit.org.uk>

CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) is a standard unit for measuring carbon footprints. The idea is to express the impact of each different greenhouse gas (CO₂, methane, nitrous oxide) in terms of the amount of CO₂ that would create the same amount of warming. That way, a carbon footprint consisting of different greenhouse gases can be expressed as a single number.

Conversion factors (electricity, electricity transmission & distribution, natural gas, water, waste, vehicles). www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2023 full set for advanced users in order to include the minibus which is classed as a 'Delivery Vehicle'. These are set annually in May.

Scope 1, Scope 2 & Scope 3 The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (<https://ghgprotocol.org>) is recognised by the UK government as an independent standard for reporting greenhouse gases. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_emissions_reporting



Structure, Governance and Management

Company Structure

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and managed by a Board of Trustees.

The Board is responsible for setting the Trust's strategic direction and ensuring it aligns with our core aims. It also ensures that the Trust is well-managed, operates within the law, and upholds strong standards of governance.

Board of Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company (the Charity) are also its Trustees under charity law. In this report, they are referred to collectively as the Trustees.

The Board is supported by a Company Secretary, who manages governance processes and ensures compliance with regulatory and administrative requirements.

The following Trustees served during the year and up to the date of this report:

Name	Nominated by:
Maureen Bragg (Chair)	Community Trustee
Nick Downes (Vice Chair)	Barrow Parish Council
Mick Burton	Broseley Town Council
Gina Rowe	Community Trustee
Vacant position	Madeley Town Council
Caroline Bagnall	Shropshire Council
John Box	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Max Speke	Sutton Maddock Parish Council
Chris Turley (deceased August 2024)	Telford & Wrekin Council
Mark Boylan (appointed 24 April 2024)	Telford & Wrekin Council

Paul Davies (appointed 21 January 2025)	Telford & Wrekin Council
Carolyn Healy	Telford & Wrekin Council
Paul Davies	Telford & Wrekin Council
Alan Taylor	The Gorge Parish Council

Staff

JP Brayford	CEO
Kate Chetwood	Company Secretary and Finance Officer
Nathan Morris	Head of Countryside
Paul Ferrington	Estate Worker
Amber Bicheno	Volunteer & Community Officer
John Haddon	Landscape & Forestry Operative

Who Governs the Trust?

The Trust is governed by its Committee of Management (COM) made up of several Member Organisations and Community Trustees. The Trustees are all volunteers with careers and experience in a wide variety of fields. The Committee of Management is currently made up of a maximum of 14 elected trustees.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, Trustees are elected by the membership for terms of four years. At the end of the four-year term Trustees may stand for re-election. Nominations for new Trustees are considered each year prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). All Member Organisations are circulated with invitations to nominate Trustees, advising them of any retiring Trustees and requesting nominations for the AGM. The Member Organisations are made up of a variety of local organisations that have a keen interest in the Ironbridge Gorge and also two Community Trustee places.

When considering appointing Trustees, the Committee of Management (Board of Directors) has regard to the requirement of any specialist skills needed.

Trustee Induction and Training

The Trust provides an induction session to brief new Trustees on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the contents of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee structure and decision-making processes, the 10-year Development Strategy and recent financial performance of the charity. They are also advised on the future plans and objectives of the Trust. During the induction they meet the CEO, Company Secretary and other employees. They are advised of appropriate training opportunities and are encouraged to attend.

Management

The Committee of Management is responsible for setting policies and ensuring legality and good practice in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Trust and the Charities Act 2011. The Committee of Management meets formally each quarter. At each meeting, the COM considers reports from the management team on areas such as strategic development, financial performance and health and safety. Additionally, as appropriate the COM considers progress on current and future projects, governance and the annual budget and workplan.

The CEO is responsible to the COM for the management of the Trust and the conduct of the Trust's business in accordance with policies and budgets set by the COM. They are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Trust within this framework and are authorised to act on behalf of the Trust on all matters other than those which by law are required to be decided by the COM. The Chief Executive is supported by Trust staff. The Trust also engages a number of professional advisers to assist in its work.

The Committee of Management met four times during the year, focusing on strengthening governance and ensuring effective oversight across the Trust's operations. Key areas included:

- ◆ A governance and diversity review, including Board composition and inclusivity.
- ◆ A proposed amendment to the Articles of Association to increase the number of Trustees.
- ◆ Monitoring of the Trust's new contracting arm and its initial contracts.
- ◆ Ongoing policy reviews. Specifically key internal policies.
- ◆ Close monitoring of the financial position and consideration of alternative income streams due to declining rental income.
- ◆ Regular review of progress against the annual plan and budget.
- ◆ Review of Tree Safety Report and Structures Report to assist with future woodland management and structure repairs.



Sub Committees and Working Groups

The board had one subcommittee and three working groups supporting its work during 2024/2025. These have advisory powers and decision making is retained by the COM. A trustee chairs each committee/working group, with membership including other trustees and staff. Trustees participate in working groups to provide advice, input, and/or support.

The Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee met twice during the year. Its role is to oversee and make recommendations on matters relating to staff salaries, staffing, training, development, and support for both employees and trustees.

When reviewing staff salaries, the Committee considers market information for comparable roles, as well as the overall employment package offered by the Trust, including benefits such as annual leave and pension contributions. Outcomes from annual performance appraisals are also taken into account when awarding salary increments.

Investment Working Group

The Investment Working Group (IWG) considers the strategic oversight and direction of the Trust's investment assets. It undertakes the long-term stewardship of the investments in order to further the Trust's aims. Its key purposes are to review the Trust's investment strategy and agree a statement of investment principles and policies, which sets out, the investment objectives, risk tolerance, liquidity requirements, time horizon, and agrees the Trust's approach to an ethical and responsible investment policy. The IWG consults with our investment advisor from LGT to help maximise the overall return within acceptable risk parameters, while ensuring that the strategy remains fit for purpose.

Climate Change Working Group

Since declaring a Climate Emergency in November 2019, the Trust has continued to take action to address the causes and impacts of climate change. Efforts include reducing emissions, enhancing carbon capture through land management, restoring wildlife habitats, and exploring flood mitigation strategies.

Key strategies include:

- ◆ Using Continuous Cover forestry and rewilding to lock up carbon and support biodiversity.
- ◆ Championing renewable energy and cutting operational emissions.
- ◆ Developing and refining a Carbon Calculator to monitor the Trust's emissions, including methane



from the Soay sheep flock—which accounts for over 68% of total carbon equivalent emissions.

- ◆ Ongoing data collection to better understand environmental impacts and inform future targets.
- ◆ Advocating for fossil fuel divestment from the Shropshire Pension Fund, despite having no direct control over pension investments.

Governance Working Group

The Governance Working Group met in October 2024 to review the results of a recent skills audit carried out by the Committee of Management. Trustees identified areas where the Committee could benefit from additional skills and knowledge.

They agreed to focus on two key areas to start with:

1. Fundraising – Gaining a better understanding of different types of charity fundraising and how Trustees can support these efforts.
2. Charity Legislation and the Role of the Trustee – Improving knowledge of charity law and the responsibilities involved in being a Trustee.



Trustees also discussed the current nomination process for Trustees by Member Bodies. While the process works, it limits the Trust's ability to involve people from the wider community who may be interested in becoming Trustees. Trustees agreed that efforts to increase diversity should be meaningful, not tokenistic.

To bring new perspectives and ideas and improve attendance, Trustees proposed increasing the number of Committee members from 12 to 14. It was suggested that:

- ◆ One new Trustee could be drawn from the SGCT Volunteers.
- ◆ The other could be a local community member ideally bringing a skill set that is currently missing from the Committee.

This change was approved in March 2024, and the updated Memorandum and Articles of Association have been submitted to the Charity Commission.

Trustees continue to receive training and support to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Planning for the Future

The significance of the Trust's landholdings dictates the need for a planned, long-term approach to give direction and continuity to management.

This is achieved through comprehensive management plans for the Trust's sites and a Development Strategy that sets the overall direction of the Trust's work

The current Development Strategy was approved by Trustees in November 2017 and will guide the work of the Trust until the end of 2028. It sets out the Trust's vision, aims and plans for achieving its charitable objectives, identifies the successful methods of working that will be continued, the developments that will be introduced over the ten years and the opportunities that will be taken up if time and resources allow.

Copies of the full strategy can be downloaded from the website (www.severngorge.org.uk) or obtained from the Trust Office.

Annual Work Plan and Budget

Each year, the Trust develops a detailed work plan and budget to make sure we can deliver the priorities set out in our Management Plans and Development Strategy, while staying within our means.

The aim is to balance ambition with sustainability, ensuring we don't overstretch our resources or compromise our long-term future.

The 2024/2025 work plan was set by the aims in our 2018–2028 Development Strategy, with work carefully planned to reflect our current financial situation, staff capacity, and environmental priorities.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees is responsible for identifying and managing the strategic and operational risks the Trust is exposed to, so that Trustees can make informed decisions and take timely action. Risks are assessed and managed through a Risk Management Strategy; the impact and likelihood of their occurrence are evaluated. Actions and procedures to mitigate the risks are detailed in the strategy.

In accordance with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2005, Trustees undertake:

- ◆ An annual review of the risks the Trust may face, which also identifies any new risks that the Trust may be exposed to
- ◆ The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate against those risks identified in the review; and



- ◆ The implementation of procedures to prevent any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

Trustees regularly review our risk management process and receive regular updates on actions put in place to mitigate the most significant ongoing risks.

It should be noted that any risk management system can only manage risks and not eliminate them.

The Trust has identified four principal risks that could impact its ability to deliver its charitable aims. Mitigation measures are in place to address each of these risks:

Future Income Levels

A decline in income would significantly affect the Trust's ability to manage and maintain the living landscape of the Ironbridge Gorge for the benefit of the local community, visitors, and the environment.

- ◆ Primary income is generated through rental returns from the Trust's property portfolio, which is currently managed by Telford & Wrekin Council under a management agreement.
- ◆ The Trust is actively working with the Council to explore opportunities for diversifying the portfolio, including potential investments in modern properties to ensure a resilient income stream.
- ◆ Additional income is sought through grants, donations, and other funding opportunities including the contracting arm to reduce reliance on rental income and support future growth.
- ◆ Effective and efficient property management remains key to maintaining financial stability.

Climate Change

- ◆ Climate change as a long-term threat to both the Trust's operations and the natural environments under its care.
- ◆ All operational activities are being reviewed to reduce CO₂ emissions, including travel, heating, and electricity usage.
- ◆ Land management practices are being adapted to improve climate resilience, particularly in the Trust's woodlands and meadows.
- ◆ The Trust continues to prioritise nature-based solutions, such as rewilding and Continuous Cover Forestry, to sequester carbon and enhance biodiversity.

Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)

- ◆ Ash dieback continues to pose a serious ecological and safety risk across the Ironbridge Gorge.
- ◆ The Trust has monitored the spread of the disease since it was first identified in 2012.
- ◆ An independent arboriculturist conducts regular surveys of ash trees on Trust-managed land.
- ◆ A dedicated Ash Dieback Policy has been developed to guide both proactive and reactive tree management.
- ◆ The Trust is exploring funding sources to support the increasing costs associated with tree felling, replacement planting, and ongoing safety work.

Safeguarding

- ◆ The protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults is a key priority for the Trust.
- ◆ Updated safeguarding policies have been implemented to align with current legislation and best practice.
- ◆ Ongoing training is provided to all staff, volunteers, and Trustees to ensure they understand their responsibilities.
- ◆ The Trust takes a proactive approach to maintaining a safe and inclusive environment across all its projects and activities.

Public Benefit

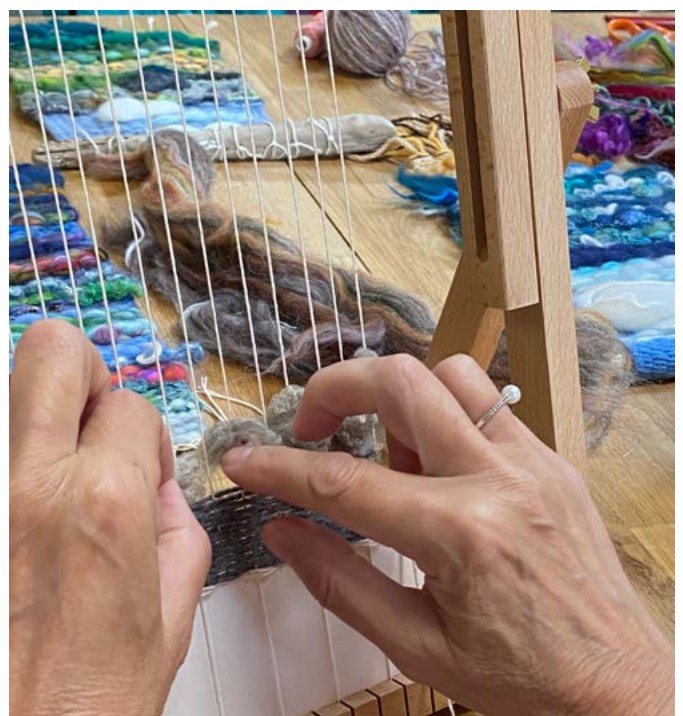
This annual report looks at what we have achieved over the previous twelve months. In setting our aims and planning our activities, Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit.

Trustees believe that the provision of such benefit is an integral part to each of the Trust's charitable objectives. We work hard to deliver public benefit by promoting and protecting the beautiful landscape of the Ironbridge Gorge for everyone to enjoy.

- ◆ The 289 hectares of land that the Trust manages is available for the public to use freely, every day of the year.
- ◆ The benefits of access to green spaces to health and wellbeing are widely documented and accepted.
- ◆ The Outdoor Learning programme helps people engage with and appreciate the natural environment.
- ◆ Our Volunteer programme enables people to become actively engaged in their environment.
- ◆ The Trust land and activities are available to all and we try to make special provision wherever possible for the disabled and disadvantaged.

We believe that the work of the Trust has a positive impact on people, communities, wildlife and the environment.

This report also helps us ensure our aims, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purpose. In order to achieve our aims the Trust must strive to maintain an efficient and effective organisation, that is well governed, professionally managed and which has the capacity, infrastructure and support necessary to deliver them.



Financial Overview

2024/2025

Our financial performance in 2024/2025 was stronger than expected, despite the difficult economic climate.

We had budgeted for a larger deficit and expected to draw on our reserves. However, thanks to careful financial management and higher-than-anticipated income, not only from investments and grant funding but also from contracting services, timber product sales, and pop-up shops, we did not need to use our reserves.

In addition, we no longer have a pension deficit; we now hold a small surplus. This positive change further strengthens our balance sheet and overall financial position.

We ended the year with healthy reserves, giving us the confidence to move forward with plans to invest in alternative income streams.

Our New Contracting Arm

In 2024, the Trust set up a contracting arm to help secure our long-term future and reduce reliance on grants and rental income. This new part of the Trust offers environmental and land management services to other organisations and landowners, providing a new source of income to support our core conservation work.



The contracting arm builds on the skills and experience already within the Trust.

Services include:

- ◆ Woodland management
- ◆ Habitat restoration
- ◆ Access and pathway improvements
- ◆ Ecological surveys
- ◆ Practical conservation work

These services are now being offered to local councils, businesses and similar land management organisations.

Any surplus generated is used to fund our core purpose, protecting and managing the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

Setting up the contracting arm helps the Trust:

- ◆ Diversify our income, making us less dependent on external funding
- ◆ Build partnerships with councils, landowners, and environmental organisations
- ◆ Create job and training opportunities for local people
- ◆ Expand our conservation impact in the region while staying true to our values



Ongoing Financial Pressures

While the Trust has delivered a positive financial result this year, it continues to operate in a challenging financial environment. Several ongoing pressures have the potential to impact future sustainability:

◆ Ageing Infrastructure

Many of the Trust's paths, access routes, and site features are in increasing need of repair and maintenance. Significant investment is required to ensure they remain safe, accessible, and fit for purpose.

◆ Rising Costs from Extreme Weather and Tree Disease

More frequent and severe weather events including storms and flooding are placing a growing strain on resources. In addition, the ongoing impact of Ash Dieback is leading to a sharp rise in emergency tree works and long-term woodland management costs.

◆ Increasing Core Operating Costs

The Trust is facing substantial rises in core expenditure, including staffing, contractor fees, insurance premiums, and energy bills, all of which put pressure on limited unrestricted income.

◆ Pressure on Traditional Income Streams

Several key income sources are under strain. Agri-environmental grants have been reduced due to government funding cuts, and rental income from the property portfolio has levelled off and is not keeping up with rising costs.

Looking Forward

To help meet ongoing challenges and strengthen our long-term resilience, we are taking the following steps:

- ◆ Continuing to explore new sources of income
- ◆ Investing in capital infrastructure, such as machinery and facilities
- ◆ Improving our capacity to produce firewood and sawn timber in-house. This helps reduce external costs and creates potential new income opportunities
- ◆ Expanding our contracting arm to offer land management services to other organisations

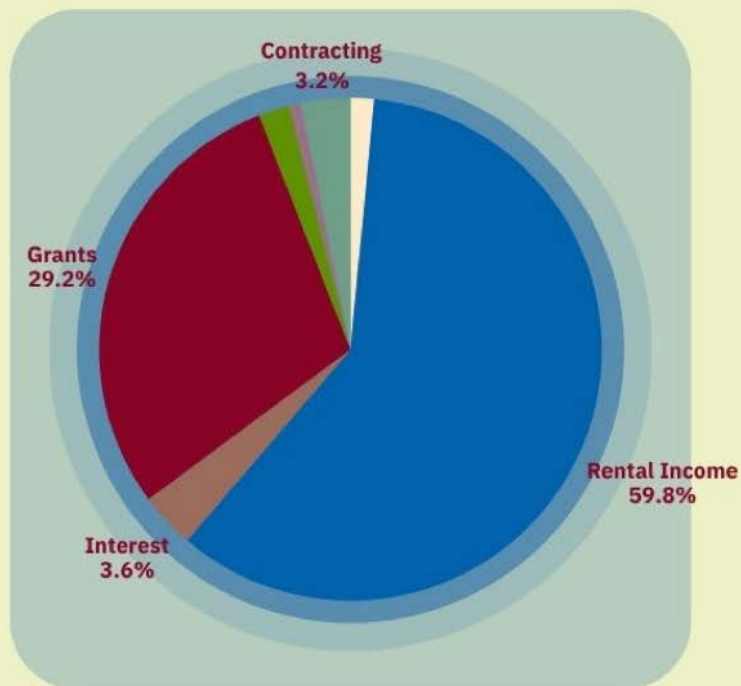
These steps are part of a wider strategy to ensure the Trust remains financially sustainable, while continuing to deliver its core charitable work. protecting and enhancing the Ironbridge Gorge landscape for future generations.



Income

Income 24/25

- Rental Income**
Income received from properties
- Interest & Dividends**
Income received from Investments and bank accounts.
- Grants**
Grant income received from a variety of organisations for projects.
- Timber Sales**
Income received from sales of logs and standing timber
- Other**
This heading includes sundry sales, room hire and includes income derived from 100 Club Lottery
- Outdoor Learning**
Income derived from our Outdoor Learning Programme of Walks & Workshops
- Contracting**
Income generated by contracting and landscaping work



The chart above shows our main sources of income for 2024/2025

Income for the year increased relative to 2023/2024 by 19%, £412,207 in 24/25 from £345,501 in 23/24) This was primarily due to additional grant income in the form of Section 106 monies for Benthall Edge (an increase of 41%) together with an increase in rental income. The 5-year Countryside Stewardship scheme generated £23,503. A large proportion of the Trust's income continues to be invested in the management of the landscape. Agri-environment payments such as the Countryside Stewardship schemes are extremely important to the Trust. They are a key funding mechanism to support our woodland and meadow management.

The Trust continues to apply for grants from a variety of sources but is careful not to stray from its aims and objectives when looking for potential funding sources.

Income was generated largely from:

- ◆ Rentals received on commercial properties in the Telford area. (The need for a balancing package to provide sufficient income for the annual upkeep of the sites was recognised when the Trust was established. A package of commercial properties was transferred to Telford & Wrekin Council. They own the freehold of these income generating properties and are responsible for their management. They are covenanted to pay 90% of the income generated to the Trust to cover the cost of maintaining the land in the Gorge).
- ◆ Investments purchased by the Trust. These consist of Charity Investment funds, and an interest paying Bank Account
- ◆ Grants
- ◆ Contracting
- ◆ Timber sales
- ◆ Outdoor Learning Programme
- ◆ Small amounts from sundry sales, books, honey, charcoal
- ◆ Room hire

We received £246,364 in income from the rental properties, fishing and grazing rights compared to £234,522 last year. An increase of 5%. Several of the properties have had an uplift in the annual rental costs.

The Trust pays a 10% Management fee to Telford & Wrekin Council for managing the properties. The majority of the properties are on full repairing and insuring leases which means the tenant is responsible for the cost of repairs and upkeep to the property.

Interest and dividends provided £13,837 compared to £12,566 last year reflecting the changes in the Trust's investment makeup and stronger than anticipated returns on investments.

Standing timber/sawmill timber and log sales provided an additional £6,323.

An increase in the hire of the community room by groups has generated income of £4,456

Grants to Help With Our Work

In support of its activities, the Trust received £120,432 (£81,723 in 23/24) from a wide number of bodies and is incredibly grateful to them all for their help and assistance:

Countryside Stewardship – the Trust received £26,423 in grant aid from this scheme. This grant contributes towards the Trust's woodland management costs. This is the third payment for this 5-year programme.

Potters Landfill Tax – £31,697 – Light Gives Light – Habitat creation

Telford & Wrekin Council – Telford Treescapes - £12,504 – Planting and maintenance of trees

Big Give – £9,902 – support towards the core costs of the Trust

The Big Give is an annual appeal that enables willing philanthropists to match the value of any donations made by supporters. This year, it was supported by the Environmental Funders Network (EFN), a UK-based network of foundations, family offices and individual donors supporting environmental causes.

The Gorge Parish Council – donated £500 towards the Big Give Campaign

Wayleave Payments – £406

Bupa – Groundwork – £236 – Willow bed restoration

Suez – £500 – Volunteer Support

Veolia – £974 – Children's Wild Art Activities

Hilton Jones Charitable Trust – £1,808 – Pond Creation

Invest Telford – £9,484 – Electric Sawmill

Farming Recovery Fund – £2,895 – impact of flooding

Welcoming Spaces – £497 – Volunteer support

Section 106 Income – £31,479 – Restricted income for Benthall Edge access and woodland work

Donations – £3,018

The Trust was fortunate to receive donations from individuals and organisations and we are very grateful to them for their support.



Expenditure

on charitable activities

Expenditure 24/25

Woodland/Countryside Management

Costs incurred in the management of the 260 ha of land the Trust manages.

Governance Costs

Costs incurred in the governance arrangements of the Trust.

Projects

This heading includes expenditure on the Volunteer and Outdoor Learning Programme.

Generating Voluntary Income

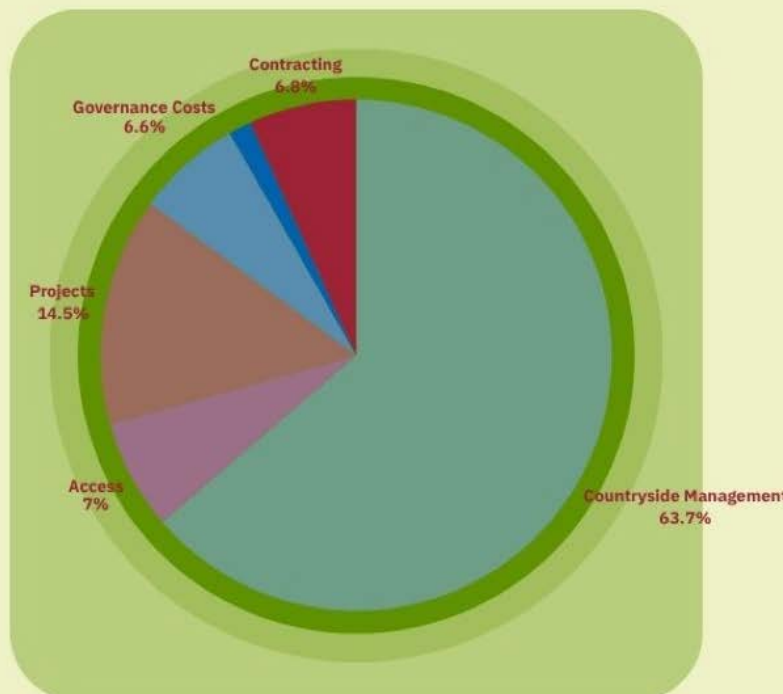
Administrative costs for generating voluntary income; grants, donations etc

Access

Costs incurred on access works, repairs and maintenance

Contracting

Costs incurred in undertaking contracting works, including salary costs, materials and equipment



Total expenditure for the year was £376,074 (£339,149 in 2023/2024), an increase of 10% reflecting continued investment in both core work and key projects including the contracting arm.

Machinery Investment

During the year, the Trust made a significant investment in an electric sawmill and related tools, supported by grant funding. This expenditure forms part of our commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The electric equipment will help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and lower emissions associated with our land management activities.

The electric sawmill is also enabling the Trust to mill its own timber in-house for use in access infrastructure repairs. This reduces costs by removing the need to purchase processed timber from external suppliers and allows us to make use of locally grown timber from our own sites. In addition to the financial savings, this supports our sustainability goals by promoting the use of local, renewable resources.

Contracting

We also incurred expenditure related to establishing our contracting business, including employee costs for a Landscape and Forestry Officer and machinery. While we recognise that building up the business will take time, we are hopeful that it will develop into a sustainable and valuable source of income for the Trust in the future.

Countryside and Landscape Maintenance – £239,438

Expenditure in this area relates to the ongoing care and management of land the Trust manages. Core costs include haymaking, hedge and ride cutting, structures inspections, tree safety surveys, maintenance of Jiggers Bank, and reactive landscape work such as tree safety operations — particularly in response to events like Storm Darragh.

Two key biodiversity and access improvement projects were completed during the year with external funding

support. The Light Gives Life project was funded through the Potters Landfill Grant, and the creation of the office pond was made possible through funding from Hilton Jones Charitable Trust. Both projects have enhanced biodiversity and made the sites more accessible to the public.

Access - £26,248

Expenditure focused on improving public access on key sites impacted by prolonged wet weather and increased usage. Several flights of steps were repaired together with footpath and boardwalk repairs. To support these works sustainably and cost-effectively, timber was milled in-house from locally sourced logs, reducing reliance on external suppliers.

Community Projects £54,385

Expenditure under Community Projects supported a range of activities aimed at engaging local people and visitors with the natural environment. This included costs associated with the Volunteering Project, the Outdoor Learning Programme, Wild About Art children's summer workshops, and a series of family-friendly guided walks. These initiatives are designed to foster greater connection to nature, promote environmental education, and encourage community involvement in the Trust's work.

We ensured that all restricted funds were used strictly for their intended purposes. The Trustees continue to monitor expenditure carefully to maintain financial sustainability while delivering maximum benefit to the community and the environment.

Employment Costs

Employment costs increased by 9.1% to £217,618, due to a combination of factors. All staff received a cost-of-living pay rise in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) pay settlement of £1,290 per salary grade. In addition, the recruitment of a new staff member to support the expanding contracting business contributed to the overall increase in staffing costs. No Pension Deficit payment was required in 2024/2025

Looking Ahead

Looking to the year ahead, a key area of planned expenditure is the replacement of the Trust Office roof, which has deteriorated over the last 18 months and is no longer fit for purpose. A designated fund has been established, with £50,000 set aside to cover the anticipated costs of this essential work. This investment will help protect the building and ensure it remains fit for purpose in the long term.

Investment Policy, Powers and Performance

The Trustees are responsible for setting and overseeing the financial policies under which the Trust operates. Under the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Trust has the power to deposit or invest funds as part of its long-term financial strategy.

Our Investment Policy

The Trust aims to:

- ◆ Preserve the value of its capital
- ◆ Generate a dependable, growing income stream to support its core charitable work

In 2021, the investment policy was updated to reflect our commitment to ethical and environmental responsibility. No new investments will be made in companies deriving income from coal or oil extraction.

Oversight and Management

Investment performance is reviewed by the Trust's Investment Working Group, which monitors reports from our advisors at LGT. They ensure that our investments remain aligned with the Trust's values and long-term goals.

Performance Over the Last 12 Months

The past year has seen considerable volatility in global investment markets, driven by ongoing economic uncertainty, fluctuating interest rates, inflation concerns, and geopolitical instability. These factors have impacted both capital values and income from investments.



Like many charities, the Trust experienced a significant dip in the value of its portfolio in the first half of the financial year, followed by a gradual recovery toward the year-end. By March 2025, values had started to stabilise and show positive movement.

As at 31 March 2025:

- ◆ Value of investments: £493,664
- ◆ Cash held in bank accounts: £60,226

Despite short-term fluctuations, the Trust continues to take a long-term view. Day-to-day operations are not dependent on the immediate value of investments unless assets are sold. By maintaining a diversified, ethically aligned portfolio, we are positioned to benefit from future recovery and market growth.

The Trustees remain confident in the Trust’s investment strategy, which prioritises sustainability, ethical alignment, and resilience over short-term gains. The Trust will continue to monitor market developments closely while focusing on long-term security and income generation to support our charitable objectives.

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust Funds

The Trust’s funds are divided between unrestricted funds, restricted funds and designated funds.

The funds and their specific purpose are detailed below:

Designated Funds

Long Term Income Fund

This fund is established to support the Trust’s core activities by safeguarding against income shortfalls from void properties within the rental portfolio and ensuring a reliable income stream that keeps pace with inflation. Should rental income fall below the level necessary to meet the Trust’s essential obligations, funds will be drawn from this reserve to cover the shortfall. The Long Term Income Fund is managed by LGT Wealth Management and invested across equities, bonds, and other assets. All interest and dividends generated are retained within the fund.

New Accommodation Fund

This fund was created to finance the construction of the Trust Office on Darby Road. It was initially capitalised through a transfer from the Long-Term Income Fund and will be used alongside restricted grants from the NHS and the Alcoa Foundation. The fund’s value will be written down over 50 years, reflecting the annual depreciation of the office building.

Land and Structures Contingency Fund

This fund provides for necessary responses to significant issues related to geotechnical features, structural elements such as walls, land instability, drainage, and watercourses. An annual transfer of £10,000 is made to this fund when income permits. Works will be carried out once sufficient funds have accumulated, although some projects may proceed earlier if external funding is secured.

Farm the Flow Fund

This fund was established to cover expenses related to the Farm the Flow Project.

Carry Over Funds

These funds have been reserved for projects not completed within the expected financial year, primarily related to planned tree works. The funds will be utilized upon completion of these activities.

Lloyds Surrender Premium

This fund originates from income received as a surrender premium from the Lloyds Bank rental property. It has been allocated to partially offset the depreciation cost of the Valtra tractor purchased in 2022.

Postcode Lottery

Initially set up as a restricted grant from the Postcode Lottery, this fund was re-designated during the Covid-19 pandemic. The funder permitted its transfer to a designated fund, allowing the Trust to use it for any purpose.

Repairs and Maintenance Fund

The Trustees have approved the establishment of a Repairs and Maintenance Fund to cover upcoming essential repairs to the Trust Office, which has now been in use for 13 years. One major concern is the cedar shingle roof, which is showing significant signs of wear and deterioration and will require replacement in the near future to prevent further damage to the building. To finance these necessary repairs, a transfer of funds was made from the Long-Term Income Fund. This designated fund will ensure that sufficient resources are available to maintain the Trust Office in good condition and protect the Trust's asset over the long term.

Land Rover Fund

This fund was established to offset the cost of purchasing the new Hilux vehicle, using the sale proceeds from the previous Land Rover. The fund will be depreciated over the expected lifetime of the vehicle.

Sawmill and Electric Tools Fund

This fund was set up to offset the capital cost of purchasing the electric sawmill and related tools, which were partially funded by a grant. The fund will be depreciated over the expected lifetime of these assets.

Restricted Funds

Alcoa/Primary Care Trust New Office Fund

This fund represents grant funding received towards the construction of the new Trust office. It is being amortised over 50 years, consistent with the office building's depreciation schedule.

Councillors Pride Grant

This grant supports the development of the Outdoor Learning Area at the Trust office site.

Big Give Green Match Funding

This fund supports the restoration of 5 ponds on the Trust's landholding. The work aims to increase biodiversity, capture more carbon, and encourage community participation.

Benthall Edge Section 106 Grant

This grant was awarded as part of the Section 106 agreement linked to the redevelopment of the former Ironbridge power station site into a housing development. The funding is intended to mitigate the increased public pressure on the Benthall Edge Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) resulting from additional local residents. Specifically, the grant is designated to support improved access and woodland management at Benthall Edge. The funds have been set aside exclusively for these conservation and access enhancement projects.

General Reserve

The Trust maintains a General Reserve comprising surpluses or deficits from the financial year. This reserve is also adjusted to reflect changes in the pension deficit: increases in the deficit reduce the reserve, while decreases enhance it. Trustees should be mindful of the pension liability's potential impact on the General Reserve.



Table of Funds

Designated Funds	Balance 1 April 2024	Balance 31 March 2025
General Fund	£363,136	£509,936
Long Term Income Fund	£392,685	£350,437
Structures Contingency	£6,950	£6,950
Accommodation Fund	£165,600	£161,000
Lloyds Surrender Premium Fund	£31,000	£27,000
Postcode Lottery	£13,400	£13,400
Farm the Flow	£1,095	£1,095
Carry Over 22-23	£3,354	£3,354
Carry Over 23-24	£1,100	£1,100
Land Rover Sale	£10,400	£7,800
Repairs & Maintenance Fund	£0	£50,000
Revaluation Reserve	£270,592	£265,745
Sawmill & Electric Tools Depreciation	£0	£11,245
Total	£896,176	£1,409,062

Restricted Funds	Balance 1 April 2024	Balance 31 March 2025
Alcoa Accommodation	£6,569	£6,387
Primary Care Trust Accommodation	£62,870	£61,123
Councillors Pride Grant	£300	£300
Big Give Green Match Fund – Ponds, Newts & Shoots	£5,196	£5,196
Hilton Jones Charitable Trust	£1,808	£0
Veolia Envirogrant	£974	£0
Benthall Edge Section 106	£0	£31,342
Total	£77,717	£104,348

Reserves Policy and Financial Overview

The Trust generates an annual income in the region of £350,000 to £400,000, with the majority derived from rental properties. Additional income is received from environmental grants and modest sales of logs, hay, and timber. In 24-25, the Trust also started to generate income from contracting work.

To ensure financial stability and protect against income volatility, the Trust maintains a reserves policy that requires holding an amount equivalent to the annual cost of operating the charity. This policy provides a buffer against short-term income disruption and supports effective risk management.

As of 31 March 2025, the Trust estimates that a reserve of £350,000 is required to meet its ongoing obligations. At that date, the balance in the Long-Term Income Fund stood at £350,437, closely aligning with the target reserve level.

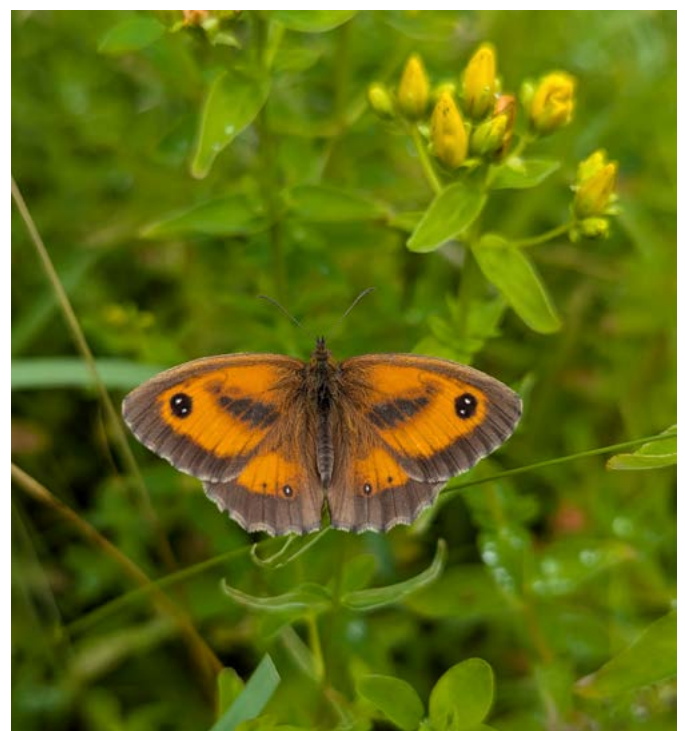
The rationale for this reserve level is primarily due to the Trust's reliance on rental income, which made up in the region of 60% of core income in 24/25. A loss of tenancy or void period could lead to a significant reduction in income. Holding reserves equivalent to one year's operational costs would give Trustees adequate time to identify replacement tenants or secure alternative funding sources.

Additionally, the Trust must consider the liabilities associated with land management, which can result in unforeseen expenditure. These liabilities are factored into the reserves assessment.

The reserves policy is reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process to ensure it remains appropriate to the Trust's evolving needs. The Trustees recognise that financial requirements may change from year to year, and the policy is adjusted accordingly.

In the event that the Trust were required to wind up its operations, reserves must also cover the cost of closure, including redundancy payments and other associated expenses. As of 31 March 2025, estimated redundancy liabilities were approximately £29,000.

In calculating available reserves, the Trust excludes fixed asset funds, pension liabilities, and any funds that are restricted for specific purposes, as these cannot be readily accessed. The resulting figure represents the Trust's 'free reserves'—the funds available for immediate use in response to unforeseen events or short-term funding needs.



Pension Scheme

The Trust is an admission body in the Shropshire County Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme. This type of scheme offers employees a guaranteed pension based on their salary and length of service. As an employer, the Trust is responsible for ensuring that contributions to the scheme are sufficient to meet the future pension obligations, based on actuarial advice.

In accordance with accounting standards, the Trust must estimate and report pension liabilities within its financial statements. As is common among charities participating in defined benefit pension schemes, our scheme is currently reporting a surplus.

As of 31 March 2025, the pension scheme showed a surplus of £216,000, (an increase from £73,000 as at 31 March 2024). This represents a significant improvement in the Trust's funding position. The primary factors contributing to this improvement are higher bond yields and changes in actuarial funding assumptions and calculations.

Under current pension scheme regulations, this surplus is not accessible unless the Trust exits the scheme. Trustees should note that any surplus or deficit in the scheme will continue to fluctuate with market conditions. Their primary responsibility remains ensuring that the Trust continues to meet the required contribution levels as determined by the scheme actuary.

Actuarial Valuation

At the last actuarial valuation in March 2023, the contribution rate payable by the Trust to the Shropshire County Pension Fund was assessed in two parts:

1. **Standard Contribution Rate** – This is calculated as a percentage of pensionable salaries and represents the cost of benefits being earned by current employees.
2. **Supplementary Contribution** – This may be required if the actuarial review determines that the accumulated liabilities of the scheme, covering benefits for past and present staff, are not fully funded by the standard contributions and the notional fund built up from past payments.

The total employer contribution rate is therefore the sum of these two components.

The Shropshire County Pension Fund has made significant progress in reducing its overall pension deficit and has implemented a clear strategy to continue this improvement. For the financial year 2024–2025, the Trust paid an employer contribution rate of 14.3%, and no annual deficit contribution was required.



Future Plans

As we look ahead to 2025–2026, the Trust remains committed to managing the 289 hectares of the ‘living landscape’ within the World Heritage Site with the same care, consistency, and passion that have defined our work over the past 34 years.

Key projects for the coming year include:

Carrying Out Safety and Structural Work

We’ll begin phased work based on our structural survey, including repairing fences, stabilising walls, and monitoring ground movement.

Caring for the Land and Wildlife

We’ll look after our woodlands, meadows, and wetlands, clearing hazardous trees, continuing to monitor the effects of Ash Dieback, planting native species where appropriate, and improving habitats to support wildlife and make the landscape more resilient to climate change.

Improving Access and Visitor Experience

We’ll upgrade entrances, signs, and pathways to make sites safer and more welcoming for everyone, including those less familiar with green spaces.

Growing Outdoor Learning and Education

We’ll expand our outdoor learning area, explore the idea of building an outdoor classroom, and offer education sessions for local schools and groups.

Engaging the Community and Volunteers

We’ll strengthen volunteering and training, helping local people get involved in landscape management. We’ll also explore new ways for people to get involved in monitoring nature, such as running a Bioblitz to record species and track changes over time. We’ll continue to offer corporate volunteering opportunities to local businesses, inviting them to take part in practical conservation tasks that support the landscape and offer a great team experience.

Communicating with local people

We’ll keep local people informed about upcoming work and make sure we listen to their feedback and concerns.

Reviewing and Strengthening How We Work

We’ll review our activities to see where we can grow or reduce work, ensure strong governance, and provide training to empower Trustees and staff to make good, strategic decisions.

Develop Contracting Opportunities

We’ll continue developing a contracting arm to deliver conservation and land management services for other organisations, using our team’s skills to generate income and potentially create local jobs.

Tackling Climate Change and Reducing Carbon Emissions

We’re committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This includes ideas like a solar-powered timber kiln, switching to HVO fuel, and using electric transport for site visits. We’ll also manage the land with changes to future climate in mind, addressing flooding, and erosion issues to care for the landscape in the long term.

Raising Awareness and Promoting the Trust

We’ll raise our profile by attending events, promoting our work, and encouraging more people to explore and enjoy the landscape we care for.

Maintaining a Safe and Functional Office Base

We’ll continue to look after our office site, carrying out repairs and improvements to keep it a safe, welcoming place to work and visit.

Securing Grants and Partnerships

We’ll keep applying for funding and building partnerships that help us deliver key projects and strengthen our financial viability.



Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- ◆ select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- ◆ observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- ◆ make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- ◆ state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- ◆ prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the group and parent charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the financial information included on the charity's website.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

- ◆ so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities and in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Committee of Management on 10 September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Maureen Bragg

Chair

Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Company No. 2647374

Muras Baker Jones Limited
Chartered Accountants
Wolverhampton

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account), statement of financial position and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report², other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

In planning and designing our audit tests we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement within the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. Our assessment of these risks includes consideration of the nature of the industry and sector, the control environment and the charity performance

along with the results of our enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of risks and irregularities. In planning and designing our audit tests we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement within the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. Our assessment of these risks includes consideration of the nature of the industry and sector, the control environment and the charity performance along with the results of our enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of risks and irregularities. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the charitable company operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the UK Companies Act, Charities Act, UK tax legislation and other laws and regulations identified as risk areas identified from our discussions with management.

We communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members including internal specialists, and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

After consideration of the above risks we then carried out audit procedures including the following:

- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- reading minutes of trustees meetings;
- reviewing correspondence with H M Revenue & Customs;
- enquiring of management and reviewing any correspondence with legal advisors concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that the laws and regulations are from financial transactions the less likely it is that we would be aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any. Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

.....
Oliver Ross BSc(Hons) FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Muras Baker Jones Limited
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

10 September 2025

Regent House
Bath Avenue
Wolverhampton
WV1 4EG

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(being INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
INCOME						
INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES						
Rents received	4	246,365	-	-	246,365	234,523
Grants	4	74,561	14,393	-	88,954	81,723
INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES						
Investment income		2,684	12,059	-	14,743	12,566
Section 106 income		-	-	31,479	31,479	
Other income		15,584	-	-	15,584	15,437
Gifts and Donations		1,968	-	-	1,968	1,252
Contracting income		13,114	-	-	13,114	-
Total Income		354,276	26,452	31,479	412,207	345,501
EXPENDITURE						
COSTS OF RAISING FUNDS						
Costs of generating voluntary income	5	5,495	-	-	5,495	5,302
EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES						
Woodland/Countryside Management	5	226,702	9,095	3,640	239,437	234,688
Access	5	26,040	175	33	26,248	23,174
Projects	5	52,132	1,078	1,175	54,385	53,704
CONTRACTING COSTS	5	25,559	-	-	25,559	
GOVERNANCE COSTS	5	20,642	4,307	-	24,949	22,281
Total Expenditure		356,570	14,655	4,848	376,073	339,149
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(2,294)	11,797	26,631	36,134	6,352
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS		4,000	(4,000)	-	-	-
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE OTHER GAINS / (LOSSES) – carried forward		1,706	7,797	26,631	36,134	6,352

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(being INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) continued

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	General Fund £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE OTHER GAINS / (LOSSES) – brought forward		1,706	7,797	26,631	36,134	6,352
OTHER GAINS AND LOSSES						
Gains/(losses) on Investments - realised		-	4,326	-	4,326	(2,575)
Gains/(losses) on Investments – unrealised		-	(9,173)	-	(9,173)	30,229
Pension scheme actuarial (losses)/gains	14	145,094	-	-	145,094	88,205
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR		146,800	2,950	26,631	176,381	122,211
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD AT 31 MARCH 2024		363,136	896,176	77,717	1,337,029	1,214,818
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 MARCH 2025		509,936	899,126	104,348	1,513,410	1,337,029

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

BALANCE SHEET

At 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	6		600,696		625,110
Investments	7		493,664		495,658
			<u>1,094,360</u>		<u>1,120,768</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	75,966		35,048	
Investments	9	40,794		39,056	
Cash at bank and in hand		105,246		71,013	
		<u>222,006</u>		<u>145,117</u>	
CREDITORS - amounts falling due within one year	10	(18,956)		(1,856)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			203,050		143,261
Pension benefit pension scheme asset/(liability)	12		216,000		73,000
NET ASSETS			<u>1,513,410</u>		<u>1,337,029</u>
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY:					
General fund	11		509,936		363,136
Designated funds	11		633,381		625,584
Restricted funds	11		104,348		77,717
Revaluation funds	11		265,745		270,592
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS			<u>1,513,410</u>		<u>1,337,029</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Committee of Management on 10 September 2025 signed on its behalf by:-

Maureen Bragg
Chair

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) BASIS OF PREPARATION

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include investments and certain freehold property at fair value.

b) INCOME

Rental income is included when receivable.

Income from contracting projects is recognised when receivable.

Grants are recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Income from investments and other income, including small sales of timber and refunds, are included when receivable.

c) EXPENDITURE AND IRRECOVERABLE VAT

Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred. Resources expended include attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered.

The proportion of employees time spent fundraising is shown as costs of generating voluntary income.

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. The cost of overall direction and administration on each activity is apportioned based on the direct costs incurred for each.

d) DEPRECIATION

Depreciation is provided on the cost of fixed assets to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its estimated useful life at the following rates:

Freehold property	Depreciated over 50 years
Fixtures & Equipment	10% straight line/20% straight line/33 ¹ / ₃ % straight line
Plant and Machinery	10% straight line/20% straight line/33 ¹ / ₃ % straight line
Motor vehicles	20% straight line/25% reducing balance
Facility Construction	10% straight line

No depreciation is provided on Freehold Land.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) BASIS OF PREPARATION

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include investments and certain freehold property at fair value.

b) INCOME

Rental income is included when receivable.

Income from contracting projects is recognised when receivable.

Grants are recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Income from investments and other income, including small sales of timber and refunds, are included when receivable.

c) EXPENDITURE AND IRRECOVERABLE VAT

Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred. Resources expended include attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered.

The proportion of employees time spent fundraising is shown as costs of generating voluntary income.

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. The cost of overall direction and administration on each activity is apportioned based on the direct costs incurred for each.

d) DEPRECIATION

Depreciation is provided on the cost of fixed assets to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its estimated useful life at the following rates:

Freehold property	Depreciated over 50 years
Fixtures & Equipment	10% straight line/20% straight line/33 ¹ / ₃ % straight line
Plant and Machinery	10% straight line/20% straight line/33 ¹ / ₃ % straight line
Motor vehicles	20% straight line/25% reducing balance
Facility Construction	10% straight line

No depreciation is provided on Freehold Land.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

e) TANGIBLE ASSETS

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

f) INVESTMENTS

Investments held as current assets are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Investments held as fixed assets are revalued annually and the aggregate surplus or deficit is transferred to Revaluation Reserve.

g) GENERAL FUND

This represents unrestricted funds that are available for use at the Trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the Trust.

h) DESIGNATED FUNDS

These are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees out of general fund for specific purposes or projects as detailed in note 11 and in the Trustees report. Included in designated funds are:

- i) Long Term Income Fund - this fund arises from the combining of the Income Security Fund and the Long Term Development Reserve and reflects monies held within Fixed and Current Asset Investments. The purpose of the fund is to provide additional income for the Trust's core work when rental income declines as properties reach the end of their expected commercial 'life' circa 2015 to 2025.
- ii) Land and Structures Contingency - this reserve reflects monies held within current asset investments. The reserve has been created to cope with expenditure arising as a result of land instability, drainage and watercourse issues and potential problems with existing structures.
- iii) Revaluation Reserve - this reflects the increase in the fair value of investments and land over their original cost.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

h) DESIGNATED FUNDS - continued

- iv) Lloyds Bank Surrender Premium Fund and Carry Over Funds. These reserves relate to surplus funds arising on certain projects during the year for which the trustees have designated against specific expenditure over the next 2 years.
- v) Postcode Lottery Access Fund. Being grants received in respect of work to be carried out on steps in the Gorge. Re-designated by the grant provider as unrestricted.
- vi) Repair & Maintenance Fund. Being funds transferred from Long Term Income Fund in respect of anticipated repairs to the Trust's offices.

i) RESTRICTED FUNDS

These represent grants received for specified projects, the use of each grant being restricted to that project.

j) GOING CONCERN

The trustees remain mindful of the impact on the charity of external economic constraints and as a result regularly review projections and budgets for the current and subsequent periods. Based on these reviews, the trustees consider there to be no significant overall impact on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees have also reviewed the supply chains, key income sources and the capital resources available and consider that the charity has adequate resources in place to continue operating for the next twelve months.

k) EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The charity contributes to a defined benefit plan for certain employees. A liability for the charity's obligation under the plan is recognised net of plan assets. The net change in the net defined benefit liability is recognised as the costs of the defined benefit plan during the period. Pension plan assets are measured at fair value and the defined benefit obligation is measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method.

The trustees believe that the scheme currently meets statutory minimum funding requirements. It is intended that the level of annual contributions to the scheme will be adjusted following the next detailed actuarial valuation. The directors note that the calculated notional deficit or surplus calculated under FRS102 can vary greatly from year to year depending on the assumptions made at the valuation date, but with normally little or no effect on short term cashflows.

2. (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR

The (deficit)/surplus for the year is stated after charging:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	2,880	2,748
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	35,203	34,383
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

3. STAFF COSTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	175,538	154,043
Social security costs	12,260	10,022
Other pension Costs	25,402	28,000
Other costs	4,418	7,828
	<u>217,618</u>	<u>199,454</u>

No employees received remuneration in excess of £60,000 (2024: None).

No Trustees received any remuneration in the year (2024 - £Nil). Apart from the Trustees, the company had 7 employees at 31 March 2025 (2024 - 6).

Staff costs in respect of key management personnel amounted to £55,051 (2024 - £52,359).

4. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	General fund £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Rents received	246,365	-	246,365	234,523
Grants:				
Natural England:				
Countryside Stewardship	26,423	-	26,423	23,503
Other	2,840	-	2,840	2,202
Telford Treescapes grant	12,504	-	12,504	12,504
Bupa – Groundwork Willow	236	-	236	2,124
Potter Group – Environment Fund	19,761	-	19,761	31,697
Big Give – Green Match Fund	9,902	-	9,902	5,196
Hilton Jones Trust – Office Pond	-	-	-	1,808
The Tree Council	-	-	-	1,715
Veolia Environmental Trust	-	-	-	974
Farming Recovery Fund	2,895	-	2,895	-
Invest Telford – Sawmill grant	9,484	-	9,484	-
Worcestershire County Council -MEG	4,909	-	4,909	-
	<u>88,954</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>88,954</u>	<u>81,723</u>
	<u>335,319</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>335,319</u>	<u>316,246</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

5. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Generating voluntary income £	Woodland/ countryside management £	Access £	Projects £	Contracting expenditure £	Governance costs £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Direct costs	-	61,920	-	7,203	9,880	-	79,003	75,130
Employee costs	5,495	122,367	25,187	40,642	15,492	8,435	217,618	199,453
Insurance	-	8,767	169	1,040	-	-	9,976	9,769
Transport	-	5,870	113	696	-	-	6,679	7,297
Office and other costs	-	9,738	187	1,155	-	1,309	12,389	13,541
Trustee support	-	-	-	-	-	403	403	678
Professional costs	-	-	-	-	-	14,287	14,287	11,899
Depreciation	-	30,775	592	3,649	187	-	35,203	34,382
(Profit)/loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(13,000)
100 Club costs	-	-	-	-	-	515	515	-
	<u>5,495</u>	<u>239,437</u>	<u>26,248</u>	<u>54,385</u>	<u>25,559</u>	<u>24,949</u>	<u>376,073</u>	<u>339,149</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £	Land and buildings £	Motor vehicles £	Fixtures & equipment £	Facility Construction £	Contracting Equipment £	Total £
COST:							
At 1 April 2024	121,541	629,476	51,421	49,038	4,495	-	855,971
Additions	4,860	-	-	4,967	-	964	10,791
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	126,401	629,476	51,421	54,005	4,495	964	866,762
DEPRECIATION:							
At 1 April 2024	35,545	122,527	33,924	36,169	2,698	-	230,863
Charge for the Year	15,121	8,752	4,374	6,318	450	188	35,203
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	50,666	131,279	38,298	42,487	3,148	188	266,066
NET BOOK VALUE:							
At 31 March 2024	85,997	506,949	17,498	12,869	1,797	-	625,110
At 31 March 2025	75,735	498,197	13,123	11,518	1,347	776	600,696

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

7. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Balance brought forward	495,658	464,158
Additions	198,838	121,369
Disposals	(191,701)	(120,098)
Revaluation adjustment	(9,131)	30,229
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance carried forward	493,664	495,658
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Historical cost of investments held at 31 March 2025	458,206	471,662
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Investments are acquired to provide fixed funding for certain of the Designated Funds set up by the Trust (see Note 11).

	2025		2024	
	Original cost £	Market value £	Original cost £	Market value £
Abundance				
- Telford & Wrekin Climate Action Investment	527	527	817	796
LGT Wealth Management				
- Investment portfolio	457,679	493,137	470,845	494,862
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	458,206	493,664	471,662	495,658
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

8. DEBTORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	75,235	35,048
Prepayments	731	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	75,966	35,048
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

9. CURRENT ASSET INVESTMENTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Short term deposits	40,794	39,056

10. CREDITORS - amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade Creditors	18,956	1,856
	<u>18,956</u>	<u>1,856</u>

11. ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE FUNDS

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expend- iture £	Other recognised gains/ (losses) £	Trans- fers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds						
General Fund	363,136	354,276	(356,570)	145,094	4,000	509,936
Long Term Income Fund	392,685	12,059	(4,307)	-	(50,000)	350,437
Land and Structures Contingency Accommodation Fund	6,950	-	-	-	-	6,950
Revaluation Reserve	165,600	-	(4,600)	-	-	161,000
Lloyds Surrender Premium fund	270,592	-	-	(4,847)	-	265,745
Postcode Lottery Access Fund	31,000	-	-	-	(4,000)	27,000
Farm the Flow	13,400	-	-	-	-	13,400
Repairs & Maintenance Fund	1,095	-	-	-	-	1,095
Carry Over From 22/23	-	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
Land Rover sale	3,354	-	-	-	-	3,354
Carry Over From 23/24	10,400	-	(2,600)	-	-	7,800
Sawmill & Electric Tools Depreciation	1,100	-	-	-	-	1,100
	-	14,393	(3,148)	-	-	11,245
	<u>896,176</u>	<u>26,452</u>	<u>(14,655)</u>	<u>(4,847)</u>	<u>(4,000)</u>	<u>899,126</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

11. ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE FUNDS continued

	At 1 April 2024	Income	Expend- iture	Other recogni- sed gains/ (losses)	Trans- fers	At 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Analysis of movements in restricted funds						
Alcoa Grant	6,569	-	(182)	-	-	6,387
Primary Care Trust - New Office project	62,870	-	(1,747)	-	-	61,123
Councillors Pride Grant	300	-	-	-	-	300
Hilton Jones Charitable Trust - Office Pond	1,808	-	(1,808)	-	-	-
Green Match Fund Big Give - Ponds Newts and Shoots	5,196	-	-	-	-	5,196
Veolia Envirogrant - Wild Art Workshops Benthall Edge - Section 106 Funds	974	-	(974)	-	-	-
	-	31,479	(137)	-	-	31,342
	77,717	31,479	(4,848)	-	-	104,348
Total Funds	1,337,029	412,207	(376,073)	140,247	-	1,513,410

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

11. ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE FUNDS continued

The assets comprising each Fund at 31 March 2025 are as follows:

	Tangible fixed assets £	Fixed asset investments £	Current assets / (Liabilities) £	Total £
Accommodation Fund	161,000	-	-	161,000
Long Term Income Fund	-	339,844	10,593	350,437
Revaluation Reserve	111,925	153,820	-	265,745
Land and Structures				
Contingency	-	-	6,950	6,950
Lloyds Surrender Premium Fund	-	-	27,000	27,000
Farm the Flow carry over	-	-	1,095	1,095
Postcode Lottery Access Fund	-	-	13,400	13,400
Carry Over from 22/23	-	-	3,354	3,354
Land Rover sale	7,800	-	-	7,800
Repairs & Maintenance fund	-	-	50,000	50,000
Carry Over from 23/24	-	-	1,100	1,100
Sawmill & Electric Tools	-	-	11,245	11,245
Restricted Funds	67,510	-	36,838	104,348
General Fund	252,461	-	257,475	509,936
	600,696	493,664	419,050	1,513,410
	600,696	493,664	419,050	1,513,410

Fund transfers

Lloyds Surrender Premium Budget. A transfer of £4,000 was made to the general fund to offset the depreciation of capital machinery.

Repairs and maintenance fund. A transfer of £50,000 was made from the long term income fund to the repairs and maintenance fund as a contingency against future repair work needed for the trust's office building.

General Fund

Included within General Fund is a surplus of £216,000 arising in respect of the pension scheme balance at 31 March 2025. Under current pension scheme regulations, this surplus is not accessible unless the Trust exits the scheme.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

11. ANALYSIS OF CHARITABLE FUNDS continued

Purpose of Designated Funds

These are detailed in note 1(h) to the financial statements and also in the Trustees Report.

Purpose of Restricted Funds

These represent grants received and related expenditure in respect of specific projects as outlined above.

12. PENSIONS

Defined Benefit Scheme

The company is a member of the Shropshire County pension fund which operates a pension scheme providing benefits based on final pensionable pay. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company. Contributions to the scheme are charged to the profit and loss account so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the company. The contributions are determined by a qualified actuary on the basis of triennial valuations using assumptions that: project the benefits forward into the future and then adjust them to current day values; estimate the probability of payments needing to be made. The most recent valuation was as at 31 March 2022. The company receives annual reports from the pension scheme which identify its share of the assets and liabilities of the scheme.

The pension charge for the year amounts to £25,000 (2024 - £28,000), against which employer contributions paid over to the scheme amounted to £22,906 (2024 - £21,795), together with the actuarial gains and losses on the scheme for the year is recognised in the statement of Financial Activities in accordance with SORP (FRS 102).

The most recent actuarial valuation showed that the market value of the whole scheme's assets was £1,951m and that the actuarial value of those assets represented 76% of the benefits that had accrued to members, after allowing for expected future increases in earnings.

The company's share of the market values of the main asset classes, at the year end were:

	2025		2024	
	%	£000s	%	£000s
Equities	58.9	666	56.5	622
Government Bonds	0.0	0	0.0	0
Other Bonds	13.4	151	14.6	160
Property	4.4	50	3.5	38
Cash/liquidity	0.7	8	1.4	15
Other	22.6	255	24.0	264

The assets of the Scheme are included in the accounts at open market value as at the year-end, and the liabilities have been calculated using the following actuarial assumptions:

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

12. PENSION -continued

	2025 %	2024 %
Rate of increase in salaries	3.85	3.95
Pension increases	2.7	2.8
Rate of discount	5.8	4.9
Inflation - RPI	-	-
- CPI	2.6	2.7

The liabilities are determined using the projected unit method as distinct from the aggregate method used in the triennial valuation. Under the projected unit method, the current service costs will increase as the members of the scheme approach retirement. On this basis, the calculated notional funding position, in respect of the Scheme at 31 March 2025, and at previous year-end, was as follows:

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Value of market assets	1,130	1,099
Value of accrued liabilities	(914)	(1,026)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus/(Deficit)	216	73
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The actuary has confirmed that the valuation made above under the requirements of FRS102 does not indicate that there is either an immediate funding requirement or any immediate need to change the agreed contribution rates currently in force. The actuary has excluded from both assets and liabilities items which have neutral effect on the Scheme's financial position i.e. additional voluntary contributions, annuities secured in respect of pensions in payment and insurance contract for death in service benefits.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

12. PENSION –continued

The charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the financial year comprised:

	2025 £000s	2024 £000s
Operating charge		
Current service cost	28	28
Admin expense	1	1
Past service cost/(gain)	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	29	29
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Other income/charges		
Expected return on pension scheme assets	(53)	(47)
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	49	46
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net interest/(return)	(4)	(1)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total charge to expenditure in the SOFA	25	28
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Movement in balance sheet deficit figures during the year:

	2025 £	2024 £
Surplus in scheme at 31 March 2024	73,000	(9,000)
Movement in year		
Current service cost	(28,000)	(28,000)
Past service (cost)/gain	-	-
Admin expense	(1,000)	(1,000)
Net interest/return on assets	4,000	1,000
Contributions	22,906	21,795
Actuarial gain/(loss)	145,094	88,205
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus in scheme at 31 March 2025	216,000	73,000
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

13. MEMBERS' GUARANTEE

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust is a company limited by guarantee. Members' liability under the Memorandum of Association is limited to £1 each and the liability continues for one year after the cessation of membership.

14. TAXATION STATUS

The company is a charity under the provisions of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

15. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

At the year end 31 March 2025, the trust was not committed to purchase any assets (2024 - £nil).