

Shropshire Council  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

Date: Monday, 16 March 2020  
:

**Committee:**  
**Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

**Date:** Tuesday, 24 March 2020  
**Time:** 9.30 am  
**Venue:** Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.  
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter  
Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

**Members of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

James Williamson (Chairman)	Gillian Binks
Hilary Clayton-Smith (Vice Chairman)	Sarah Bury
Cecilia Motley (Vice Chairman)	Veronica Cossons
Heather Kidd	Helen Dale
Robert Tindall	Ian Dormor
David Turner	Charles Edwards
Chris Turley	Patrick Edwards
Alison Caffyn	Rhona Goddard
George Chancellor	Carol Griffiths
Adrian Cullis	Robert Harris
Chris Naylor	Lizzie Hulton-Harrop
Andrew Wood	Alan Jones
Mark Hughes	Bill Klemperer
John Long	Sue Lee
David Mills	Hazel MacDowell
Steve Pennington	Ronald Repath
John Pritchard	Leo Smith
Sonja Belchere	Donna Tavenor

Your Committee Officer is:

**Tim Ward** Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: [tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk)

# **AGENDA**

## **1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence

## **2 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 1 - 6)**

The note of the meeting held on 8 November 2019 is attached for confirmation

## **3 Net zero and nature recovery in the Shropshire Hills (Pages 7 - 10)**

This paper provides some background material which along with presentations, will inform discussion at the meeting.

## **4 Health, wellbeing and diversity (Pages 11 - 26)**

This paper provides some information for discussion about development of work in the Shropshire Hills AONB on health, wellbeing and diversity.

## **5 Defra Environmental Land Management Scheme Consultation (Pages 27 - 30)**

This paper provides information on the current Defra consultation on the Environmental Land Management (ELM) system, highlighting questions of particular relevance to the AONB Partnership.

## **6 Workshop Session**

## **7 Update on various items (Pages 31 - 40)**

This paper provides an update on significant matters, including the Glover Review and recent team activity. Further updates will be given verbally at the meeting.

## **8 Planning policy for the AONB**

Item to be confirmed

## **9 Date of Next Meetings**

Members are asked to note that future meetings of the Partnership will be held on:

Tues 16th June 2020,  
Tues 27th October 2020



Shropshire Hills  
AONB Partnership

24 March 2020  
9.30 am

Item

**2**

Public

## **MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2019 9.30 AM - 12.00 PM**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward  
Email: [tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 257713

### **Present**

#### **Local Authorities**

Shropshire Council

Cllr Heather Kidd  
Cllr Cecilia Motley (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Robert Tindall  
Cllr David Turner

Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Chris Turley

#### **Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members**

Individual Member  
Individual Member  
Individual Member  
Individual Member  
Town & Parish Council representative  
Town & Parish Council representative  
Town & Parish Council representative  
British Horse Society  
Caring for Gods Acre  
Country Land & Business Association  
Historic England  
Land Life & Livelihoods  
Middle Marches Community Land Trust  
Ramblers Association  
Shropshire Wildlife Trust  
The Strettons Civic Society  
Upper Onney Wildlife Group

Adrian Cullis  
Chris Naylor  
James Williamson (Chair)  
Andrew Wood  
Hilary Claytonsmith  
John Long  
Steven Pennington  
Ronald Repath  
Gill Binks  
Helen Dale  
Alison McDonald  
Robert Harris  
Richard Keymer  
Charles Edwards  
Veronica Cossons  
Ian Dormor  
Leo Smith

## **Observers/Officers**

Shropshire Council	Clare Featherstone (Interim Head of Culture & Leisure) Tim Ward (Committee Officer)
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Staff Team	Phil Holden (AONB Partnership Manager) Alison Jones (Clun Catchment Officer) Nigel McDonald (Sustainable Tourism Officer) Steph Hayes (Promotions Officer)

## **11 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 11.1 The Chairman welcomed Adrian Cullis and Chris Naylor to their first meeting of the Partnership. He also welcomed Richard Keymer who was representing the Middle Marches Community Land Trust, David Howard from Stretton Climate Care and Paul Hayward from the Environment Agency.
- 11.2 Apologies for absence had been received from Sonja Belchere (Visit Shropshire Hills), Sarah Bury (CPRE), Alison Caffyn (Individual Member), Carol Griffiths (NFU), Rhona Goddard (Butterfly Conservation), Lizzie Hulton Harrop (Middle Marches Community Land Trust), Mark Hughes (Individual Member), Emma Johnson (Natural England), Hazel McDowall (Natural England) and David Mills (Town & Parish Council Rep).

## **12 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 12.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 had been circulated.
- 12.2 Resolved:
- That the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership held on 11 June 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- 12.3 The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that the amended terms of reference had been approved by both Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.

## **13 Appointment of Chair, Vice Chairs and six seats on Strategy & Performance Committee**

### **13.1 Appointment of Chair**

The AONB Partnership Manager advised that one nomination had been received for the position of Chair.

Resolved:

That Mr James Williamson be elected Chair of the Shropshire Hills Partnership.

### 13.2 Appointment of Vice Chairs

The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that there were 2 Vice Chair positions, one for a Unitary Councillor and one for a non-councillor. He advised the meeting that two nominations had been received.

Resolved:

That Cllr Cecilia Motley and Ms Hilary Claytonsmith be appointed Vice Chairs of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

### 13.3 Appointments to Seats on the Strategy and Performance Committee

The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that there were 6 vacancies for seats on the Strategy and Performance Committee and the 4 nominations had been received prior to the meeting. 1 nomination was received at the meeting.

Resolved:

That Lady Veronica Cossons, Cllr Heather Kidd, Mr John Long, Cllr David Turner and Mr Andrew Wood be appointed to serve on the Strategy and Performance Committee.

The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that the Committee could co-opt to fill the vacancy and that if any one was interested on serving, they should contact him or the Chairman.

- 13.4 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that there were currently 2 vacancies for trustees on the AONB Trust, one appointed by the Partnership and one for a non-Partnership Member. Members were asked to contact him if they were interested.

## 14 **Report of the Glover Review**

- 14.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided a summary of the Glover Review final report.
- 14.2 Members generally welcomed the content of the report and asked how responses were to be made. The AONB Partnership Manager stated that he would feed comments to the NAAONB to enable a national response to be made but that there was no reason why the Partnership could not make an individual response as well.
- 14.3 Mrs Kidd asked whether Shropshire Council would be making a response as there was quite a lot in the review that could be built into the draft local plan proposals. The Interim Head of Culture and Leisure advised members that officers had regular meetings with the Director of Place.
- 14.4 The Chairman asked Members to feed any further comments to the AONB Partnership Manager as soon as possible so that they could be included in the response.

## 15 **Environment & Climate Emergency**

- 15.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which set out the background on national and local declaration of emergencies and some draft recommendations to the Councils from the AONB Partnership on nature recovery; on farming and land management; and on development, energy, transport and tourism.
- 15.2 The Interim Head of Culture and Leisure drew attention to the recommendations contained in the report and suggested some amended wording. Members generally accepted the amendments after making some minor amendments.

### 15.3 Resolved:

That the following recommendations be made to Shropshire Council and the Council of Telford & Wrekin -

#### Recommendation 1 - Nature recovery:

Nature decline is as threatening an emergency as climate change and both are inextricably linked. Nature recovery and restoring resilient ecosystems also provide some of the essential solutions to reaching zero carbon emissions, as well as addressing many other factors vital for our survival and quality of life. These are not just distant global issues, they are the main challenges now for the Shropshire Hills. It is strongly recommended that the Councils include nature recovery in their formal declarations.

#### Recommendation 2 - Farming and land management for zero carbon and nature recovery:

The Councils have an important role shaping and influencing the future of their areas, as well as directly providing services. While they have less direct involvement in land management than some other factors, making change in this area will be vital to achieving net zero carbon emissions and nature recovery. It is strongly recommended that the Councils play an active part in this and consider increasing their capacity to do this, including training of members and senior officers.

#### Recommendation 3 – Development, energy, transport & tourism for zero carbon and nature recovery:

In these areas the Councils have a greater lead. Net zero and nature recovery cannot be achieved if the political and corporate focus is on economic growth at all costs. It is strongly recommended that the Councils build the goals of net zero and nature recovery into their visions at the highest levels. Doing this can deliver better quality of life for people as well as new forms of economic activity which are truly sustainable. On energy and transport we need to talk about managing demand as well as changing supply. This may mean people consuming less and travelling less. This future is not unthinkable and can benefit people.

- 15.4 The meeting broke up into 3 workshop groups covering, nature recovery, farming and land management for zero carbon and energy, transport and tourism for zero carbon. The AONB Partnership Manager advised that feedback from the groups would be used to guide further work on the subject.



**16 Judicial Review regarding implementation of the Habitats Directive, River Clun SAC**

- 16.1 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded members that there was a Judicial Review regarding the government's failure to deliver Habitats Directive obligations on the health of freshwater sites in the UK including the Clun Catchment.
- 16.2 The meeting received a presentation from Paul Hayward which gave an update on a study carried out in the Clun Catchment area to assess the extent of the problems and to look at possible solutions.
- 16.3 Members commented that whatever solution was employed it would be hard to overcome all the problems identified.

**17 Proposed Development Plan Document for the AONB**

- 17.1 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which proposed a planning policy Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- 17.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded Members that local authorities were required to give special consideration to AONBs as part of the planning process and that a DPD specifically for the AONB area had the potential to reduce conflict and the large workload associated with contentious site allocations and major planning casework. He drew members attention to the DPD for the Arnside & Silverdale AONB which had recently been adopted by Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council.
- 17.3 Members welcomed the proposals and agreed that the production of such a document would strengthen the protection of the AONB from inappropriate development.

**18 Ironbridge Power Station Site Redevelopment**

- 18.1 Members received the report of the AONB which provided an update on the Ironbridge Power Station redevelopment proposal.
- 18.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised members that the AONB Partnership had submitted a response to the Strategic Sites Consultation, and that he had held meetings with senior officers to discuss the concerns of the AONB Partnership.
- 18.3 Mrs Kidd commented that part of the proposal was for the removal of sand and gravel and that there was often opportunity for community gain as part of this and she wondered whether the AONB would be able to benefit from this.

**19 Capacity Building project - Youth engagement and feasibility for ongoing leadership activity with the Partnership**

- 19.1 The meeting received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which set out a process for youth engagement for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

19.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that as part of the Resilient Heritage Project, the Partnership was exploring opportunities to embed youth involvement more widely in the work of the AONB, and that a contact had been let to the South Shropshire Youth Forum to carry out a consultation process with young people to examine what form of youth involvement or representation could be developed.

19.3 Members commented that the work with the John Muir Award had been very successful and hoped that this could be built on.

## 20 **Date of Next Meetings**

20.1 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that dates for future meetings were in the process of being set and that members would be informed of the dates when they were to hand.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date:



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  24 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	<u>Item</u>  <b>3</b>
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## NET ZERO AND NATURE RECOVERY IN THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper provides some background material which along with presentations, will inform discussion at the meeting.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

### Background

The AONB Partnership will continue to give net zero and nature recovery a top priority in our work, bringing together as we do many key players, and encouraging climate action to embrace wider ecological aspects.

The importance of this has been highlighted in our Defra funding offer letter for 2020-21, just received:

*"More broadly, I also ask how you will use your grant funding to deliver nature recovery, work towards net zero carbon through nature-based solutions, and support the needs of communities in modern Britain. I would like to see how you intend to work in partnership strategically with other groups, including other National Park Authorities and AONBs. We will set out more detail of any specific actions we would like to you to take on this basis ahead of the start of the new financial year."*

We would like to use the Partnership meeting to move on thinking and action around net zero and nature recovery, using the following summary ideas as a start:

#### Net zero

- Many of the issues for the Shropshire Hills about reaching net zero are the same as the UK overall – across sectors of energy, transport, domestic, agriculture and food, etc, and the linked changes needed by government, businesses, local authorities, communities and individuals.
- Some factors are particular (though not unique) to the Shropshire Hills – e.g.
  - Relatively low in industry and **high significance of agriculture and land management, with high proportion of pasture and livestock farming.**
  - rurality means a **high dependence on private cars**, but better access to woodfuel.

- lots of **older, larger rural properties** which are relatively energy inefficient.
- **high landscape value** – seen as areas less suitable for large scale renewable energy generation – likely to be pressure for more. Small scale renewables are compatible with AONB, and uptake has been less than expected over last 10 years
- We need a **balance of land use** – food from arable, pasture, woodland and forestry, more natural habitats, places for people, energy, etc.

#### Nature recovery

Proposed generalised actions for nature recovery in the Shropshire Hills:

- **Best possible management of existing high quality habitats as ‘core areas’** of a nature recovery network, e.g. SSSIs, Wildlife Sites, recorded areas of priority habitat, and ancient woodlands.
- **Improving margins and buffer areas to good habitat** especially heathland and rough grassland hills – to soften transitions, including mixed habitats, scrub and woodland.
- **Hydrological re-naturalisation of catchment headwater areas** – rewetting and roughening of improved and drained pastures, including restoration of locally extensive hilltop peatlands and small upland flushes. Peatlands can store more carbon than woodlands, but many are drained, modified for farming and forestry and a source of emissions - need to be wet and absorbing and storing carbon. Also flood alleviation benefits from slowing the flow.
- **Regenerating and expanding existing upland semi-natural woodlands** by excluding stock. Also restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and sensitive management of commercial woodland – need timber in construction, but low impact.
- **Woodland creation and increasing tree cover - mimicing natural pattern, largely native species**, improve habitat networks. E.g. steep banks, upland gullies and streams, field corners, and trees outside woods including hedgerow trees and agroforestry. Also respond to tree disease, and more restoration of hedges.
- **Habitat improvement of river and stream corridors** including buffer strips with tree and shrub planting and control of stock access. Restoration of flood plain wetland habitats.
- **Managing and re-creating wildflower meadows and species-rich grasslands**, including roadside verges. Yes we probably need a rather wilder landscape overall, but some important habitats still need active management.
- **Management of invasive non-native species** such as Signal Crayfish, Himalayan Balsam.
- **More sustainable regenerative management of farmland** e.g. pasture regimes which increase soil organic content and reduce water run-off (e.g. reduced compaction, buffering and small wetlands), arable farming avoiding soil loss and harm to rivers by avoiding steep slopes and erosion-vulnerable land.
- **Involving people in nature recovery and appreciation in many different ways.** Many of the behavioural changes which would help lower carbon emissions also have huge health and wellbeing benefits e.g. more active travel (walking, cycling, etc).

**List of Background Papers**

Some additional material has been circulated by email.

**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**

None

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<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  24 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	<u>Item</u>  <b>4</b>
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## HEALTH, WELLBEING AND DIVERSITY

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper provides some information for discussion about development of work in the Shropshire Hills AONB on health, wellbeing and diversity.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

### Background

The health and wellbeing benefits to people of outdoor activity and contact with nature has long been acknowledged in relation to the Shropshire Hills AONB and activity of partners. The Glover Review requires us to pay even greater attention to this in future, and to take active steps to ensure these benefits are enjoyed by a broader cross-section of society.

For projects led by the AONB Partnership, health and wellbeing has often been a secondary benefit from activities with a primary focus on conservation (such as volunteering within our Rivers project work and the Landscape Partnership Scheme) or awareness-raising (such as through the John Muri Award activity). This is fine, and the spin-off benefits are welcome, but designing projects and activities with health and wellbeing uppermost obviously has the potential to achieve more with these benefits, and to target them to those most in need. Some examples of projects with health and wellbeing benefits as the primary aim, operating in the Shropshire Hills AONB through partners, and from other AONBs, include:

Shropshire Wild Teams – Shropshire Council. Outdoor practical volunteering for adults with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties.

<http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/volunteering-outdoors/wild-team-leaders/>

Growing Confidence – Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Engaging 11-24s with nature.

<https://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/growing-confidence>

Stepping into Nature – Dorset AONB. Outdoor trips and activities for people with dementia.

<https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/project/stepping-into-nature/>

As with many topics, the role of the AONB team as a direct provider is just one mechanism, of modest scale. While we do want to identify ways to improve and expand this, the collective activity of partners within the AONB Partnership, and the ability of the Partnership to influence and co-ordinate the activities of others, are also very significant.

We are developing youth engagement work with the South Shropshire Youth Forum, and discussing possibilities for greater engagement with visitors from BAME backgrounds in conjunction with the National Trust at Cardingmill Valley and with Telford & Wrekin Council. We are also in discussion with Public Health colleagues within Shropshire Council.

Information on current activity in the areas of health, wellbeing and diversity by organisations within the Partnership will be welcomed from members, along with ideas for development of further work and collaboration.

The rapidly evolving Coronavirus situation will affect activities in the coming months, but does also highlight the huge value to people of outdoor physical exercise and contact with nature, as highlighted in the current MIND advice on mental health and wellbeing <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>.

The Glover review recommendations on this topic are reproduced here for reference:

*Landscapes for everyone*

*Our national landscapes should be alive for people, places where everyone is actively welcomed in and there are unrivalled opportunities to enjoy their natural beauty and all it offers: landscapes for all. We need:*

- *England's national landscapes to reach out and actively connect all parts of society with these special places to support the nation's health and wellbeing. Their legal purposes should be explicit about this, and the same purpose applied to AONBs as to National Parks.*
- *National landscapes must develop ambitious, targeted plans for helping those who currently fail to benefit from our most special places to do so, and be held to account for delivery. This must include excellent, but currently local, examples being established everywhere. The National Landscapes Service should have a key role in spreading these best practices and holding bodies to account for delivery.*
- *Ambitious programmes should include, but not be limited to:*
  - *children and young people;*
  - *Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities;*
  - *people with health conditions and disabilities;*
  - *volunteering.*
- *A truly warm and helpful welcome, wherever you want to go – better signs, information and websites are needed, and critically, a National Landscapes Ranger Service.*
- *Our national landscapes must become our most welcoming and easily accessible places. Here, more than anywhere else, people can get out into nature and enjoy it. This means joining up with others to make the most of what is already there, but also asking ourselves whether they could be more accessible than they are now.*



**List of Background Papers**

This video of the presentation on 'The role of nature on mental health and wellbeing' by Dr William Bird at the Europarc 2019 Conference is highly recommended:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUrXoXutd8U&feature=youtu.be>

**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 Extracts from Europarc Federation Jurmala Communiqué 2019 on Health and Wellbeing in Protected Areas

Appendix 2 Extracts from Europarc Federation Health & Wellbeing Toolkit

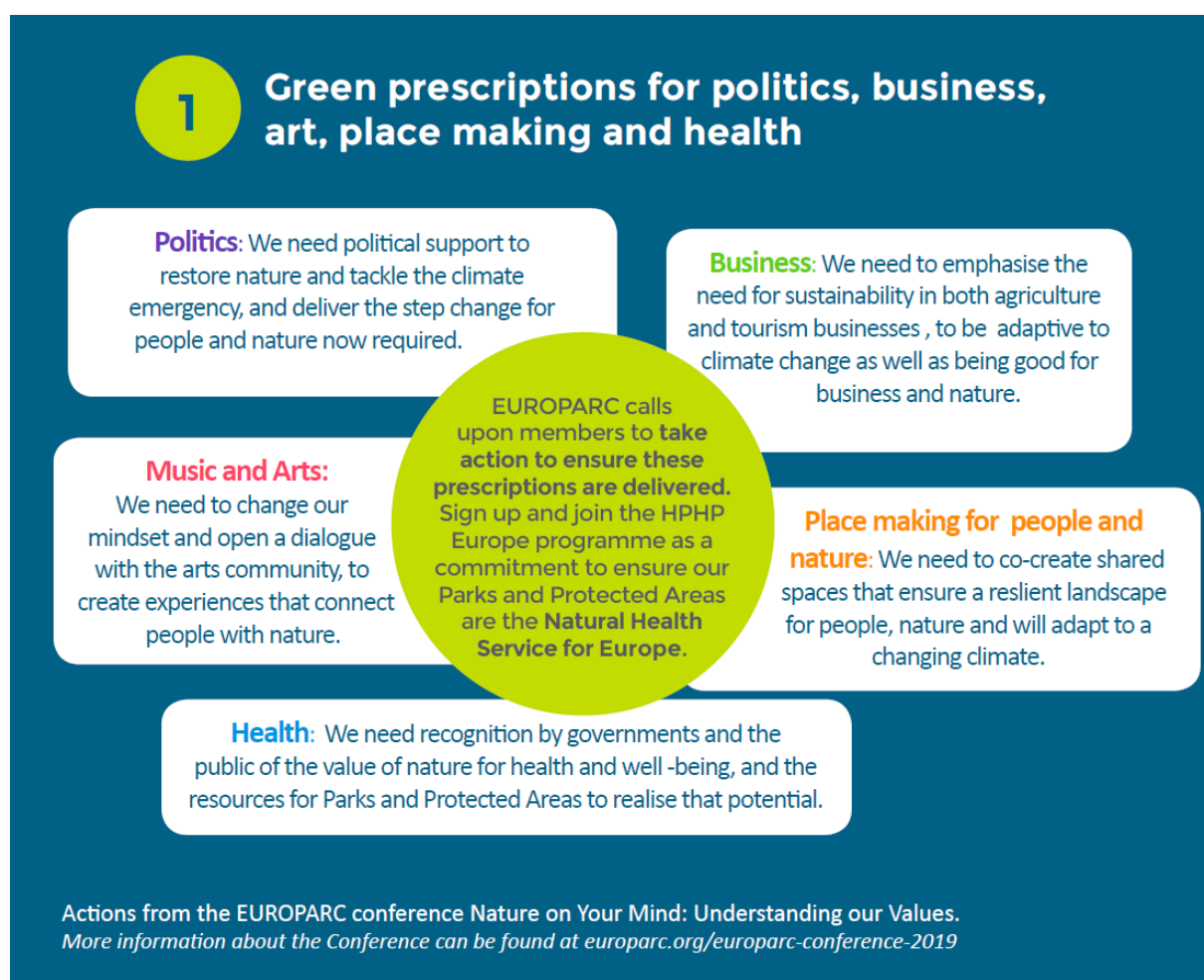
Appendix 3 Extracts from Dr William Bird presentation on 'The role of nature on mental health and wellbeing'

## Appendix 1 Extracts from Europarc Federation Jurmala Communiqué 2019: Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe

Based on the outcomes of the 2019 Conference, and with input of the Europarc Health & Protected Areas Commission, the Europarc Federation launched the Jurmala Communiqué, a first step towards the creation of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People initiative Europe.

We firmly believe that our parks and Protected Areas are a health-promoting asset. They have a crucial role in nurturing healthy ecosystems that sustain our societies, and the conference has given us the opportunity to analyse these roles, needs and opportunities in detail.

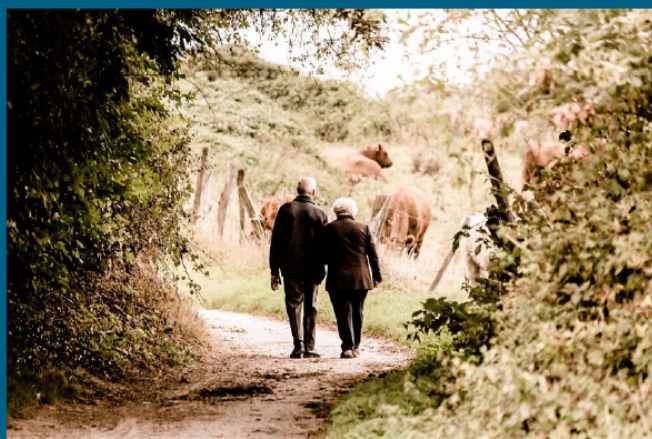
To assure Protected Areas are recognised by the opportunities they provide for people to experience and enjoy nature, and the contribution to the mental, physical, social and spiritual health and well-being of people and communities across Europe, EUROPARC will further develop the Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPPH) Europe. The HPPH programme will support EUROPARC members to develop policy, practice and partnerships in order to build stronger relations with the health sector.



These fundamental connections between human health and environmental health have inspired the development of the “Healthy Parks Healthy People” programme – a global movement that aims “to unlock the power of nature and parks for their preventative and restorative health and well-being benefits while conserving and restoring biodiversity”. Common elements of the approach are:

- increasing recognition and priority in relevant policy frameworks of the role that outdoor recreation, play, learning and volunteering activity which promotes positive contact with nature can play in supporting physical, mental and social health;
- ensuring that local communities, and people and groups of all ages and backgrounds, can access parks and Protected Areas and can use and enjoy them responsibly;
- enhancing existing or establishing new programmes for promoting healthy lifestyles and delivering health outcomes through contact with nature in parks and Protected Areas;
- developing new partnership with local and national health partners and other sectors to maximise health and environmental benefits; and
- investing in visitor infrastructure to allow for increased use alongside nature protection and enhancement;
- promoting the contribution that parks and Protected Areas can make to improving health and supporting local and regional economies.

The concept was developed by Parks Victoria which organised the 1st HPHP conference in Melbourne in April 2010. It was then quickly taken up by other nations, including the US and Canadian, Finnish and Korean Park Services which have developed nation-wide programmes to deliver it. EUROPARC Federation signed up to the Melbourne Communiqué and has promoted this agenda through the work of its Health and Protected Areas Commission, including most notably the toolkit and a series of well attended webinars and seminars. EUROPARC members from Scotland and Finland are also on the current Health and Well-being specialist group established by IUCN to take forward this work on health-related nature-based solutions as part of its broader “Nature for all” programme.



The EUROPARC Federation vision is for “sustainable nature, valued by people” across Europe. We believe that the development and implementation of a common European approach to HPHP will help make the case for further investment and a strategic approach to parks, Protected Areas and associated green infrastructure which can deliver better outcomes for both people and nature.



# Why should parks and Protected Areas be involved in supporting health outcomes?

The following Guiding Principles have been adopted by the EUROPARC Federation.

Positive contact with nature is important for human health. It can create well-being, **prevent public health problems and promote an active lifestyle.**

Parks & protected areas **connect people with nature** and represent a valuable natural asset that can provide specific contributions to the delivery of positive health outcomes.

Parks & protected areas contribute to **individual and community health and well-being**, and to wider aspects of **economic health and growth.**

Planning and delivery of site management to achieve health objectives should be informed by and delivered through:

## Policy

A policy framework at national, regional and / or local level that establishes the connection between the natural environment and health benefits supports management objectives

The delivery of health objectives by parks and protected areas is a natural extension of their traditional role in providing for access and recreation – it illustrates the environment sector responding to social needs and should be embedded as part of park management bodies' core business.

## Partnerships

Community engagement and cross-sector partnerships in implementation reflect joined-up working and provide wider benefits

**The importance of parks and protected areas for health promotion and improvement adds to the case for investment in these natural assets.**

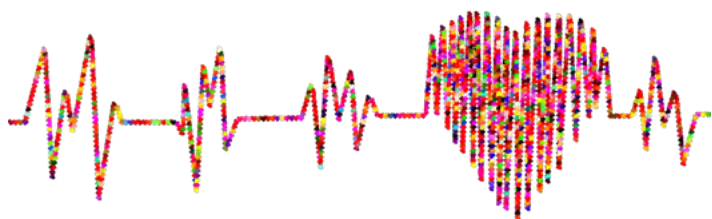
## Best practice & innovation

A strong evidence-base is supported by many examples of good practice, with innovative projects being shared throughout the parks & protected areas network.

These principles have been developed from the *Healthy Parks Healthy People* philosophy as set out in the Melbourne Communiqué of 2010 which has been endorsed by the EUROPARC Federation.

# Evidence

4



## Key benefits include:

**better physical and mental health  
and guarding against future illness;  
therapeutic and restorative qualities  
which enhance recovery;  
reduced social isolation and greater  
community cohesion;  
and opportunities to establish  
lifelong healthy behaviours.**

## References

- [NHS Forest – evidence summary](#) of health, social, environmental and financial benefits
- [Evidence statement on the links between natural environments and human health 2017](#) DEFRA and University of Exeter
- [A Dose of Nature: addressing chronic health conditions by using the environment](#). 2014 University of Exeter
- [The Great Outdoors: how a green exercise environment can benefit all](#). 2013 Gladwell et al
- [Benefits of connecting children with greenspace](#) – range of evidence
- [Nature-based integration Nordic experiences and examples](#). 2017 Pitkänen et al
- [Natural outdoor environments and mental and physical health: Relationships and mechanisms](#). 2015 Triguero et al

There is a significant evidence base for the range of individual and wider social health and well-being benefits that can be achieved through outdoor activity and contact with nature.

- The evidence suggests that **people are more likely to maintain regular physical activity in the outdoors** – the attractive and changing surroundings aid motivation and it provides opportunities for social contact.
- One in four adults will experience mental health problems at some point in their lives. **Outdoor activity and contact with nature can help sleep patterns, reduce stress, improve mood and self-esteem, provide meaningful social contact.**
- The number of people with dementia is growing rapidly. Spending time in the outdoors can bring a range of benefits to people living with dementia and their carers.
- A range of health benefits for young people, including better motor skills for children who play in green spaces; reduced symptoms of ADHD with contact with green spaces; more likelihood of physically active young people in greener and more walkable neighbourhoods.
- **Experience of the natural environment by young people can be life changing in terms of confidence**, and skills that can enhance job opportunities. Encouraging interest in the natural world and outdoor activity early in life instils confidence in using natural settings and has a positive role in supporting more active, healthier lifestyles in adult life.
- The natural environment is associated with opportunities to make social contact, increase inter-generational connections, avoid isolation and enhance community cohesion. Experience of the outdoors and involvement in its care can lead to stronger more inclusive and sustainable communities.

**Physical and mental health are inter-related**, and in many ways, inter-dependent. With an ageing population and more people with multiple health issues, the breadth of benefits offered from green exercise make it a useful tool for the health sector.

**Re-connecting with the environment** through green exercise can help patients, their carers, and the general population in terms of healthy lifestyles and prevention of poor health / illness.



# Visiting the outdoors

4

## can help address issues of poor health and health inequalities

Visiting the outdoors, whether it's urban greenspace close to home, countryside around towns or remote and wild areas of land and water, can help deliver a range of health benefits and can contribute to the attainment of national targets for physical activity.

**A brisk 30 minute walk on five days of the week can reduce the risk of:**

**Heart attack and stroke by 20-30%;**

**Diabetes by 30-40%;**

**Hip fractures by 36-68%;**

**Bowel cancer by 30%;**

**Breast cancer by 20%;**

**Depression/dementia by 30%**

*(from the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2011 'transforming Scotland's Health, NHS Scotland)*



**Encouraging more people to visit the outdoors more frequently would help spread the benefits as widely as possible.**

- There is a **significant relationship between self-reported stress and the proportion of greenspace** in the local area (*Ward Thompson et al, 2012*)
- **Health disparities between high income and low income groups are much narrower in areas with ample greenspace** (*2012 Scottish Health Survey*)
- People living near green space experience less health complaints and better mental and physical health than those living in an urban environment. **For every 10% increase in green space there was a reduction in health complaints equivalent to a reduction of 5 years of age** (*de Vries S, Verheij R A and Groenewegen P P, 2001*)
- People living close to greenspace are more likely to meet physical activity guidelines and less likely to be overweight or obese. (*The relationship of physical activity and overweight to objectively measured greenspace accessibility and use, Coombes, 2011*)
- Nature provides an added value to the known benefits of physical activity. **Repeated exercise in nature is connected to better emotional well-being.** (*The Relationship between Perceived Health and Physical Activity Indoors, Outdoors in Built Environments, and Outdoors in Nature Pasanen, Tyrvaäinen & Korpela, 2014*)

### Case studies

- **Wandering in the woods - enabling people living with dementia to benefit from visiting woodlands**

The evidence gathered throughout the project implementation has shown that there are significant potential physical, social and emotional benefits for people living with dementia in case settings when they can go out into woodlands.

- **Active Senior Tourism** The project began in Extremadura (Spain) and Alentejo (Portugal) and it aims at training the tourism sector in the creation of services and products for tourists over 55.
- **Natural training with tourism and healthcare professionals.** In 2017, ENRx published the brochure "Forme, nature, Bien-être" with his partners in support of a specific Natural Training and trained 20 professionals.

# Health Check-list

## Are you delivering

## a health-promoting park / Protected Area?

The Health Check-list below and in the following pages is designed to help you think about:

- how best to plan, manage and promote your sites to a wider range of people to improve their general health and well-being; and
- how to link your sites to the health sector so that people at risk of or experiencing specific illness / health conditions can be supported to make use of your sites.



### Strategic planning – is there:

- > A link between the management objectives of your site, and the national / regional / local health and well-being policy framework
- > A site management plan that engages with local health stakeholders and responds to health issues and priorities / target groups

### Outreach – does your site have:

- > Engagement with health sector, intermediary bodies and target groups to ensure activity programmes and volunteering opportunities cater for their needs
- > Outreach programmes aimed at key target groups or communities

### Monitoring & evaluation – does your site have:

- > A visitor monitoring system that gathers feedback on health benefits
- > Monitoring systems for the health benefits delivered through specific activity programmes / health interventions

### Communications – is there:

- > Active engagement with local health professionals, providing information and opportunities to experience the ways your site can support health outcomes
- > A communications plan for your site that specifies appropriate messages for health professionals and for the public / target health groups
- > Easily accessed information about the site and what it offers to a range of visitors

### Site management – does your site have:

- > Easily accessible information on the facilities provided at the site
- > A sense of welcome for visitors
- > Visitor facilities such as parking for people with disabilities; toilets
- > A range of access provision, from easy-going paths for people with health issues / disabilities, to specific equipment / furniture to promote physical activity
- > A range activity programmes delivered directly, or through green exercise providers
- > Staff who are well trained to support visitors with health issues

### Staff training

- > Do site staff have appropriate skills and confidence to work with health groups
- > Can you build wider awareness and capacity in your organisation on health

### Other opportunities – are you able to:

- > Identify local health sector partnerships and provide a place / activity programme / visual identity for green exercise referrals / sign-posting
- > Make access to information easier for health professionals and target groups to find by inputting into / establishing a central information service for a wide range of parks / protected areas

# Our factory setting is to be in a sociable group, supportive environment and have a purpose

People



Sociable

Connect

Place



Nature

Take Notice

Purpose



Autonomy

Be Active, Give  
Keep Learning





# Pathway of Ill Health



People

Chronic stress



Place

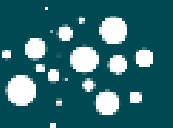


Purpose

Poor health behaviours

Mitochondrial damage, telomere shortening,  
and chronic inflammation

Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, depression



# How lack of walking impacts society



People



Place



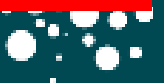
Purpose

Chronic stress

Inactivity

Poor concentration, tiredness, irritability, addiction, depression, weakness, chronic inflammation

Unsafe streets, poor air quality, reduced learning and productivity, dependence of elderly, less volunteering, isolation, obesity





# How walking invigorates society



People

Place

Purpose

Happiness

Being active

Increased confidence, greater concentration, less illness, greater contentment, better behaviour.

Increased productivity, safer streets, good air quality, stronger students, community cohesion, independence, more volunteering etc



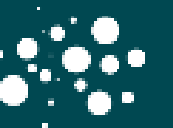
# Summary

- We live in a stressful environment
- Isolation disconnection to nature and lack of purpose create chronic stress.
- Chronic stress causes poor health behaviour and leads to Chronic Inflammation (CI)
- CI is the “cause of causes” of most long-term conditions
- Health, diet, activity should be means to the end which is Happiness leading to greater potential and productivity.
- Its definitely walking for Happiness



# Building Active Communities

[William.bird@intelligenthealth.co.uk](mailto:William.bird@intelligenthealth.co.uk)



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<u>Committee and Date</u>
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Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
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24 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
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<u>Item</u>
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<b>5</b>
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## DEFRA ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT SCHEME CONSULTATION

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper provides information on the current Defra consultation on the Environmental Land Management (ELM) system, highlighting questions of particular relevance to the AONB Partnership.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

### Background

On 25<sup>th</sup> February, Defra launched a consultation on a policy document on the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) system. The link to this is in the background papers section below. Alongside this, Defra has published 'Farming for the future: Policy and progress update'. This provides detail on the Environmental Land Management scheme and our other planned schemes to support productivity, animal health and welfare. It also covers future support for innovation and research and development.

The discussion at the meeting will focus on developing answers to the following questions in the consultation most relevant to the Shropshire Hills AONB and the Partnership's remit:

### **6. Do you have any comments on the design principles? (see box below)** **Are they the right ones? Are there any missing?**

For all elements of the ELM scheme design we will:
--

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Focus on achieving environmental outcomes, helping to deliver our 25 Year Environment Plan and net zero target. In doing so, it will help farmers, foresters and other land managers optimise the potential of their land to deliver public goods, as part of a thriving food or other land-based business;</li><li>b. Ensure national and local environmental priorities are supported and balanced effectively;</li><li>c. Ensure that the scheme and its underpinning systems and processes work effectively and represent maximum value for money to the taxpayer;</li></ul> |
|---|

- d. Ensure that ELM includes actions that most farmers, foresters and other land managers could deliver and encourage delivery of outcomes at all spatial scales through collaboration as well as individual participation;
- e. Enable farmers, foresters and other land managers to have greater flexibility over how they deliver environmental outcomes;
- f. Ensure minimal complexity and administrative burden for participants and administrators, considering lessons learned from similar past initiatives;
- g. Seek to harness new technology and digital solutions where they are shown to add value and improve the scheme design and operation;
- h. Seek to continuously improve all elements of the scheme and its administration, through monitoring, evaluating, learning and innovating, while providing sufficient certainty and clarity to applicants;
- i. Consider re-using / improving existing systems and data before building new.

**7. Do you think the ELM scheme as currently proposed will deliver each of the objectives?** (see box below)

In summary, we recommend the strategic objectives of ELM are:

1. To secure a range of positive environmental benefits, prioritising between environmental outcomes where necessary
2. To help tackle some of the environmental challenges associated with agriculture, focusing on how to address these in the shorter term

In doing the above, ELM will provide an opportunity for farmers to derive an additional income stream through the delivery of environmental benefits as and once direct payments are phased out. The "Farming for the future: policy and progress update" sets out the other mechanisms the government proposes alongside ELM to mitigate the vulnerability of the sector in a targeted way.

**8. What is the best way to encourage participation in ELM? What are the key barriers to participation, and how do we tackle them?**

**9. For each tier we have given a broad indication of what types of activities could be paid for. Are we focussing on the right types of activity in each tier?**

**10. Delivering environmental outcomes across multiple land holdings will in some cases be critical. For example, for establishing wildlife corridors or improving water quality in a catchment. What support do land managers need to work together within ELM, especially in tiers 2 and 3?**



**11. While contributing to national environmental targets (such as climate change mitigation) is important, ELM should also help to deliver local environmental priorities, such as in relation to flooding or public access. How should local priorities be determined?**

**14. As we talk to land managers, and look back on what has worked from previous schemes, it is clear that access to an adviser is highly important to successful environmental schemes. Is advice always needed? When is advice most likely to be needed by a scheme participant?**

<p><b>List of Background Papers</b></p> <p>Environmental Land Management: Policy Discussion, Defra consultation at <a href="https://consult.defra.gov.uk/elm/elmpolicyconsultation/">https://consult.defra.gov.uk/elm/elmpolicyconsultation/</a>.</p> <p>Farming for the future: Policy and progress update February 2020 <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment-policy-statement-2020">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment-policy-statement-2020</a>.</p>
<p><b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b></p> <p>The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Appraisal</b></p> <p>The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p><b>Risk Management Appraisal</b></p> <p>Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>
<p><b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b></p> <p>The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.</p>
<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>None</p>

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<b>Committee and Date</b>
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Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
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24 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
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<b>Item</b>
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<b>7</b>
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## UPDATE ON VARIOUS MATTERS

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
e-mail: [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 254741

### Summary

This paper provides an update on significant matters, including the Glover Review and recent team activity. Further updates will be given verbally at the meeting.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the information provided.

### Background

#### Glover Review

The final report of the Glover Review was published on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019 and some key aspects highlighted in the Partnership paper of 8<sup>th</sup> October. Discussion at the recent NAAONB Lead Officers meeting in February was about the initial assessment of which of the recommendations can be picked up in the short term, which require policy change (therefore medium term) and which require legislative change (and are therefore more long term). The government's response to the report is currently expected in the autumn.

#### AONB Team activity

The update of 26<sup>th</sup> February for the Strategy & Performance Committee on recent work of the AONB Partnership team is included at Appendix 1 for the information of members.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
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Glover Review final report at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review</a> .
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<b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b>
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The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
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**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 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 update on team activity for the Strategy & Performance Committee

#### **Item 4. AONB Team Work Programme update**

##### **1. Summary**

This paper presents an update on recent activity in the 2019-20 work programme.

##### **2. Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Team Work Programme – updates on recent work**

**TAKING ACTION - on the ground and in our communities - to conserve and enhance natural beauty and to promote enjoyment and understanding.**

##### 'Unmuddying the Waters' project work

This is funded by the Environment Agency, and a two-year collaborative agreement for 2019-2021 is in place for Alison Jones' post as Clun Catchment Officer.

Capital expenditure for 2019-20 is £55,000, for major projects, plus a number of smaller ones, dependant on funds being available.

##### **1. Bridge construction**

The bridge is the major element in the restoration of a 300m degraded stretch of a tributary watercourse which flows into the Clun just upstream of Recovery Site 1. The bridge construction is now completed, apart from some minor additions.

- Tree coppicing and pollarding of bankside trees. Completed.
- Fencing and gates. Scheduled for completion in February.
- New tree and shrub planting once fencing is complete.
- Second crossing upstream to be replaced by a new culvert once conditions are more favourable.

##### **2. Broadward Bridge Highway Drain Diversion**

We are working in partnership with Environment Agency and officers of the Shropshire Highways team and WSP engineers, in full consultation with farm manager and tenant.

- SC funded the design drawn up by WSP, to divert a drain through a new culvert under a road to discharge into a low-lying meadow.
- Three contractors invited to quote, and two responded. The selected contractor has scheduled the work to start on 16<sup>th</sup> March.

##### **3. Smaller projects. Fencing to enable woodland creation with Woodland Trust funds.**

##### **4. An additional £5,000 has been secured from the EA, to fund the installation and upgrading of a number of solar powered water supplies for livestock.**

##### Water Environment Grant (WEG) Teme-Onny-Clun (TOC) project

Due to delayed start, a number of project variations were required to be submitted to Natural England, these were approved which allowed our first claim to be submitted and approved.

Due to the recent departure of one of the Advisors to new employment, the Project is having to recruit a new Advisor for the Upper Teme Catchment - interviews took place on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb.

The recent excessively wet weather has prevented delivery of the soil aeration element of the project and this will need to be rescheduled.

Farm visits and Management Plans continued to be undertaken/produced, but the targets are challenging, and plan delivery is at different rates dependent on the Advisor experience (the need for improved Severn Rivers Trust (SRT) support has been raised with SRT project manager - especially GIS). Advisors feel under pressure and are finding it difficult to meet these targets.

The soil testing element of the project is proving to be physically demanding for the Advisors, and furthermore the recommendations issued by the soil testing laboratory may not be compatible with the project objectives (i.e. they are based on agronomy and focused on maximising production). This element of the project should be reconsidered.

External GIS Training had been approved by variation, but this itself will require a further variation due to providers need to provide separate training sessions for ArcMap and ArcPro. A new quote is pending from another provider.

Taken together, the project is behind target, catching up will be difficult and dependent on the qualities of the replacement advisor and also improved advisor support by SRT. The risks this presents to the AONB Partnership and SRT will need to be managed carefully (especially the need to ensure that management costs do not exceed 15% of the delivery costs). Further project variations will be necessary.

#### Woodland creation - Woodland Trust funded work

As part of our ongoing partnership with Woodland Trust, we now have more funding coming into the AONB for woodland creation. The Trust are providing some funding to support Alison Jones' post and an allocation of £15,000 to be spent on new woodland creation in the Clun catchment. Two projects have now been completed, with two further projects scheduled for February and March.

Climate and ecological emergency have raised the profile of trees in the AONB, and there is increased demand for landowner advice/visits. Woodland Trust have confirmed that their funding through MOREwoods, MOREhedges and "special projects" is eligible across the AONB (rather than just the Clun catchment) as part of the "Shropshire Hills Treescapes" area. This area of work raises the profile of the AONB, but there are capacity issues to be addressed as demand for advice/visit is likely to increase.

#### White-clawed Crayfish surveys

Mike continues to represent AONB on the Marches Crayfish Partnership. Last year's survey work identified a number of possible ark sites. One of these has now been confirmed as suitable and agreement with the landowner gained. We are still considering the best options for moving crayfish to the ark, but it is likely to be translocation of adult crayfish from a nearby river or juveniles raised in hatchery – both will be undertaken under a Natural England and/or NRW licence.

#### Other Clun/Teme catchment delivery work

We are involved in the Teme Catchment Partnership Steering Group, Freshwater Pearl Mussel Steering Group, Clun Field Officers Group meetings and run the Clun Catchment Partnership.

Lucie Zak, a post graduate student from ENGEEES (National School for Water and Environmental Engineering of Strasbourg, France) has now completed her internship with the AONB Partnership. Her report, "*Study of the Dynamics of Runoff, Erosion and Pesticides Transfer in the Clun Catchment*" can be viewed on the AONB website. We hope this study will be useful to inform future conservation priorities in the Clun Catchment.

### 'Our Common Cause' Upland Commons project

The Stage 2 Delivery bid was successfully submitted as planned by 19<sup>th</sup> November deadline.

We held our last Area Group meeting on Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>. This included a visit to Clee Liberty common and lunch. If the bid is successful and the delivery phase goes ahead, members agreed to re-join the Area Group in 2020. The National Lottery Heritage Fund Northern Committee visited Cumbria as part of their deliberations on 4<sup>th</sup> February and the Committee will meet formally to make the decision on approval mid-March 2020. Joy's contract on the project has ended, but she is attending through her role with us, a 'Lessons Learnt' session for the development phase as part of the Foundation for Common Land's AGM in London on 26<sup>th</sup> February, which will help to inform set-up for the delivery Phase. If the funding is approved in March, delivery of the project will start late April/early May 2020. We have met with a PhD student who is carrying out research on natural capital and commons, linked to the project.

### Stepping Stones project

We support this major landscape scale initiative at a number of levels -

- Phil participates in the Project Partners group with regular progress meetings.
- Cath is contracted to support farmer engagement. The Upper Onny Farmers group has been set up and is running well, with 12 of the largest landowners/farms in the project area involved. The Defra Environmental Land Management (ELM) Test/Trial on Whole Farm Plans has been approved and is under way and going well. 3 events have been held (2 indoor meetings and 1 on-farm workshop at Partridge Farm) to introduce the consultants, launch the whole farm plan test, and share initial thoughts. The next meeting was held in December to finalise the farm plan framework/process and select the five farms to test the process on. Agricultural consultants Promar International were appointed to work on the test but a decision was taken to terminate their contract at the end of January as they were struggling to deliver all the required work within budget and timescale. National Trust (NT) have commissioned their internal consultancy staff to do the remaining work with the five Upper Onny farmers on the Test & Trial. Richard Wheeldon and Carolyn Jones are carrying out this work and their areas of expertise match what is needed. Richard is NT Food & Farming consultant and a beef & sheep farmer in the Peak District and Carolyn Jones is NT Environment & Wildlife Adviser. Richard and Carolyn met our 5 selected farmers during the first two weeks of February to carry out the Farm Business Audits and Environmental Assessments. Then they will meet the 5 farmers again on March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> to present their findings and finalise the Whole Farm Plans. The whole group will meet again on 11<sup>th</sup> March to provide feedback on the whole process and have a discussion, before reporting to DEFRA.
- The National Trust have secured a year's funding from the Peoples Postcode Lottery for community activity related to Stepping Stones. A project officer Charlie Bell has been appointed, but Cath is contracted to deliver the initial community engagement during January – April. This includes three introductory evening meetings, three field visits, a community consultation and a feedback/next steps event in April. The first two events went well, with lots of interest and a willingness to get involved. 50 people attended the first event at Norbury on 30<sup>th</sup> January and 42 attended the second event at Pontesbury on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Mike is also delivering a number of Woodland Advisory visits in the Stepping Stones area supported by the PPL funding.
- Visitor Economy Research Project - Nigel is continuing to work with tourism consultant Alison Caffyn to conduct a study of farm-based tourism in the Stepping Stones area. This has involved interviews with businesses and drawing up case studies. The project will reach conclusion in March.

## **Sustainable Tourism delivery:**

### Destination Partnership

A Destination Partnership meeting was held in December. Unfortunately, attendance at these meetings has declined and we are considering other approaches to engaging with stakeholders. Nigel continues to represent the AONB Partnership at Visit Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Partnership. He has also recently been accepted as a member of the new Visit Shropshire Board. In this role he will support networking and destination management across the county and have opportunities to influence strategy and outreach through the Marches. Nigel has contributed to the new Marches Visitor Economy Strategy and is working on the Council's Cultural Heritage Strategy. He also continues to work at a community level, keeping contact with town councils and local businesses through other aspects of his work.

Nigel is helping to arrange the 2020 Tourism Expo which will be held at Ludlow Castle on 30<sup>th</sup> March during English Tourism Week. AONB Partnership members are very welcome to attend.

### Shuttle Buses 2020

A review of the Shuttle Bus income and use has led to changes to the 2020 service. This will run on an hourly timetable but turn around at Plox Green, rather than continue in a circuit to Pontesbury and Pulverbatch. This has provided some savings. The proposed service for next year will run for 45 days, from May to September. It is projected that the cost of this to the Partnership budget will be less than £5,000, after the remaining allocated reserve is used. The option of removing concessionary fares for this year was considered. However advice from the Council Transport Team suggested that changing the route and removing the concessions in the same year would be unwise. The financial risk of this not working was considerably more than potentially phasing it in once the new route is established.

### 'Fix the Fort'

This appeal for Caer Caradoc has been publicised and £2,380 has now been raised. A number of people have offered to assist as volunteers with practical repairs. We are seeking support from the charitable fund of HF Holidays (who operate the Long Mynd Hotel). Discussions are being held with Historic England, Shropshire Council rights of way team and the landowner about what works will be carried out. It is anticipated that practical work on the northern slope of the hillfort will commence this April/May. Detailed specifications for all the works and a coordination plan for volunteers is being drawn up. We have had offers of help from Shropshire Council, National Trust and Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The potential as a partnership project is very attractive.

### Shropshire Hills Cream Tea Trail

Visit Shropshire Hills will launch the new trail this March at the 2020 Tourism Expo.

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism – Phil presented the new Charter business awards in December as a member of the judging panel.

'Learning the Landscape through Language' – this is a children's education project on place names run through the University of Nottingham. Cath is supporting the project with some paid work, and three training courses have been held for teachers and education providers. School resources are also being developed, with input from the participating teachers. The Nottingham University team have also agreed to run an event in the Shropshire Hills AONB for the general public, which Cath will arrange.



Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Cath attended the regional D of E providers conference with Tom Blackwell from National Trust to raise awareness of the AONB and promote the Countryside Code and good behaviour by groups. 150 participants attended the conference, mainly from the West Midlands, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. This provided us with a good opportunity to reach new audiences from urban areas. It was very evident that many of the D of E leaders Cath met were unaware of the Shropshire Hills AONB, and AONBs in general, and the special features of the places their groups visit (e.g. Long Mynd – farming, working landscape, commoners, SSSIs, biodiversity, Scheduled Monuments, etc).

### **Project development:**

Young Rangers project - The bid was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund by the 19<sup>th</sup> November deadline. A decision on funding will be made at Midlands & East Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. If approved, the project would need to start with recruitment of a Project Officer from April 2020.

Linking Landscapes (Trees Outside Woods) – Joy has been reviewing and updating costs for the earlier Trees Outside Woods proposal and has drafted an Expression of Interest to go to National Lottery Heritage Fund for approval to start a two-stage bid process, to be submitted in early February. If given the go ahead, Joy plans to submit a Stage 1 development bid for the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 deadline.

Shallow Peatlands – A bid was submitted in January at short notice for potential Environment Agency funding, following research and discussions around the AONB's resource of shallow peatlands, which are under-recognised and have not previously been a focus for attention.

Unmuddying the Waters 2020/21 - Mike has submitted to Environment Agency revised proposals for the Unmuddying the Waters project in 2020/21 – the project remit has been widened to deliver greater biodiversity gain and can now include projects such as meadows, woodlands etc. However, the freshwater environment will still be a key factor.

Water Improvement Fund - Mike submitted to Environment Agency a number of "pipeline" project proposals (allied to above) to bid for internal EA funding. More development will be required, but should it be successful it will secure an ongoing partnership agreement 2021-27.

**INFLUENCING OTHERS - lead and champion the delivery of public benefits from the AONB, working strategically and collaboratively from policy to grassroots level.**

### AONB Management Plan

Meetings with Shropshire Council have been adapted into an Officer Group for the AONB, which will meet regularly with different staff involved. A meeting was held with Sue Lloyd from Public Health, who is interested in working with us further.

### Environment & Climate Emergency

The Community Networking event we are facilitating is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> February and booking numbers are looking good. The first part of the evening is for community groups to share what they are doing, followed by some informal networking and then selected short talks and workshops.

The AONB Manager continues to attend meetings of Shropshire Council's Climate Emergency Officer Group and input to discussions, e.g. commenting on a new Local Plan draft policy.

A presentation was made to the Marches Woodlands and Trees event on 28<sup>th</sup> January, with good feedback.

Research is being undertaken for the Nature Recovery Plan and principles are being developed, including on peatlands, woodlands and trees, and on emblematic species which help to communicate the changes needed. We have contracted Fiona Gomersall to provide some expert knowledge and input on this. We submitted a detailed response to the NAAONB's questionnaire survey on Nature Recovery in December and have inputted to the national sub-group working on this.

#### AONB Trust, Conservation Fund and Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB

Conservation Fund projects funded by the AONB Trust for 2019-20 are mostly nearing completion and claims are being processed. Steph has been talking through projects ideas with potential applicants for 2020-21. Changes have been made to simplify the administration process and the grant range is now £500-£2,000. The Expressions of Interest deadline was 7<sup>th</sup> Feb and deadline for full applications is 6<sup>th</sup> March. Over 20 enquiries have been received about the Fund, with 15 EOIs submitted, totalling over £21,000. Not all of these will necessarily go forward to full application. We have £15,000 to award, and the Conservation Fund Panel meets on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

Friends membership is 117. We are working with the AONB Trust to improve display material for attending local shows. We have set up Mailchimp for sending out news, events and activities to Friends.

The Trust is looking at how to implement its Business Plan and the intention to raise larger sums of money from other trusts, businesses, etc. A sub-group of the trustees has met to look at fund-raising from other charities and trusts, which Joy is going to assist with, and a small external contract for specialist advice and support has been let, with Resilient Heritage funding.

Volunteers to assist with fund-raising are being sought, and an advert is out on the national Reach Volunteering website, but there has been no uptake so far. There are now three vacancies for Trustees, one to be appointed from the AONB Partnership.

#### Planning

We are preparing a detailed response to the proposed Ironbridge Power Station site redevelopment application, with the support of specialist landscape advice.

The AONB Manager is to deliver a briefing session on the AONB in March to members and officers as part of a training programme on planning. A session is also to be held with the South Planning team.

#### Other influencing

We have commented on a number of Ordinary Watercourse consultations and Countryside Stewardship woodland plans in the AONB.

Mike attended a Buglife B-lines workshop - defining nature recovery networks in the Marches.

We continue to provide input into Shropshire Council's Cultural Strategy Steering Group.

We are supporting Church Stretton's Community Led Plan process and are discussing how to help them involve farmers.

### Landscape guidance

Countryside have provided further draft material for the Landscape Guidance on which we have commented.

### Local partnership working

The Wrekin Forest Partnership met on 14<sup>th</sup> January. Telford & Wrekin Council's Ecology team propose to co-ordinate the production of a new Wrekin Forest Plan.

The Clun Catchment Partnership is due to meet 4<sup>th</sup> March.

### Communications & public awareness

The new mobile-device-friendly AONB website has gone live, and much of the content has now been added, with some further additions and fine tuning still in progress.

2020 public events are being collated for the Great Days publication.

Phil is doing a talk to Cardington Parish Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

We are active partners in the Hay Meadow Festival for 2020, which is being held at the Discovery Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> July. As previously, this a partnership effort involving ourselves, Discovery Centre, Natural England, National Trust, Caring for God's Acre and Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

**MANAGING OUR BUSINESS - develop a robust, effective and financially sustainable AONB organisation.**

### Glover Review

The Glover Review was discussed at the NAAONB Chairs' Conference in November. The government's response is expected during 2020. The Defra funding settlement for 2020-21 is expected imminently.

We have had contact with colleagues in Telford & Wrekin and the National Trust to look at potential for research and project development work around diversity including BAME audiences.

### Resilient Heritage

We held a team development day jointly with the Wye Valley AONB team and the NAAONB on 29<sup>th</sup> January, using the Lumina Spark profiling tool, which people found interesting and helpful.

We are setting up a youth engagement event with South Shropshire Youth Forum, to link young people with Partnership and team members to discuss environmental issues and action. This is scheduled for the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

We are approaching the end of the project and need to complete the evaluation phase, probably with a joint workshop with the AONB Trust.

### AONB Team and office

The team undertook joint IT training with a trainer from Shirehall on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

Subject to WEG approval there is an opportunity for AONB staff to benefit from GIS foundation training to be delivered by the Rivers Trust.

Joy's contract as Funding & Programmes Officer has been extended to March 2021.

Agreement was reached about funding to resolve lack of kitchen facilities at Drovers House, but the quotes have expired and are having to be renewed, which is causing further delays.

We have made progress with trying to secure a green energy supplier for the offices.

We have recently been informed by the Council's Asset Management team that we are very likely to be moved out of Drovers House as the Council needs the space for other staff, and we are in discussion about other possibilities, including the lodge building at Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.

#### National Association for AONBs

Phil and James attended the NAAONB Chairs' Conference in London on 28<sup>th</sup> November.

The 'Taking the Lead' programme of development and collaboration which Phil took part in has now finished, with a final event on 19<sup>th</sup> November. The Staff Development Topic Working Group is likely to continue, and its national induction pack has recently been launched, with positive feedback.

Phil attended the Lead Officers meeting in February on 10-11<sup>th</sup> February (see item 5).

### **3. RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Committee is recommended to comment on the work programme updates.**

This paper has been prepared by Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager and the AONB Team. For further details contact 01743 254741/ [phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk).