



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 22 June 2010	<u>Item</u> 4
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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 AONB Partnership LEADER Approvals Panel appointed a new Chair in March 2010. The new Chair, who has taken over from Glynn Barratt, is Alison Caffyn, who is also a Vice Chair of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.
2. The Shropshire Hills LEADER funding programme has approved £484,866 of the £1million available budget for grants. This has attracted £359,933 of match funding making a total project investment of £844,799.
3. The Shropshire Hills LEADER programme has had confirmation from Advantage West Midlands that the preliminary claim, and a further three claims that cover the running costs of the programme, have now been paid. The Shropshire Hills LEADER Programme has currently drawn down £56,623.41 of Management and Administration costs for running the programme.
4. The LEADER Coordinator continues to attend the regional update meetings and training sessions at Regeneration West Midlands. These monthly meetings are organised by Advantage West Midlands. The recently approved Soil Association application concerning School Farmers Markets (please find the details included in Appendix 1) gave a presentation at the June Network meeting. Members will recall in 2009 – 2010 that the Soil Association secured a Sustainable Development Fund grant to pilot four school farmers markets in the Shropshire Hills AONB. This project has now been developed further through the Shropshire Hills LEADER area and will hopefully become regional as the other West Midlands LEADER Local Action Groups begin to support the project.
5. Representatives from Advantage West Midlands carried out an audit on the four initial LEADER project claims on Tuesday 4 May 2010. The LEADER Coordinator and Neil Stuart, Principal Accountant for the Corporate Finance Team at Shirehall, provided the necessary information and explained the Shropshire Hills LEADER claims process.

Advantage West Midlands were satisfied with the claims and the procedures that have been adopted.

6. The Approvals Panel met on 18 March 2010 and approved six projects and again on the 13 May 2010 and approved two projects, outlined in Appendix 1.
7. In addition the following Expression of Interest Forms have been received. Applicants are working with the LEADER Co-ordinator to develop to full application:
 - HMM Arts Ltd (The Hive Music and Media Centre) – Youthful Landscapes
 - Scrappies – Rural Delivery Services
8. The LEADER Coordinator is working with the following organisations to develop their LEADER Expression of Interest forms:
 - Church Stretton Town Council
 - Care Farming West Midlands
 - Small Woods Association

Development of the Shropshire Hills Farming Project is also well under way, led by the AONB Team, and an Expression of Interest will be submitted by the end of the month.

9. 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.

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 .
Human Rights Act Appraisal
The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environmental Appraisal
The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.
Risk Management Appraisal
Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
Community / Consultations Appraisal
The LEADER Appraisals and Approvals Panels have been involved with the projects.
Appendices
Appendix 1 Projects approved on 18 March 2010
Appendix 2 Projects approved on 13 May 2010

Appendix 1

Projects approved on 18 March 2010

Name of Applicant	Project Title	Level of Funding	RDPE Measure	Project Description
Caring for God's Acre	Sacred Spaces through the ages	£70,000	322	<p>The project will provide opportunities that inspire and engage people in the sacred spaces (natural, historical and spiritual) of the Shropshire Hills, which will help develop a 'sense of place' and a deeper connection with the landscape in which they live.</p> <p>Via management plans, interpretation, increased practical management, increased community awareness and engagement, sites will be better understood, valued and conserved.</p>
Soil Association	School Farmers' Markets	£40,000	321	<p>The aim of the project is to revitalise local food communities based around the hubs of schools in disadvantaged areas, and, in so doing, generate educational, social and economic benefits to the area.</p> <p>The following measures of success will be monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting target number of schools taking part/ how many additional schools initiate a project. • Number of local producers (and some further afield) recruited to sell at the markets • Educational work conducted within the schools to promote and support the markets and associated learning and awareness amongst pupils • Number of people attending the training sessions • Number of people from the community attending the markets

Name of Applicant	Project Title	Level of Funding	RDPE Measure	Project Description
Bishop's Castle Heritage Centre	Chronicles of our Shropshire Hills	£44,139	323	<p>Gleanings from the past – Looking to the future</p> <p>The project will gather and share information about history and heritage on parishes within the AONB area. The project comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting Parish Champions to help identify local cultural heritage material to develop Parish Profiles • Publishing research projects led by local demand and including the 1901 project, using the 1901 census in Bishop's Castle as a springboard • Piloting a scheme to distribute archive boxes in Bishop's Castle as a repository for past and current material on houses and their occupants • Digitising existing analogue reminiscence tapes produced by the RECALL group and transcribing selected tapes
Shropshire Council	Developing Much Wenlock as hub for discovering East Shropshire	£30,000	321	<p>This project will make Much Wenlock a hub for discovering west Shropshire on foot. It will deliver a complete "walking package" for the benefit of the local community, businesses and visitors to the area.</p> <p>The project will deliver a number of physical improvements to local walking routes, removing styles for easier gated access, better signposting and waymarking and where necessary improvements to the footpath surfaces. A number of walking literature and interpretative materials will also be created to promote Much Wenlock and its surrounds.</p>

Name of Applicant	Project Title	Level of Funding	RDPE Measure	Project Description
Light Foot Enterprises	Farm Carbon	£50,000	321	<p>This project will set the Shropshire Hills on a low carbon farming pathway ahead of the rest of the UK. It will audit farm carbon on 160 farms over two years whilst also providing learning and disseminating opportunities through demonstration low carbon farms and bringing together a farmer based Advisory Body on carbon.</p> <p>The project will measure its success by achieving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genuine and long-term carbon cuts in a number of commercial farms based on factual surveys of real carbon flows. Our resurveys will provide empirical evidence. 2. An understanding of, and an ability to influence, carbon flows in the agricultural system. From this to be better able to develop and deploy the necessary policies and programmes for sustainable farming. 3. A significantly enhanced awareness amongst farmers and the farming sector regarding the role of carbon in agriculture and an understanding of how to manage it through farming practices.
Clun Forest Community Broadband Group	Clun Forest Community Broadband	£15,000 (Applicant has not accepted offer to date)	321	<p>This project will avoid further deterioration of local services to the isolated rural communities around Chapel Lawn and Newcastle by taking over and running a wireless broadband service which would otherwise be removed. This will ensure a fast, reliable broadband connection to communities that otherwise would have no access to this resource, contributing to the well being of users through better access to this vital modern day service. The method of delivery will foster community spirit and facilitate a greater amount of local enterprise.</p>

Appendix 2 Projects approved on 13 May 2010

Name of Applicant	Project Title	Level of Funding	RDPE Measure	Project Description
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	Discover Local	£39,277	321	<p>Discover Local will encourage local people, visitors and businesses to use local food, drink and medicinal products that in themselves help conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills- whether those are commercial or 'free' products. The project will work with businesses through the Shropshire Hills Buy Local Initiative and with the wider community through a series of events and workshops to challenge everyone to gather, buy and cook foods that are all around them. A core focus of the work will be traditional skills- for example preserving, curing and cider making, and a co-operation project will be developed to share these skills with a project in north Shropshire called 'Meres and Mosses' and with other countries in Europe, in particular with groups in Slovenia. The outcomes of the project will be: better awareness of wild and gathered foods and the habitats that support them; better promotion of the benefits of sustainability; more self sufficient local supply chains; increased profitability for businesses and increased choice and quality for customers; reduced impact on the environment and more resilient communities.</p>
Craven Arts CIC	Into the Hills	£35,000	321	<p>Since 2007 Craven Arts CIC, working in partnership with the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, South Shropshire Housing Association and Craven Arms Community Centre, have produced many community arts workshops and events culminating in an annual ArtWalk. For the last two years the acclaimed ArtWalk has been a temporary outdoors and indoors exhibition of work by local artists, community groups and school children. "Into the Hills" is a way of extending the ArtWalk into the landscape and hills around Craven Arms. Through the vehicle of art (and specifically land art) people will be encouraged to walk into, to play with, take notice of, and to enjoy the natural environment all around them, throughout the year and to gradually venture further and further out into the landscape. Six pieces of art sculpture will be created in the Onny Meadows over the next two years and three walks to developed destination sculptures in partnership with the Shropshire Way.</p>