

Shropshire Hills Ancient Woodland pilot



Introduction & Location

Shropshire Hills Woodlands Project

Woodlands are an important part of the Shropshire Hills landscape and there is great potential to improve their management, in particular, the small woods. Much of this area has been identified as Ancient Woodland landscape and Ancient Woodland restoration area on the Woodland Opportunities Map for the WM. This new project in the AONB focuses on improving the condition of existing small woods and new woodland creation, piloting an approach that can be rolled out in the wider region. The aim is to encourage a gradual move towards more natural woodland where appropriate and centres on the restoration of ancient woodland that has been planted with non-natives back to native broadleaves. Advice to woodland owners can include management planning, advice on the grants available for activities such as thinning, felling, planting, woodland improvement and also advice on marketing and adding value to timber after felling. The project links with the Heartwoods woodfuel project, which promotes development of the woodfuel supply chain.

Objectives:

Improving the condition of Ancient Woodland sites currently carrying non-native trees with the aim of restoring them to native species and ongoing management.

Encouraging the creation of new native woodland, focusing on linking and expanding existing Ancient Woodland sites.

Actions:

- free site visit and report with recommended woodland management options
- help with accessing grants and advice on timber sales
- adding value to timber after felling
- advice on managing woodland for woodfuel
- felling licence applications
- woodland creation
- contacts for contractors and timber merchants to implement management options

Achievements:

Although the Project is in its early stages, the achievements to date are encouraging. They include:

- 15 Woodland owners visited and advice given.
- 5 Management Plans in progress.
- 2 EWGS applications.
- 5 Woodfuel supply chain visits made.

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Background:

This project is the outcome of the desire on the part of the Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission to encourage the restoration of Ancient Woodland sites that are now carrying non-native trees, together with the wish to see unmanaged woodlands brought in to positive management. Based on the Woodland Opportunities Map for Ancient Woodland landscapes and restoration areas, the Shropshire Hills AONB was identified as a key area. The AONB unit were asked to host the project, as many such woodlands form an important part of the AONB landscape. The project is guided by a steering group chaired by the Woodland Trust and a Woodland Officer, Brian Barker, has been appointed.

Quotes:

"I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the day at Bank Wood with you. It was fascinating to see how the trees for thinning are selected. It will be great to get the work done and watch the remaining trees grow."

Andrew Allot
Bank Wood

Partners:

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Forestry Commission
The Woodland Trust
Heartwoods
Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Natural England

WMRFF Objectives: Main Theme & Others

Tree & Woodland Cover
Trees, Woods & Forestry Industry
Health & Wellbeing
Enhancing Biodiversity
Green Infrastructure

Wood Energy
Recreation & Tourism
Fostering Social Inclusion
Climate Change

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