



**Nature
Calling**



**Shropshire
Hills**
National
Landscape



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
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Whispers of the Hills — Evaluation Report

Funder: Shropshire Hills National Landscape

Delivery period: March–October 2025

Lead organisation: Pneuma Affinity CIC

Lead artist/facilitator: Roz Donati



Telford and Wrekin



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Project Overview

Delivered by Pneuma Affinity, a newly established CIC rooted in the principles of Creative Health, ‘Whispers of the Hills’ is a community art project that brings together people from diverse backgrounds who face challenges related to neurodiversity, mental health, and social isolation.

In collaboration with Telford & Wrekin CVS, My Options, Park Lane Centre, Challenging Perceptions and Telford Together with Refugees, the project invited people from the Telford and Wrekin area to discover a deeper connection with the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. Through exploring, observing and listening, they immersed themselves into the landscape in ways that activated reflection and presence.

Inspired by these experiences, participants then created stoneware ceramic flags incorporating ground ancient rocks, mark-making and words. The flags have been installed into the Cheslea gardens in Telford Town Centre, representing a sculptural gateway between the urban industrial town of Telford and the open hills.

‘Whispers of the Hills’ celebrates the ancient memory embedded in the land’s geology and offers a space for people to find a deeper sense of belonging, inviting all who encounter it to listen, reflect, and reconnect.

Delivered as a **£4,000 project**, it provided high-quality engagement and creative opportunity across multiple community groups.

Aims and Objectives

Primary Aim:

To connect marginalised people with the Shropshire Hills through creative, therapeutic, nature-based experiences.

Objectives:

Engage diverse community groups in nature-based and creative activities.

Facilitate workshops to design and make ceramic flags using natural materials.

Collaborate with local partners to ensure inclusivity and reach.

Deliver high-quality, meaningful engagement within the project's budget.

Project Delivery and Content

The project worked in partnership with four community organisations, reaching **86 people** in total:

Telford & Wrekin CVS (Autism Hub): 25 adults with autism

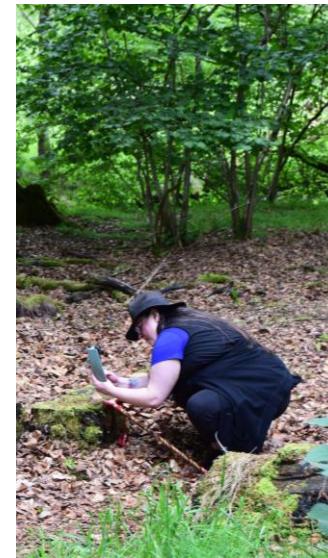
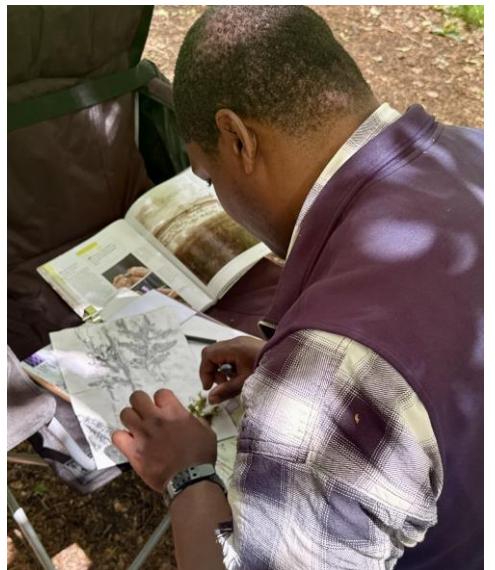
Telford Together with Refugees: 13 refugees and people seeking asylum (some attending with children) (13 participants and 1 staff)

My Options (Telford & Wrekin Council): 36 adults with learning disabilities (29 participants + 7 staff)

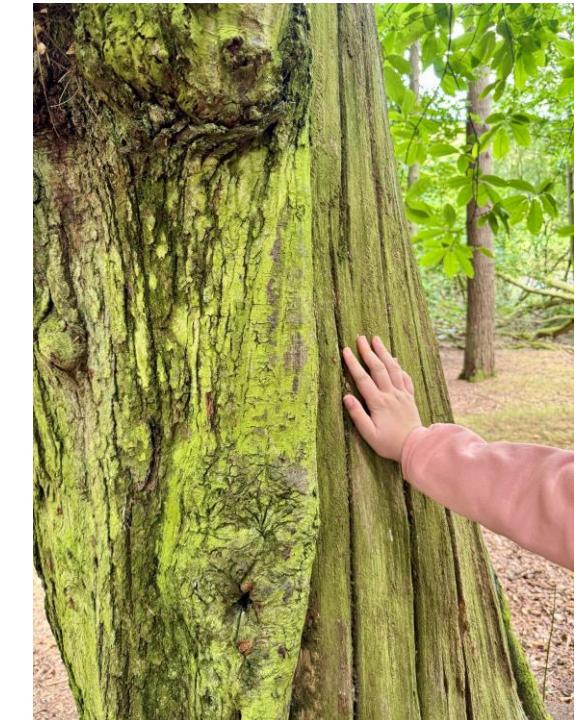
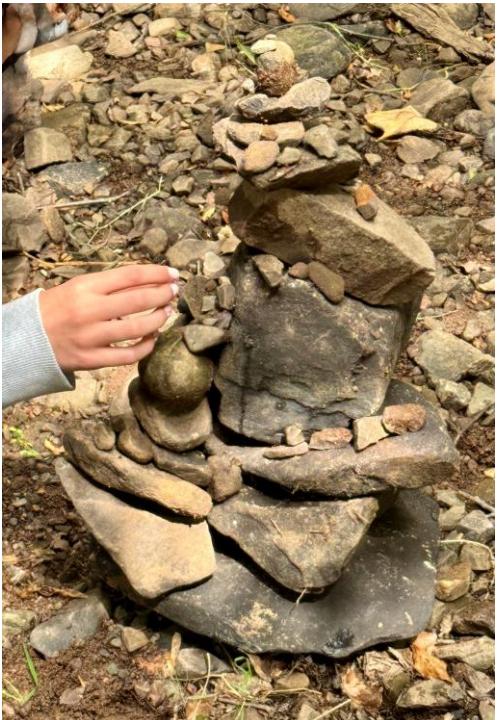
Challenging Perceptions: 11 young people, including some who are neurodivergent (9 participants + 2 staff)

Exploration trips were held to the Long Mynd, Darnford Brook, the Stiper Stones, Wenlock Edge, and the Halfway House on the Wrekin. Each group then took part in creative workshops at their services, using their experiences and collected imagery as inspiration for the clay work.









Learning & Challenges

- This project marked the first time our CIC led an initiative involving multiple partner organisations.
- While the project aligned closely with our core activities as a creative health organisation, it introduced a new experience for several partners, who had limited familiarity with cross-service collaboration. Coordinating and organising contributions from all partners presented challenges; however, this process enabled our CIC to develop valuable skills and increased confidence in partnership working.
- A further challenge emerged when the proposed installation location changed late in the project, making the work dependent on a new partner with Chelsea Gardens in Telford. The addition of a celebration event with a new partner at a later stage caused some delay in project completion, but ultimately enhanced outcomes by strengthening further community connections, expanding our network of organisational partners.

Evaluation & Feedback

- Feedback was extremely positive. **86 questionnaires** were returned, showing:
- **Enjoyment:** 4.9 / 5
- **Feeling more connected to the Shropshire Hills:** 4.8 / 5
- **Positive effect on mental health and wellbeing:** 4.8 / 5
- **Helped to express thoughts and feelings:** 4.8 / 5
- **Would like to take part in similar projects again:** 4.9 / 5
- Comments from participants described the project as “*peaceful and relaxing*”, “*a wonderful opportunity*”, and “*a fantastic combination of art and nature*”. People valued being outdoors, discovering new places, and having time to be creative with clay.
- Organisations also reported strong benefits. My Options described the sessions as “*a wonderful way for us to work with our customers in a more mindful and holistic way*”.

Key Outcomes & Staff Reflections

- Participants connected with the Shropshire Hills National Landscape through creative, nature-based activities.
- Partnerships ensured inclusivity and community reach.
- ‘Whispers of the Hills’ offers the Telford & Wrekin community a lasting collaborative artwork, embodying the collective spirit of the participants and the Shropshire Hills.
- The project delivered meaningful engagement within budget.

“It was absolutely magical from start to finish. The views along the way were breathtaking, and the minibus journey itself felt like part of the adventure. I found myself really connecting with nature throughout the experience, and it was clear that the clients felt the same. There was genuine sense of awe and appreciation from everyone, which was lovely to witness. It's not everyday you get to be part of something that feels so special and uplifting. I truly believe everyone walked away with something valuable- whether it was a moment of stillness, inspiration, or simply a deeper connection to the environment. Please thank everyone involved in organising such a memorable outing. It was a standout experience.”

“These projects provide unmeasurable benefit for our customers and staff alike. A wonderful way for us to have the opportunity to work with our customers in this more mindful and holistic way. These sessions provide a platform to do so. Yes, I am very grateful to be part of this project as I enjoy every bit of it.”

“It was amazing and beautiful poignant and inspired. I was privileged to be part of it.”

Celebration Event

Although not part of the original proposal, the funders, agreed to support a celebratory event, where the ceramic flags were installed at the Cheslea Gardens in Telford Town Centre. This enabled participants, councillors, the Mayor, and service managers and staff to come together to view the installation.



Conclusion & Project Legacy

Whispers of the Hills has been a clear success. It gave people from very different backgrounds — adults with autism, refugees and people seeking asylum, adults with learning disabilities, and young people — the chance to explore the Shropshire Hills, connect with nature, and express themselves through art.

The stoneware ceramic flags will stand as a lasting installation bringing the Shropshire Hills to the people of Telford and Wrekin. The overwhelmingly positive feedback, combined with the commitment from funders to continue their support, shows that the project has laid strong foundations for future creative and community work.

