

About HHO and the Project

Q: What is Hengistbury Head Outdoors (HHO)?

HHO is a community-led charitable Community Benefit Society set up to save, restore and run the former Hengistbury Head Outdoor Education Centre. Our goal is to create a thriving, inclusive hub for outdoor education, wellbeing and community activities in one of the UK's most stunning natural settings.

Q: Why are you raising money through community shares?

We have secured a 99-year lease on the site and over £600,000 in grant funding. To unlock this grant and complete vital renovations, we need to raise additional match funding. Community Shares give local people and supporters the chance to own a stake in the project and help bring the centre back to life.

Q: What will the money be used for?

Funds raised will support essential repairs and improvements: rebuilding slipways, repairing the main building, adding accessible facilities, improving energy efficiency, and creating spaces for education, wellbeing and land-based activities. Phase 1 works are due to finish by late 2025, with Phase 2 (equipment, solar panels, wildlife pond, outdoor activity areas) by spring 2026.

About Community Shares

Q: What are Community Shares?

They are a form of withdrawable share capital unique to co-operative and community benefit societies. Unlike company shares, they can't be traded or sold, but they can be withdrawn (with Board consent). Your main return is social — helping secure a long-term community asset. Financial returns are modest and depend on the society's performance.

Q: How much can I invest?

- Minimum investment: £250
- Maximum investment: £30,000 (or 10% of total share capital, whichever is lower).

Q: Who can apply?

Anyone over 16 can apply. Associations, companies or community groups can also apply, nominating a representative.

Risks, Returns and Rights

Q: Is my money at risk?

Yes. Like any investment, your money is at risk. Community shares are not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme or the Financial Ombudsman. You could lose some or all of your investment if HHO faces financial difficulties.

Q: Will I get interest on my investment?

The Society aims to pay interest of up to 3% per year from year 3 onwards, but only if finances allow. Interest cannot be guaranteed and will only be paid when sustainable.

Q: Can I withdraw my shares?

Yes, after year 5, subject to Board approval and the Society's financial position. Withdrawals are expected to start at around 2% of total shareholding per year.

Q: What happens if I die?

You can nominate someone to inherit up to £5,000 of your shares. Above this, the process must follow probate rules. The Board must approve any new member inheriting shares.

Q: Do shares go up in value?

No. Shares are always valued at their original £10 each, though their value can be reduced if the Society's liabilities exceed its assets.

Q: Do I get voting rights?

Yes. All members, regardless of investment size, have one vote on key decisions at General Meetings. This ensures democratic control.

Practicalities

Q: When does the share offer run?

- Opens: 4th October 2025
- Closes: 10th January 2026 (may be extended up to 12 months).

Q: What happens if the minimum target isn't reached?

If less than £100,000 is raised by the closing date (or extended deadline), and no alternative funds are secured, the offer will be withdrawn and all money returned.

Q: How do I apply?

- Download the application form from hengistbury.org/share-offer
- Return by post or hand delivery, with payment by bank transfer or cheque.

Q: How will my money be held before shares are issued?

It will be kept in a separate account, not mixed with day-to-day funds, until the Board approves your application after the offer closes.

Wider Impact

Q: What's the benefit for the community?

Investing helps secure the long-term future of a much-loved centre, providing outdoor education, water and land-based activities, wellbeing programmes, volunteer opportunities, and improved access for all ages and abilities.

Q: How is HHO governed?

HHO is a Community Benefit Society with charitable status, run democratically by its members. It has an elected Board of Directors, supported by advisors, and is bound by an asset lock ensuring assets are used only for community benefit.