

Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust (formerly AONB) Conservation Fund 2024/25 Bushmoor Verges Project Final Report

The Bushmoor Verges Project is one of around 40 Restoring Shropshire Verges Project's (RSVP) demonstrating best practice in the management and restoration of wildflower road verges. Our **outputs** for 2024/25 were to continue our awareness raising activities and ground work on the verges.

The Project's support from the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust (formerly AONB) Conservation Fund was highlighted in all publicity including our regular activity updates on the RSVP Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ShropsVerge> which were shared on the SHLT website. Additionally an 'Activities Calendar' was posted on the Bushmoor, Leamoor Common and Wistanstow public noticeboards and a case study for 2024/25 is featured on the RSVP page on the Middle Marches Community Landscape Trust website. We've also worked in partnership with the Shropshire Council Highways Department, and following an extensive tendering exercise, two Shropshire-based verge contractors.

The Project's work is related to the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust **conservation priorities** through its alignment with its statutory purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This is being achieved via: improvement in the local biodiversity of native wildflowers, plantlife, and habitat for small mammals and insects; enhancement of the scenic quality and tranquility of the area for residents and visitors; encouraging local residents to engage with the natural environment; and by contributing to the development and sharing of best practice with partners and key stakeholders.

Our Funding

The Project in 2024/25 was match funded through around 100 hours of volunteer time. This is detailed in the attached 'In Kind Record', and valued at c-£1232. The Project also benefited from a Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust grant of £1384. This financed one day's cut and collection of vegetation by a commissioned contractor at £720, the cutting and chipping of scrub at £636, and the purchase of bluebell bulbs at £28 from a native wildflower supplier.

Our Achievements

The Bushmoor Verges Project began in early 2021 with the formation of our enthusiastic Volunteer Group made up of around a dozen local residents. Our verges are approximately three quarters of a mile in length and cover an area of approximately 1400 square metres.

Our work in 2024/25 began with a verge walk in April and survey in June 2024. Since 2021 we've identified over 130 species of wildflowers, demonstrating the diversity of this roadside meadow, and we have a growing catalogue of species photographs.

Over the summer Yellow Rattle seed was harvested from the verges and other local sites, and this was broadcast in the early autumn. In October, after an extensive tendering process, vegetation from both sides of the verges, was cut and collected by Shropshire contractor DT Ground Maintenance.

In late December 2024, local contractor Rob Marpole Landscaping was commissioned to cut down and chip overgrowing scrub from the verge opening up a new area for the planting of bluebell bulbs. Our plans for 2025/26 are already in hand, as we continue our work to enhance the Bushmoor verges as a habitat for wildflowers, invertebrates, birds and small mammals.

Our Lessons Learned

Planned verge activities need to be flexible – creating a ‘depending on the weather’ ‘Activities Calendar’ continues to be a useful way to keep track of the project plan and monitor progress over the year.

Engaging the local community can be both rewarding and challenging – while the Project has continued to inspire the energy and enthusiasm of the Volunteer Group, our ability to recruit ‘new blood’ remains a challenge. We hope that the continuing success of the Project will make it one that people who live in the local area engage with.

Budgeting for verge restoration continues to be a challenge – we have been grateful for the Trusts’ continuing support since the Projects’ launch in 2021.

Don’t underestimate the generosity and talent of volunteers – over the last four years the capacity of our volunteers to design and self-manage Project activities continues to provide evidence of their resourcefulness, tenacity and commitment to the Project.

Mike White
Bushmoor Verges Project
25 March 2025

The Verge Group Walk in April



The Verges in May



The Verges Survey in June



Cut and Collection in October



Scrub cut and chipped in December



Snowdrops in February



A selection of photo's from our species catalogue

Greater Stitchwort



Goats Beard



Hedge Mustard



Lesser Trefoil

