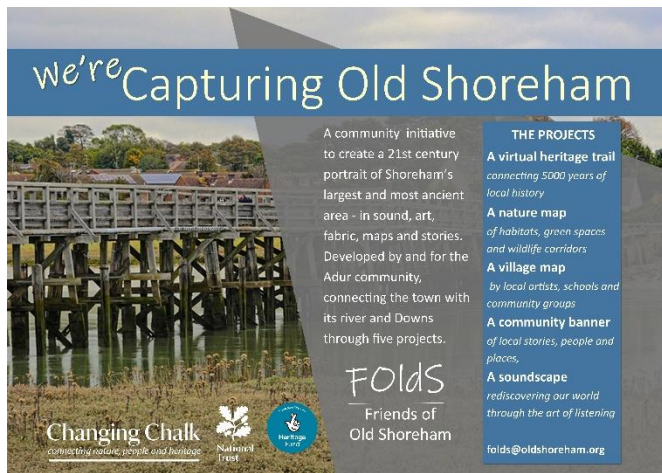


Capturing Old Shoreham Interim report

October 2025



Summary

Capturing Old Shoreham is a volunteer-led initiative by the Friends of Old Shoreham (FOldS), supported by a Changing Chalk grant, uniting the community to explore, record, and celebrate the town's natural and built environment. The project comprises five interconnected strands: the Community Banner, Echoes of Old Shoreham (Soundscape), Virtual Heritage Trail, Nature Map (BioMap), and Village Map. Together, these activities have engaged local residents, schools, care homes, and artists in creative, educational, and ecological work, fostering inclusion and new skills. Despite funding delays and logistical challenges, participation has exceeded expectations, raising awareness of heritage and natural landscapes, strengthening community connections, and building partnerships with councils and local organisations. The project will culminate in a multimedia exhibition at Marlipins Museum in May 2026, providing a living archive of Old Shoreham and continue as part of the Friends of Old Shoreham's ongoing work.

Project support

The Friends of Old Shoreham (FOldS) 'Capturing Old Shoreham' project is supported by a National Trust Changing Chalk Community Grant and the National Lottery Heritage Fund



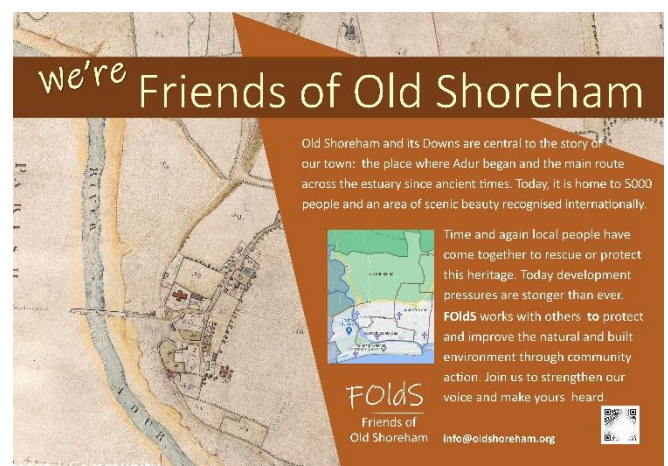
[Capturing Old Shoreham](#) is a project by the [Friends of Old Shoreham](#). It aims to involve local people in creating a detailed, multimedia snapshot of the natural and built environment of Old Shoreham and its surroundings through five connected activities.

Changing Chalk has provided a grant of up to **£7,440** for 11 months to support these five activities, which are described below with progress updates.

A key milestone will be an installation at the Marlipins Museum in Shoreham-by-Sea, where we will share the results of the project with the local community. The exhibition will take place after the grant funding ends.

The project has progressed well, with all activities now underway. Each is community-led, bringing together different groups and generating new knowledge, ideas, and stories. Many participants are involved in more than one activity, and the boundaries between this and other Friends of Old Shoreham projects are very flexible. The project has already raised awareness of Old Shoreham and strengthened connections between the town and the Downs, both within the community and among local representatives.

All work is done on a voluntary basis with limited funding, so this report reflects our own observations rather than formal evaluation. We can describe our activities and experiences but do not have the resources for extensive data collection or independent assessment.



As a community organisation, we have allowed *Capturing Old Shoreham* to grow naturally alongside our other projects. Five project leaders were identified, and we held two initial meetings. Since then, each activity has developed in its own way, often working together.

Since early September, we have focused more on the short-term goals of the funded activities and the planned exhibition, while recognising that this work will continue beyond the grant period. This report provides us with a chance to review progress and plan for the remainder of the funding.

Successes and Issues

- The project has succeeded both as a community development initiative and to raise awareness of Old Shoreham's natural and historic environment among participants and the wider community, including the "Downs on our doorsteps."
- Participant numbers have exceeded expectations and continue to grow. The project has provided a valuable focus for the relatively new Friends of Old Shoreham, helping us establish coherent principles and practices. It also set a short-term focus for the projects that will continue into the future.
- Launch activities and project events have reached a broader community through events, articles, and web postings. This level of engagement would have been unlikely without the structure and deadlines provided by Capturing Old Shoreham.
- Challenges have mainly stemmed from Changing Chalk's timelines and funding conditions. Although the project was initially approved in December, formal approval did not arrive until mid-February, preventing public announcements or preparatory work. On the positive side, this allowed us to "hit the ground running" once approval was granted.
- The fixed project deadline of 1 February 2026, with no extension possible, creates a three-month gap before the exhibition launches in May. For Changing Chalk, the solution was to remove the exhibition from the final agreement, but for us it compresses timelines, creating artificially early deadlines for printed materials and leaving less time for participants to complete their work.
- Funding has also posed a significant challenge: only 50% of the grant was released at start-up, with the remainder unavailable until after project completion and reporting. We were unaware of this when submitting our application. This caused cashflow issues and initially inhibited spending. In the short term, we have covered expenses personally for later reimbursement. In the medium term, we are organizing a crowdfunding campaign to match the remaining grant from Changing Chalk. While necessary, this adds extra workload and diverts attention from core project activities.
- A further challenge has been meeting our own targets for diversity and outreach. This largely reflects the demographics of our local community, which we have examined. However, it also highlights the high level of demand placed on the time of people representing minority or hard-to-reach groups, who have their own priorities. We are continuing to address inclusion to ensure that underrepresented voices are heard in our work.

Launch activities, outreach and inclusion

The project was designed in mid-2024 and approved before Christmas, but funding was only confirmed in mid-February, delaying publicity until documents were signed. We had planned a large launch but instead ran a staggered campaign with a soft launch at St Nicolas Church's coffee morning.

We created a small exhibition and flyers and hosted a stand at the local farmers' market on 8 March. The main launch a week later, promoted to members and the wider community, was well attended, with partner representatives on hand to discuss plans.

FOldS held a Midsummer Fair on 24 June, showcasing our project alongside local groups and NGOs, including Changing Chalk. The Fair drew several hundred visitors, introducing many new people to the initiative.

Each activity has since held its own launch or taster event, supported by the local MP and councillors. Further outreach included features in Inside Shoreham, Sussex Life, Facebook, and our website, plus participation in Heritage Open Days, the Sussex Tree Festival, Shoreham Wordfest, and other events to share our work more widely.

Outreach and inclusion

Overall, Capturing Old Shoreham has engaged a diverse range of people, though gaps remain. Despite sustained outreach and face-to-face meetings, participation by visible minorities has been lower than hoped. The Soundscape, Banner, and Map strands have included some women and men of colour, while all strands have involved neurodivergent and non-binary participants, offering both individual and group opportunities. The Banner project has delivered clear mental health benefits for many, and we aim to capture testimonials for the exhibition. The Soundscape work has also been therapeutic, helping several participants discover their creative selves.

Young creatives with learning differences are now allies in promoting Old Shoreham. Involving care home residents and engaging the three primary schools in the Banner and Village Map has been a real success. We also plan to involve young people through community work experience—for example, a Duke of Edinburgh student currently working with FOldS. New links are being followed with a local mosque, a Romany artist, and a Romany author.

Involving local landowners is important for FOldS and this work. Most of our members are property owners and we now have partnerships with the County Council, District Council and National Park. These will provide introductions to local farmers who are major with whom we have only had limited contacts till now.

Activity Community banner

Permitted purpose¹ *“A sewn banner for Old Shoreham by the local community that stitches together a new story celebrating the area, people and stories”*

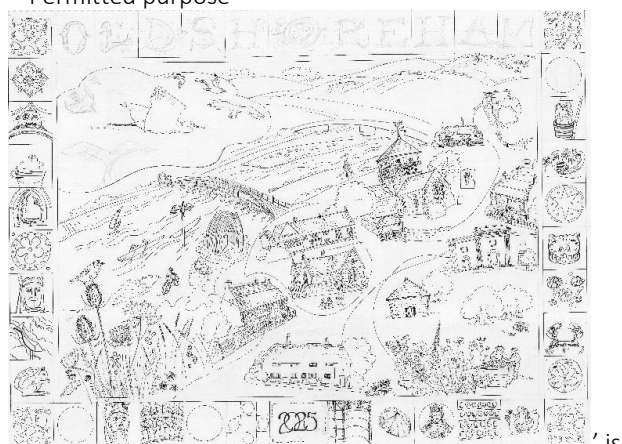
The banner project arose from an earlier project by community artist Wendy Jones and the Shoreham Creatives to create a community banner during COVID lockdown. This was used at the Old Shoreham Heritage Festival in September 2024 in a workshop to explore interest in a new banner for Old Shoreham.

The project centres on monthly meetings for inspiration and to plan and integrate work done by individuals and small groups. It involves 24 active members and extends to children of Swiss Gardens School and a local care home, New Elmcroft. The banner is structured around an initial template prepared by local artist Karolyn Mnich in consultation with the group, as an evolution of earlier work by FOldS to create a Heritage Trail map. The individual crafters and artists have taken elements from this template and are making their own interpretations and new pieces working with a range of fabric and stitching techniques including hand and machine stitching, fabric paints, printing and collage to find different ways to represent their experience of living in and/or visiting the Old Shoreham area.

The banner has now reached the first stages of assembly, and the group are looking for suitable premises to continue this phase of work, which is on target to be ready for the Marlipins exhibition in 2026. From the outset the banner has been designed both for permanent exhibition in St Nicolas church or elsewhere at the heart of the community and with an awareness of the potential for extension as a ‘modular’ tapestry if interest continues to grow through the work and the installation. There is also potential for replication in different formats and for different purposes (for example ‘kits’)

Grant funding is being used to meet the costs of venue hire, materials, reproduction and other workshop costs.

¹ Permitted purpose



Activity Old Shoreham Soundscape

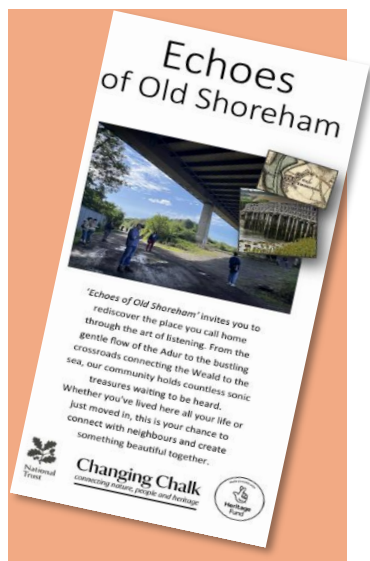
Permitted purpose *“Created through workshops and field outings documenting the river, downland, human and wildlife corridors and peri-urban settings of Old Shoreham.”*

Alongside the Banner Project, the Soundscape project, now called *Echoes of Old Shoreham*, was one of the first activities to begin, and recordings are complete. Facilitated by professional sound artist Simon James, twenty participants—mostly residents, including four with specialist sound expertise—explored, recorded, and reflected on the area’s unique sounds.

Five structured workshops progressed from listening walks to engaging with rivers, wildlife, the airport, and community spaces, deepening awareness of Old Shoreham’s acoustic history. Participants also collected recordings independently, shared them digitally, and reflected together. A WhatsApp group supported social interaction and documented how the project fostered community, creativity, and curiosity about local soundscapes.

An additional recording captured a FOLDS concert at St Nicolas Church—*A Celebration of Natural Voices*—featuring songs about rivers, waves, and birds, contributing to a layered soundscape of the team’s experience. Following the final July review workshop, recordings are being edited for a premiere at St Nicolas Church before installation in the Marlipins exhibition.

The process has been documented through poetry, prose, and photography. All artefacts are archived in cloud storage, licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0), and provide a resource for future projects.



Grant funding has covered recording equipment, accessories, and facilitator fees. The equipment will support follow-up soundscape events and the heritage group’s oral history work.

Activity The Virtual Heritage Trail

Permitted purpose *“A virtual heritage trail building on the published heritage trail guide of 18 landmarks across Old Shoreham, linking to online sources, photographs, recollections and artefacts, to be accessible to all”*

This is the work of the FOLDS Heritage and History group, meeting regularly since December with over 25 active members, all residents. Several are owners or custodians of listed properties. The work builds on a Heritage Trail with interpretation board and trail guide created for the Heritage Festival in September 2024.

The Virtual Heritage Trail aims to develop and collect richer histories of these and other heritage sites around Old Shoreham. This is being achieved through examination of official records, deeds, local histories, property inspections, newspaper archives, and oral histories. In some cases, well-documented histories already exist, particularly for the principal buildings – Adur Lodge, Buckingham House, and St Nicolas Church. For many of the vernacular buildings, much less is known.

The gathered information will provide short ‘thumbnail’ descriptions with links to web pages in the shorehambysea.com local history website. These will be indexed on a summary page; included in a revised heritage trail guide and linked to waypoints at individual sites. QR codes and web addresses will connect users to relevant pages, and a geolocated audio guide is being explored to complement printed and online resources. New photography and an initial video trail are adding further ways of representing this history.

The web pages will also link to detailed documents, photograph collections, and other online resources.

The work has developed gradually as team members familiarized one another with available resources and how to use them. The pace is now accelerating, with research on almost all sites assigned to individuals.

This is an open-ended project that will continue to evolve long after the funded phase. The templates for the 18 trail properties are suitable for almost any site in the area. A key purpose of the Marlipins exhibition will be to provide resources and structure for people to research their own properties. Researchers are also exploring the owners and tenants, creating links within and beyond the local area.

Grant funding has so far been used to buy maps and research documents, subscriptions and fees for archive access and printing. The work of the group will provide the content for the narrative and images that integrate all the elements of the Marlipins museum which will involve substantial printing and reproduction costs.

Activity The Nature map

Permitted purpose “Habitat survey and biodiversity audit conducted through a series of walks throughout the Old Shoreham Area with teams of 3-5 volunteer surveyors”

the **Nature Map** (or **BioMap project**) engages the community in mapping and monitoring local biodiversity and habitats. It builds ecological awareness and practical skills while creating a map of the area’s main habitats — woodland, farmland, and hedgerow — highlighting features such as water bodies and nest sites and assessing biodiversity.

The project is part of **Greening Old Shoreham**, a wider **FOLDs** initiative offering conservation volunteering to community groups and landowners to support nature recovery and environmental improvement locally.

Mapping is based on the **JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Survey** classification, and initial exploratory walks tested the suitability of this method for our purposes. Since then, six walks have been completed with eleven volunteer surveyors, involved, led by **Julia Widdows**.

The walks have covered diverse habitats, including a nature reserve, riverside paths, public rights of way, a civic park, an ancient churchyard, and two contrasting residential areas — one on the Downs’ slopes, the other in an established riverside neighbourhood.



A parallel **garden survey**, on paper and online, explores local attitudes to around “wilding” and supporting nature in domestic gardens.

Old Shoreham, covering nearly 2,000 acres, contains a mix of habitats: suburban gardens, saltmarsh, chalk downland, woodland, agricultural fields, ancient parkland, and equestrian areas. A comprehensive mapping exercise is unlikely to be completed during the funded phase, but findings will be

consolidated for the **May exhibition**. The project’s main contribution to the *Capturing Old Shoreham* installation will be highlighting local flora, fauna, and habitats for displays and maps.

in the longer term, the skills and data collected will provide a contemporary ecological baseline for comparison with historical studies and help prioritise areas for future conservation action. The data will gradually be incorporated into an existing map hosted by Greening Steyning which uses the same classification system to maintain a record of the adjacent civic areas of Steyning, Beeding and Bramber which are part of the same river and hill systems.

Grant funding has been used to purchase field guides, local maps and stationery items for field recordings.

Activity Village Map

Permitted purpose: “The Parish Map project involving local artists, schools and community groups.”

The Parish Map project – now referred to as the Village Map – has been the final activity to launch, as it needs to draw on findings and contacts from all the other activities. We organised a launch event as part of this year’s [Heritage Open Days](#) in September. Follow-up meetings with individuals and groups are ongoing, and a further drop-in session in mid-October shared an initial concept-drawing (below) with potential contributors.

These initial sessions have so far involved almost twenty participants of whom ten have already indicated they will make ongoing contributions. In addition, several local artists have already agreed that we can incorporate their original work in the map, including a group of artists with learning differences. Importantly all three local primary schools are preparing to contribute to the project.

The project is led by Karolyn Mnich and has evolved through earlier designs for an art show - *New Art for Old Shoreham* - the Old Shoreham Heritage Festival, Heritage Trail Guide, Community Fair and the related Banner Project. All of these are part of an iterative process that has already engaged artists, writers, photographers, videographers, teachers, citizen-historians and others in the community in creating representations of our area. Artwork will be completed by the end of the school term in December.

The Village Map will provide a collective representation of Old Shoreham as a centrepiece of the *Capturing Old Shoreham* installation and exhibition. It is intended both for interpretation boards and a springboard for further work by local creatives.

Grant funding has been used to meet the costs of art materials, workshop facilitation and initial artwork. Assembly of the final map will involve spending on graphic designer and pre-production time to incorporate all the elements into a single digital image.



Building Community

Overall, the Capturing Old Shoreham activities are ambitious and challenging. But the process has already become as valuable and important as any outputs or products and the availability of the Changing Chalk funding has been a key catalyst for this community building process

To give one example, the Heritage group which came together to assemble the Virtual Heritage Trail played a significant role in building a strong sense of community among its members. Beyond simply sharing historical information, the group has provided a supportive environment where people feel valued and encouraged. Many participants have carried out personal research—sometimes over decades—but previously lacked the confidence or platform to share their knowledge.

The group has empowered these individuals to take pride in their work, speak with authority, and feel that their contributions are meaningful. As a result, members are not only learning from one another, but are also developing new skills, connections, and confidence. Over time, this group is growing into a genuine community of researchers who collaborate, support and inspire each other. This sense of belonging and shared identity has been one of the most important outcomes of the project and demonstrates the wider social value of the funding.



Leia Sands and Clare Ablett at the Wordfest Sussex History Day

