



<b>Committee and Date</b> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  21 June 2011	<b>Item</b>  <b>3</b>
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## AONB PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY UPDATE

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### Summary

This paper provides members with a summary update of recent activity of the AONB Partnership staff team and a list of Sustainable Development Fund projects for the current Financial Year.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the information provided and offer comments.

### KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS SINCE MEETING OF 14 FEBRUARY 2011

**Take and co-ordinate action to conserve and enhance natural beauty, to promote wellbeing, enjoyment and understanding and to further sustainable development.**

- Good progress with allocation of LEADER grants, project monitoring and claims.
- Study visit made by LEADER Local Action Group representatives to Loir Valley, France focusing on local food. Presentation made to a visiting LAG from Poland.
- £17,087 allocated in Sustainable Development Fund grants to 8 projects for 2011-12.
- Farming Project under way following recruitment of two part-time officers. Initial meetings, establishing contacts and publicising the project.
- Advisory visits and Management Plans completed for Woodlands project (ongoing). Secondment in preparation to Heartwoods for SITA funded woodlands project.
- SITA funding bid for Rivers Project successful. Project Delivery Plan being prepared.
- Contract for development work on Upper Clun Community Catchment project nearing completion.
- 12 week graduate placement started through Keele University looking at waste water infrastructure in the Upper Clun catchment (Rosanna Fildes).
- Shuttles service for 2011 under way. Shuttles leaflet distributed and web page updated.
- Discover Local events in progress.
- Review of Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme membership arrangements to allow a three year pledge for longstanding members.
- Walking with Offa delivery under way - walks leader weekends, events, preparation of self-guided walks, etc.
- Development of Walking with Offa cross-border LEADER co-operation project.
- Walking for Wellbeing project under way – Walking Action Plan prepared.

- 2011 Events Programme and Visitor Guide published.
- New AONB website launched.
- Stage 1 bid submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund for Stiperstones – Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme (decision due 19 July). Visit by HLF hosted in support of application.
- Ongoing work on proposals for undergrounding of electricity cables.
- Various promotion activity – press releases, article in Ludlow town Guide 2011, etc.

**Develop policy and strategy for the area through the AONB Management Plan, and influence the policies and strategies of others.**

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan completed by consultants, endorsed by the Shropshire Hills & Ludlow Destination Development Partnership, and published for public consultation.
- Work with English Heritage on a new Guidance document for historic farm buildings.
- Objection submitted to southern route of Mid Wales Connect National Grid proposal.
- Input to local authority and other steering groups (Biodiversity Partnership, Local Access Forum, Destination Development Partnership, and others).

**Develop the AONB Partnership as an inclusive and effective organisation.**

- New Clee Hill Partnership formed, with strong AONB input into Terms of Reference, structure and support.
- Progress with forming a Friends of the Shropshire Hills committee and constitution.
- Parish Councils approached to join Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- Good practice on governance and partnership working shared with National Association for AONBs.
- New national AONB branding adopted.
- New funding Memorandum of Agreement between Defra and local authorities under consideration for signing.
- Budget planning for 2011-14.
- Input to West Midlands Protected Landscapes Forum and National Association for AONBs, including development of Strategic and Business Plans.
- Reallocation of project staff management to balance workloads.
- 2010-11 work programme outputs collated for Annual Review.

**Support the involvement of the community in the management of the AONB (also a cross-cutting theme in some items above).**

- Support and advice for a wide range of community projects.
- Talks to Parish Councils and other interest groups.
- School visits continued, including joint events with Natural England at Stiperstones NNR.
- Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB social event held at Stokesay Court.
- First AONB led guided walks for 2011 held and well attended. Input to Walking Festivals.

**List of Background Papers**

Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan

**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 topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 Sustainable Development Fund grants 2011-12, at 9 June 2011

## Appendix 1 Sustainable Development Fund grants 2011-12, at 9 June 2011

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Name of project</b>	<b>Amount of grant</b>	<b>Planned total project value</b>	<b>Rate of grant</b>
Jenny Stevens	Beetles and Bees	£2,895	£3,860	75.0%
Church Stretton Town Council	Feasibility study on the development of a travel/interpretation centre in Church Stretton	£3,500	£12,500	28.0%
Norbury Primary School PTA *	Outdoor creative learning space	£3,000	£7,315	41.0%
West Midlands Butterfly Conservation	What's that butterfly?	£1,340	£2,797	47.9%
Frances Brett	Women in the Landscape	£2,000	£4,000	50.0%
Shropshire Peregrine Group	Bird hide at Clee Hill quarry	£852		
Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust *	Round house at The Novers	£3,000	£10,980	27.3%
Thelma Thompson	The Story of Wool - Church Stretton	£500	£2,270	22.0%

\* projects supported by the Millichope Foundation contribution to SDF