

# Annual Report 2023-2024



[www.sharphamtrust.org](http://www.sharphamtrust.org)

  
THE  
**Sharpham**  
TRUST

## Chair's Introduction



Welcome to our 2023-24 annual report.

Huge thanks must go to all our staff, facilitators and volunteers who together hold the beautiful space that is Sharpham.

In this place of peace many people who come to stay with us have life-changing experiences and many find a deeper connection with nature - and with themselves.

Our expanding body of work exploring the connection between mental health and nature is particularly relevant to today's digital lifestyle.

If you feel your life is caught up in the rush, this is the place for you to meet yourself again.

In a difficult economic environment, Sharpham continues to carefully evolve, gradually developing redundant farm buildings on the estate to serve a widening demographic, always with the intention of fostering a more sustainable, compassionate and mindful world.

Thank you for your interest in the Sharpham Trust. I hope you will come to stay with us soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Stokes'. The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

*Daniel Stokes,  
Chair of the Sharpham Trust*

## Our Vision, Purpose and Principles

### Our Vision

To create a more mindful, compassionate and environmentally-sustainable world.

### Our Mission

To connect people with nature and foster mindfulness and wellbeing.

The Trust works to a strong set of guiding principles and these act as a moral and creative compass in the planning of activities and projects.

### Our Principles

The Trust's activities are guided by

- an understanding of the interconnectedness of all life
- a deep respect for the natural world
- a belief in learning through experience, creative engagement and enquiry
- an acknowledgement of the value of stillness and awareness

The Trust aspires to be a living demonstration of these principles in all our activities.

### Objectives

1. To develop a range of innovative educational activities based on a sense of Sharpham as a special place
2. To demonstrate sustainable approaches to managing the land and buildings
3. To promote greater access to the Sharpham Estate
4. To operate a balanced budget with a secure income base



# Director's Report



Another year has flown by and a lot has been achieved by our staff, volunteers, retreat leaders and Trustees. It's important we pause and appreciate their hard work and dedication.

Once again the feedback from our participants has been very positive with numerous people saying how important visiting Sharpham has been to them and how transformational it can be.

Throughout the year there has been a theme of developing our links to the natural world across all the work we do. It was the last year of our Wild For People project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund - and this project delivered in partnership with Ambios has had a huge impact in terms of both the wildlife that has returned, as well as the people who have witnessed it.

We have been running Wildlife Discovery Retreats at the Coach House and participants have told me how much they have learned about nature recovery and gained from spending time in the natural world. We've enjoyed our birds, bugs, moths, bats, wildflowers and much more.

The next phase of our nature recovery work is a new project funded by the South West Community Forest which will see us plant some 5,000 trees and new hedges on the estate.

Volunteers will be involved with these efforts and our public events programme will include lots of tree-related opportunities.

We continued our public engagement work running events and school visits, sharing the importance of restoring our environment and wildlife. We also secured a grant from Farming in Protected Landscapes to create a new 20-acre wildflower meadow in front of Sharpham House, which will add to the mosaic of habitats across the estate.

Financially we are living in tough times and many charities are struggling as are many of our beneficiaries. Trustees continue to be focused on making sure the Trust remains resilient but also that we review our programme and work to make it as accessible as possible to as wide an audience as possible.

Many people have benefited from our bursaries and we have increased these for young people thanks to a generous donation from the Hollick Family Foundation.

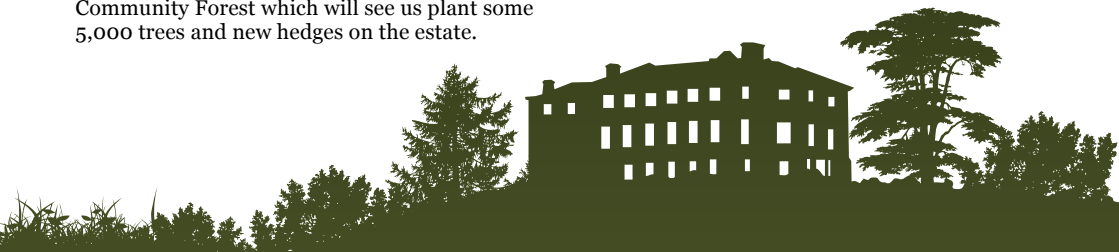
Our retreat programme goes from strength to strength and must be one of the largest in the UK if not the world! We have started hosting larger retreats for external organisations who want their members to benefit from what Sharpham offers.

Organising the programme is a huge logistical task so a big thank-you to the team for how smoothly it all runs.

We hope to see you back at Sharpham soon.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "JMCarnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

*Julian Carnell, Trust Director*



## Sharpham Trustees



*Our Trustees 2023-24. From left to right: Daniel Stokes, Julie Richardson, Martin Wright, Eve Anneck, Jane Sillis, William Lana. Inset: Charlotte Rathbone.*



*"Wonderment!! Magical...nurturing...food so delicious and nourishing.  
Lovely caring support in every aspect"*

*Coach House retreatant leaving 5-star review on Google*





**Retreats & meditations in-person and online**  
**To book, visit our website or call 01803 732542**

# Mindfulness Retreats, Meditations & Courses

## Mindfulness supports The Trust's charitable activities, our approach to caring for the land and each other.

- The Sharpham Trust was founded in 1982 by Maurice & Ruth Ash, daughter of the Elmhursts of Dartington.
- The Trust is a **leading mindfulness centre nationally**, offering a rich programme of retreats and courses with different doorways into mindful awareness – including offers for beginners and experienced meditators.
- We offer **secular** mindfulness retreats & courses as well as retreats based in the **Buddhist** tradition and solitary retreats.
- We have online retreats and meditation sessions to enable hundreds of people who can't visit us to benefit from mindfulness practices
- Last year **2,293 people** benefited from Sharpham mindfulness retreats, with 114 people taking part in our Mindful-in-Nature sessions, 13 participants on our 8-week mindfulness course and an estimated 120 'sitters' a week on our online meditation sessions.



*“My retreat at Sharpham House has been life changing to me.*

*My mind was totally blown by the beautiful nature of the estate.*

*A truly magical getaway from daily life, which made me appreciate the big and small wonders of nature”*

Andre, reviewing a Sharpham House retreat on Google

## Mindfulness in 7 places:



### Sharpham House Retreats

Our retreats in a Georgian house on a bend in the River Dart allow people to stay full-board amid history, art and stunning nature. Sharpham House retreats continued to near capacity or full up throughout this year.



### Woodland Retreats

These take place under canvas in woodland behind Sharpham House, affording people a closer connection to nature. In this reporting year, we ran 14 retreats and 8 were sold out with long waiting lists.

### The Hermitage

Our newest retreat venue - for solitary retreats - opened for business in this reporting year.

Thanks to our donors who supported our Crowdfunder appeal, we were able to replace our beloved Kuti building, which had burnt down the previous year.



### The Barn Retreat Centre

People stay in community at The Barn, living and meditating together and working on the land each day. In this year, The Barn offered shorter and longer stays & continuing teacher-led offers alongside its signature 6-night meditation retreat.



### Online Retreats

Our 1-day and Weekend online retreats support people who can't get to an in-person Sharpham retreat. They involved a carefully-curated schedule of guided meditations, movement practices, off-screen times and nature practices.



### The Coach House

This retreat venue offers retreats with a deeper connection to nature and celebrated its one year anniversary this year. Participants gave the venue positive feedback, 5-star reviews on Google and repeat custom.



### Online Meditation Sessions

We continued with weekly online sits in this year, offering guided meditations via Zoom. Hundreds of people connected to Sharpham digitally in this way.

#### ONLINE OFFERS:

[sharphamtrust.org/online](http://sharphamtrust.org/online)

#### FREE MEDITATIONS:

[sharphamtrust.org/resources](http://sharphamtrust.org/resources)



Retreats & meditations in-person and online  
To book, visit our website or call 01803 732542





[www.sharphamtrust.org](http://www.sharphamtrust.org)



# Mindful-in-Nature

114

participants in our  
Mindful-in-Nature  
nature-mindfulness courses  
in this year



Mindful-in-Nature is a programme supported by the National Lottery Community Fund.

The project is specifically designed to support mental health recovery, resilience and well-being for people aged 18+ living locally, and combines mindfulness and nature connection.

This seventh year of the programme saw 90 people from across Devon use Mindful-in-Nature as part of their mental health recovery. The project consists of a half-day taster course, an 8-week course, a growing group of alumni made up of past participants and many valuable volunteers including peer mentors, gardeners and members of the conservation team. We also host six gathering days annually, where alumni can return to Sharpham to refresh their practice and reunite with their cohort.

We continue to receive overwhelmingly good feedback about the course and the positive impact it is having on people's lives.

*"This course has totally changed my outlook on the rest of my life ahead"*

*"I have completed other courses/treatment to address my mental health in the past, but none match this course in terms of effectiveness"*

*"I can't thank the team enough. We were held with such heartfulness, care and strength"*

*"I honestly feel that the course was a healing miracle for me"*

*"The course has given me love and a feeling of self-worth"*

Project participants

## How to participate:

There are 2 ways to participate in Mindful-in-Nature:

- a **half-day** introduction to the 8-week course
- an **8-week** course, one day per week



### CONTACT:

**www.  
sharphamtrust.org/  
Mindful-in-Nature** or email the  
Project Co-ordinator Toria Hare on  
**volunteer@sharphamtrust.org**



LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/Mindful-in-Nature](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/Mindful-in-Nature)

## The Coach House

**Our centre for nature-based mindfulness continued to wow people who stayed here. Here's retreatant Christina on her experience staying there. Search 'Christina' on our website to read her full account.**

## The Coach House

We arrive as strangers. A rag-tag group with varied expectations. Arriving is always awkward, no one being quite sure of what to say. A brief “hello,” a sharing of names, and then silence. Small talk seems inappropriate in such a setting, and we aren’t sure what else to talk about. At this moment, silence is easy.

The week begins on a reflective note - or so we think. The ‘Tree Walk,’ which turns out to be more of an introspective exercise than anyone anticipated, sets a mellow tone which continues through lunch. But then, without warning, we are thrown headlong into ‘the rewilding area,’ bushwhacking our way through tall grasses and brambles as Julian expounds upon the complexity of “doing the right thing.” It all almost feels too much, but then we are reborn into childlike wonder as we wander through the reed beds. By the time we return for our 5 o’clock meeting, the reed beds are all anyone can talk about.

Before we realise it, we are journeying together as a crew...



LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/coach-house](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/coach-house)

## The Coach House



**The Coach House continued to impress and inspire people who stayed within its 18th century walls, just behind Sharpham House.**

In 2021, we invested more than £1.6million in converting an underused stableyard to a suite of 18 rooms, almost all of them ensuite.

In this financial year, we welcomed 583 retreatants to immerse themselves in nature, gardening and rewilding, alongside daily mindful movement, time on the land and - of course - meditation.





## 5-star Google reviews of The Coach House in this year:

*"I don't ordinarily leave reviews, but my 6 days at Sharpham last week changed my life. Having been sliding down darker mental slopes for months now, battling feelings of low self esteem, stress, feeling lost, but crucially not really realising it, a week's detox at Sharpham helped me come to a measure of acceptance about who I am, reignite my purpose and worth, calm me and rejuvenate me. Not to mention the beautiful scenery, wonderful tasting and nourishing vegan food and ever helpful, loving and supportive staff. Would **HIGHLY** recommend to **ANYONE**, especially if you've become trapped in the 21st century all-rush-no-play. 100% worth the money" - James*

*"One of the best decisions I have ever made was deciding to come to this beautiful place for a meditation retreat. Frank, Rachel and Elaine were so kind and welcoming and the food was amazing. The whole experience was transformative for me, and has helped me to live more in the present through mindfulness. I am so happy I found Sharpham House/Coach House. I will be making this a yearly pilgrimage going forward. Thank you to the whole staff for being amazing!" - Cherie*

*"Stunning location, beautiful food and very comfortable rooms. I attended a new year retreat which was held with much care and warmth and kindness. The structure of the days gave me time to myself, time out in nature, time to get to know and connect with others and the meditation helped me to feel balanced and relaxed and able to face my busy life again. it truly was a wonderful recharge" - Lisa*



LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/coach-house](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/coach-house)

## Fundraising



In 2022-23, generous donors gave more than £11,000 to help us create The Hermitage after our beloved solo retreat venue The Kuti burnt down at the beginning of that financial year.

This year we opened the doors to The Hermitage, welcoming our Crowdfunder donors followed by the general public.

We maintain a constant Crowdfunder where donors can choose to give a one-off gift or set up a monthly donation to directly support us in our mission to make a more mindful, compassionate and sustainable world.



Generous employees of a South West business donated cash to support The Sharpham Trust's rewilding efforts.

Workers from Somerset's RH Fibreboard gave £200 in their Christmas 2023 collection, to be spent on restoring nature on the Sharpham Estate.

*"It's been a lovely Christmas present for both us and the wildlife on our rewilding area, and the donations given will go specifically on tree-planting and further work on our wildflower meadow,"* said Sharpham Trust Communications Officer Katie Tokus.



## Help us to help people and nature

You can help us to build a more mindful and sustainable world, whilst caring for the beautiful Sharpham Estate.



The generosity of our friends, visitors and donors helps us in our mission to connect people to nature and foster mindfulness and well-being – from enabling us to offer places to people on low income to supporting our efforts to rewild areas of the Estate.

**Anything** you can give will make a difference - and will be gratefully received.

### HOW TO GIVE

- Choose whether to give a monthly gift, a donation to our General Fund or a Bursary Donation (enabling those on lower incomes to come on retreat with us)
- Donate quickly and securely online here: [www.sharphamtrust.org/donate](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/donate)

LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/solo](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/solo)

## The Hermitage



We were delighted to re-open our solo retreat venue on The Sharpham Estate in August of this reporting year - and to earn plaudits for it almost immediately.

The Hermitage is for people who have participated in a Barn retreat, or a silent retreat elsewhere, and who are experienced meditators. It offers the opportunity for a solitary, silent, and self-sufficient retreat in private woodland a short walk from The Barn Retreat Centre.

The space contains a double bed, meditation mat and cushion, table, chair and cooking equipment. There's running water, a gas cooking stove, wood-burner and a compost loo nearby. There is no electricity except for solar-powered lights.

People who stay will be expected to create their own personal daily structure including meditation and two hours (or optionally more) working meditation in the garden.

Solo retreatants get a hearty vegan lunch on weekdays, while supplies for other meals (which they cook themselves) are provided.

*A simple but comfortable accommodation, delicious organic food, and the support of The Barn coordinators: that's all you need. Thank you, may you all flourish! Much metta!"*





# The Barn

## We grew as a team this year!



Tasha Bassingthwaighte



Nina Jankelson



Emily Smith

Barn Manager Tasha Bassingthwaighte was joined by Assistant Barn Manager Nina Jankelson and they were both supported by Emily Smith, who helps with administration of The Barn and The Coach House.

Together they have developed a new approach for some Barn retreats: The Dharma Pathway.

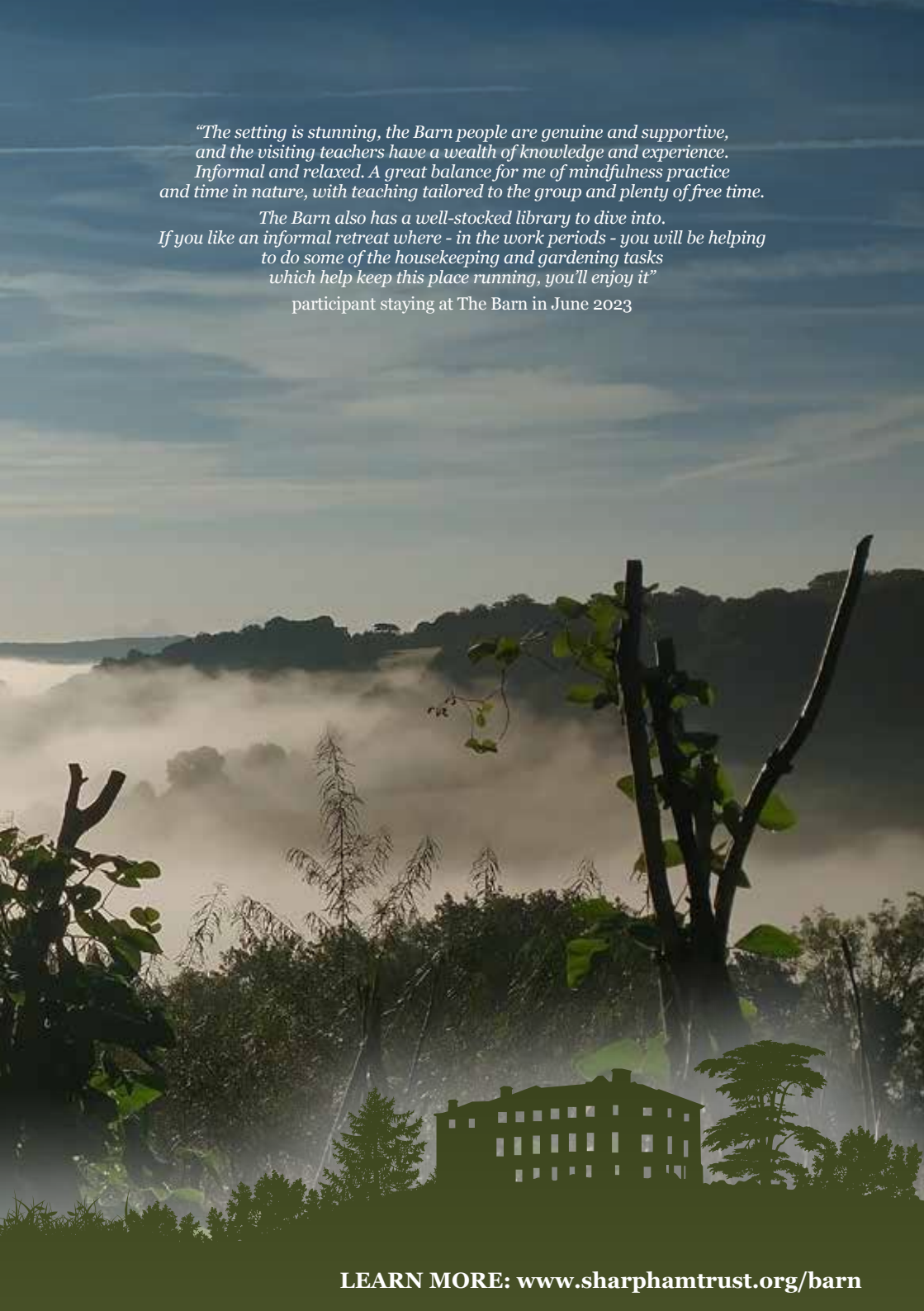
This is a series of connected retreats where participants are encouraged to complete the 'pathway', thus embedding their learning about Buddhism.

Themed Barn retreats continued to run successfully, bringing esteemed and experienced leaders to The Sharpham Estate.

Meanwhile, The Barn's signature 6-night retreats continued, alongside 4-night and 10-night retreats.





A scenic landscape featuring a misty valley with silhouetted trees and a large building in the foreground. The sky is a mix of blue and white, suggesting a clear day with some light clouds. The foreground is dominated by dark green foliage and the silhouette of a large, multi-story building with many windows. The middle ground shows a dense forest of trees, some with green leaves and others as dark silhouettes. The background is a hazy, misty valley with rolling hills under a bright sky.

*“The setting is stunning, the Barn people are genuine and supportive,  
and the visiting teachers have a wealth of knowledge and experience.  
Informal and relaxed. A great balance for me of mindfulness practice  
and time in nature, with teaching tailored to the group and plenty of free time.*

*The Barn also has a well-stocked library to dive into.  
If you like an informal retreat where - in the work periods - you will be helping  
to do some of the housekeeping and gardening tasks  
which help keep this place running, you'll enjoy it”*

participant staying at The Barn in June 2023

**LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/barn](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/barn)**

## Sharpham hired



### We hosted our biggest ever hire client this reporting year.

We welcomed 76 people from Emergence Magazine, an award-winning publication, podcast and organisation that exists to “share stories that explore the timeless connections between ecology, culture, and spirituality”.

Photographer and retreatant Kasia Murfet captured some of the peace, tranquillity and camaraderie felt by the participants in the pictures on this page.

Said one retreatant afterwards: “It’s been the most needed reminder to take it slowly, to allow myself to be present and appreciate the wonderful people and nature that surrounds me. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe through”.

Emergence, and sister organisation The Golden Sufi Center have booked & re-booked to hire our buildings and grounds.

**SEE MORE:** [www.sharphamtrust.org/news/view/pictures-emergence-magazine](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/news/view/pictures-emergence-magazine)



**LEARN MORE:** [www.sharphamtrust.org/hire](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/hire)





## Our gardens



### Sharpham House gardens & grounds

Our organic gardens at Sharpham House continued to feed, nourish and inspire retreatants.

Retreatants and volunteers continued to contribute to the gardens and grounds, helping to ensure that future visitors can enjoy the horticulture at Sharpham.

Our garden team was augmented in this year by two sets of Regenerative Agriculture trainees.

Thanks to a partnership with The Apricot Centre near Totnes, groups of trainee gardeners lived at Sharpham and worked towards an NVQ in regenerative & organic techniques.



Sharpham House gardens also featured **THREE TIMES** on BBC Gardeners' World - a primetime national TV show.

Frances Tophill, a presenter on the show, came to work for us and brought the cameras with her. Read more on this on our Sharpham in the Media page.



### Barn gardens

The Barn's organic veg gardens continued to flourish and a massive 740.40kg of fruit and veg was harvested, including more than 380kg of salad, 77kg of tomatoes, 72kg of squash and a huge 210kg of leeks!

LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/the-gardens](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/the-gardens)





**666**

litres of apple juice



**296**

kilos of mixed salad leaves



**53**

kilos of cucumbers



**62**

buckets of flowers to decorate Sharpham House, The Coach House and the Woodland Campsite




**26**

kilos of red, white and blackcurrants



**160**

kilos of courgettes



**125**

kilos of chard



**146**

kilos of tomatoes



**75**

kilos of french beans



**74**

kilos of mixed herbs



# Nature at Sharpham



## Rewilding at Sharpham

Our Wild for People project came to an end this year, bringing to a close a four-year project to restore nature in a historic parkland and boost biodiversity.

We partnered with Sharpham Estate-based conservationists Ambios Ltd in the project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to the tune of £177,000.

The Covid pandemic took place within the period of Wild for People, forcing us to limit activities and postpone public events.

Fortunately, funders allowed us an extension and today, after nearly half a decade of working together on Wild for People, we can declare that biodiversity has dramatically improved, hundreds of people (including children) now understand the importance of rewilding at Sharpham, and our historic, Capability Brownian setting has been conserved.



Wins include:

- Birds like Stonechat and Greater Whitethroat were newly recorded as visiting & breeding at Sharpham
- Consistent year-on-year increases in butterfly numbers across five peak summer surveys
- Increased natural tree regeneration: a 77% increase in the number of saplings over 50cm tall was recorded in one year
- The number of plant species increased by nearly 80% between 2020 & 2023
- 144 new native trees were planted
- Hundreds of people engaged with our events, our BioBlitzes, vocational training and volunteering
- Interpretation boards and map boards were installed to help visitors understand rewilding at Sharpham
- We earned organic status for Home Farm, enabling us to proudly say that The Sharpham Estate is certified organic!



## Nature at Sharpham



### Graze expectations

Two ponies arrived on The Sharpham Estate in January to help with rewilding.

The Konik ponies mimic the behaviour of the wild horses who roamed the lands thousands of years ago, nibbling and browsing vegetation and keeping a check on plant growth naturally.

The ponies join Belted Galloways and Mangalitzas on the estate – restoring nature on former farmland near Totnes, South Devon.

We were on regional TV with this news!

**LEARN MORE/VIEW VIDEO:**  
[www.sharphamtrust.org/ponies](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/ponies)



LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/wild](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/wild)



# Nature at Sharpham

## Wildlife Discovery Retreats

We launched a new, nature-packed retreat for our Coach House venue in this reporting year.

Our Wildlife Discovery retreats offered 6-night stays with mindful practices, movement and nature exploration under the guidance of expert leaders who ran sessions on birds, insects, plants and mammals, throughout the week.



*"I've just completed the Wildlife Discovery Retreat at the Coach House.*

*The accommodation, grounds, and activities with extremely knowledgeable local experts were wonderful! The mix between mindfulness practice, learning about different aspects of nature and personal time was well balanced.*

*The coordinators created a safe space, were patient, compassionate and used kindness and humour throughout.*

*I would highly recommend this and the many other retreats offered at Sharpham" - a Wildlife Discovery retreatant during this year*

### LEARN MORE:

[www.sharphamtrust.org/wildlife-discovery](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/wildlife-discovery)

## BioBlitz

Birds, wildflowers, trees, bats, butterflies and many other invertebrates were all counted in a packed 24 hours on the land just outside Totnes.

The event (and the rewilding at Sharpham) was supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the players of the lottery, enabling the free participation of members of the public.

42 species of birds were recorded (up from 32 in 2021), from the tiny wren to the big buzzard, and other bird highlights included hearing skylarks, linnets, yellowhammer and goldcrests, plus reed buntings and reed warblers down in the reedbeds.

Some 149 wildflowers and plants (up from 107 in 2021) were spotted & documented. Insects observed included a Long-winged Conehead Cricket, a Red-Headed Cardinal Beetle, Large Skipper butterfly and a Marmalade Hoverfly.

"We are over the moon about the splendid results from our third BioBlitz, which show that biodiversity is growing on our rewilding meadows at Sharpham," said organiser Lisa Carnell, Event and Education Officer of The Sharpham Trust.



*"Incredible BioBlitz Workshop! My partner and I loved the mammal tracks and signs free workshop on the Sharpham Estate with mammal specialist Simon Roper."*

*"Really appreciate the Sharpham charity and all it does for the environment and eco-education. Having this free workshop series made it so accessible and inclusionary, thank you for having us!"*

BioBlitz  
2023 participants



Made possible with

**Heritage  
Fund**

# The Sharpham Estate



## New wildflower meadow planted

A new, organic habitat for native plants, insects, birds and animals was ploughed and planted on the Sharpham Estate in Summer-Autumn 2023.

The wildflower meadow was created in front Sharpham House, on land previously occupied by Sharpham Vineyard.

The vineyard had come to the end of its useful life and Sharpham Wine moved over the River Dart to Sandridge Barton, freeing up the land.

Sharpham Trust Director Julian Carnell said: *“It gave us an opportunity to think, ‘Well, what are we going to do with the land as we move forward?’. We’ve recently been working on a rewilding of the estate, and we wanted to do something that was in tune with that approach, around making more space for wildlife.”*

The UK has lost a huge amount of lowland, wildflower meadows - which are vital food sources for pollinators. A common figure quoted is that we’ve lost 97% of our wildflower meadows since the Second World War.

The new meadow fits with Sharpham House’s history. It’s a return to how the land used to look in previous centuries.



 Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

 South Devon National Landscape

**Farming in Protected Landscapes programme**



**LEARN MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/wildflower-meadow](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/wildflower-meadow)**

## Parkrun

The first event at Sharpham Estate Parkrun took place during this year: a weekly 5 kilometre run on the foot & cycle path between Totnes and Ashprington.

Parkrun is a UK charity encouraging people to exercise more. Participants register for a free barcode and their time is measured each time they run.

The Sharpham Parkrun begins at 9am on Saturday mornings on the foot/cycle path just up from the Steam Packet Inn in Totnes and winds through land alongside the River Dart, including our rewilding fields.

Organisers of the Sharpham Estate Parkrun have averaged 100 walkers and runners every week, from those who want to exercise in good company and beautiful surroundings to those seeking a personal best running time.

If you're interested in running (and/or volunteering to help marshal the event), email [sharphamestate@parkrun.com](mailto:sharphamestate@parkrun.com)

**LEARN MORE:**  
[www.parkrun.org.uk/sharphamestate](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/sharphamestate)





# The Sharpham Estate

## Upper Sharpham Farm & Home Farm

Helen & David Camp are tenants of our organic farmland at Upper Sharpham Barton and Home Farm.

The Camps graze their organic cattle on the Sharpham Estate and use organic practices to manage the land, including growing red clover to feed the animals and the soil.



## Lower Sharpham Farm

Ambios Ltd is a tenant of The Sharpham Trust and runs this 80-acre organic farm, as well as partnering with us to manage our rewilding land on Home Farm fields.

Ambios's work centres on nature conservation traineeships, supporting trainees to develop skills and confidence to help them progress towards finding employment in the nature sector. During this reporting period, Ambios supported 11 trainees over a Spring/Summer traineeship programme.

The organisation also works in partnership with United Response, a charity that supports adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. United Response adults work daily on the farm, helping care for the animals, plants and buildings there.

Ten volunteers from across the UK and Europe stayed on the farm this year.

And 2023 saw nearly 200 people visit the farm for the Restoring Nature Literary Festival (run in conjunction with Eastgate Books from Totnes). They listened to four wonderful authors share their passion on the subject of rewilding and regenerative agriculture, alongside 'forest school' activities, delicious, locally-sourced food and live music.



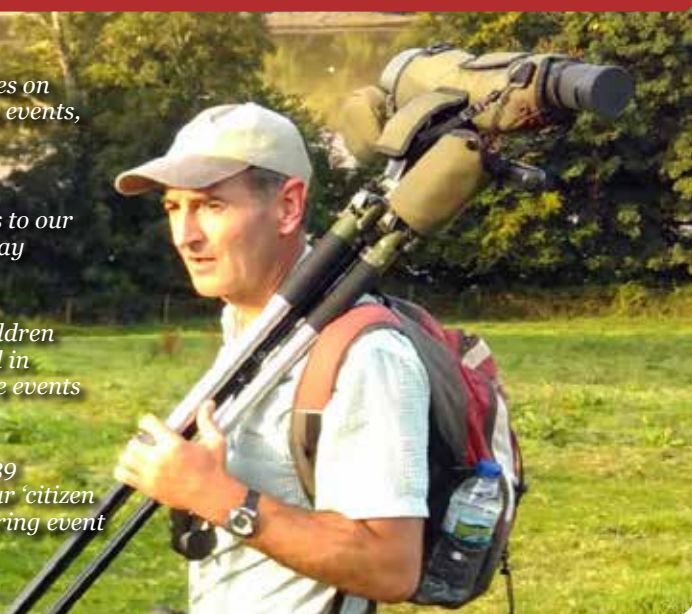
## Events

**863** attendees on  
Sharpham Trust public events,  
including...

**600** visitors to our  
Summer Celebration Day

**321** schoolchildren  
& students participated in  
Sharpham Trust nature events

**88** adults and 39  
children took part in our 'citizen  
science' nature-monitoring event  
BioBlitz in June 2023



We ran a full programme of public events, enticing people to spend time connecting to themselves, to nature, food & Sharpham's heritage.

During this year we invited people to participate in events including:

- A family mindfulness day, introducing youngsters to meditation
- foraging for wild foods and medicines
- fermenting foods for good gut health
- birdsong walks
- a stargazing and bat walk
- a first-time fungi quest
- a family firecraft session

*"Lovely being out of doors, with such a knowledgeable bird guide"* - participant on our Dusk Chorus walk with expert Mike Langman



Made possible with

**Heritage  
Fund**



We enabled brain-injured children and their families to visit The Sharpham Estate, thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Young people with Acquired Brain Injury and their families went on a trip operated by our partners Canoe Adventures and were able to explore the River Dart and Sharpham's shoreline, as part of our Wild For People rewilding project.

*"Dad reported how much he had enjoyed such quality time with his 2 young people - something he does not often get the chance to do,"* reported occupational therapist Penny Weekes.

## Ceremonies



## Weddings

Sharpham House is licensed for wedding ceremonies and we hosted three in this financial year.

**LEARN MORE:**

[www.sharphamtrust.org/weddings](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/weddings)

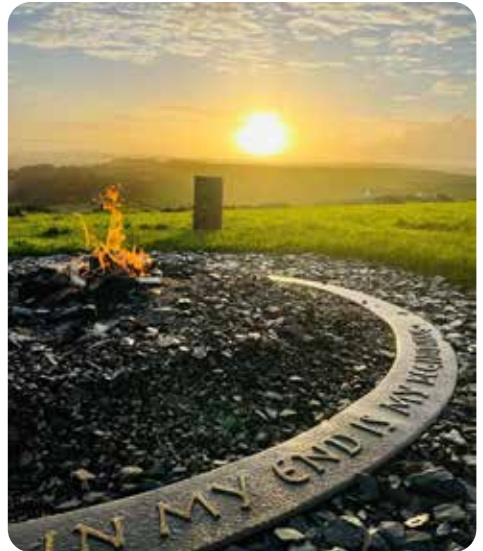
## Burials

We own and operate Sharpham Meadow Natural Burial Ground - an incredible spot from where you can see (on a clear day) the River Dart, Dartmoor and the sea.

The space features the Ancestors' Fire, created by Totnes artist Robin Lacey, and is an organic haymeadow that is home to lots of wildlife.

**LEARN MORE:**

[www.sharphamtrust.org/burials](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/burials)



### Natural Burials

105 burials, ashes interments and pre-paid plot purchases at Sharpham Meadow.



SEE EVENTS: [www.sharphamtrust.org/whatson](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/whatson)





# The Sharpham Trust in numbers

## Volunteers

Barn & Coach House volunteer coordinators	11,116 hours
Garden volunteers	882 hours
Wild for People conservation & rewilding volunteers	1425 hours
Events volunteers	205 hours
Archive volunteers	168 hours
Admin volunteer	128 hours
Mindful-in-Nature peer mentors	140 hours
<b>Total volunteer hours</b>	<b>14,064</b>

### LEARN MORE:

[www.sharphamtrust.org/volunteer](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/volunteer)

**94** volunteers  
(including our Trustees)



**288,201** website sessions\*

\* The number of engaged sessions (as measured by Google Analytics) that lasted longer than 10 seconds, or had a conversion event, or had 2 or more screen views.



## VIDEO

**836**

hours of Sharpham  
video watched in 2023-24

SEE MORE: [www.sharphamtrust.org/video](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/video)



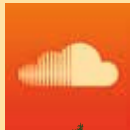
## SOUNDCLOUD DOWNLOADS

**21,129**

plays of our meditations  
this year

### FREE MEDITATIONS:

[www.sharphamtrust.org/resources](http://www.sharphamtrust.org/resources)



## RETREATS

161 retreats attended by

**2293** participants



**48**

retreats in Sharpham  
House with **937**  
participants



**54** retreats at  
The Barn with  
**479** people



**41** retreats in  
The Coach House  
with **583** people



**15** woodland retreats  
& **178** people



**11** online retreats with  
**116** people



## DONATIONS

**£33,989**  
given



**52** online meditation  
sessions with estimated  
**120** sitters each time



## Sharpham in the media



### Gardeners' World TV

We were on national TV THREE times!

Our Head Gardener at the time was a famous face: Frances Tophill, one of the presenters on BBC Gardeners' World.

We appeared on the programme in April, August and October 2023

Frances shared her story of moving to a new home and a new gardening workplace and that meant we had the national spotlight upon us and our organic grounds.

It was a fantastic opportunity (well, three actually) to showcase our surroundings and our work and our subscribers and social media followers loved seeing their favourite retreat centre on the TV.

It brought huge numbers to our website and lots more sign-ups to our newsletter too.

Thanks Frances!





# What people said about us

## Google reviews:

### Sharpham House retreats:

*"I went on a five-night Summer Embrace retreat at Sharpham House. It exceeded my expectations in every way. The setting, the staff, the leaders and my fellow retreatants were all wonderful and expectational. The location is beautiful and I can't recommend it enough. It is truly great value and very life-enriching. Oh and the food is pretty good too :)"*

### The Barn retreats (Buddhist-inspired):

*"The Barn Retreat is an absolutely magical experience and opportunity to gift yourself clarity, healing and connection. I couldn't recommend this more"*

### Woodland Retreats:

*"There are no adequate words to describe the beauty & magic of this place. The Woodland Retreat has been a salvation and I cannot recommend it highly enough"*

### The Coach House (nature-connection retreats):

*"A retreat at The Coach House is a truly relaxing and rejuvenating experience. The opportunity to be a part of nature in the walled garden and*

*explore the Sharpham estate rewilding project was a real highlight. The vegetarian food is beautifully done. The configuration of the rooms and communal eating area foster a real sense of community as well. I would highly recommend a retreat at The Coach House at any time of the year to reset and reconnect with yourself and nature"*

### The Hermitage (solitary retreats):

*"I've been to many different meditation retreats and of course, have been meditating on my own for decades. This Solitary Retreat has just suited my state of mind perfectly. Thank you so much, Sharpham Trust x"*

### Retreats at Home (online retreats):

*"I have just completed a truly beautiful and inspiring online weekend mindfulness retreat led by two wonderful facilitators Will and Miguel. I feel so blessed and humbled by the trust and connection formed in the group and appreciate the 'space' this experience has created for me in my chaotic life. The group worked so well (albeit through Zoom) and I feel recharged and inspired to carry on the good work in my future mindfulness practices and look forward to signing up for another retreat very soon. Thank you"*

## Media reviews:

### The Guardian

*"Testimonials profess that regular mindful practices, guided meditations and male-to-male emotionally driven communication opened up a world of connections with others, nature and self"*

The Guardian features our men's meditation retreat at The Barn

### BBC COUNTRYFILE MAGAZINE

*"Sharpham is a truly magical place. Not to mention that the vegetarian food is fantastic"*

BBC Countryfile Magazine

### thebmj

*"It's about reclaiming the experience of joy and of being alive"*

The British Medical Journal covers our mindfulness retreat for doctors

### BAZAAR

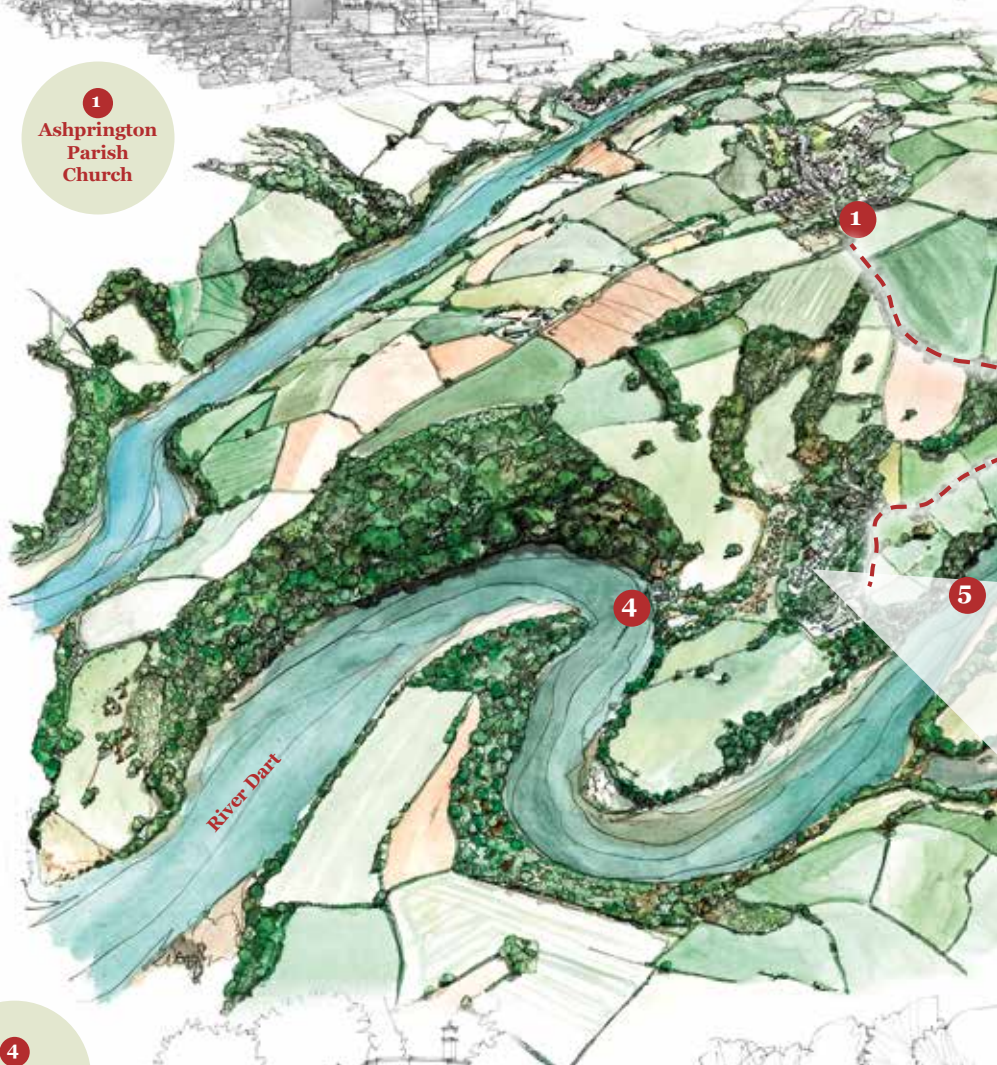
*"Best for a solo getaway: The Sharpham Estate, Devon"*

Harper's Bazaar magazine feature us



# THE Sharpham TRUST

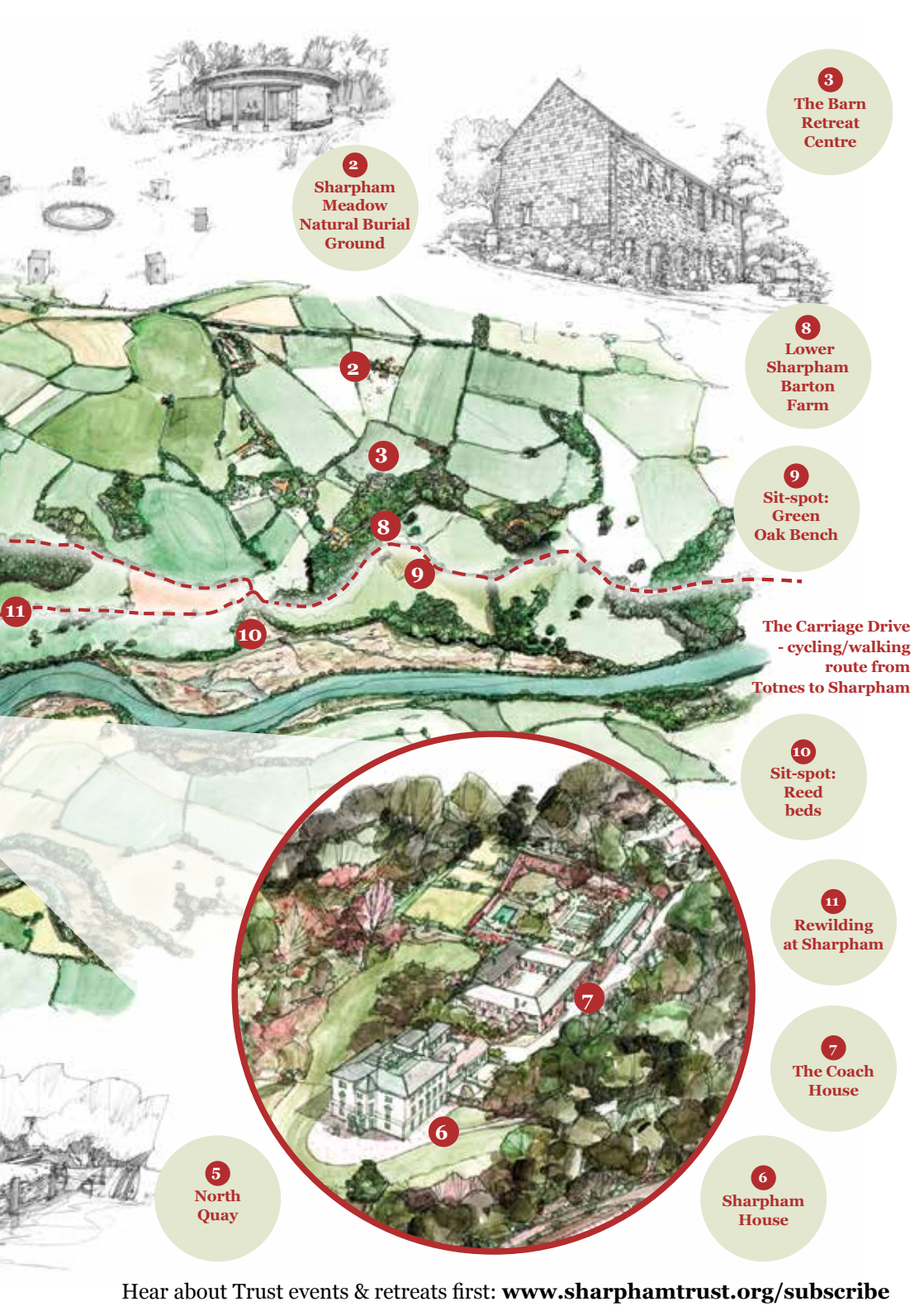
**1**  
Ashprington  
Parish  
Church



**4**  
Bathing  
House







3

The Barn  
Retreat  
Centre

2

Sharpham  
Meadow  
Natural Burial  
Ground

8

Lower  
Sharpham  
Barton  
Farm

9

Sit-spot:  
Green  
Oak Bench

9

3

8

2

10

The Carriage Drive  
- cycling/walking  
route from  
Totnes to Sharpham

11

10

Sit-spot:  
Reed  
beds

11

Rewilding  
at Sharpham

7

The Coach  
House

6

Sharpham  
House

5

North  
Quay



# Financial information

## Donations and grants

Grants for restoration of former vineyard into wildflower meadow - £17,792

Hermitage fund - £15,029

Plymouth & South Devon Community Forest project - £16,381

Mindful-in-Nature programme from the National Lottery Community Fund - £21,168

Wild for People project, from the National Lottery Heritage Fund - £36,473

Donations - £33,989 given

Headline Figures		
EOY period	March 2023	March 2024
Total income	1.859m	1.830m
Total expenditure	1.630m	1.652m
Total funds	8.070m	8.410m
Voluntary income (donations)	0.057m	0.034m
Investment income	0.125m	0.131m
Charity activity income	1.419m	1.515m
Investment management costs	0.025m	0.023m
Cost of charitable activities	1.591m	1.596m
Governance	0.009m	0.012m
Governance as % total expenditure	<b>0.59%</b>	<b>0.72%</b>

## Trust Salaries

The Trust believes in equal pay and a living wage. It pays all staff more than the current governmental national minimum wage and at least the Living Wage as defined by The Living Wage Foundation.



## Pay ratio

The ratio between the highest paid member of staff and the median or average pay for all staff at the Trust is 2.29.

The ratio between the highest paid and lowest paid is 2.95.

*Picture credits: The Sharpham Trust, Julian Carnell, Debbie Geraghty, Emma Dibben, Georgie Byrom, Ambios Ltd, Mike Cooke, Sharpham Parkrun, Emma Stoner Photography, Toto Ellis*



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Charity No. 285767 Company No. 01659601