Swinden Quarry Natural Environment Fund

Sixth Annual Report | 2025



Aire Rivers Trust Salmon Safari Project volunteers

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wildlife

SWINDEN QUARRY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FUND (NEF)

Sixth Annual Report | 2025

Background

On 20 December 2019, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) granted Tarmac planning permission C/23/67K for the deepening of Swinden Quarry near Cracoe and an extension of time allowed for the winning and working of limestone until 2039 (restoration to be completed by 2041). To give force to certain planning obligations arising from the consent, the Authority and Tarmac entered into a s106 Planning Agreement under which Tarmac: "*shall pay to the Authority on an annual basis the Environmental Contribution of £30,000 (Index Linked)….The first payment of the Environmental Contribution shall be made on or before* ***31st December 2019*** *and thereafter annually up until* ***31st December*** *2040*".

It is stipulated in the S.106 that the Environmental Contribution must be applied by the National Park Authority "*towards projects which improve biodiversity and quality of the natural environment within the Locality or which compensate for the actual or potential environmental impacts of the Development, with particular emphasis on the natural beauty of the landscape, tranquillity and air quality and riverine environment within the Locality*".

Tarmac's Environmental Contributions have been used to establish a discretionary grant fund administered by YDNPA for environmental projects in 'the Locality' that must benefit from any funds received from Tarmac due to the Section 106 Planning Agreement. The existence of the discretionary grant is advertised on the Yorkshire Dales National Park website at:

https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/swinden-quarry-nef

The grant guidelines, application form and a map of the area within the Locality are available to view and download from this webpage.

Under the terms of the s106 agreement: "*within one month of the due date for payment of the Environmental Contribution by Tarmac the Authority shall provide Tarmac with annual reports setting out how monies received as part of the Environmental Contribution have been spent (or allocated) over the preceding 12-month period*".

This report covers the period 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

Activity in 2025

During 2025 the Authority dealt with nine enquiries regarding the Natural Environment Fund from individuals and organisations interested in obtaining funding. Five applicants were offered discretionary grants, and all offers were accepted by the organisations that applied, with the exception of Prof. J Grey on behalf of the River Wharfe Angling Association (RWAA) as the Authority awaits confirmation of grant acceptance from them. One submitted application was unsuccessful. A summary of the expenditure from the NEF is given in Table 1 below.

Appendix 1 showcases photographs from current projects.

12-month progress update reports from previous successful applications can be found in Appendix 2.

In 2023, the Natural Environment Fund was used to commission Bowland Ecology to undertake habitat and watercourse surveys and reporting in the Linton area. In 2024 the findings of these surveys were made available to landowners in the area. Individual landowners are now facilitating project ideas for enhancing the biodiversity and quality of the riverine environment on their parcels of farmland.

The 2020 Authority report to Tarmac detailed allocation of £8985 NEF money to the establishment of a Local Provenance Plant Nursery. A plant nursery was set up and local provenance seeds collected from specific site locations around the Yorkshire Dales National Park. These were then germinated under the process of stratification and potting on. A large batch of 574 Purging Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and 24 Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) were released from the seed nursey for woodland planting in 2024. Purging Buckthorn is a native deciduous shrub that grows on limestone in both woodlands and scrubby woodland edges, and it is the food plant for the rare Tissue Moth (*Triphosa dubitata*) that breed in the Dales and overwinter in caves in the Yorkshire Dales. Wild Privet is a valuable shrub for a range of species including invertebrates and birds. Following on from this work, a final smaller batch of Purging Buckthorn (149 plants) growing from local provenance seed has been moved in to the Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust tree nursery at Clapham in October 2025, along with seedlings of rose species (*Rosa sp*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) to be grown on and used for understorey planting, and other useful supplies such as root trainers. The remaining peat free compost will be used within the Heritage Orchard site located at Colvend below the overflow car park on a fenced off section of field. There has been some success with Rock Whitebeam (*Sorbus rupicola)* with a small batch of seven tree seedling being grown to plant out in partnership with work being carried out by a member of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in Grass Wood Nature Reserve in Wharfedale.

Rachel Brindle (Wildlife Conservation Officer) 19/12/2025

Amendment to 2024 Report

Application Number SQ-2024-002 accepted the grant offer of £2,000 but decided not to go ahead with that specific project. The Authority reallocated the funds to SQ-2024-007 additional fund awarded to drystone walling element of project for Hedmann Conservation Trust. Total SQNEF allocated between 1st January and 31st December 2024 remained at £38,500.

Table 1: Discretionary Grants from Swinden Quarry NEF as at 19/12/2025

ITEM	APPLICANT / ORGANISATION	AMOUNT
SQ-2025-001 Various locations on the map between Kilnsey and Appletreewick, fund Himalayan Balsam Rust Trials to control Himalayan Balsam along the Upper Wharfe.	Prof. J Grey on behalf of the River Wharfe Angling Association (RWAA)	**£9,750** Awaiting confirmation
SQ-2025-003 This year, the project aims to re-find two Wharfedale populations of Dwarf Milkwort (*Polygala amarella*) that were last seen in the 1980's and also survey a known extant site which has not had a population count since 2013. The fourth project site is thought to be extinct following previous searches but is being assessed as a potential reintroduction site.	Species Recovery Trust	**£1,800** Grant accepted
SQ-2025-004 The construction and siting of a complex of nesting boxes for the colony of Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) just above Conistone Bridge on the River Wharfe (a cabinet of 6 x 8 nest holes).	A Roberts Kilnsey Park Estate	**£4,440** Grant accepted
SQ-2025-005 Nature reserve project, creation of two wildlife ponds on separate field parcels on existing low-lying hollows and creation of linear invertebrate/butterfly bank with spoil. Pond 1 is 13m x 40m, 45mm depth and Pond 2 is 15m x 20m, 45mm depth.	D Mann Hedmann Conservation Trust	**£8,880** Grant accepted

SQ-2025-006 The purchase of several outdoor planters, bug hotel and seeds/plants for outdoor learning and engagement with school pupils.	H Burns Embsay Preschool	**£2,000** Grant accepted
SQ-2025-007 Planting of a native species hedgerow for food and shelter, managed sensitively for wildlife as a green corridor on land adjacent to Eller Beck watercourse.	P Clarke Land off Lauradale Lane	**£5,000** Processing application
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**£26,870**

Appendix 1 – Photographs from current projects



Sand Martin box installation (Photograph: R Brindle courtesy of A Roberts)



River Wharfe riverine habitat, near Conistone Bridge (Photograph: R Brindle courtesy of A Roberts)



Eller Beck in the Linton Beck catchment (Photograph: R Brindle courtesy of D Mann)



Camera trapping monitoring on HEDMANN Conservation Trust nature reserve (Photograph: R Brindle courtesy of D Mann)

Appendix 2 – Progress update reports

SQ-2024-001 Aire Rivers Trust

Funding for a citizen science program called “Salmon Safari”, staff time for project management and volunteer training, venue hire, training materials, mileage, data hosting and licencing costs.

Salmon Safari Project Progress Report August 2025

SQ-2024-004 Conistone with Kilnsey Parish

Planting between 20 and 25 British fruit trees along with native shrubs and reseeding with grass and wildflowers.

12-month project update for annual Authority report to Tarmac

SQ-2024-006 Threshfield Parish Council

Install planters, plant orchard trees and sow a wildflower meadow / verge at three small areas within Threshfield village.

12-month project update and future plans for the three village sites

SQ-2024-007 HEDMANN Conservation Trust

Fencing & walling project, and purchase of equipment for community engagement including 5 camera traps, rucksacks and stream dipping nets.

Annual Report and Accounts from Hedmann Conservation Trust

Please note that the text from Salmon Safari Project Progress Report August 2025 has been presented unedited for this Report, as requested by Aire Rivers Trust.

Aire Rivers Trust Salmon Safari Project Progress Report August 2025

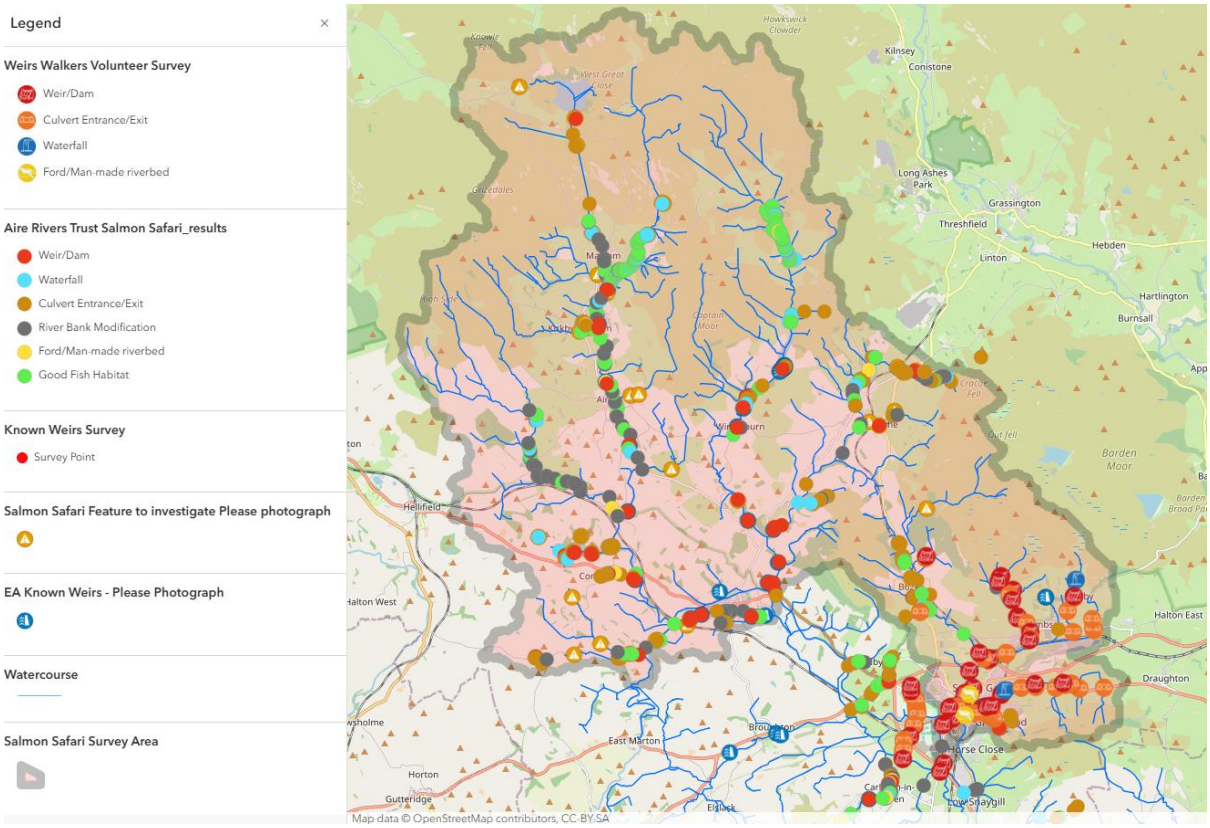
The Aire Rivers Trist Salmon Safari Project has progressed well over the last 12 months, with the project delivering all promised outcomes despite numerous snagging points along the way, which have delayed final completion of the project. However, volunteer recruitment was better than the target 12 volunteers, with a total of 17 volunteers taking part, allowing the project to extend its surveying range beyond the Eller and Flasby Beck catchments to also include Malhamdale and the Aire Gap in the project.



Interim Survey Report

The volunteer recruitment, data collection and first draft analysis of the results have taken place, and an interim summary of the results can be viewed on this online story map:

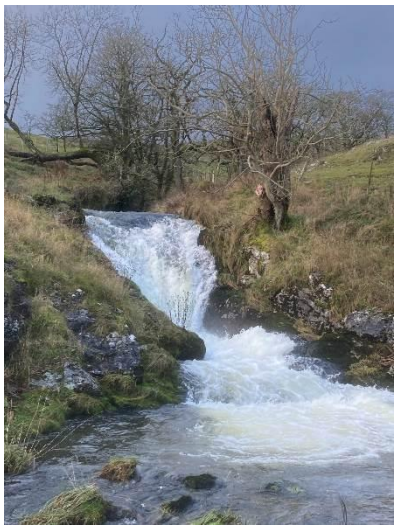
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/95dc9a405ff2441b932d54d065af7d84



Key Interim findings of the survey include:

- 17 volunteers helped gather the data. From The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Aire Rivers Trust.
- 73 weirs were recorded that form priority barriers to fish passage.
- 17 weirs were found to have collapsed or been removed from the river.
- 56 barriers were found that were not recorded on the national record.
- The highest priority weirs requiring fish passage were found on the main River Aire between Gargrave and Malham.





- Eller Beck represents the most modified river in the survey area, containing 65% of the weirs recorded and an extensive network of buried rivers known as culverts.
- The most common modification to the river other than weirs was found to be hardened Riverbanks. Extending along both the urban and rural rivers within the survey area.
- The highest quality habitat for salmon and trout is found across the main River Aire, the Malhamdale tributaries and the uppermost section of Eller Beck.

Modifications to the Project

During the formative months of the project, several changes had to be made to the project design. The first being the design of our own River Naturalness survey method as the national trainer for the Freshwater Biological Association/Natural England method, we aimed to adopt left their post, leaving no replacement to deliver the training to the recruited volunteers. To this end, Aire Rivers Trust developed a method that reflected the naturalness surveys but also placed a clearer focus on barriers to fish passage. Which is one of the highest priorities for the Upper Aire. The second adaptation was the shift to working with practical volunteers for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to help deliver the survey, due to the Friends of the Dales being able to commit volunteers at the time of survey delivery. This worked well and has built a good new link between the authority and Aire Rivers Trust.

The final modification came when we presented the work to the other partners in the Upper Aire Project. The Wild Trout Trust asked to peer review the results and add their datasets into the final report to ensure all possible data on fish passage is included to make the work as comprehensive as possible. This step was not anticipated in the initial project plan and led to an extension of the project publication date. In addition to publishing the project report on the Aire Rivers Trust website, we aim to share our data with the EA and the National Rivers Trust online databases of barriers to fish passage.

Financial Summary

The spend to date includes:

Budget Period	**Project**
April 2024- June 2025	**YDNP Salmon Safari**
Income	
Grant	9600.00
TOTAL	**9600.00**
Expenditure	
Salary	6128.57
Employer Pension	130.88
Meeting Room Hire	70.56
ArcGIS Credits	187.88
TOTAL	**6517.89**
c/f balance @30/6/2025	**3082.11**

The project budget is on track, the residual £3,082.11 will be used by the end of the 2025 financial year to staff creation of the final draft of the project report with the Wild Trout Trust, fund further GIS cloud hosting of the data, and to market the findings.

Further Information

If you wish to know more about the Salmon Safari please contact:

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Citizen Science Officer

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Mob. 07456 481797

https://aireriverstrust.org.uk/

Aire Rivers Trust, BizSpace, Albion Mills, Greengates, Bradford, W. Yorkshire, BD10 9TQ

12 MONTH PROJECT UPDATE FOR ANNUAL AUTHORITY REPORT TO TARMAC

Reference: SQ-2024-004

Conistone with Kilnsey Parish

In the summer of 2024 Conistone with Kilnsey Parish meeting decided it would be beneficial to tidy a strip of waste land opposite the Tennant Arms Hotel in Kilnsey. In order to make this happen we requested from the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) for a grant form for the Swindon Quarry Environment Fund. With the help and assistance from Rachel Brindle from the YDNP we submitted a grant form which was accepted to the value of £6,400.

Work began in August of 2024 and the following has been completed to date:

1. Clearance of debris such as rubbish, weeds and large stones.
2. Remaining area dug over and covered with three large agricultural trailer loads of topsoil.
3. Grass seed laid
4. Natural plants planted such as Wild Geraniums and bulbs.
5. Ten trees planted so far. (Plum, Apple, Pear species and Rowan) that were all British varieties. Compost was used to provide nutrients whilst planting the trees.
6. Stakes, tree guards and ties used to support and protect the trees.
7. Raspberry bushes also purchased and planted.

So far amount spent is £4,478.20 leaving a balance of £1,921.80.



Pre-project landscape (Photograph: Courtesy of Kilnsey with Conistone Parish)



Post-project habitat creation (Photograph: Courtesy of Kilnsey with Conistone Parish)

Threshfield Parish Council

12-month project update and future plans

SQ-2024-006

We started the wildflower initiative in the Autumn of 2024 primarily focused on identifying three suitable locations for small wildflower areas across the village. My intention was always to start small and build on any learnings, challenges and of course successes as they presented.

I think is key to point out the significant challenge that the very dry and hot spring presented and a consequence of this has unfortunately been a poor showing for the three wildflower areas that were scarified and seeded. The planters however have been more successful but not without a significant amount of attention in terms of watering and general maintenance to support the growth in the very hot and also very dry conditions.

As you know, establishing and wildflower meadow areas takes time and we are very hopeful that the second year will see the areas that were seeded show more growth in the 2026 growing season. I am of course disappointed that we have not had more success but there is no exact science to this as I am sure you would agree.

In terms of learnings, my intention is to greenhouse the plugs next year and bring them onto more maturity before we plant out.

The total spend thus far is just short of £750 with a remaining balance of circa £1,250. This has covered wildflower meadow seed mixes, wildflower plugs and the soil and compost to fill each planter.

I have broken down the approach by area below;

1. – planters on Chapel Corner for plug plants and wildflower seeds;

The three planters were kindly donated by a local business and have all been located at Chapel Corner at the top of Station Road. We used a selection of plugs in each planter including Corn Cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Rock Rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Blood Geranium (*Geranium sanguineum*), Meadow Geranium (*Geranium pratense*), *Viola, Malva and Campanula* species along with a small selection of native grasses to add some year-round growth. We did add some annuals just to add some colour given the challenge with bringing the plugs on. I don't intend to do this next year once we get the perennials established.

2. – three or four small native orchard fruit trees with wildlife protection;

This element has proved more challenging as other members of the Parish Council were undecided on appropriate locations for these to be sited. This is an ongoing

conversation which I am hopeful we can agree on ready for planting next year. There are significant trees already in prominent locations and the areas we felt might be suitable experienced push back from residents living close. This will happen, but I need to be sensitive to the introduction and location.

3. – small wildflower meadow on grass verge area;

We identified three small locations which we heavily scarified and seeded with a meadow mix in mid-October 2024. We used a native seed mix and plugs consisting of Corn Cockle (*Agrostemma githago*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Corn Marigold (*Glebionis segetum*), Poppy (*Papaver* sp), *Scabious* species, *Silene*, *Campanula*, *Viola* and *Malva*. In addition, we also added a significant number of plugs to each area as well. As noted above, the extreme dry weather and heat presented a real challenge to each area and the first year was significantly impacted. However, the seeds remain in the ground and I am hopeful they will germinate next year. We will seed again in late Autumn 2025.

I had an issue twice with the NYCC grass cutters who strimmed over two areas that had been seeded, planted and clearly marked up with 'no mow' signs 'wildflower' signage and twine to identify the areas.

Future plans;

We have identified a significant patch of grass in High Bank Cul-de -sac that will be scarified and seeded with wildflowers in late autumn as well ready for the 2025 growing season. In addition, this may present a suitable site for one or possibly two small native orchard trees but I need to approach this sensitively with other residents. I am confident most will be amenable but I need to establish the success of the wildflower growth before I plant trees as well.

All the land used is managed by the Threshfield Parish Council.

Paul Biddulph



The new roadside planters (Photograph: P Biddulph)



Plugs brought on in greenhouse (Photograph: P Biddulph)



High Bank planned wildflower meadow (Photograph: P Biddulph)

A further update received from Paul in December 2025, states that the “planting initiative continues across Threshfield with the introduction of a further planter taking the count to four in total, areas have been prepped for wildflower meadow seeding next year, the planting of a native Hawthorn tree 'Crataegus Paul’s Scarlet' and finally we have just planted 50 kilos of native Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), bulbs and 100 native Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) bulbs in six different locations.

I have managed to gather a small group of volunteers who support me with various tasks. The initiative is certainly gathering some community momentum which was always my intention. The funding has been integral to get me to this point and I plan to build on the success to date.”

Annual Report and Accounts

Hedmann Conservation Trust

Charity Number 1197602

For the Financial Year Ending

31 August 2024

This was a year of consolidation for the Trust, while surveys undertaken by Bowland Ecology were completed and the reports were presented to the YDNPA and myself as Chair of the trustees.

Two reports were finally completed by Bowland Ecology by November ’23 though as further checks were needed and subsequently assessed by the YDNPA, final versions were not released until early 2024. Copies of both reports are available on request.

The reports including the use of camera traps confirmed the presence of Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Stoat (*Mustela erminea*), Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius Arquata*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), European (Brown) Hare (*Lepus europaeus*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*), Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), and two areas suitable for scrapes and hence wading birds.

Additionally, hedgerow restoration, fencing off two small areas of the land to allow for planting and protection of Willow species saplings and trees already present. Bat boxes are being considered once the results of a survey in Autumn ’24 have been received.

A three-year plan of environmental improvements is being drawn up in conjunction with the YDNPA, YDMT (Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust), Bowland Ecology and the local Swinden Quarry who are very supportive of environmental improvements within the locality. This will include the restoration/rebuilding of a 130 metre drystone wall to provide a wildlife corridor.

As part of the three-year plan, it has been agreed that after the summer of 2024, sheep will no longer graze the land, due to the damage their intense grazing causes. In future years, cattle such as Belted Galloways, Highland, or suckler cows will be grazing the land, as these are best suited to vegetation management also known as conservation grazing. These types of cattle will also break up the soil and reduce its compaction, which should increase the flora and return the land to its traditional plant life.

From year three onwards, it is planned to re-seed parts of the land with seed type which would have been traditionally found in the area.

Local environmental groups will be permitted and encouraged to visit and monitor the site. Subsequently local primary schools will also be invited to monitor the watercourses etc. especially Eller Beck.

Financially there has been no Income or Expenditure within the Trust. The Chair has provided any resources at his own cost.

There have been no changes to the Trustees.

Account statement prepared by David Mann 14-Jun-25



HEDMANN Conservation Trust walling repairs (Photograph: D Mann)



Feature drystone wall on the nature reserve (Photograph: D Mann)