

Annual Report 2019-2020



www.sharphamtrust.org


THE
Sharpham
TRUST

Chairman's Introduction



Welcome to the Sharpham Trust's Annual Report.

What a full year it has been. We had a record 1,746 participants come to Sharpham to explore, and connect with the natural world across the 3 venues we offer: the main Georgian house, the Woodland bell-tents, and the long-established Barn retreat centre.

As humanity continues to grapple with the complexity and multiple challenges we all face, all of us at Sharpham are so pleased and

humbled that so many of you opted to visit us to develop, reflect and deepen your resilience. We received hundreds of positive reviews from retreatants. Recently one simply said "Thank you for changing my life". In the same vein we wish to thank all of you for coming to Sharpham and for enlivening our lives.

The Estate continues to change and evolve and we have now concluded the buyback of various leases, and can share that the wine business and cheese business, which have been on the Estate for so long will leave the Estate in the coming years. We wish them well, and are excited for the new social enterprise opportunities which will no doubt emerge in the coming months and years in their place.

I can also share that we will be commencing work on the Coachyard behind Sharpham House soon, upgrading and enhancing this beautiful space whilst increasing the number of bedrooms we have available to people coming on retreats. We hope this work is completed by the end of 2021.

The various projects and activities you will read about in this report, and on our website, are a reflection of our efforts to deepen the offerings we create for you. From the new Stillness & Flow canoeing retreats (which were full a few days after we announced them) to the fact that our Walled Garden team is producing more wonderful organic vegetables than ever before (2.7 tonnes of fruit and veg grown, against 1.5 tonnes last year and 0.75 tonnes the year before).

We enjoy sharing this Estate with you and are grateful for all the support you have shown over the last 12 months.

Finally, I want to thank all the staff, volunteers and friends of Sharpham who have helped us to make this such a full and positive year. Muchísimas gracias!

Of course, as the year draws to a close, we are also confronting the new challenge of Covid-19. I will leave it to Julian to go into this further, but please stay safe, and may the crisis bring us closer together and remind us of the importance of compassion.

With best wishes,

William Lana, Chair of the 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 well-being.

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 its 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



Looking back on what I wrote in last year's annual report I neglected to mention the risk posed by a global pandemic sweeping across the world and how this would cause us to have to reassess how we are all leading our everyday lives.

In fact this risk had been long identified in the UK National Risk Register. The 2017 version mentions on page 34: "For pandemic flu - up to 50% of the UK population experiencing symptoms, potentially leading to between 20,000 and 750,000 fatalities and high levels of absence from work. Disruption to essential services, particularly health and education; and economic disruption, including disruption to business and tourism".

It is interesting to reflect on our experience over the last 10 months and how we have responded to a threat that we were aware of and had developed contingency plans to deal with. It is to be hoped that we apply our learning to other significant risks such as climate change and the decline in biodiversity which we have also identified and supposedly formulated appropriate mitigation plans to address.

Interestingly, page 7 of the National Risk Register says: "the emergence of new infectious diseases is unpredictable but evidence indicates it may become more frequent. This may be linked to a number of factors such as: climate change; the global transport of food and intensive food production methods; humans encroaching on the habitat of wild animals." It goes on to highlight Climate Change as: "not only a future challenge. Experts are already observing changes in the UK's climate."

Looking back 2019 was a hugely successful year at Sharpham in terms of the experiences we were able to provide to a wide audience and the really positive feedback we received as a result. It is a tribute to all our staff, Trustees, freelance teachers and volunteers that people value their time spent at Sharpham so much.

Last year we developed plans to refurbish the Coachyard behind Sharpham House to provide additional accommodation. This was a response to the fact that our courses and retreats are pretty much full up most of the time. We had to pause this project back in March but we are now planning to get contractors onsite in December 2020 to start the works.

We were also successful last year in securing funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for our 3-year project Sharpham Wild People to enable us to rewild the Estate and tell people about the benefits of this approach. We are working with our partners Ambios on this exciting project.

It is examples such as these that provide an antidote to the difficulties currently facing us all.

At Sharpham we are working hard to try and maintain our services whilst ensuring that our staff and participants are safe. We feel that what we offer is more important than ever in these challenging times and we hope that more people will be able to benefit in the coming year.

Julian Carnell, Trust Director



Our Trustees in 2019 (left to right): Elizabeth Seward, Charlotte Rathbone, William Lana, Daniel Stokes, Tony Kuhl, Martin Wright



Mindfulness Retreats & 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 centre nationally** for mindfulness offering a rich programme of retreats and courses with different doorways into mindful awareness – from retreats for beginners to those for experienced meditators.
- We offer **secular** mindfulness retreats & courses as well as retreats in the **Buddhist** tradition.
- Last year a **record 1746 people** benefited from Sharpham mindfulness retreats and courses.

Retreats in 3 venues

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 – and we continue to gather **hugely positive reviews** and comments.

Many return again and again for their dose of Sharpham's rejuvenating remedies of **nature, community and quietitude**.

The Barn Retreat Centre



People stay in community at The Barn, living and meditating together and working on the land each day.

The simple rhythm of The Barn's routine, and the Buddhist philosophy that supports it, helps retreatants develop and deepen compassion, space and kindness for themselves and others.

The Kuti is a hermitage in the grounds of The Barn where people can retreat alone, with meals provided by The Barn.

Woodland Retreats



We launched a brand new Woodland Retreat during this year, where people could connect to nature via the nearby River Dart.

Our canoeing retreats, Stillness & Flow, were an immediate hit with our retreatants and sold out quickly. Retreatants paddled the Dart in silent awareness, appreciating the river's rhythms and the incredible life the shores host.

"This was an astonishing experience to undergo: from arriving in the sunny woodland setting of breath-taking beauty and seeing the woodland meeting the river to getting on the water, paddling and soaking it up in silence. It's a memory I will treasure"

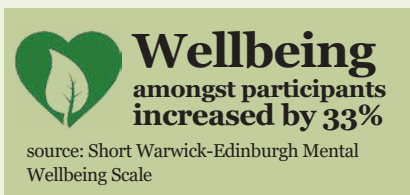
Canoeing Retreat participant, summer 2019

Mindful-in-Nature



We made it to the halfway point through the four years of this ground-breaking project to support people's mental health recovery, resilience and well-being through nature-connection.

By the end of this financial year, 84 people had completed the Mindful-in-Nature 1-day and 9-week courses.



"I have enjoyed being set free outside" a project participant

The project has been co-designed with Devon Recovery Learning Community, with input from people with lived experience of mental health challenges.

It is supported by a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund



"I can't thank this course and leaders enough for the change it has made/ is making in my life. My journey is still tough but I feel I now have better and more effective tools to make wiser choices" a project participant

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

- a **1-day** introduction day, to give people a taste of the programme.
- a **9-week** programme of sessions.

CONTACT:
www.sharphamtrust.org/Mindful-in-Nature
or email the Project Co-ordinator on volunteer@sharphamtrust.org

Mindfulness Courses

We run 8-week and 1-day mindfulness courses, facilitated by our **trained and hugely experienced mindfulness teachers**.

We delivered **15** courses to a total of **114** participants.

We also offer an **outreach programme** for organisations, companies or schools.

Sharpham House Hire



As well as running our own retreat programme we also hire Sharpham House to organisations who share our ethos and principles.

"It is a perfect formula to have exclusive use of such a beautiful venue with superb food and friendly staff"

a satisfied Sharpham House hire customer.

LEARN MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/hire

Sharpham books online!

We published books about Sharpham's heritage and food and made these available for sale online – to a great response.



The Sharpham Estate's fascinating story, researched by volunteers from the Sharpham Archive, was told by our Director Julian Carnell in the full-colour, A4 illustrated book Sharpham: A History.

Proceeds from the sale of the books go towards our charity's Bursary Funds, helping those on low-income to access our retreats.



And a new A4 version of The Barn Cookbook was published, with delicious vegetarian and vegan recipes gathered over the years of the Barn's existence and with professional pictures by Barn retreatants and photographer John Allen.

Buy the books individually, or as a bundle, from our website here:
www.sharphamtrust.org/books

Fundraising, Gardens & Heritage

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

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

Our gardens and food

This was an abundant and flourishing year for the gardens surrounding Sharpham House and The Barn.

Our garden team has been working hard to hone new skills, reinvigorate the garden vision and tend the grounds beautifully and productively, using sustainable garden practices that encourage wildlife and species diversity.

The 18th century Walled Garden behind Sharpham House produces fresh, organic food all-year-round for retreatants staying in Sharpham House and Woodland.

Meanwhile, in the hillside organic garden at The Barn, retreatants work daily on mindful food-growing, ensuring a continuing supply of delicious vegetables & fruit for the kitchen.

During this year we:

- produced over 2.7 tonnes of fruit and vegetables in the Walled Garden – a bumper year, the best yet!
- harvested 450 kilos of apples; 340kg of salad, 280kg of chard, 150kg of courgettes, 250kg of beetroot and 112kg of tomatoes
- grew many beautiful cut flowers to decorate Sharpham House during the retreats.
- worked with a trusty crew of volunteers in the gardens every Tuesday and Schumacher College Horticulture students on Thursday mornings! Thanks so much to you all, we couldn't do it without you!
- had a bumper apple harvest from our orchards, working with volunteers and OrchardLink to press the apples, filling our freezers with 800 litres of fresh juice. We also staged an Apple Tree Pruning course with Orchardlink
- we spent a beautiful Tree Care Day of sun and hail in March looking after some of the tree guards on the Great Run parkland opposite the house.
- we repaired the damaged wall along the Ladies Walk area of our formal gardens, working with a local dry stone waller and our volunteers.



• **Head Gardener Bryony Middleton** completed a Forest Garden Design Course, an Apple Pruning Course and both Amy and Bryony attended a Medicinal Herb Forest course. New plans are ahead.

• Amy Cairns completed her Apprenticeship in Horticulture with flying colours and we managed to entice her into employment with us for another year.



Sharpham Heritage

The Heritage Group were pleased to embark on a new opportunity to work with Katy McBean, part-time Archive Co-ordinator, who was appointed to take responsibility for the Sharpham Archive which was set up, and so ably run, by Lynette Gribble for many years.

The immediate focus for the Heritage and Archive Team was preparation for the Discovering Sharpham Heritage Day, which took place in September 2019. This was only the second Heritage Day at Sharpham but, since the first had been firmly centred on the house and gardens, this time the team decided to look outward, and explore Sharpham's wider position on the River Dart.

The day was a real success - enjoyed by all - and was a real tribute to the inspiration of Lynette in devising the day; the fascinating

speakers; and to Katy and her team of archive volunteers who worked so hard to prepare for it.

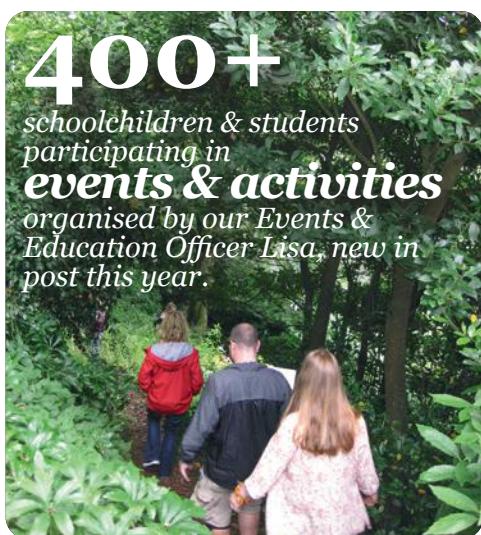
In June 2019, the Heritage Group were delighted when The Trust acquired a watercolour by Thomas Allom: Sharpham House from the River Dart. It is likely to have been gifted to Sharpham owner Captain John Bastard (1787-1835) by the painter during the 1820s, but had been lost to the House for many years.

In November 2019, Polly Morrow took over the role of Archive Co-ordinator, and continued the ongoing work with the team of enthusiastic archive volunteers. This included the important task of cataloguing the many documents, images and artefacts held by the Archive on a wide variety of topics, moving closer to the time when all records are easily accessible.

Events & Volunteering



1000+ people at our
Summer Open Day 2019



400+ schoolchildren & students participating in **events & activities** organised by our Events & Education Officer Lisa, new in post this year.

Volunteers

We ran weekly volunteer days, offering participants the chance to meet new people, learn a new skill, connect with nature and get active in beautiful and inspiring surroundings.

We are so grateful for the assistance – which helps The Sharpham Trust to operate day-to-day and maintain our nature conservation practices.



9,294

hours contributed to the Trust this year

Garden volunteers
2356 hours

Archive volunteers
917 hours

Conservation volunteers
735 hours

Barn co-ordinator volunteers
4,920 hours

Open day volunteers
221 hours

Marketing volunteer
144 hours

LEARN MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/volunteer

RETREATS

103 retreats attended by
1,746 participants



42 of our own retreats in Sharpham House with **905** participants



50 Barn retreats & **568** people



11 woodland retreats & **159** people



1,631 people attended our events



130,394 website visitors



DONATIONS

£22,466 in donations given



87 bursaries worth **£14,454** given to people of low income, enabling them to come on retreat at Sharpham



VIDEO

252 hours of Sharpham video watched 2019-20



SOUNDCLOUD DOWNLOADS

12,479 plays of our meditations in 2019



FREE MEDITATIONS:
www.sharphamtrust.org/resources

Wild for People

We learnt that we'd been successful in our bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to make more space for wildlife and take action for nature.

We were awarded £177,400 for a 3-year project called Wild for People, which will rewild parts of the historic Sharpham landscape and help more people to engage with nature here.

"Thanks to the National Lottery funding, we've got a great opportunity for us to enable nature to flourish on the Sharpham Estate and to share this story with local people and our other visitors", said Julian Carnell, Trust Director.



The project in partnership with Ambios at Lower Sharpham Farm - was highlighted on BBC television,

with a story about how earthworms were being counted to measure the quality of the soil before rewilding begins.

Wild for People was due to develop more in 2020, although the Covid lockdown in March delayed its start and its planned public events.

LEARN MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/wild-for-people

Ceremonies

We held our second Open Day at **Sharpham Meadow Natural Burial Ground** in May of this financial year, where more than 30 people visited to find out more about this serene resting place overlooking the River Dart.

Sharpham Meadow is a place for natural burials and ashes interments and is hugely appreciated by the local community whose loved ones are buried at this special place.

This haymeadow has a well-established flourishing and healthy ecosystem, including wildflowers, skylarks and hares and a variety of pollinating insects.

Unfortunately, our All Souls' Day ceremony around the Ancestors' Fire had to be cancelled in this year due to bad weather.

LEARN MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/burials



Natural Burials

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

On a few limited occasions each year, the Trust welcomes couples to use Sharpham House and its wonderful gardens exclusively for their weddings, with all proceeds going to help support the work of the charity and upkeep of the Estate.



6 weddings in Sharpham House 2019-2020

LEARN MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/weddings



#SharphamTrust

"Simply Magical"

Sharpham films

We made 2 more promotional videos, highlighting retreats in Sharpham House and The Barn.

SEE MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/video

What the reviewers say...

CountryLiving

London Evening Standard

"Perfect" and "Delightful", featuring us twice in a list of top 10 UK wellness retreats

"At the Grade 1-listed Sharpham House, you'll concentrate on stillness and appreciate nature as a path back to feeling centred... come ready to awaken your senses"

coast

"On a 4-night Walking Retreat, attendees can deepen their knowledge of the surrounding coastline while also developing their mindfulness and meditation practice"

Reader's digest

"Here you'll concentrate on understanding the land, appreciating its history and bringing your hectic mind to a place of acceptance and peace"

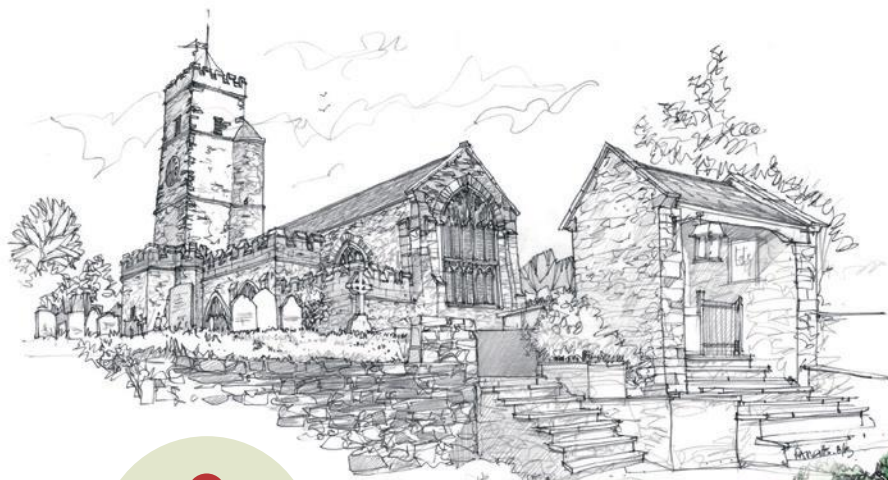
leave us a review on



"The Barn may be the most beautiful and thought-provoking place I've ever been. The sense of community. The time to contemplate. The knowledge to absorb. The people to befriend"

SEE MORE:
www.sharphamtrust.org/reviews

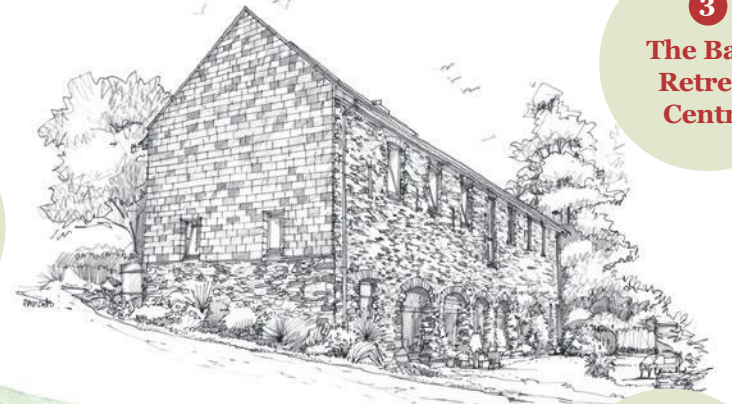
THE Sharpham TRUST



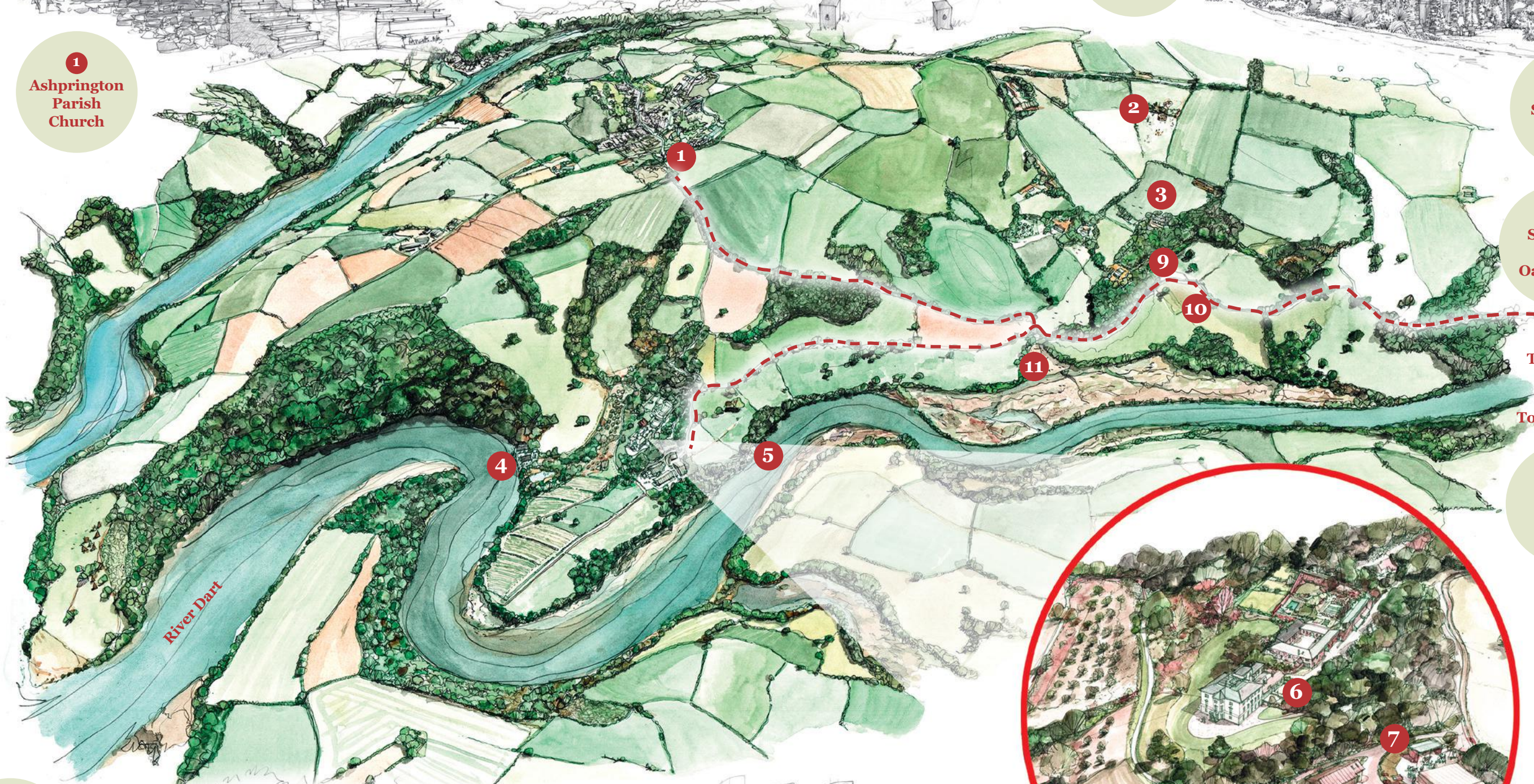
1
Ashprington
Parish
Church



2
Sharpham
Meadow
Natural Burial
Ground



3
The Barn
Retreat
Centre



9
Lower
Sharpham
Barton
Farm

10
Sit-spot:
Green
Oak Bench

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

11
Sit-spot:
Reed
beds

6
Sharpham
House

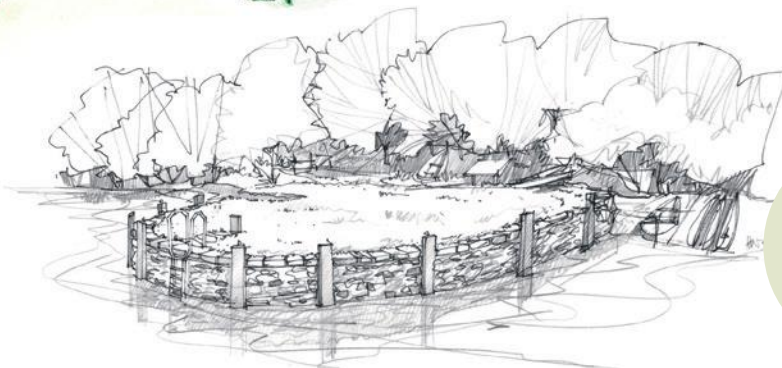
7
Sharpham
Wine &
Cheese

8
Sharpham
Café



5
North
Quay

4
Bathing
House



Financial information

Donations and grants

£38,902 for the Mindful-in-Nature project

£22,466 donations received, including bursary donations.

Headline Figures		
EOY period	March 2019	March 2020
Total income	1.238m	1.378m
Total expenditure	1.027m	1.072m
Total funds	6.821m	6.808m
Voluntary income (donations)	0.094m	0.022m
Investment income	0.124m	0.116m
Charity activity income	0.963m	1.091m
Investment management costs	0.027m	0.026m
Cost of charitable activities	0.952m	1.013m
Governance	0.020m	0.022m
Governance as % total expenditure	1.95%	2.16%

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 more than 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 2.05.

The ratio between the highest paid and lowest paid is 2.75.



Ashprington, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 7UT
01803 732542 • bookings@sharphamtrust.org



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