



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 9 February 2010	<u>Item</u> 7
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LEADER IN THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS UPDATE

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Summary

This paper presents an update on the progress of the Shropshire Hills LEADER programme.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note progress and offer comments.

Background

1. The Shropshire Hills LEADER funding programme has issued its first Funding Contracts to successful applicants. The Contracts, approved by Shropshire Council's Legal Team, have been presented to the approved applicants for their consideration. Once the contracts have been signed projects can begin to draw down LEADER funding.
2. The Shropshire Hills LEADER programme has had approval that the preliminary claim, that covers the running costs of the programme, has now been paid. A further claim will be presented for payment at the end of January.
3. The LEADER Coordinator attends monthly regional update meetings and training sessions at Regeneration West Midlands. These monthly meetings are organised by Advantage West Midlands. A good working relationship is being developed with the other seven LEADER Local Action Groups throughout the West Midlands.
4. The LEADER Coordinator has engaged with 26 organisations that are at different stages of the LEADER process. There remains a strong interest in LEADER funding throughout the Shropshire Hills area. A Business Plan that explains the mechanics of LEADER and sets out the strategic aims and objectives for a twelve month period will be presented for the new Financial Year. This Plan will be made available to members. In conjunction with the Local Development Strategy the plan will assist the LEADER Approvals Panel in their task of awarding grants to applicants.
5. The Approvals Panel met on Thursday 17th December 2009 and approved one project, outlined in Appendix 1.
6. The following Expression of Interest Forms have been received. Applicants are working with the LEADER Co-ordinator to develop to full application:
 - Soil Association - School Farmers Markets
 - Caring For God's Acre – Sacred spaces through the ages

- Wistanstow Village Hall – Annexe refurbishment
 - Bishop’s Castle Heritage Centre – Chronicles of the Shropshire Hills
 - Craven Arms Community Centre – Craven Arms community events project
 - Clun Forest Broadband group – Chapel Lawn & Newcastle Community Broadband
 - Shropshire Council Outdoor Recreation Service – The Shropshire Way – developing Much Wenlock as a hub for discovering West Shropshire
7. The LEADER Coordinator is working with the following organisations to develop their LEADER Expression of Interest forms:
- Land, Life and Livelihoods
 - Shropshire Wildlife Trust
 - Cleobury Mortimer Parish Hall
8. Members of the Partnership, which is formally the LEADER Local Action Group, are welcome to see applications or Expressions of Interest for any of the above projects. Pete Banford can supply copies of these on request.

<p>List of Background Papers LEADER in the Shropshire Hills Local Development Strategy and Business Plan, available at http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/leader/Leader.htm.</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>
<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal The LEADER Appraisals and Approvals Panels have been involved with the projects.</p>
<p>Appendices Appendix 1 Projects approved on 17 December 2009</p>

Appendix 1 Projects approved on 17 December 2009

Name of Applicant	Project Title	Level of Funding	RDPE Measure	Project Description
Hopton Castle Preservation Trust	Hopton Castle - restoration and interpretation	£30,000	323	<p>The project will transform Hopton Castle from a dangerous inaccessible ruin into a safeguarded gem of Shropshire's history, open to the public with quality interpretation.</p> <p>The desired outcome will be that one of Shropshire's most important buildings has been saved for future generations, and will create a valuable addition to the tourism offer in South Shropshire.</p> <p>It will make a very positive difference to the local community who have feared the gradual crumbling away of the castle for many years and will be proud of their success in saving it. It will also make a difference to tourists who will be able to visit it, students who will be able to study its history more easily and other local providers of services such as tearooms and accommodation, as there will be more visitors in the area.</p>