Annual Report
2019-2020

www.sharphamtrust.org
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 Walled 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 the offerings we create for you. From the new Stillness & Flow canoeing retreats (which were full a few days after we announced the offerings we create for you.

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

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 aims to:

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

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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

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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 Elmhirsts 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 highly positive reviews and comments.

Many return again and again for their dose of Sharpham’s rejuvenating remedies of nature, community and quietude.

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 endorse: to arriving in the sunny woodland setting of breath-taking beauty and seeing the woodland reaching the river, to getting on the water, paddling and making it up in silence. It’s a memory I will treasure.”

Counselling 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.

Wellbeing amongst participants increased by 33%

source: Sharri Warsi-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

“I have enjoyed being set free outside”

a project participant

The project has been co-designed with Devon Recovering 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

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 gardening practices that encourage wildlife and species diversity.

The 18th century Walled Garden behind Sharpham House produces fresh, organic food all season for our visitors dining in The Barn, and for retreatants staying in Sharpham House and Woodland.

Meanwhile, in the hillyside 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 430 kilos of apples; 3,400kg of salad, 380kilos of chard, 500 kilos of courgettes, 250 kilos of beetroot and 100 kilos 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 Thursday at the Community Garden opposite the house.
- we spent a breathtaking Tree Care Day of sun and laughter 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.

Sharpham Heritage

The Heritage Group were pleased to facilitate a new opportunity for artists with Katy McBean, part-time Archive Coordinator, who worked closely with us to take responsibility for the Sharpham Archive which was set up, and is still 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 2020.

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 a real tribute to the inspiration of Lynette in devising the day; the fascinating speakers; and to Katy and her team of enthusiastic 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 Ambrose Sharpham (1792-1845) 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 Coordinator, and went on to continue 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.

Sharpham books online!

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

And a new A4 version of The Barn Cookbooks was published, with delicious vegetarian and vegan recipes gathered through the years from the house’s existence and with professional pictures by barn retreatants and photographer John Allen.

Fundingraise, Gardens & Heritage

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

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www.sharphamtrust.org

Retreats in-person and online

To book, visit our website or call 01803 732542

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
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Retreat during this year, where people

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grounds of The Barn where people

People stay in community at The

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Many return again and again for their

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It is a perfect formula to have exclusive

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“By allowing the grass to be grazed in small

paddocks and rotated, rather than continually

grazed we allow the roots to build more energy

reserves and root deeper into the soil. This

improves the soil structure and allows the

grazing to regrow faster post grazing”.

On the set of January, Upper Sharpham

started a new year Mid Devon Countryside

Stewardship agreement. This will see the

continuation of organic farming at Sharpham

with added extras including the sowing of nectar- and pollen-rich paddocks, grazing management, and the continued growing of cereal crops for the benefit of

over-wintering birds including the

cirl bunting, with the harley then being led to

the cattle during the winter.

Upper Sharpham Barton

During this financial year, Upper Sharpham

Barton continued to be farmed by John & David

Camp, who rear organic beef & lamb from their

herd of South Devon suckler cows and Male

eswes. Says David: “At Upper Sharpham we

graze cattle on the permanent pasture fields and

rotational grassland. The rotational grass was

grazed in paddocks in this year as we set to move

to a more ordered grazing system.

“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 develop”

See more:

www.sharphamtrust.org/reviews

“The project in partnership with Ambios at Lower

Sharpham Farm - was highlighted on BBC TV, 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

retreats

- 103 retreats attended by 1,746 participants

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

- 50 Barn retreats & 508 people

- 11 woodland retreats & 159 people

- 1,631 people attended our events

- 130,394 website visitors

- £22,466 in donations given

- 87 bursaries worth £14,454 given to people of

  low income, enabling them to come on retreat at 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...

“Perfect” and “Beautiful”, featuring us twice

in the top 10 UK wellbeing retreats

Country Living

“On a 4-night Walking Retreat, attendees

can deepen their knowledge of the

surrounding coastline while also
developing their mindfulness and

practical practice

Reader’s digest

“Here you’ll concentrate on understanding the

land, appreciating its history and bringing
your practice into a place of acceptance and

peace”

See more: www.sharphamtrust.org/reviews

Ceremonies

Upper Sharpham Estate

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

- 80 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.

Learn more: www.sharphamtrust.org/weddings

Simply Magical

Sharkham 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...

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over-wintering birds including the

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Lower Sharpham Barton Farm

Ambios are tenants of Lower Sharpham Barton Farm, comprising 80 acres of organic pasture where their farm cows, sheep and hens.

The principal aim of the land management is to provide habitat for wildlife; creating the learning environment for nature conservation trainees who come from the UK and EU.

In this year, 20 trainees on 12-week placement gained skills in nature conservation, towards work in the environmental sector. They researched bats, butterflies, birds, grasslands and worked on education, habitat management and rewilding at Sharpham.

Ambios ran a volunteering project with partners from France, helping 6 disadvantaged young people to develop their rural skills, English language, confidence and employment prospects.

Ambios partner with United Response and adults with learning disabilities who carry out the day-to-day tasks on the farm, gaining work experience and well-being, with involvement in animal care, horticulture, wood and metal work, forestry and nature conservation.

Learn more: www.ambios.net/our-farm

Sharpham Wine & Cheese

The Sharpham Partnership’s award-winning cheese dairy has been producing wines and unpasturised cheeses for over 30 years to local and national acclaim, winning medals annually.

Learn more & buy: www.sharpham.com

Wild for People

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

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

“We thank 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.

Volunteers

We run 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

130,394 website visitors

£22,466 in donations given

87 bursaries worth £14,454 given to people of

low income, enabling them to come on retreat at Sharpham

Learn more & buy: www.sharphamtrust.com

1,631 people attended our events

2356 hours

1917 hours

735 hours

4,920 hours

221 hours

144 hours
Sharpham Trust

Welcome to the Sharpham Trust's Annual Report 2019-2020

What a full year it has been. We had a record number of participants coming to Sharpham to explore, and connect with the natural world and each other. 1,746 participants come to Sharpham to explore, and connect with the natural world and each other. In fact this risk had been long identified in the Trust’s risk register. It is examples such as these that provide an antidote to the difficulties currently facing humanity, as humanity continues to grapple with the complexity and multiple challenges we all face.

Looking back on what I referred to in last year’s report as the ‘green revolution’, I can also share that we will be commencing work on the refurbishment of 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.

We were also successful last year in securing £22,466 donations received, including bursary donations. It is examples such as these that provide an antidote to the difficulties currently facing humanity, as humanity continues to grapple with the complexity and multiple challenges we all face.

In 2020, the Trust’s activities are guided by a deep respect for the natural world and a belief in learning through experience, creative engagement and 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 projects that respond to climate change; the global transport of food and intensive food production methods; humans encroaching on the habitat of wild animals.
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.

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 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 strain risks to health services, particularly health and education; and economic disruption, including disruption to businesses and tourism”.

People to enable us to rewild the Estate and tell others about the benefits of this approach. We have also identified and supposedly formulated appropriate mitigation plans to address. Other significant risks such as climate change; the global transport of food and intensive food production methods; humans encroaching on the habitat of wild animals;

For the new social enterprise opportunities which will no doubt emerge in the coming months and years in their place.

2019-2020

Total funds £6,821m
Total expenditure £1,027m
Total income £1,238m
Charity activity income £0.963m
Investment income £0.124m

2018-2019

Total funds £6,808m
Total expenditure £1,072m
Total income £1,378m
Charity activity income £1.091m
Investment income £0.116m

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

We feel that what we offer is more important than ever in these challenging times and we hope that more staff and participants are safe.
Financial information

Donations and grants

£38,902 for the Mindful-in-Nature project
£22,466 donations received, including bursary donations.

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<tr>
<th>Headline Figures</th>
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<tr>
<td>Governance as % total expenditure</td>
<td>1.95%</td>
<td>2.16%</td>
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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.

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01803 732542 • bookings@sharphamtrust.org