



BUSINESS STRATEGY
2023-2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT) will have its 30th birthday in 2025. Since its inception it has played an important role in developing and making a difference to the cultural and habitat landscapes of the Sherwood Forest area and the people who live, work and play within its boundaries.

While our achievements during past years have been very well regarded, it is to our future involvement and engagement in all things that matter to Sherwood Forest by which we will continue to be judged. At the same time, the world surrounding and influencing the SFT is very different from when we started and we need not only to be fleet of foot, but also focussed to optimise the tremendous opportunities open to us.

The SFT has always been open and transparent that it alone could never achieve all the work needed to protect, preserve and promote Sherwood Forest. Partnerships with many like-minded individuals and organisations are key to our approach.

Trustees

The Trust is a Registered Charity (1119614) and Company Limited By Guarantee (5639227) and operates with a Board of twelve Trustees, made up of representatives from the original founding partners and more recently with appointments from local authorities, business' community, environmental organisations and health.

The Board comprises:

- Andy Statham (Chair)**
- Carl Cornish (Vice Chair & Company Secretary)**
- Robert Bealby (Treasurer)**
- Tim Hill**
- Jen Turner**
- Andy Jeffcutt**

- Erin Baker**
- Henry Farr**
- John Peck**
- Louise Hackett**
- Scott Carlton**
- Dan Mottishaw**

OUR VISION

To ensure the survival of the historic Sherwood Forest as a national treasure for future generations of people and wildlife.

OUR PURPOSE

To achieve our Vision, our purpose is to be a leading organisation to protect, preserve and promote the landscape, habitat, cultural, heritage, educational and community activities of the Sherwood Forest area.

At a strategic level, the SFT can provide the necessary facilitation and coordination of a wide range of partner and stakeholder interests to achieve more than we could do alone.

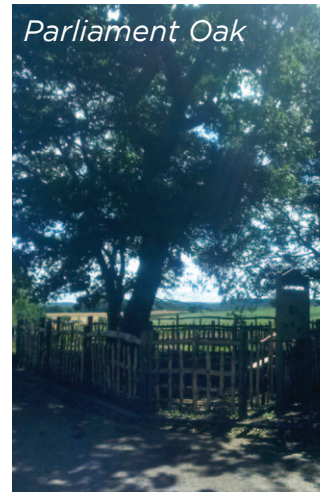
At an operational level, the SFT is able to support the specific work of landowner partners to help them improve the quality and integrity of the land that they own.

OUR VALUES

The SFT has a set of values that underpins its work:

- **Fairness** - to treat others with inclusive care and attention
- **Openness** - to encourage clear communications and be transparent with our partners, stakeholders and users
- **Respect** - for the people we work with and for, and the environment in which they live
- **Enjoyment** - promoting positive learning, cultural and recreational opportunities for those who live, work and play in Sherwood Forest
- **Sustainability** - to develop our skills and those of our partners for the long term betterment of Sherwood
- **Trust** - to retain the confidence and belief of others in what we do

Parliament Oak



OUR PRINCIPLES

Our working approach/style is founded on the following principles:

- **Hope** - having a positive view of the work that we do and the benefits this brings
- **Outcome focussed** - getting the right processes in place for the right scheme
- **Partnership working** - with a diverse and expanding range of organisations and individuals
- **Excellence** - aiming to do the very best for Sherwood Forest

OUR AIMS

Throughout our operational boundary, but focussing primarily on the Sherwood Forest Character Area (SFCA), the SFT will aim to:

- Ensure the organisation is financially and operationally sustainable.
- Foster understanding of, and learning about, Sherwood Forest.
- Encourage community engagement and support for our work.
- Protect and conserve the heritage landscape and wildlife habitats through our work at both the strategic and practical level.
- Support the creation of improved cultural and tourism experiences.
- Develop stronger links between health, well-being and nature.
- Support activities to mitigate climate change.
- Champion the establishment of a Regional Park for Sherwood Forest.

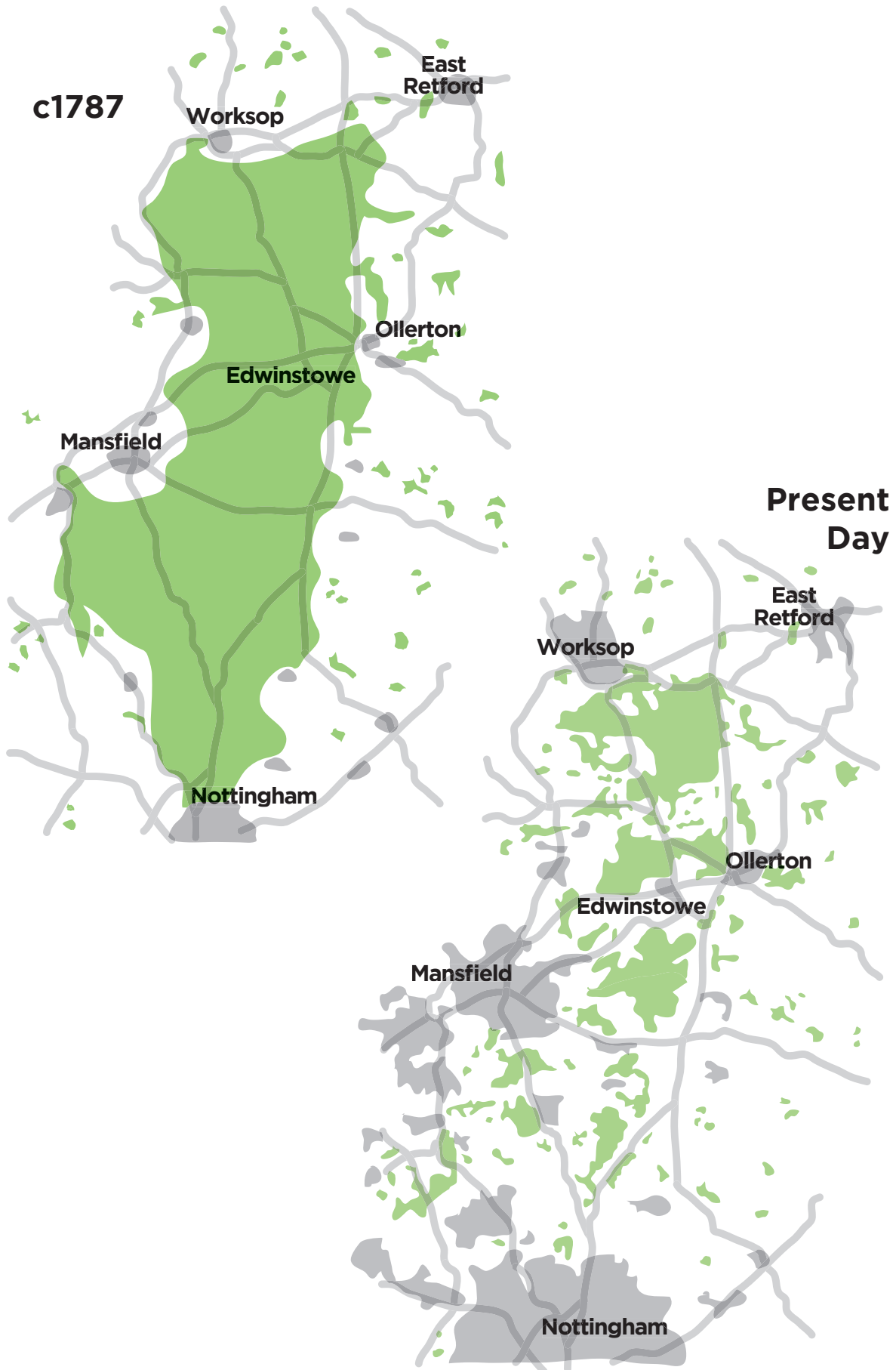
KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Recently the SFT has been successful in a number of major projects that have brought in the income to enable us to undertake our works in Sherwood. The larger grant awards have been:

- 2016 - Resilient Heritage £53,000 (NLHF) - this allowed us to undertake a major organisation review of our governance, structures and what we do.
- 2017 - Resilient Heritage £70,800 (NLHF) - this followed on and allowed us to deliver on a range of conservation and cultural projects.
- 2019 - Spirit of Wartime Sherwood £158, 200 (NLHF) - this is a 3 year programme to tell the story of how Sherwood Forest helped in the allied cause to win WW2. It included reminiscences from those who were alive at the time but have never told their story, community archaeology to unearth WW2 artefacts and will conclude with a 1940s Celebration Event.
- 2020 - Green Recovery Challenge Fund £182,500 (NLHF/DEFRA) - a major award related to Covid 19 environment conservation activities focussing on lowland heathland, trees and people.
- 2021 - Trees for Climate £61,000 (NCC/DEFRA) - a partnership programme to plant 250 hectares across Nottinghamshire by March 2025.

These have been supplemented by many smaller grants, contract work, business sponsorship, donations and a 'crowd-funder' campaign, which are bespoke to specific projects.

SHERWOOD FOREST



CASE STUDY 1

The Sherwood Community Tree Nursery

For a number of years, it has been an aim of the Trust to start a Community Tree Nursery focused on growing Sherwood specific species: sourced in Sherwood, grown in Sherwood, planted in Sherwood and involving the people of Sherwood and the surrounding areas in collecting and growing the trees.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) enabled SFT to put staff time and resources into making this happen. During 2022, the groundworks were completed with a new polytunnel being installed in October at the Feelgood Gardens site (near Sherwood Pines) that already houses a community horticultural nursery and is a long-time associate of SFT. Months of planning and research have gone into what species to collect, how and when to collect, and how to grow these different species of tree.

The community tree nursery will provide valuable educational opportunities for children and adults of all ages and backgrounds, united in the simple and meditative task of growing, watering and caring for the seedlings. The hope is that in winter 2023, the trees will start to be provided to local customers keen to grow trees that have been grown in the right local conditions to suit their own land.



Before clearance



After clearance, polytunnel in place

CASE STUDY 2

Bassetlaw Tree Planting

Bassetlaw is a district council area north of the famous Sherwood Forest NNR, with a low level of just 9% woodland cover (Woodland Trust, 2019).

The GRCF funding allowed SFT to pursue the possibility of tree planting of 5 hectares (ha) with two farmers who wanted to create new woodland areas in the winter of 2021/22 when there was no other funding that would allow a landowner to get trees planted at no cost to themselves.

The SFT was able to put the staff time into getting these projects fully funded, including bringing in resources from the Woodland Trust and Severn Trent Water to cover the cost of trees and guards, and planting using a contractor and 8 days of volunteer labour.

The project enabled SFT to inject enthusiasm and set the ball rolling in the area, to show local farmers and other landowners that woodland planting can be achievable, positive and stress free. As a result of the Manor Farm planting, a neighbour approached us and said they wanted to plant 4 ha on their own land with our help, so positive change is already on its way.



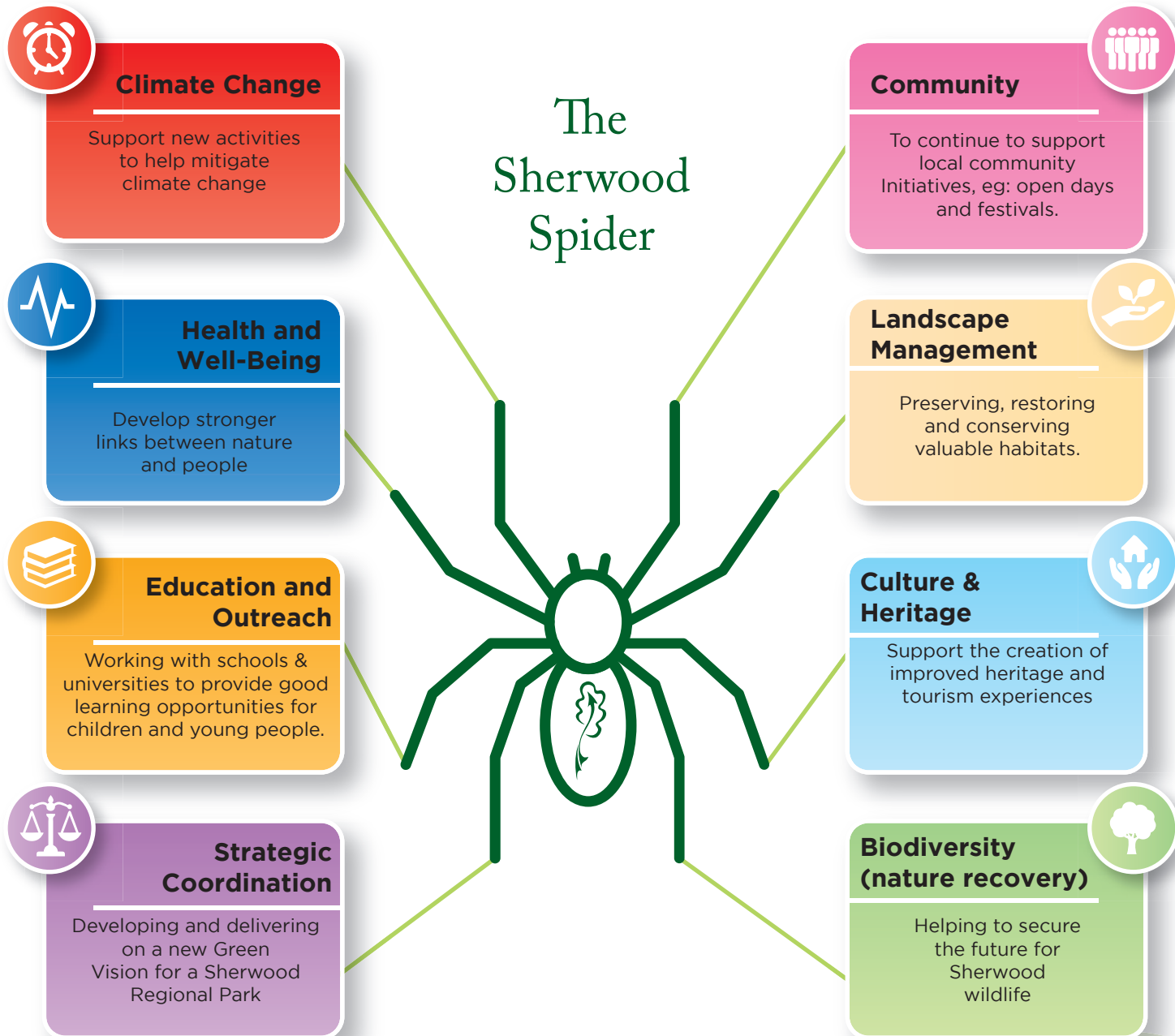
We planted a 3.14 ha woodland at Grange Farm DN22 9BL



We planted a 1.7 ha woodland at Manor Farm DN22 9HH

OUR OPERATING MODEL

In 2016, a new species of spider was found in Sherwood – the Midia midas. In recognition of this important discovery, and as part of our new strategy, we have refined our business operating model to reflect the nature of a spider in our aims, objectives, themes and in the way we work with others. This is shown as:



Linked to each of the above themes of work will be a series of projects and ideas that we wish to progress. We are well aware that this is an ambitious programme, and it is one that we cannot achieve on our own but will need the support and collaboration of our partners.

We will also require the necessary resources to be secured to underpin each of the projects and the core operating costs of the Trust.

Furthermore, with such a broad programme, it is evident that not all projects can be implemented at the same time. There will need to be a prioritisation of projects through a combination of Trustee preferences, available funding, partner support, external pressures and opportunities.

This overarching strategy well reflects what we would like to see happen for the wider benefit of Sherwood Forest, its surrounding areas and the people who enjoy the beauty and vitality of its offer.

The Neutral Ground (TNG) is a linear area of acid grassland and heathland habitat situated within the Birklands and Bilhaugh Site of Special Scientific Interest in Nottinghamshire. It measures 1.2 km in length and is approximately 5ha in size.

TNG is regarded as being host to one of the UK's largest and most famous Glow Worm colonies. The site was regularly managed as part of a Countryside Stewardship Agreement until approximately 10 years ago when the agreement expired.

The site began to succumb to seral succession and the area had become scrub with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* spp), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and silver birch (*Betula pendula*) growing in the open area and becoming the dominant habitat type.

Apart from its importance for biodiversity, TNG represents the boundary point between the Welbeck and Thoresby Estates, and historically has always been traditionally managed as a strip of acid grassland with patches of heather.

The Trust had an aim to restore TNG by removing the scrub, to reinstate the lapsed programme of annual flail mowing and collecting and revert this once shining example of lowland acid grassland and heath back to its former glory. Permission was sought from Natural England with the support of Thoresby Estate, Welbeck Estate and Forestry England and work began in January 2022.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund budget was used to undertake habitat management which included a 'flail and collect' of a large area of the smaller elements of the invasive scrub, along with working with contractors and volunteers to remove approximately 0.5ha of small trees from the northern section of the site. The funding also enabled a new set of invertebrate surveys to be carried out in 2021, with 521 species being recorded, highlighting the importance of the site for biodiversity.

This work has earned praise within the Sherwood Forest area from the landowners, Natural England, and local entomologists. It has helped to get TNG back to a position where inclusion in a new HLS type scheme is a real possibility, meaning that its long-term future is much more secure.

A video of the works that have been completed to date 'Heathland Restoration Works in Nottinghamshire'. Please view [YouTube.com/@SherwoodForestTrust3029](https://www.youtube.com/@SherwoodForestTrust3029)



*The neutral ground
after scrub clearance.*

CASE STUDY 4

Oak Tree Heath Firestarter Project

The purpose of the Firestarter project was to raise awareness of the damage and dangers that can be caused to nature, wildlife, the wider environment, and the public by starting fires on lowland heathland sites.

The target site of this project was Oak Tree Heath in Mansfield, a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Over the summer of 2021, the Sherwood Forest Trust's (SFT) conservation team undertook both educational and practical conservation work here with local schools, community groups, and the general public, to encourage local people to take greater responsibility for the longer-term sustainable management of the site and at the same time improve public and community safety.



Help from the Scouts at Oak Tree Heath



Our stand at the Action Day

Our work included: 3 on-site school sessions in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue, engaging nearly 90 children in educational activities to raise awareness of the dangers of fire-setting on heathland, an Action Day at Tesco Superstore in Mansfield, during which the conservation team engaged with more than 100 members of the public in conversations about heathland habitat, as part of SFT's regular volunteer conservation sessions, we helped to restore areas of the heath already damaged by fire, litter picking and scrub management.

After doing this conservation work, the Trust made a 'legacy video' to explain the importance of the heathland, the dangers that can be caused by fire and the resulting damage to animals, insects and plants.

This video is available to view on The Sherwood Forest Trust's YouTube channel, as well as being circulated through schools in the area as an educational resource.

Key Work Themes



Landscape Management

Our GIS data mapping has identified a number of wider landscape areas that are experiencing varying degrees of degradation and which require ongoing 'nature recovery'. It is important that these are put into some priority listing for preservation and conservation work.

At the same time, landowners and other organisations are keen for improvement actions to take place, eg: through the production of site management plans that can then lead to appropriate grant applications for works to take place.

This has been a key strength of the SFT for the past decade and there is every intention and ambition that this line of work should be expanded as resources allow.



Biodiversity

A similar approach needs to be adopted to more specific site and habitat management, with a clear prioritisation of those areas of Sherwood and associated species which are most under threat through inappropriate development or other such causes.

Working through such forums as the Sherwood Habitats Strategy Group, the SFT will be able to coordinate and support the work of others and potentially more specialist local community groups.



Culture and Heritage

The SFT is in central position to help manage, enhance and promote the world renowned character of the forest, its people, heritage assets and culture. In so doing, the SFT can help to engage more local people in the rich heritage of the Sherwood Forest area.



Education and Outreach

This is an area in which in the past, the SFT has had a number of very positive successes, especially with its learning and educational pamphlets. These need to be regularly revised and updated for the benefit of new children and families who come to Sherwood, utilising different social media platforms.

The SFT does not have the capacity to do this work alone, but positive links can be made to work with partners in the promotion of outdoor learning and education, especially at a time when this is all but disappearing from the national curriculum. For example, there is close work with the RSPB Sherwood Visitor Centre and the Outward/Adventure Education team at Perlethorpe.

More recently, new links have been established with Nottingham Trent University (Brackenhurst Campus) and also the NTU/Vision West Campus in Mansfield. We will actively offer student placements to support our heritage and conservation projects.



Health and Well-Being

To help deal with growing health challenges of both adults and children, eg: obesity, with all its connections the SFT can promote the healthy benefits of outdoor exercise and living, eg: green social prescribing, health walks, adventure days. The SFT wishes to build its capacity to develop such schemes not only by itself, but also in partnership with other agencies and organisations.



Community

The SFT has an excellent track record of organising a range of key community programmes, eg: the Ollerton St Georges Day, Robin Hood Festival, Major Oak Woodland Festival. There are also many groups and organisations such as Parish Councils who would like to arrange their own events, but do not always have the know-how. The SFT is in a position to provide that back-up support to get things started.

In the post covid recovery period, there remains a significant tourism opportunity to be optimised within the Sherwood Forest area, with an overarching aim of linking the ‘string of pearls’ – the main tourist and visitor attractions from Worksop in the north of the county down to the City of Nottingham.

The Trust has a number of ideas how these attractions could be better promoted.



Spirit mask of Sherwood



Major Oak Woodland Festival



Climate Change

The SFT acknowledges we are in a climate emergency and is committed to playing its part alongside individuals, communities, businesses, partners and others across Sherwood and the wider region to act now on the causes and impacts of climate change. This work includes helping facilitate others in their efforts, such as tree planting, as well as examining our organisation’s own carbon footprint and wider environmental impact.



Strategic Coordination

The development of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park has been closely linked with the SFT for some years, where the Trust has taken a leading role in trying to turn the aspiration into a reality. While in recent years the project concept has stalled, given a new focus on environmental sustainability on a landscape scale, it is argued that a refresh of thinking about the Regional Park proposal is most timely.

The SFT has also been engaged with work on a Green Vision for Sherwood Forest that can augment the Purple Vision (2005). Any new Vision will need to link into new strategic initiatives such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Key Outcomes

People Focused

The SFT will ensure that all activities are as engaging and accessible as possible to benefit the public in the widest sense.

Landscapes Improved

Within the next 2 years, we aim to improve 30 landscape areas covering 100 hectares.

Habitats Improved

Similarly, within the next 2 years, we aim to improve and restore up to 15 wildlife and habitat areas.

SFT Future Secured

New project opportunities are constantly emerging on which the Trust can capitalise. These projects can generate new funds and sources of income to enable the Trust to pursue its wide ranging objectives and secure its future.

OUR ORGANISATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The present staff team comprises:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Finance Officer
- Conservation Manager
- Community Conservation Officer (2)
- Marketing and Events Officer
- Community Engagement and Education Officer
- Community Woodland Creation Officer
- Forestry Trainee

A key ambition is to retain and create permanent full time posts where these are required.

Looking ahead to meet the revised objectives set out above, it is proposed that new staff will need to be recruited to develop appropriate projects, but only as and when funding is secured:

- Fundraising Officer
- Health and Well-Being Officer
- Training and Development – Apprenticeships, student placements



UK Registered Charity No. 1119814 (Company No. 582827)

**Units 5/6, Church Farm Business Centre, Mansfield Road,
Edwinstowe, Notts, NG21 9NJ**

Telephone: **01623 821490**

E-mail: **info@sherwoodforesttrust.org.uk**

Web-site: **sherwoodforest.org.uk**

f sherwoodforesttrust **t** @SherwoodTrust

UK Registered Charity No. 1119814 (Company No. 582827)