**Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust**
Registered Charity no. 1168432
Unit 5 Drovers House, The Auction Yard, CRAVEN ARMS SY7 9BZ

Shropshire Hills National Landscape

# Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

### Vision

*The natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills is secured forever as a place where wildlife, people, landscape and heritage thrive in harmony.*

### Mission

*We will inspire people, communities, and organisations to actively support the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and secure its natural beauty for the future.*

### Objectives

The Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust is dedicated to promoting the conservation and enhancement of the Shropshire Hills. Most of our work is achieved through the Conservation Fund. This makes grant awards to small community groups to support practical projects that help the Shropshire Hills to be a beautiful landscape where nature and people thrive together.

Priority areas for projects are:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife or heritage of the Shropshire Hills.
- Educational and awareness-raising activities relating to the area and its conservation, especially involving young people.

## Governance

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation established in 2016, working alongside the Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership and Team.

During 2025–26 the Trustees undertook a significant review of the Trust's constitution to provide greater flexibility in trustee recruitment and to reflect the change from Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to National Landscape terminology. At the Trustees' meeting on 28 July 2025, amendments were approved to revise the trustee structure to allow a maximum of eight trustees, comprising up to seven appointed Trustees and one ex-officio Trustee. The Charity Commission approved the proposed changes in March 2026, subject to a further formal resolution to adopt its approved wording for the charitable Objects.

Anthony Morgan retired as a Trustee at the AGM in July 2025 and was formally thanked for his contribution to the Trust since its establishment.

At 31 March 2026, the Trustees were:

- **Appointed Trustees:** George Chancellor (Treasurer), Janet Cobb, Neil Willcox
- **Trustees:** Rachel Cockett (Chair), Charles Edwards
- **Ex-officio Trustee:** Phil Holden (Secretary)

Four Trustees' meetings were held during the year alongside the Annual General Meeting to review finances, governance and policy. Trustees also met in March 2026 to consider Conservation Fund applications and award grants.

The Shropshire Hills National Landscape staff team continued to provide administrative support, with day-to-day work carried out by Trustees working individually or in groups with staff and external support as required.

## Performance Against 2024–2027 Business Plan

### Conservation Fund

In March 2026, twelve projects were awarded grants totalling £16,088. The awards continued the Trust's underlying principle of supporting locally led projects which combine practical conservation with community involvement, learning and volunteering.

The projects reflected a broad range of environmental priorities across the Shropshire Hills. Clunbury Parish Council received support to continue the restoration of heathland on Black Hill, training volunteers to use scythes to tackle bracken and help restore the hill's former whinberry habitat. The Restoring Shropshire Verges Project brought together six parishes to develop long linear meadow verges as connected wildlife habitat, while Church Pulverbatch Parish Council was supported to expand its community nature recovery activity.

Wildlife monitoring was another strong theme. The Rea Valley Pine Marten Group received funding to survey Oaks Wood near Pontesbury using camera traps, while a project in the Strettons will develop monitoring for harvest mice and water voles. High Leasowes Trust will use bat observation activities to connect local people, particularly young people, with wildlife.

The Trust continued its support for wildflower habitats and traditional landscape features. Marches Meadow Group received a grant to evaluate the impact of ten years of meadow surveys and advisory work, and CPRE Shropshire was supported to deliver its Hedgerows in the Hills event at Acton Scott Heritage Farm.

Young people remained an important focus. Stretton Area Community Wildlife Group will work with Year 5 and 6 pupils at St Lawrence's Primary School on wildlife identification and wildflower gardening. Grow Cook Learn received support for a conference bringing together organisations involved in connecting young people with nature, while the Clee Young Rangers project will involve young people aged 12–16 in rebuilding a small Mesolithic hut and sharing what they have learned with others.

Details of all the activities supported and reports on project outcomes are available on the Trust's web pages.

### Increasing our Reach

The Trust continued to build relationships with communities across the Shropshire Hills during 2025–26.

Following the previous year's direct engagement with Parish Councils, Trustees attended meetings with nine Parish Councils or groups of parishes during the year, including Edgton,

Mainstone, Rushbury, Pontesbury, Buildwas, Much Wenlock, Morville, Munslow and a joint meeting involving Pitchford, Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Ruckley and Langley.

The Trust was also represented at the Shropshire Hills Summer Forum and Field Visits in June 2025. These opportunities helped to raise awareness of the Conservation Fund, maintain relationships with existing community partners and encourage applications from areas and organisations which the Trust has not previously funded.

The 2026 Conservation Fund awards achieved a wider geographic reach than previously and included six organisations which had not previously received a Trust grant.

**Fundraising**

The Friends of the Shropshire Hills were established in 2008 on the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Since the Trust was created in 2016, Friends' subscriptions have been paid directly to the Trust and provide an important source of support for the Conservation Fund.

At the end of 2025–26 there were 94 Friends, a slight reduction on the previous year, and three Business Supporters. The Trust continued to develop its relationships with Friends and Business Supporters and reviewed arrangements for renewals and regular communications during the year.

The Trust is very grateful to everyone who contributed to the Conservation Fund. In particular, we thank the Millichope Foundation for its continued support and the HDH Wills Charitable Trust for a grant received during the year. We are also grateful for donations from Parish Councils, including Edgton, Mainstone and Morville, support from local business Moonshine & Fuggles, and the many Friends and individual donors who make the Trust's work possible.

With the Trust approaching its tenth anniversary in July 2026, Trustees developed a campaign and communications plan to use the anniversary as an opportunity to celebrate a decade of community conservation, increase awareness of the Trust and strengthen future fundraising. Work during the year included bringing together stories demonstrating the longer-term impact of projects supported by the Conservation Fund and planning an email and social media campaign, a presentation at the Shropshire Hills Forum and a programme of public talks during 2026.

**Governance and Operations**

Governance development was a significant area of work during 2025–26.

The constitutional review begun during the previous year was taken forward, with Trustees approving amendments in July 2025 to give greater flexibility in trustee recruitment and update the Trust's name and terminology following the designation's rebranding as the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. The proposed amendments were submitted to the Charity Commission, and approval was received in March 2026, with a further resolution on the detailed wording of the charitable Objects required before the process could be completed.

The review was intended to enable the Trust to recruit from a wider pool and strengthen trustee capacity. Planning for recruitment began during the year, with two trustee vacancies

identified and opportunities sought to promote them through the Trust's and National Landscape Partnership's networks.

The Trust also continued to monitor changes to the governance arrangements for the wider Shropshire Hills National Landscape Partnership. Trustees recognised that the Trust's Memorandum of Understanding and associated working arrangements with the Partnership and National Landscape Team would need to be reviewed once the new structure was implemented.

Throughout the year, Trustees continued to monitor delivery against the 2024–27 Business Plan and review the Trust's financial position and organisational risks at regular Board meetings.

## Financial Review

Most of the Trust's money is used to award grants from its Conservation Fund. The Trust holds all its financial assets in a current account with Barclays Bank. At the start of the year the bank balance was £35,139, total income during the year was £12,838, and total expenditure was £22,941.

During the financial year £22,705 was paid out to grant recipients whose projects had completed; a further £5,818 of grants pertaining to the financial year were paid post 1 April 2026.

Administrative services were kindly provided at no cost by members of the National Landscape team, hence minimal annual operating costs of £236. At the end of the year the Trust had a bank balance of £25,036.

| Shropshire Hills AONB Trust | | | | | | Accounts 2025-2026 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INCOME** | | | | | **EXPENDITURE** | | |
| **Friends Membership** | | | **£** | **4,263.08** | South Shropshire Youth Forum CF/2425/14 | 02/04/2025 | 2,500.00 |
| | | | | | MMCLT CFWW/2425/16 | 15/04/2025 | 1,300.00 |
| **Business Supporters** | | | **£** | **250.00** | Shropshire Ornithological Society CF/2425/13 | 15/04/2025 | 2,000.00 |
| | | | | | Nick Fogg CF/2425/11 | 15/04/2025 | 2,500.00 |
| **General Donations** | | | **£** | **379.36** | Glyn's Garden CIC CFWW/2425/19 | 04/06/2025 | 600.00 |
| | | | | | Marches Meadow Group CF/2425/10 | 15/04/2025 | 500.00 |
| **Shuttle Supporters Scheme** | | | **£** | **-** | BC Walking Festival CF/2425/9 | 17/04/2025 | 1,100.00 |
| | | | | | Earthcare CF/2425/3 | 24/04/2025 | 500.00 |
| **Caering for Caradoc Appeal** | | | **£** | **26.13** | Edgton Parish Meeting CFWW/2425/1 | 09/05/2025 | 1,009.73 |
| | | | | | ABDON VILLAGE HALL (CFWW/2425/17) | 21/01/2026 | 1,500.00 |
| **Gift Aid Reclaim** | | | **£** | **919.72** | | | |
| Millichope Foundation | | | | £5,000.00 | David R Lewis CF/2526/12 | 22/05/2025 | 80.00 |
| HGH Wills | | | | £2,000.00 | Hanna Instruments CF/2526/12 | 03/06/2025 | 859.22 |
| | | | | | Mrs S P Crichton CF/2526/11 | 15/04/2025 | 112.99 |
| **Grants Received** | | | | **£7,000.00** | Rea Valley CVS CF/2526/5 | 26/09/2025 | 1,473.34 |
| | | | | | Pontesbury PPC (CF/2526/1) | 19/11/2025 | 443.90 |
| | | | | | Rob Rowe (CF/2526/3) | 19/11/2025 | 1,700.00 |
| | | | | | Caring for God's Acre (CF/2526/9) | 18/12/2025 | 2,000.00 |
| | | | | | SOUTH SHROPSHIRE Youth Forum (CF/2526/8) | 26/02/2026 | 2,000.00 |
| | | | | | Rea Valley CVS CF/2526/5 | 05/03/2026 | 525.83 |
| | | | | | **Grants Paid** | | **£ 22,705.01** |
| | | | | | Woodhouse Accountants | | 200.00 |
| | | | | | IONOS Cloud (SSL certificates fees) | | 36.00 |
| **Total Income** | | | **£** | **12,838.29** | **Operating Costs** | | **£ 236.00** |
| **Surplus of Income over Expenditure** | | | **-£** | **10,102.72** | **Total Expenditure** | | **£ 22,941.01** |
| **Additional Income** | | | | | **Additional Expenditure** | | |
| *Pertaining to the financial year but received post-April 1, 2026* | | | | | *Pertaining to the financial year but paid post-April 1, 2026* | | |
| **Gift Aid Reclaim** | | | | | Piece of String (CF2526/2) | | £ 1,000.00 |
| Membership | | | £ | 177.95 | Morville Parish Council (CF2526/4) | | £ 1,931.14 |
| Membership | | | £ | 221.06 | Forestry Commission (CF2526/7) | | £ 2,000.00 |
| | | | **£** | **399.01** | Pontesbury PPC (CF/2526/1) | | £ 444.93 |
| | | | | | Edgton Parish Council (2425/1) | | £ 442.00 |
| *Pertaining to previous years but received in the financial year* | | | | | | | |
| **Gift Aid Reclaim** | | | | | | | |
| Membership | 23/04/2025 | BGC | £ | 198.05 | | | |
| Membership | 24/04/2025 | BGC | £ | 207.92 | | | **£ 5,818.07** |
| | | | **£** | **405.97** | *Pertaining to previous years but paid in the financial year* | | |
| | | | | | **Grants (as above)** | | **£ 13,509.73** |
| **Adjusted Total Income** | | | **£** | **12,831.33** | **Adjusted Total Expenditure** | | **£ 15,013.35** |
| **Adjusted Surplus of Income over Expenditure** | | | **-£** | **2,182.02** | | | |
| **Funds at Bank (1/4/25)** | | | **£** | **35,139.04** | **Funds at Bank (31/3/26)** | | **£ 25,036.32** |
| **Restricted Funds** | | | **£** | **6,161.95** | | | |
| **Shuttles Supporters Scheme** | Carried over from 2024/25 | | £ | 100.15 | | | |
| | Income 2025/26 | | £ | - | | | |
| | Expenditure 2025/26 | | £ | - | | | |
| | **Total** | | **£** | **100.15** | | | |
| **Caering for Caradoc** | Carried over from 2024/25 | | £ | 217.60 | | | |
| | Income 2025/2026 | | £ | 26.13 | | | |
| | Expenditure 2025/26 | | £ | - | | | |
| | **Total** | | **£** | **243.73** | | | |
| **Grants Carried Over for 2026/27 payment** | | | **£** | **5,818.07** | | | |
| **Available Unrestricted Funds** | | | **£** | **18,874.37** | | | |

# Independent Examiner's Report.

**To the Trustees of Shropshire Hills AONB Trust, Charity Number: 1168432**

**On the accounts for the year ended 31ST March 2026.**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ('the Trust') for the year end 31.03.2026.

**Responsibilities and Basis of Report:**

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2001 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

## Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination in accordance with guidance given by the Charity Commission. My examination has included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and compared to the accounts presented and bank records presented. It also included a review, (if required), of any unusual items / disclosures in the accounts where an explanation from the trustees has been required. The procedures I have undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required for an audit and as such, I do not express an auditor's opinion on the accounts.

Upon completion of my examination, I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination, which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- The accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- The accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- The accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

In conclusion, I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report, in order, to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed……Jacqueline Madeley…… Date….24.06.2026

Mrs Jacqueline E Madeley BA (Hons), MAAT AATQB – Licenced by AAT