

# Shropshire Hills AONB Trust Conservation Fund 2018-19

## Final Report – Shropshire Hills Hay Meadow Festival, The Bog, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership alongside other partners, organised the third annual **Hay Meadow Festival** event at **The Bog on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018**. The event was part of the AONB's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and also coincided with National Meadows Day, a national celebration of meadows aimed at raising awareness about the importance of meadow preservation.

The event was focused on traditional hay meadows – it promoted their sympathetic management and raised awareness of the wealth of wildlife that they support.

Small traditionally managed hay meadows are a habitat under threat nationally, but in this part of south Shropshire they still represent a key landscape feature and some of the most valuable habitat to be found locally.

The one-day event involved demonstrations, trade stands, competitions, guided walks and activities for young people and families. The event was attended by about 360 people of all ages, mostly from surrounding villages within the AONB but also from nearby towns such as Bishop's Castle, Church Stretton and Welshpool, with some coming from further afield. A programme showing the day's activities is included below:

Sat 7th July  
10am to 4pm  
The Bog  
Pennerley  
Sy5 0NG

**Celebrate with us...**  
60 years of the  
**Shropshire Hills**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**Shropshire Hills Hay Meadow Festival**

Find out what's happening locally to help conserve and enhance the Shropshire Hills AONB... Displays & information from Marches Meadow Group, Rare Breeds Survival Trust, Shropshire Swift Group, Shropshire Hills Shuttle Buses, Shropshire Bee Keepers & Snailbeach WI, local road verges projects, Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB, Butterfly Conservation, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Curlew Country, Friends of Castle Pulverbatch, National Trust, Shropshire Wood Carvers & Shropshire Mines Trust.

**programme**

- 10:00 – 1.00 have a go at Scything
- 10:30 Wildflowers of the Stiperstones, guided walk with Fiona Gomersall, botanist, Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- 11.00 Scything Competitions, including heats and teams
- 11.00 Have-a-go at Hay Rick Building
- 11.30 Bale Lobbing, come and have a go!
- 12.00 History of the Bog Mine, guided walk with Jerry Hughes
- 12.00 Bale Lobbing Competition Time
- 1.30 Strimmer v Scythe show down!
- 2.00 Scything Competition Final
- 2.00 Bog Butterfly Walk (weather permitting)
- 2.30 Bale Lobbing Bale-off
- 3.00 Hay Rick Knockout finale
- 3.30 Prize giving

Entry:  
Adults: £5  
Children: £1

More information: [www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk)

Head to the children's Hay Play area for hay rope making & skipping \* make a mini hay bale & have a go hay rick building \* bug hunting & ID \* wildflower craft activities (children must be supervised at all times)

Bar & BBQ  
DIY Pizza  
Local Ice-cream  
Music

**Bee in your Bonnet Talk Tent**  
From 11am, 10 minute talks on conservation topics with discussion time

**Greenwood Working** with craftsman, Ben Gray  
Watch **Acton Scott's heavy horse** tending the hay  
Take a closer look at the **marvellous moths** that fly at night  
Try your hand at **peg loom weaving, felting, wood carving & printmaking from plants**

**Plus local crafts, beautiful gifts, tasty cakes & pollinator plants for sale**

"The landscape in stories & song"  
with Sal Tonge

**Please keep dogs on leads!**  
Entry fees to cover Festival costs. Any surplus will go into the Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund  
Supported by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust, the Bog Visitor Centre & Cold Hill Shelters, [www.coldhillshelters.co.uk](http://www.coldhillshelters.co.uk)

Programme kindly designed by [www.sarahjameson.co.uk](http://www.sarahjameson.co.uk)

The event was an important opportunity to:

- raise public awareness and understanding of one of the AONB's most valuable habitats - by providing information stands, short talks and guided walks
- to promote the sensitive and appropriate management of species rich grassland habitats – through demonstrations and competitions based around traditional management skills
- and to encourage their restoration and re-creation – information available from relevant support groups such as Marches Meadow Group, Rare Breeds Survival Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire Organic Gardeners etc.

The event was organised by a partnership of organisations and individuals who formed a Steering Group to support preparation and delivery on the day:

- Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership staff – overall coordination and management, bank rolling
- Natural England – organisational support prior to and on the day from Stiperstones NNR Officer Simon Cooter and event equipment and infrastructure provided by the NE National Events Officer, Neil Henderson
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust – guided walk, support with stalls and equipment
- Shropshire Mines Trust – stand, guided walk
- The Bog Visitors Centre – provision of toilets, refreshments
- Marches Meadow Group – support with organising stands/offering volunteers
- Shropshire Council – car parks.

The event was also supported by a good number of individuals who volunteered on the day prior to the event to help with set-up and on the day of the event to steward and support particular activities, and to help with set-down. The SHAONB team and our partners were extremely grateful for this support without which it would have been difficult to run the event successfully.

The event was financially supported by:

- Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund
- The Bog Visitor Centre
- Cold Hill Shelters
- National Trust.



## Lessons learnt

This event was the third of its kind at The Bog - in 2016 and 2017 the event was delivered under the auspices of, and with funding from, the Stiperstones & Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme. In 2018 it had minimal funding and needed to cover most of its costs. By making a small charge (of £5 for adults) and bringing in income from a modest stall fee, the event was able to make a small profit which is being returned to the SHAONB Charitable Trust.

The scope of the event is limited by the site and particularly by the parking area available, which was at capacity for much of the day - it is difficult to see how many more people could be catered for. The organisers also tried to keep closely to the Hay meadow theme in relation to stalls, demonstration and activities provided. This does mean that the event is quite niche and to attract a greater number and wider range of people it would probably be necessary to widen the scope of the event.

Given the capacity and resources available to the SHAONB Partnership staff team, the successful running of the event relies heavily on partner contributions both in terms of time and resources, and also on significant help from volunteers.

