

# **Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow**



# Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Development Partnership

- A forum aiming to improve co-ordination of tourism businesses, public sector capacity and voluntary groups.
- Work at strategic level for the whole destination.
- Links to Shropshire & Telford Tourism Strategy Board and other DDPs.

Visitor information

Marketing

Facilities

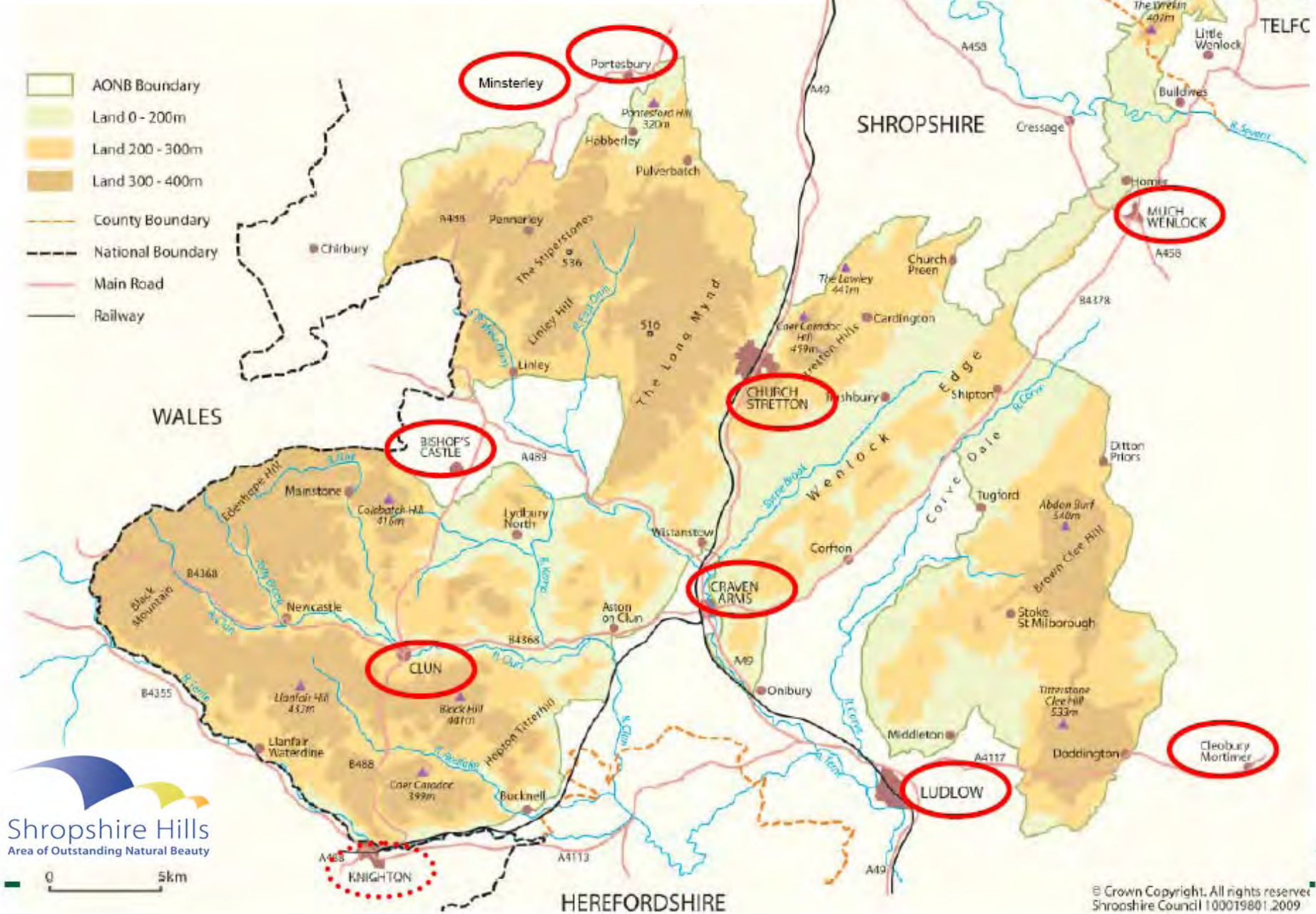
Sharing best practice

Developing sense of place

Strategy & Action Plan

Research

# Shropshire Hills & Ludlow DDP area



# Developing the Strategy

- Funding obtained from:



- Contract managed by Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership



- Consultation and strategy development by:



THE  
TOURISM  
COMPANY





# Definition and aim

Sustainable tourism = 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'.

*World Tourism Organisation and UN Environment Programme*

## **Primary aim of the Strategy**

- To develop, manage and promote the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow as a high quality sustainable tourism destination, in keeping with its focus on a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

# Associated aims:

- To provide all visitors with a fulfilling and enjoyable experience of the Shropshire Hills and neighbouring market towns.
- To foster a prosperous tourism and food industry, providing secure year round jobs.
- To enhance the quality of life within local communities and support for local services.
- To increase appreciation and understanding of the special landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage of the area and support for their conservation.
- To minimise negative impacts of tourism on the environment.



# Observations from our consultation (1)

- Awareness of area, even Shropshire, perceived as low despite central location and good market access
- Natural assets of Shropshire Hills seen as well managed but underplayed in promotion of Shropshire
- Visitor offer is diverse and complex and not well understood – need for better joining up
- Need for single identity and clear brand for S Hills
- Importance of connecting towns with the hills
- Certain businesses capable in their own right of bringing visitors to Shropshire Hills
- Importance of walking within stunning landscape



## Observations from our consultation (2)

- Food/heritage/events also drivers of visits
- Conscious of impact of market towns (+/-)
- Concern over impact of cuts on services which underpin quality of tourism offer
- But some place-based partnership projects still (hopefully) moving forward
- Good progress on embedding sustainability in tourism offer – are there limiting factors?





# Observations from our consultation (3)

- Seasonality is an issue
- Need for balance is well understood – countryside seen as under-used but peace and quiet seen as asset
- Understanding better the part played by Ludlow in relation to whole of Shropshire Hills
- Uncertainty over reliability of existing market in time of recession
- Active local groupings of tourism businesses – need to see how they can work together in context of overall destination of Shropshire Hills and Ludlow



# Guiding principles



- Building an **integrated destination, linking towns and the hills/ AONB**
- Ensuring effective partnership working between stakeholders at all levels
- **Growing tourism spending year round and throughout area**
- Bringing out opportunities to enjoy the area's special qualities and distinctiveness
- Being **ambitious about the sustainable aspects** of tourism
- Providing a quality experience for all visitors

# Target markets

## *Primary target markets*

- Domestic short breaks and holidays - Couples post-family
- Domestic short breaks - Couples pre-family

## *Secondary target markets/ Niche markets*

- Domestic short breaks and holidays – Families
- Day visitors
- Young active singles and groups of friends
- Singles and couples looking for active learning experiences

# Strategic Objectives

## **1 RAISING AWARENESS**

- *To strengthen the identity of the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow and raise awareness of it as a leading rural tourism destination.*

## **2 DELIVERING THE MARKET TOWNS EXPERIENCE**

- *To ensure that each market town makes the most of its distinctive location and character, provides a quality experience and acts as a gateway to the Shropshire Hills.*

## **3 DELIVERING THE HILLS EXPERIENCE**

- *To conserve the distinctive landscapes of the Shropshire Hills and provide and creatively promote a wide range of opportunities to experience and enjoy them.*

## **4 DELIVERING THE FOOD EXPERIENCE**

- *To maximise on the established position of the area as a centre of food excellence.*

# Strategic Objectives 2

## **5 ORIENTATING AND INFORMING VISITORS**

- *To ensure that all visitors are aware of the range of experiences and activities available across the area by providing readily accessible information and interpretation.*

## **6 PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT**

- *To encourage and promote actions by visitors and tourism providers which benefit the natural heritage and the wider environment.*

## **7 SUPPORTING LOCAL ENTERPRISE**

- *To build the contribution of tourism enterprises to the local economy, increasing business success and ensuring consistency in the quality of the tourism offer.*



# 1. Raising Awareness



- Destination values and messages
- Visual identity and text
- Images
- Branding
- Online marketing
- Print
- PR
- Shropshire promotions
- Target markets



## 2. Delivering the Hills experience



- Maintaining the high quality landscape
- Opportunities to experience the landscape
- Varied range of walking
- Cycling and mountain biking
- Horse riding
- Outdoor activities
- Geology and wildlife
- Creative and practical



# 3. Delivering the Market Town experience



- Unique identity of each town
- Effective information
- Facilities, services & amenities
- Creative experience of heritage
- Co-ordinate events
- Distinctive retail
- Link with countryside

# 4. Delivering the Local Food experience



- Develop events and spread reach
- Food outlets of national renown
- Catering for all budgets
- Visiting and buying from local suppliers
- Local produce in catering



# 5. Orientating and informing visitors

- Maintain network of VICs
- Information dissemination
- Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre
- Help accommodation hosts
- Strengthen identity and signing
- Creative IT based info and interpretation
- Visitors with special needs





# 6. Sustainable access and management

- Visitor management
- Options using public transport
- Help enterprises to promote public transport
- Shuttle bus
- Innovative alternative transport
- More sustainable tourism businesses
- Generate support from visitors



# 7. Supporting local enterprise



- Raise quality of service
- Business advice & skills training
- Business networking
- Dialogue with planners
- Investment in tourism products that relate to area's character and appeal

# Implementation

- DDP to co-ordinate
- AONB Partnership making application for Europarc Charter
- Less public sector support available due to spending cuts
- Engagement of private sector
- Engagement of market towns

