



Ymddiriedolaeth  
Cwm Elan

Elan Valley  
Trust

Strategic Plan  
2019 – 2030





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# About the Elan Valley

**The Elan Estate** was established by Birmingham Corporation Water Department through Water Acts of 1892 and 1896. Today, water is supplied from six reservoirs situated in the Valleys of the Claerwen and Elan rivers. They provide a direct supply of up to 320 million litres a day to Severn Trent Water via a gravity fed aqueduct to Frankley Reservoir to the west of Birmingham. Additionally, water is released into the River Elan, a tributary of the River Wye, to help increase its flow during dry periods for subsequent abstractions at Lydbrook and Monmouth.

As a consequence, the Valley provides drinking water for up to 3 million customers of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and Severn Trent Water.

**The Welsh Water Elan Trust** (generally known as the Elan Valley Trust) was established in October 1989 on the privatisation of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. It is a Charitable Trust created to ensure that one of the largest water estate in England and Wales benefits people, both now and into the future.





# Objectives

## The Objectives of the Trust are:

- The preservation, maintenance and enhancement for the benefit of the public of the area of great natural beauty comprising the Elan Valley and its natural aspect and features (and its animal and plant life).
- The facilitation and encouragement of access to and the study of the Elan Valley (and its animal and plant life) by the general public.
- The provision at the Elan Valley or such part of it as shall be appropriate in the interest of social welfare and for the purpose of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the same are intended of facilities for physical recreation which shall be available to members of the public at large
- The facilitation and encouragement of the use of the whole or part of the Elan Valley for charitable purposes.



**The Trustees** have carefully considered how to take forward the principal assets and items administered, managed and influenced by the Trust over the coming years. Our aim is to set high standards, ensure we deliver these in a sustainable way, and to effectively deliver our Ambition.

*Our **AMBITION** for the Elan Valley Estate is for it to be internationally recognised for the sustainable benefits it provides to the public.  
We achieve this through:*

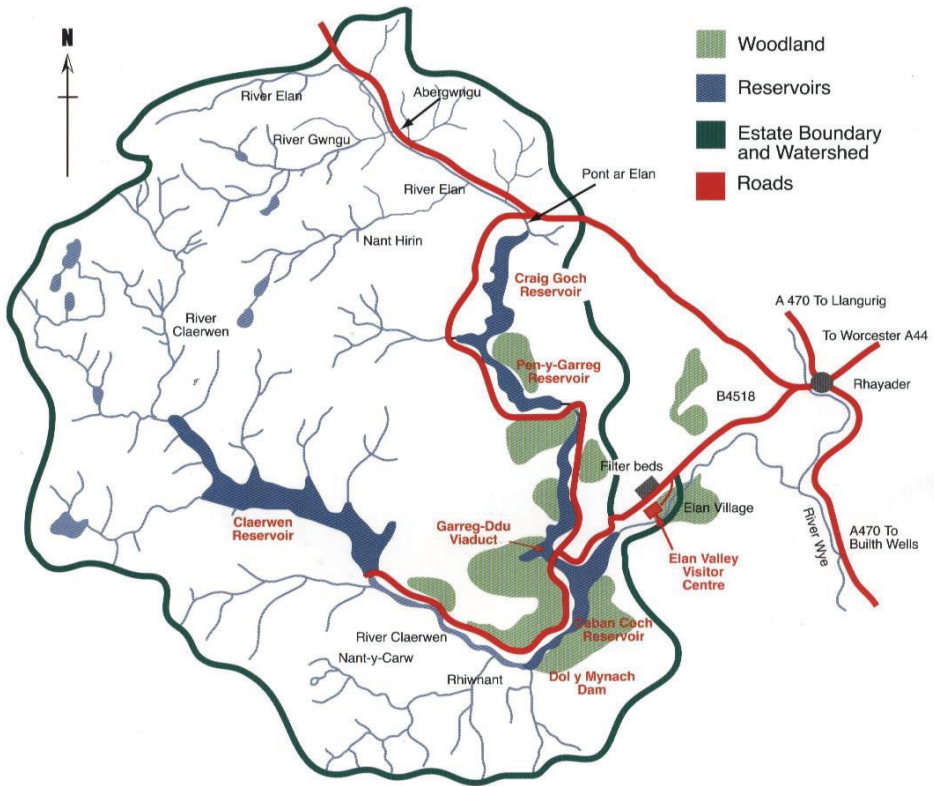
- being an exemplar of sustainable natural resource management for an upland water catchment;*
- the values and benefits that result from its heritage, the richness of its nature, and its thriving community life; and,*
- managing a place where people's health, wellbeing and understanding are improved by experiencing the Estate.*

**The Trust** will deliver its Objectives and Ambition across its key activities; namely Land and Farming, People, Property, Infrastructure, Finances and Environment and Heritage.

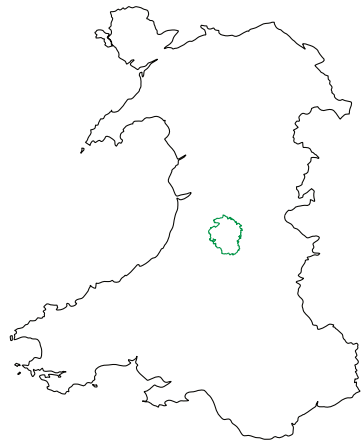
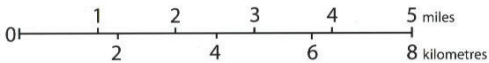
For each category we have considered the role the Trust has thought through, what we would like these aspects of the Estate to 'achieve' over the coming decades and then challenged the Ambition against known and expected impacts. These include items such as budgets and Policy which will influence delivery. In this way, we believe we have a robust outline strategy which delivers a challenging programme of outcomes for the next generation.



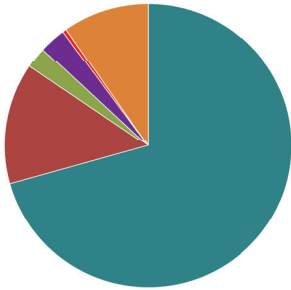
# The Elan Valley Estate



Scale:



# Facts and Figures for the 20,600 hectare (ha) Elan Valley



- **17,400 ha vested in Elan Valley Trust**
- **1,200 ha retained by DCWW**
- **2,000 ha Cwmduddwr Common**
- **14,550 ha tenanted farms (71%)**
- **2,850 ha EVT in-hand farms (14%)**
- **500 ha of woodland (2%)**
- **606 ha open water (3%)**



19 houses for Elan Valley residents, 23 farmhouses /farmsteads, 4 visitor cottages, a tearoom/B&B and 2 bothies.



28 tenanted farm holdings and 8 in-hand holdings run by the Trust. It is home to more than 20,000 sheep. 50 ponies and 100 cattle. All farms are in Glastir, the Welsh Government agri-environment scheme.



5 abandoned zinc and lead mines. Cwm Elan Mine is the best preserved mine site in Powys.



34 listed buildings  
39 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.



6 dams with a combined capacity of 99,499 million litres of water. Water supplied to over 3 million people and the released water generates 4.2 megawatts of electricity.



Open public access on foot to most of the Estates open hill land. 100km of designated rights of way including the medieval Monks Trod. The 13 km Elan Valley Trail uses the low gradient route of the old Elan Valley Railway.



12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Claerwen National Nature Reserve. Two Special Areas of Conservation covering 9,049 ha of bog and woodland. Elenydd-Mallaen Special Protection Area for Birds.



20 species of mammals and 21 'Red and Amber' list (declining) bird species that regularly breed on the Estate.



Species-rich neutral and acidic upland fringe hay meadows, including the Radnor Coronation Meadow. Nationally important mosses, liverworts, lichen, ferns and fungi and has 7 species of orchid.



The only International Dark Sky Park in Wales.



# Land and Farming



## The Estate

The core asset of the Trust is the **17,400 ha (43,000 acre) area of the Estate** vested in, and administered by, the Elan Valley Trust. It accounts for just under 1% of the area of Wales. The Trust is responsible for all of the original Estate bar the woodland and water assets which are managed by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW).

This is a unique and beautiful place and we are ambitious to not only meet our Objectives through managing the Estate as we have since our inception in 1989, but to extend and enhance our work. We believe that the policy context for this work is highly positive; our Objectives and Ambition align strongly with the Environment (Wales) Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act Goals. In addition, the principles of sustainable management of natural resources (SMNR) promoted by the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales provide a useful context for undertaking our work. SMNR covers the sustainable management of water quality and quantity, soils, carbon, biodiversity, landscape, community, health and wellbeing.

To deliver these we will adopt an ‘ecosystems approach’. This will mean that for any part of the Estate we will test its current management against a range of potential alternative management approaches. We will then assess what service(s) each approach delivers. A judgement can then be made based on cost and benefit, the Ambition of the Trust and our Objectives to see which management options provide the optimal balance of outcomes (ecosystem services). The approach will explicitly recognise and value the outcomes that have been provided by past management.

In line with the long-term perspective of the Trust we will, in addition, seek to understand the available management options in the context of the Trusts 999-year lease. We will make our decisions based on sound evidence. Key to this approach, is access to information and where we see gaps in our knowledge, we will commission work ourselves, or in partnership with others to fill these gaps. Scientific research and monitoring work will therefore be an important theme during the period of the strategy. This will ensure our land management decisions are well founded and achieve our Objectives and Ambition during a period when changing economic and climatic conditions are strongly anticipated.

## Tenanted Farm Land

Some 28 tenants manage estate land for farming purposes. These tenancies are typically based on the sheepwalks extant at the time of the Birmingham Water Corporation Act in 1892. For a number of tenants their tenancy agreement includes the requirement to live on the associated farmstead. For others the sheepwalk is managed from a holding off the Estate. Older tenancy types are Agricultural Holdings Act (AHA) agreements but more recently, tenancies have been created as Farm Business Tenancies.

When new opportunities to rent farms occur, the Trust will continue to strive to offer the tenancies to those with values that mirror the Objectives and Ambition of the Trust. The Trust will work with tenants to develop high nature value farming systems as a means of delivering our objectives. This could be achieved through the terms of the tenancy agreement and through enabling farming tenants to participate in agri-environment schemes. We are developing a future statement of our intent building upon Welsh and UK Government Policy.

Where possible, the Trust will seek to proactively work with tenants to deliver our Objectives and Ambition. The current Heritage Lottery Fund Elan Links project, along with the 2015 Elenydd Purple Moorgrass Nature Fund project are examples of this collaborative approach.

## Trust Managed Farm Land

2850 ha (14% of the Estate) is managed in-hand. This approach is adopted to ensure the credibility of the Trust as a knowledgeable manager of an upland estate, for economies of scale for staff and operations, to generate income and to provide first-hand experience of management of the Estate's key conservation sites (such as the National Nature Reserve).

The Trust recognises the different ways contributions are made to the local community and economy by farming land in-hand or by offering tenancies. The current preference for maintaining a stable approach to the proportion of the Estate managed in-hand is expected to continue. However, as tenancies change and opportunities arise the Trust will review the area under direct control to ensure it can deliver its stated Objectives and Ambition in the best way possible. Trust-owned and managed livestock focuses primarily on sheep and ponies. We expect to review our livestock policy to assess the best mix required to meet our Objectives and Ambition. We will also adapt our approach as we assess the impact of future changes to upland farming support.



**This is a key feature of the Estate**, though much of the existing woodland is retained and managed by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (450 ha, 90% of the total estate woodlands). The Trust is, however, looking to the Heritage Lottery Fund project: “Improving our Woodlands”, to deliver an Estate-wide long-term woodland management plan to steer our thinking for new woodland cover. This will set an aspiration to improve the special landscape character of Elan’s woodland through sustainable management practices. It will also direct us to substantially increase the broadleaf mix to ensure a prosperous native woodland. This will include an expansion of Fridd<sup>2</sup> woodland where co-operation with partners, such as Coed Cymru, has already trialled planting of more mature saplings to help establish Fridd woodland to suppress bracken.

## Land Beyond the Boundary of the Original Estate

Since the creation of the Trust, opportunities have occurred to extend the land holding around the edges of the original estate. This has been examined and sought where ownership of the land allows the Trust to better deliver its objectives. As a consequence the Trust has acquired influence over an additional 2,000 ha of land (Cwmduddwr Common).

On this land, the Trust aims to adopt a consistent management approach that delivers the same objectives as the core Estate. We do not currently anticipate extending land ownership further, although Trustees are aware that the addition of relatively small areas of lower ground may improve the efficiency of the Trust’s farming operation. This option will be examined in the coming years if opportunities arise.

In all other cases, the Trust will look to work with neighbouring land managers where this can benefit the Trust’s objectives on the Estate. We will also look to support others more widely where our land management and other experience can promote positive outcomes for people and nature. We will only consider additional land purchase where our influence is not deemed sufficient to achieve the outcomes we see as necessary and if the opportunity is deemed appropriate.

<sup>2</sup>Hill side land between fields and open moorland



# People



## Farming and Residential Tenants

The social welfare and preservation duties of the Trust are a cornerstone of our Objectives. This could not be delivered without proper reflection on both our **farming and residential tenants**. The Trust aspires to be a fair and engaged landlord who carefully considers the wellbeing of its tenants and residents. The Trust will ensure properties are maintained in good condition with, where practicable, a full range of modern utilities (see Section 4 on Infrastructure below). Through delivering its Objectives, the Trust will seek to maintain and, where possible, enhance the economic wealth of the area to benefit those living here.

## Trustees

The Trust will ensure that the experience and knowledge of Trustees properly reflects the Trust's needs. The original Trust Deed identifies only certain bodies from which Trustees can be appointed. Given the passage of time and changes to many of the bodies from which Trustees can be appointed, this aspect is now more challenging. It has therefore been agreed that a Sole Corporate Trustee; **Elan Valley Limited**, be utilised as Trustee to Elan Valley Trust. This alteration allows better flexibility in appointing Directors of Elan Valley Ltd, the Trustee, to best suit the future needs and expertise of the Trust. It is hoped that this change will be implemented by Spring 2019, with existing Trustees being the first Directors. Where skill gaps are identified the Trust will then be better placed to fill these.

## Staff

The Trust will be a fair and trusted employer for its **Staff**. This will be evidenced through its low turn-over and complaints records, along with its standards of Health and Safety, competitive terms and conditions and duty of care. The Trust sub-contracts some work on the Estate and will continue to do so where this ensures value for money. The Trust cannot work in isolation and will endeavour to develop strong **Partnerships** with other groups and individuals to help deliver our ambition. It will similarly take a positive approach to create effective relationships with local **Stakeholders**.

## Neighbours

The Trust will be a **good neighbour**. It will attempt to purchase services and products locally to ensure it supports and encourages the local economy. It will continue to use a prompt payments approach. It will develop strong relationships with its neighbouring land holdings, with non-government organisations and the Water Companies who operate in the Valley. It will work through groups, such as the Wales Environment Link, to play its part in the management of this part of Wales, but also help others elsewhere to promote sustainable management.

## Visitors

The Elan Valley has a long history of **welcoming visitors**. The Trust believes there are many opportunities to build on this legacy to provide improved health, wellbeing, enjoyment and educational outcomes for people. We also recognise the benefits this can deliver for the local economy through increased visitor numbers and spend.

To assist this aspiration, the Trust, working as the lead partner of the Elan Links Partnership, has developed an **Access and Recreation Plan**. This aims to help visitors and locals alike to make the most of the Estate while conserving the things that make the Elan Valley special. The Plan reviews the current access and recreation provision on the Estate and proposes a number of enhancements. These cover improved facilities, more opportunities for progression dependent on skill and fitness levels, new ways of gaining access, enhanced interpretation of our heritage, bespoke support for individuals and groups with particular access challenges and improved promotion so that we are more widely recognised nationally and internationally. The Trust will play a full part in implementing this Plan and will monitor its progress.

One such partnership supported by the Trust is with the Cambrian Mountains Initiative. This Initiative aims to promote sustainable development of the area through securing the natural and cultural heritage of the Cambrian Mountains and building the locality as a tourist destination rather than a through-route from the Brecon Beacons to Snowdonia.

## Benefits of Sound Management of the Estate

The **services provided** by land managed by the Trust impacts far beyond the boundary of the Elan Estate. For example, people in the West Midlands, Birmingham, Herefordshire, the Forest of Dean and South-East Wales all benefit from an ample clean water supply. However, it is likely that very few ever contemplate the benefit they gain as a consequence of the sound management undertaken by the Trust and their tenants on the Estate. To take steps to increase this link the Trust will engage with the benefitting communities to raise awareness and appreciation of the Estates natural environment and landscape. By so doing, it will promote and highlight the importance of good management of the Estate and the need for conserving our natural environment and landscape. The Trust will also ensure that our work to maintain and enhance the natural assets of the Estate is more widely recognised.

# Property



## Houses

The houses of Elan Village and the many outlying properties have a particular provenance and character derived from their style and age. Many were built by the City of Birmingham Corporation alongside the dam developments in the early 20th Century and so are an intrinsic part and feel of the area. Previously, when opportunities to purchase properties on the Estate presented themselves, the Trust has often done so. Today, the Trust portfolio includes 19 houses providing a range of rented accommodation. These properties not only meet a local need but also help preserve and maintain the look and feel of the Estate. The Trust will regularly review its housing provision to ensure it can help meet reasonable local demand for rented accommodation and assist in maintaining the provenance of the local built environment. However, the Trust has no current plan to increase its housing portfolio.

## Farms

The magnificent landscape of the Estate owes much to the generations of farmers that have lived and worked here. The future management of the Estate will undoubtedly rely on the continued occupation of the **farmsteads**. The Trust endeavours to ensure that both the farmhouses and the outbuildings continue to be fit-for-purpose and meet modern agricultural needs and standards while also maintaining the local vernacular.

## Visitor Accommodation

Encouraging access to the Estate requires adequate **Short-Term Accommodation**. Since there are a range of local providers of holiday accommodation the Trust has a policy of pursuing a complementary and need-led approach to short-term accommodation provision. Currently, the Trust maintains four holiday rental properties, a Bed & Breakfast business and two mountain bothies.



## Holiday Accommodation

Currently the occupancy rates of the Trust's holiday accommodation **meets or exceeds expected levels**. This suggests there is further untapped demand for accommodation on the Estate. We will work with other providers to enhance the overall offer in the area and explore opportunities as trends in the holiday market change. In addition, we will assess the existing and potential Estate housing to identify opportunities for additional capacity. We are also keen to support proposals from tenants wishing to diversify into tourism provision.

Through the Elan Links Partnership we have already identified the need to provide low-cost group accommodation suitable for educational visits and groups of recreational users. In response we have earmarked a currently unoccupied farmstead for potential development to meet this need.

## Disused Buildings

There are some **buildings on the estate** that are unoccupied or have no current function. As a minimum the Trust will endeavour to ensure these buildings do not deteriorate. Where improvements could bring these buildings into use, the Trust will actively investigate options. This will include assessing whether any of the buildings could fill gaps in accommodation provision (long or short-term) or for heritage and interpretation purposes. For example, the future of the Dam Builders Hut is being considered for its heritage value. The Trust proposes to develop a plan for all such derelict buildings and sites within its lease.

## Accommodation Standards

The **condition and standard of all properties and sites on the Estate** is important both to reflect the high quality landscape and for the well-being of visitors and residents alike. A review of all Trust properties has been undertaken to identify their condition. The review includes potential risks such as safe fuel containment. The Trust will prepare a programme of works to ensure all sites, as a minimum, meet Welsh Government standards. These standards aspire to ensure that in Wales everyone will live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community by 2020<sup>3</sup>. We also want to ensure that all properties are resource efficient and will, when opportunity arises, invest in enhancing their energy and natural resource footprint.

<sup>3</sup>The Welsh Housing Quality Standards – July 2008



# Infrastructure



## Access

Access to the Valley and the much larger area of the Estate relies on well-maintained access infrastructure. To achieve many of the objectives of the Trust we must ensure that essential assets, other than those managed by Ceredigion or Powys County Council, are maintained at an adequate level. This includes vehicle, bridle, cycle and pedestrian access, and bridges; many of which are in remote and sensitive areas.

Where required, we will work with neighbours and partners to maintain and open routes. This includes sections which lie off the Estate, but are key to ensuring visitors are able to visit. Much of our work will be guided by the Access & Recreation Plan. The maintenance and improvement of some assets remain prohibitively costly. In such circumstances, for example, the Suspension bridge in the Elan Village, the Trust will maintain a cost-effective alternative such as the Bailey bridge. The Trust will prepare long-term assessments of these assets and plan out how it will repair or replace them in the most cost effective and acceptable way.

## Illegal and Damaging Access

Many of the **remoter access assets**, such as bridle ways, paths and open country, are at risk from illegal access by off-road motor vehicles. The Trust will work with partners and Local Authorities to prevent illegal use through discussion and co-ordination with legal off-rovers, clear information and firm compliance measures. This approach will help ensure that the negative impact of this activity is minimised, while enabling legal off-rovers to enjoy this pastime sustainably on the by-ways and unclassified roads on the Estate where legal use is permitted.

## Access to Utilities

One of the key characteristics of the Estate is its remoteness; but this presents many challenges. Today, large parts of the Estate have limited or no **mobile phone signal** and many properties have no **mains electricity**. The Trust wants to ensure those living on or visiting the Estate have access to a full **suite of utilities**. Where connection to standard utilities is cost effective, the Trust will work with the utility provider to deliver these services. It will also push Government and other statutory bodies for support where this is needed to ensure adequate services. The Trust will seek to develop opportunities to expand the provision of mains electricity and where this is not possible, will investigate alternatives such as viable renewables. On occasion, such as the Claerwen Hydroelectric Power scheme currently being pursued by the Trust, the development of larger scale schemes may open up options for mains electricity to properties currently remote from a mains connection.

## Renewable Energy

With regard to renewables, the Estate is blessed with many natural resources, such as solar, wind and hydropower. This presents the Estate and its residents with **‘renewable’ energy** opportunities. This is particularly important given the lack of grid-delivered electrical and gas services. Hydropower production is already a feature at all of the dam assets in the Elan and Claerwen valleys, and some farms have installed solar panels, small wind turbines and biomass boilers for their own use. The Estate wants to encourage further uptake, including possible development of ‘Generating Hubs’, where a single scheme can provide a power source for more than one household.

Where possible, the Estate will commission renewable energy schemes where they can provide reliable supplies to unconnected properties. This will reduce the reliance on diesel generators and help reduce the carbon footprint of the Estate. The Trust will also support tenants and other residents to further reduce their carbon footprint and cut their overall energy needs.

Despite the proliferation of wind and solar farms across Wales, the Trust believes similar major developments on the Estate would greatly detract from the key natural beauty of the area. As a consequence, the Trust does not support any of these developments on the Estate.



# Financing



## Income

The **Funding** required to deliver the Objectives and Ambition of the Charity is largely dependent upon farming and land management activities. This makes it vulnerable to the twin vagaries of prevailing land management support payments and commodity prices. For this reason the Trust has taken prudent steps to ensure a robust financial position. Trustees believe that the long-term nature of the Trust's remit and the vulnerability of the Trust's income streams make the maintenance of a sustainable level of reserves highly desirable.

## Investments

Like most organisations, the Trust looks to the financial markets to secure **its investments** and this will continue. Over the years, the Trust has created a balance between a savings portfolio and investment in the Estate; for example, through property ownership. However, Trustees are keen to see further capital invested to enhance the sustainable future of the Estate. This should improve the well-being of the Estate and those living and working here as well as providing new and alternative income streams for the future.

## Risk and Liability

Trustees have set themselves a near-term goal of reviewing and developing its Reserves Policy through a better understanding of the balance of **financial risk and liability for the Estate**. This will establish what reserves the Trust needs to maintain whilst providing clarity on what funds are available for its core charitable objectives. Undertaking this process will enable the Trust to operate efficiently whilst having sufficient available funds to invest on the Estate. This will set out a base line fund to accommodate operating costs, sufficient funds to invest in the Estate and provision for infrequent major projects to replace ageing expensive assets. Through this work the Trust will enhance its current openness on the finances of the Estate and better fulfil its charitable Objectives and Ambition over the long-term.



## Alternative Income Generation.

The Trust believes that for long term sustainability the majority of its activities should be self-funding in the long term. Some exceptions will occur where an objective is unable to generate an income or the return generated falls below the cost. In such cases, the Trust must still ensure that such expenditure does not undermine the long term stability of the Estate. In considering any investment on the Estate, a thorough long-term financial model will be developed for each proposal so that the true impact of the investment can be ascertained before it is commissioned. This will include an assessment of the projects alignment to the principle of sustainable management of natural resources.

## Profit

The Trust is a **not-for-profit organisation**. It only seeks sufficient income to cover its long term operating costs and liabilities. There are, from time to time, “windfall” incomes as a result of payments for use of the Estate. Examples include: income from film locations and military exercises. Each year, we invite local groups to outline any needs they have and with collaboration of Trustees and Tenants we allocate these funds. In recent years, this has helped local school visits to the Estate, supported local care in the community groups and bolstered projects in Rhayader and Cwmystwyth. The Trust will continue this approach; encouraging groups to contact the Trust with their ideas and annually reviewing the allocation of funds.

## Working with Partners

**Partnership opportunities** provide the chance to spread costs and deliver more than we are able to achieve alone. The Trust will proactively develop opportunities either in support or as lead partner that help achieve its Objectives and Ambition. A good recent example is the funding provided through the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Elan Links Partnership. This partnership includes four key partners working alongside the Trust: Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Natural Resources Wales, CARAD (Community Arts Rhayader and District) and Tir Coed. Here, around £1 million of investment by the Trust will draw down an additional £2.5 million over the course of five years. In the future, the Trust, through the ‘Payment for Ecosystem Services’ approach, will seek to work with others to develop markets where those that benefit from the ‘services’ provided by the Estate contribute towards them, provided by the Estate contribute towards them.



# Environment and Heritage



## Nature

The **natural assets** of the Estate are very rich with many rare species of animals, plants and fungi as well as six recognised different types of habitat. Large areas of the Estate are designated as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and as National Nature Reserves and Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites. Much of the Estate is also legally protected through designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Nature on the Estate is important for its own sake, for maintaining a reliable supply of clean water and for providing a range of economic and other benefits for people, including a sense of wonder and wellbeing. In recognition of this, and through meeting Trust objectives, we have developed and evolved the **Elan Biodiversity Action Plan**. This identifies how we maintain and enhance the natural assets of the Estate and meet our objectives through land management. The Trust is implementing this plan and monitoring and reporting on its success. In addition, we will promote understanding of our natural life through education and research, and will proactively seek to ensure that people benefit economically (for example, through eco-tourism), physically and psychologically from it.

## Culture and Heritage

The Estate's **cultural, historic and pre-historic heritage** is significant. For example, there are over 39 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 34 Listed Buildings on the Estate. The history of the Estate includes how people have moved across, lived and worked in the Elan Valley during the last five millennia. Working through the Elan Links Partnership we have commissioned a heritage-at-risk survey and now have a prioritised action plan to conserve sites and features that are most at risk. We will ensure this action plan is progressed and we will review the need for further surveys at regular intervals.

Through the Elan Links Partnership, we are working with CARAD / Rhayader Museum to ensure memories and historic Estate documents and artefacts are conserved, archived and made accessible for the future. We have also developed a plan to interpret our heritage to a wider audience.

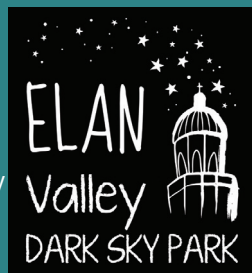
Cultural links between the Estate and communities 'along the pipeline' who benefit from the water supplies from the Elan Valley towards Birmingham are also important. The Trust has begun to investigate and build on this within the Elan Links project.

## Landscape

**Landscape and scenery** are a defining asset of the Estate which the Trust wants to share and promote. Working through the Elan Links Partnership, we have recently commissioned a Landscape Character Action Plan (LCAP) to support this work. By implementing this plan we will enhance and protect the area through sensitive and careful management. Issues such as sensitive development of recreational and access opportunities are considered in the Access and Recreation Plan and are informed by the LCAP.

## Dark Skies

The remote and unspoilt nature of the Estate has meant few sources of man-made light pollution. Taking advantage of this, the Trust has supported the development of the internationally designated **Elan Valley Dark Sky Park**. We will continue to minimise light pollution and invest in properties, and other assets, to reduce current and possible issues. We will work closely with partner organisations to promote the Park so that the local community and visitors can benefit from the clear unpolluted skies of the Estate. The Trust will develop appropriate sites within the Estate so that the full benefit of the Dark Skies status can be experienced by residents and visitors alike. We are also considering how our visitor accommodation can better utilise and take advantage of the International Dark Sky Park designation.



## Natural Assets and Services

**Natural Assets, such as clean air, water, soils and geology** are all key features for the Estate. The Trust will manage the Estate sensitively and proactively to ensure that water and soil resources are protected and natural drainage is maintained. Similarly, the impact of land management and other catchment activities will continue to be managed and monitored to ensure we reduce the risk of any deterioration in water quality.

For example:

- we will work with DCWW, Severn Trent Water and Natural Resources Wales to develop a plan to ensure water quality and water resources are sustainably managed across the Estate;
- we will promote management of our moorlands so that water is retained in the uplands to reduce downstream flood risk and maintain stream flows at times of low rainfall;
- all properties on the Estate without mains sewerage facilities will have a well-designed and operated treatment system.

We will also take steps to ensure that our activities do not contribute to any water bodies failing to meet the standards required of it through the Water Framework Directive. We will work with partners to enhance our rivers, reservoirs and wetlands and help mitigate the impact that the reservoirs cause; for example through working with the Wye and Usk Foundation to re-introduce gravels into the River Elan below Caban Coch dam to promote salmon and trout spawning.

## Future Pressures on the Environment

The impact of issues such as a changing climate, are now well accepted. For the Estate this could see stormier weather, extended drier and warmer periods and wetter winters. The Estate is likely to see changes such as increased slope instability, soil erosion, increased drought, changes in grazing conditions, higher risk of wild fires and introduction of new non-native species and diseases.

The Trust will use the evidence at its disposal and commission work where necessary, to allow us to employ the best management approaches to reduce these risks. This will include steps to hold water in the uplands, promote mitigation measures such as tree planting and soil protection and working with partners and residents to reduce the risk of impacts such as fires and the spread of invasive non-native species. Measures to reduce the carbon footprint within the Estate outlined earlier are also part of the Estate's approach.





# Our Plans



## Business Plans

The Trust will set out the detail of our Strategy in a Business Plan that identifies the detailed goals and how we will achieve them. Our success will be monitored annually. Here, we will consider how well we have progressed and what may need to change to keep us on track. As well as the annual review of our Ambition, we propose to refresh our strategic view every 5 years.

## Engaging with our Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan will be shared with partners, stakeholders and the wider public to ensure our Objectives and Ambition for the period are well known. We welcome your views and input on this document and encourage you to feed these back to us for consideration.

This can be done through contacting us on: **01597 810449** or via email: [info@elanvalleytrust.org](mailto:info@elanvalleytrust.org).

**Your feedback will help us to develop our work so that we can truly reflect the aspirations of all those who value the Elan Valley.**



**Elan Valley Trust, Elan Estate Office, Elan Village, Rhayader, Powys LD6 5HP.  
Website: [www.elanvalley.org.uk](http://www.elanvalley.org.uk)**



Produced by

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Elan Valley  
Trust