

THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK:

A NEW NATIONAL PARK FOR ENGLAND AND WALES...
JOINING THE MALVERN HILLS AND WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPES WITH
THE FOREST OF DEAN AND PARTS OF HEREFORDSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND MONMOUTHSHIRE

THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

We now need to look carefully at the proposed area and structure of the Shires National Park. It is vitally important to maximise the benefits and remove any disadvantages we find through research and analysis. We must design the best possible proposal to put before the public. If carried out properly there will be no substantive or even theoretical reason left to cast shadow over creation of the Shires National Park. Historical rights, traditions, public custom and practice already help to make the proposed area of the Shires National Park so very special and unique. We do not need to change anything that helps in this way. On the contrary, we need to show the world all of this. People from all over the globe will come to see our rivers, forest and Hills. They will come to see where JRR Tolkien walked The Hills with CS Lewis, Henry V was born, Harry Potter was filmed and Bohemian Rhapsody was composed. They will see the Abbeys, castles, caves, commons, mines, museums, and steam railways we can show off. They will travel on cycle routes, visit climbing centres, go 4x4 off-roading, canoe on our rivers and walk on a 50 mile route we put together across all of our landscapes. We have more to offer everyone than many of the existing National Parks and the best news of all is that to put this all together will be relatively easy... Indeed, creation of our Shires National Park will be confirmed as the “No brainer” that Jessie Norman MP described to us all earlier in the process.

AREA

The core of The Shires National Park will be the three National Landscape areas: The Malvern Hills, The Wye Valley and The Forest of Dean. Other areas shown A-E below, on the Origin Map, will be carefully and objectively assessed by the University of Worcester to determine whether smaller adjoining areas should be included for economic, environmental, sustainability, cultural or other pragmatic reasons.

Each of these “optional” areas are currently defined by the Local Authority or District they are within, or their protected status and need to be clearly shown on new accessible maps as an identifiable section of the proposed National Park. At a stage when research is complete and structures agreed, it will be appropriate to consult the populations of each area and gain their registered support for inclusion. This is fundamental. Based on the Origin Map the specific areas outside each of the three core already protected areas are listed below. Each Local authority will thus be able to identify where detailed consultation and even a local referendum might be needed. The Feasibility Study needs to identify all of these areas that meet a set of agreed criteria for potential inclusion. They are now marked out on the Shires National Park Origin Map. Some areas may not be included in the final proposal, if the initial feasibility study does not find enough supporting factors.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (outside Wye Valley AONB/Malvern Hills AONB/Forest of Dean)

A. Ross/Ledbury area linking the Malvern Hills and Forest of Dean

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNCIL (outside Wye Valley AONB/Forest of Dean)

B. Monmouth/Rockfield/Skenfrith

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL (outside Forest of Dean/Wye Valley AONB)

C. River Severn border/Westbury/Newent/Chaceley

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (outside Forest of Dean)

D. River Severn border/Minsterworth/Forthampton

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL (outside Malvern Hills AONB)

E. River Severn border/Upton upon Severn/Powick/Knightwick

THE CAIRNGORMS STRUCTURE

There are a huge number of vested interests that can lead opposition to creating the Shires National Park. Local government and political opposition could try to claim a loss of sovereignty under the usual English National Park setups. This is entirely avoided if The Shires National Park is set up in a similar way to the Scottish Cairngorms National Park. This particular National Park structure reduces any such complaints and even ensures the incredibly important benefits of a return to a genuinely local planning system, with no national housing targets imposed from above and an economic development program that is tailor made to the area covered. The Cairngorms National Park structure is different to that of existing English National Parks as it leaves control of planning in local authority hands across the National Park with the caveat that the National Park is able to 'call in' and decide/regulate the most sensitive within the park area. This is actually a higher powered version of the existing National Landscape protection and would replace the current systems and functions at a relatively low extra cost. The Shires National Park Authority would run this overall operation and all of the other functions operating in established English/Welsh National Parks.

Setting up the Shires National Park will involve combining the existing management of The Malvern Hills and The Wye Valley National Landscapes with the Forest of Dean. This would be supplemented by a small team of specialist staff from the four local authorities that include and surround the proposed park. Creating this structural nucleus and adding representatives of other relevant partners, will not create a large increase in public costs. New senior management might need to be recruited from existing National Parks but these would replace duplications in the existing protected area set ups. Local community representation could come from a combination of local MPs, Councils, partnership organisations and directly elected trustees. Existing public rights and access would be written into the basic constitution and management directives. There would be political balance and other democratic safeguards also built in to prevent 'takeovers' by unrepresentative political or sectional movements trying to change things without public approval or support. Recent experiences in the Malvern Hills and Forest of Dean have demonstrated how important such safeguarding can become. This would all be agreed by the local authorities and all partners involved before being put to the public for approval as part of the Shires National Park creation process.

THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK BRAND

The Shires National Park Authority would have another more unique role... To oversee, regulate and operate **'THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK' BRAND**. (exact name to be decided by those involved, of course.) This trademark of local quality will help businesses from farming to technology across our park, gain recognition and sales across the world. It would be a charity run by a dedicated small team initially funded by a combination of Council grants, sponsorship and eventually, a small fee for use of **'THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK' BRAND**.

The Shires National Park Authority would be responsible for channeling all government funding for green/economic initiatives and sustainable farming grants that would allow for environmental improvement and farming diversity. There would be a planning diversity benefit built into the National Park constitution. This would allow much more redevelopment or adaptation of existing agricultural and business buildings into tourist accommodation and landmark/attraction entrepreneurial facilities. The Shires National Park Authority would be able to oversee schemes beyond usual local government boundaries and plan innovative projects and initiatives on much larger scales. Other crucial factors are long term investment and operation. Major investment will be more likely if authority and control is not limited to the 4 year local/national government political cycles. This could all be tested for validity in the research carried out by the University of Worcester at the required stages. An example of the benefits of joint working, between some of the major partners in the Shires National Park, can be seen in a report for tourism development between the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley: [tourism-destination-management-plan-2015-to-2020.pdf](#) This document is indicative of how cooperative work would be carried out on a larger and comprehensive scale for the Shires National Park.

OF BENEFIT TO ALL

A detailed multi-stage Feasibility Study will obviously need to produce/confirm a list of substantial, long term benefits to the economy, environment and populations living within the Shires National Park. Once these are recognised and agreed, they would be set as the targets for administration by the National Park Authority over projected time periods. A series of realistic and carefully worded objectives would lay out and confirm the achievable and measurable positive effects Of each target and how to realise their full benefits.

Detailed study of each section of the Shires National Park would be led by a team of councillors, officers from all five local authorities working with the University of Worcester.

In turn, they would enlist the help of Parish/Town councils, charities, civic societies, Commoners' groups, farmers, landowners and specific local experts to really find out what makes each area special and how to keep this so, for generations to come. They would list local attractions, economic, sustainability and environmental projects/proposals, networking opportunities and joint initiatives, benefiting each community within and consequently for, the whole Shires National Park area. An element of "myth busting" would need to be built in and should call upon evidence from existing UK National Parks and statistics from around the world, to demolish the inevitable attempts to undermine the truth, by those who nowadays, will attempt to disrupt any new initiative, especially online. Besides planning, farming and economic growth the 'myths' will extend to democracy, public rights, housing, infrastructure and even country traditions. It is essential to have clear and unequivocal evidence based commitments to answer all reasonable questions that any potential campaign or protest might attempt to put forward. Any proposal must disarm as much opposition as possible by having answers ready before the questions are asked. A detailed booklet with all of this may need to be sent to every household in the necessary areas as part of a launch process. The content would be defensible, research based information that would confront any conspiracy/myth creation on the internet etc.

'OUR' SHIRES NATIONAL PARK

Working together does not mean a loss of identity or local culture. There will be some fear of being swamped by "another layer of government quango" in certain communities within the Shires National Park. A clear series of safeguards will need to be written into the constitution. It will be important to specifically reassure communities with historic rights, farming and developers large or small that they will be involved in creating the National Park and benefit from its presence and operation. The overall principle is to enhance, protect and preserve the living and working landscapes, that we all value so much, as they are now or potentially improved in the future. This must not prevent necessary or even dynamic change that local people need in order to prosper or improve their communities. The democratic control and local representation on decision making boards and committees must give confidence to all local residents that this works for them as much as tourists or vested interests and yet prevent a small section of the population dictating change for their own advantage. Recent events in Malvern and the forest of Dean illustrate the need for accountability and careful structural planning. On the plus side, these events can now be studied and thus prevented from happening again.

CHECKING THE INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK

The objective goals broadly outlined above and in the original Shires National Park notes added below, need an initial assessment, in principle, during stages 1 & 2 of this process. The factors that will weigh heavily include:

- a. Economic
- b. Environmental
- c. Sustainability
- d. Farming and landowners
- e. Community and Social Impact
- f. Housing and Planning
- g. Democracy and Representation
- h. Local Identity and preservation of historic rights
- i. Tourism
- j. Infrastructure
- k. Communication
- l. Culture and Heritage
- m. Employment and Skills
- n. Well being and Health
- o. Future Proofing and the Long term
- p. Introductory and continuous Operation

The overall aim of Stage 1. of the feasibility study is to give a thumbs up to the overall idea in principle. It is not to go into specific detail. Stage 2. Will then deliver the necessary high level of analysis and suggested modifications that improve the Shires National Park structure in terms of the list above and other factors that must be considered. Stage 1. Will be funded by two of the councils involved, Worcestershire County Council and Malvern Hills District Council.

WHY SUPPORT THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK?

From the birthplace of Henry V to the home of Elgar. From the magnificent landscapes that inspired Land of Hope and Glory to the studios where Bohemian Rhapsody was let loose on the world. The Malvern Hills, Severn, Wye valleys and Forest of Dean all together. Over 600sq miles of some of the UK's most beautiful countryside, farmland, hills, rivers and forest. Almost 80% of the area proposed is protected already in some form as, National Landscapes, National Forest, SSIs, Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas. Now is the time to put all of these treasures and more together. The benefits of joining will far outweigh the current separation in terms of both national and international profile, creating vast opportunities for sustainable growth, while preserving all of our landscapes, heritage and local identity

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Increased sustainable growth. This would come from a number of sources....
From integrated and better managed tourism growth. Creating "The Shires" international trademark brand as a quality high end mark for farming and other producers, eventually recognised and valued around the world. Establishing a reputation as an area attractive to new sustainable/high tech industries and potentially becoming a national/international benchmark for high standard farming, forestry and nature tourism, all run by local populations for local populations.

There would also be an increase in indirect general investment as the Shires National Park attracted other new businesses to set up and local authorities managed sustainable residential inward migration as knowledge of the area grew. Confidence in the economic future of a well planned and managed new National Park would certainly create long term faith in all sectors across the Shires National Park area. This will, in turn, attract the green and other long term investment that can be added to our area. A secure, preserved environment attracts the most creative and provides them with security for personal and commercial investment.

A Blue Chip "Shires" brand for products and services will inspire and create innovative entrepreneurial activity. Look at the success of the Duchy of Cornwall brand as a model. Incidentally, we would envisage King Charles being involved in helping establish the Shires National Park, as a major landowner in the area and would invite him to be Patron of the new National Park

INTERESTING ECONOMIC FACTS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL

A similar size National Park (Yorkshire Dales) generates an extra £700 million pounds per year for the people and businesses within its boundary, because of its status alone. The Shires National Park has potentially more to offer than this example. There would be significant uplifts in economic activity from increase in overnight/destination tourism, drawn from the UK and abroad. Simply put... There are reasons to visit and stay for longer if the area, attractions and activities available are packaged together. A day visit could become a weekend, long weekend or week because there is a greater 'package' of things to see or do. The whole area is visible, appears more comprehensive and more attractive, than the parts. Advertising would be supercharged. An identity would be forged that could be world class.

Public money put into National Parks generates £9 for every £1 that is invested.

Social development funding achieves a 4.3 to 1 higher return on programmes in NPs.

There would be immense value to a "Shires National Park" brand as detailed below. This would be only available to businesses, farmers and producers located in the Shires National Park and the brand usage would be run by a not for profit charity or trust and financed by a very small levy for those who choose to use the quality mark, with approval. This could be set up with a board of supervision including local MPs, Councillors, Chambers of Commerce and the NFU. Once established, the brand would be a springboard for entrepreneurs to start or evolve sustainable industries and internationally market the best of what is produced within the Shires National Park's borders.

Economic organisation and planning on a larger but sustainable scale would be extremely marketable and taken seriously by larger corporate employers and businesses. It would quickly become very attractive to new high tech and innovation organisations to set up in an attractive, protected and highly valued space with a reliably stable local workforce. It would also be easier to prioritise the highest level of information technology standardisation and integration installation across the National Park for broadband, power generation/supply, communication and innovation development. All of this and more would fit into the protection of a green and sustainable area attractive, across the world, to investors and employers and where staff are happy to settle permanently.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Shires National Park would NOT need major new travel infrastructure as a substantial network is already in place which has the extra capacity necessary to deal with increased visits. As such visitor numbers increase, a demand-led network of taxi/minibus vehicles could take extra tourists to key destinations and their accommodation. This could all be coordinated by the Shires National Park marketing and logistics operation. Joining the existing protected areas, tourism offices and parts of Council economic development functions together, with a relatively small public money investment, could produce international and national advertising that would attract visitors from all over the world through local airports and inter city connections and the knowledge to design the right comprehensive methods to take them from place to place sustainably.

There would be more use of existing sustainable and under-used transport links...

These would include networks for travel based on the:

(North) Pontrilas/Hereford/Ledbury//Malvern/Worcester/ Birmingham mainline railway.

And the:

(South) Cardiff/Newport/Chepstow/Lydney(Dean Forest Railway to Cinderford)
Gloucester/Cheltenham/Bristol/ Bath/London

And the:

M5/M50/A40/M4 road spine trunk road running from centrally from Birmingham; Worcester;
Bristol; Ross on Wye; The Forest; Monmouth; Newport; Cardiff

And the:

A466/A48/M48/M4 London/Bath/Bristol/Chepstow/the Forest/Monmouth

An increase in coach travel excursion coverage and well managed rail/hotel/farm accommodation packages could be put together across the Shires National Park to integrate and thus maximise reasons to stay. In the longer term there could even be new forms of viable sustainable tourism created. How about tourists on river boats travelling up sections of the River Avon, Severn and Wye transport networks? Including a Shires National Park stay, of course!

There is a real opportunity to increase the length of overnight stays and create interesting week-long holidays. The present pattern is very poor, for example, only 1% of visitors stay overnight in the Malvern Hills and a pitiful 4% come by public transport. If there are reasons to stay longer and easy, green and cheap ways to visit a wider area, there can be sustainable growth for the benefit of all locally.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Most National parks have a high degree of local planning control. The Shires National Park would operate best with the Cairngorms National Park model for planning. Local Councils would run all routine Planning but the National Park Authority (NPA) would be able to “call in” any applications that it felt important. The four or more Council Planning Authorities involved would also not have a “Five Year Housing supply” target and would draw up truly local plans with the NPA. Importantly this includes the areas of a Council OUTSIDE the Shires National Park so that development is not wrongly concentrated. With this set of existing principles, council planning authorities in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, with any part of the Shires National Park in their boundaries, would potentially regain real power to help combat social problems with genuinely local solutions for homelessness, social housing for rent and affordable housing. These are all easier to provide for local people because of the exemptions above and further exemptions in the National Policy Planning Framework (aka NPPF) for National Parks which are more proactive than those for lower tier protected areas. The Shires National Park would still have robust ‘local plans’ However, such plans would then create a far more accurate level of appropriate quality community planning. Genuine localism is at the core of the National Park ethos and in the NPPF. Councils at all levels tend to be onboard and work collaboratively at NP level, which is much fairer and produces better quality results. Glynchbrook would no longer be necessary, for example.

The proof of how valued National Park status would be for us is already in place... How many campaigns do you see for National Parks to be scrapped, by those who live in them? Even those who do feel constrained by the original planning models in England have not had the opportunity to set up using the Cairngorms model hereby proposed, which is both fair to developers and local communities. The Shires National Park can show a balanced middle ground where appropriate and environmentally enhancing development can be very welcome in the right places. Reuse of agricultural, business and residential sites can be encouraged and cities, towns and villages can grow sustainably in the right places for real local demand rather than national targets.

The main strategic goal in creating the Shires National Park would be to enhance and preserve the dynamic cultural, historic, farming, commercial and industrial landscapes that already exist. Farmers and other business owners would be actively encouraged to innovate and create new high value businesses. Obvious growth areas could be accommodation, farm shops, craft centres, health, activity and sport centres. Landowners could contribute land for reforestation, wildlife restoration/rewilding, leisure activities, tourism, new rural services and technologies in exchange for new growth opportunities. Everyone would benefit as the extra opportunities would bring jobs, local homes and spending into every community. Local Councils, MPs, the NFU and elected trustees would oversee the “Shires” brand, thus ensuring agriculture, rural enterprise and local people always kept a reassuringly secure presence in shaping their own future.

FARMING/ NFU AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY INVOLVEMENT

Farming and forestry are fundamental to a large part of the Shires National Park landscape. Indeed, The Shires National Park could be partially subtitled as the UK's 'farming and forest' National Park. (The logo could have hills, rivers, woods and a tractor!) Farming and forestry provide employment, income and the basic land use structure for how much of the landscape in the Shires National Park has evolved. There would be a much deeper and stronger relationship with the Shires National Park for farming and forestry than with the separate protected areas that exist now. During the creation period, there would be opportunities for local people to plan for long-term development of farming and forestry, a chance to influence the all important agenda on land use. Farmers would be able to gain a diversity of income with sustainable alternative business uses, some of which already listed above. It is vital to have the NFU, Forestry Commission, landowners and councils involved with planning the most effective structure from the start. This could be a far more responsible and powerful role than in any other National Park and thus recognise the importance of landscape providers, their interests and benefits for the local communities they live within.

The same consideration and inclusion would be essential for community residents and their representatives. Nothing would change without their agreement. Planning, resource management, Commoners' rights and traditions would all be kept and celebrated for as long as local residents wished. The whole point of creating the Shires National Park is to be proud of our area, show off each of the different landscapes together and celebrate the people who live there.. To the world! The governing body would be set up in a way to safeguard traditions and delegate responsibilities to the existing democratic infrastructure, ensuring accountability and a feeling of ownership by all. Nothing would change without genuine consent.

THE PLANNING MYTH DEBUNKED:

There is a completely untrue myth that is always brought up about National parks and planning. In fact, almost all household and commercial planning law applies. It is even possible to leave all but major decisions to existing local councils as in the Cairngorms. As for individual planning applications there is a similar 80-90% success rate for planning applications inside and outside National Parks. Local residents can be reassured knowing their very precious living environment is carefully protected... BUT..... Yes... people would still be able to build extensions, home offices and garden sheds!

At the same time genuinely affordable housing can be built for local people including houses for rent. Better paid and longer lasting jobs would be secured by increased tourism and the prestige/branding of the Shires National Park bringing people from all over the world.

In a world where employment may well be under threat from A I and growing inequality, creating our own Shires National Park will provide a whole series of new business and employment opportunities for young people now and in the future. Servicing tourism, maintaining the heritage, working on world class brands and educating new generations could provide more opportunities and wealth for our area. There is literally nowhere else left in the UK that could achieve so much, with so little real change. It is all here but needs to be carefully linked, promoted and maintained.

Creating the Shires National Park and making our area more wealthy in a long term, sustainable way means young people can stay local and run innovative businesses here rather than have to move elsewhere. This, in turn, helps lower local inequality. After all, you hear very little genuine desire from the majority of residents who live in a National Park to remove that status. In fact, it is almost always the opposite. The majority are very proud of such an accolade being given to their home neighbourhood and want even better protection for their own unique places to live. The Shires National Parks would similarly help reduce local inequality and be good for everyone!

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The Shires National Park will have a far superior ability to put practical environmental initiatives into practice. It will advertise, showcase and promote appropriate local culture, heritage and nature friendly initiatives. In practice neglected sites and areas otherwise do receive significantly more help from the community, philanthropy and government in the existing National Parks.

Local community pride and self interest in protecting their own environment is enhanced. There is government support for home grown, nature friendly economic initiatives after the Pandemic and unending financial crisis this country faces. The Shires National Park would be launched at an optimal moment, when good ideas that bring money into our country are vital. The Shires National park can be a focus to respond to the issues and policies to deal practically and appropriately with such needed change. The Shires National Park would encourage and help preserve ancient woods, landscapes, orchards and our country's amazing environmental history and yet also support new innovations for communities, farmers/producers and businesses to keep each landscape thriving and unique. It would help the Community Forestry movement expand. The Shires National Park could be an area of national significance for tree planting and include a new additional wooded area, between the Malvern Hills and Forest of Dean. Indeed, as a result, it may be possible to create a non-stop 50+ mile long woodland trail from the edge of Shropshire, through the Malverns, Forest of Dean and Wye Valley, down to Chepstow and the Severn Bridges which could become a National natural treasure and world famous attraction.

THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK BRAND

Recently the existing National Parks have become sponsors and advertisers of Sustainable farming working in partnership with food producers. The Shires National Park should have its own trademark brand. This could be supercharged here with help from the Duchy of Cornwall brand and the NFU as partners.. King Charles is a major landowner in the proposed Shires National Park area and will be approached to promote and help drive the initiative. The Shires National Park brand would be extended to types of product or service based within the park boundaries that met agreed standards.

The Shires National Park brand would be a trusted mark of quality that local people would jealously protect. (I have already reserved all of the .com brand names on behalf of the National Park authority for when they need to be used!)

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Shires National Park would be a stable, less stressful environment for residents and visitors to live in and visit. The area gives itself to an active outdoor lifestyle promotion: Walking, Running, Cycling, Orienteering, Go Ape, Zip wires, Hang gliding, Parachuting, Canoeing, Boating, Climbing, branded races and Competitions. Farm activities, play areas, mazes, exhibitions, festivals, outdoor theatre, cinema, sport, shooting, fishing, archery and so much more could be expanded and provide a better life for locals and tourists alike.

Countless other potential healthy applications would spring up. These would be added to by growth in retreats, wellbeing centres, camps and “get away from it all” accommodation to help mental and spiritual health as well.

WEALTH AND SECURITY

Local residents would see an increase in funding for social initiatives as the area became established and wealthier than otherwise. Spending would increase across the population as the Shires National Park became established with greater stability for local asset markets and demand for local products of all kinds. The protection afforded National Parks ensures new initiatives are thoroughly tested and pass higher barriers for long-term Sustainability and investment.

As security of employment and housing for younger members of society increases less local people leave. A less transient population and local workforce would become more committed to the Shires National Park's geographical area and its ideals. This creates greater community resilience and would also increase local community support for each other and reduce crime as people work together more. Volunteering rates are higher in National Parks. All of these aspirational social benefits can be written into the Shire National Park's Constitution.

READY TO GO

Most of the infrastructure is in place. A reorganisation of the two National Landscapes and Forest of Dean authorities into a "Shires National Park" Authority would probably cost very little because of removing duplication. Planning and other Council functions could also be adapted at relatively small cost. The return for the Government from grant money for advertising, consultations and legislation will be offset by extra growth and tax revenues, especially if the Shires National Park package attracts overseas tourists to visit. Most non-UK visitors currently go straight from Stratford to Bath via the Cotswolds. The division of the Shires National Park area into separate protected areas has held back every business, company and resident, economically and socially, as smaller attractions get less noticed. The present situation is now an opportunity to show that this whole area can have a real identity, cohesion and sustainably grow, yet still conserve some of the most wonderful farming, wooded and rural landscapes this country has left. Remember, at present, there is currently no National Park between the Peak District and Exmoor in England. We should have one HERE now...

The Shires National Park... Our National Park!

**COMPLIMENTARY POTENTIAL IDEA:
A UNIVERSITY OF MASTER CRAFTS**

Main Campus in Hereford (combined with NMITE)

Further campuses at: Malvern, Ross on Wye, Monmouth, Cinderford, Newent and farm centres across the National Park....

Expert tuition and revival of disappearing skills that are in demand across the world: Some examples...

Thatching, stone and masonry restoration, green building,

Stained glass, Farriery Lime plastering and construction,

Archeological/ Building Conservation, Stone walling etc etc

Centres of excellence training skills engineers and experts for the world.

This is already established with Farriery at Holme Lacy which does attract students from across the globe!

This proposal was written by Cllr Paul Bennett, Worcestershire County Council/Malvern hills District Council with the support of other political groups on both councils.

THE SHIRES NATIONAL PARK NEXT STAGES: 2026-2029

- A. Initial staged feasibility study by Worcestershire County Council and MHDC, in partnership with MPs, Councillors and other interested parties. All work to be carried out by the University of Worcester and consultants they choose.
- B. Meetings with other Councils and MPs to present evidence and create official support from elected representatives. Coordinated by Worcestershire County Council and MHDC.
- C. Initial Introductory reception at major venue in winter 2026
- D. "See the park" event with views from:
Pinnacle Hill, Malvern Hills/May Hill/Garway Hill/ The Kymin (Early Summer 2027)
- E. Joint letter asking King Charles to provisionally become patron (Summer 2027)
- D. Preparations for full public consultation, referenda and Act of Parliament with all partners on board and political parties supporting the Shires National Park in their parliamentary manifestos. (2028/29).