

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

Date: Monday, 31 October 2022  
My Ref:  
Your Ref:

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

**Date:** Tuesday, 8 November 2022  
**Time:** 9.30 am  
**Venue:** Shropshire Room, Craven Arms Community Centre, Newington Way,  
Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9PS

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

Tim Collard  
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

**Members of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Alex Carson-Taylor (Chairman)       | Steve Pennington |
| Hilary Claytonsmith (Vice Chairman) | Wayne Barnes     |
| Cecilia Motley (Vice Chairman)      | Gillian Binks    |
| Heather Kidd                        | Jim Bunce        |
| Hilary Luff                         | Sarah Bury       |
| Dan Morris                          | Pete Carty       |
| Chris Turley                        | Janet Cobb       |
| Alison Caffyn                       | Veronica Cossons |
| George Chancellor                   | Nick Read        |
| Adrian Cullis                       | Charles Edwards  |
| Gillian Preece                      | Rhona Goddard    |
| Fiona Williams                      | Carol Griffiths  |
| Andrew Wood                         | Robert Harris    |
| John Luck                           | Alan Jones       |
| Ruth Houghton                       | Bill Klemperer   |
| Mark Hughes                         | Sue Lee          |
| John Long                           | Hazel MacDowell  |
| David Mills                         | Leo Smith        |

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 - 4)**

The note of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 is attached for confirmation

## **3 Shropshire Hills AONB Trust update and trustee nomination (Pages 5 - 6)**

This paper gives members an update on recent activity of the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust including launch of the Business Supporters Scheme, and seeks confirmation of a trustee nomination from the Partnership.

## **4 Draft AONB Partnership Climate Change Action Plan (Pages 7 - 20)**

This paper provides a draft Climate Change Action Plan for the AONB Partnership.

## **5 Our Upland Commons Project (Pages 21 - 26)**

This paper gives members an update on the Our Upland Commons project operating in the Shropshire Hills AONB and other areas. The paper is in support of a presentation which will be made at the meeting by Renee Wallace, project officer for the Shropshire Hills.

## **6 Stepping Stones Project Update and Sustainability (Pages 27 - 34)**

This paper gives members a further update on the Stepping Stones Project including recent project delivery and current work on a Sustainability roadmap and Needs Assessment. This is in support of presentations which will be made at the meeting by Andrew Hearle and Anam Choudhury of the National Trust.

## **7 Farming in Protected Landscapes - Showcase of Project Activity (Pages 35 - 36)**

This paper provides some summary information about the programme, in support of the presentation which will be made at the meeting by Alison Jones.

**8      AONB Team Activity Brief Update (Pages 37 - 40)**

This paper gives members an update on recent activity of the AONB team.

**9      Dates of Future Meetings**



Shropshire Hills  
AONB Partnership

8 November 2022

9.30 am

## **MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2022 9.30 AM - 12.05 PM**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

Email: [tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 257713

### **Present**

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chair) Heather Kidd, Hilary Luff, Chris Turley, Alison Caffyn, George Chancellor, Adrian Cullis, John Luck, Ruth Houghton, David Mills, Jim Bunce, Sarah Bury, Janet Cobb, Veronica Cossons and Greenall (Substitute) (substitute for Robert Harris)

### **63 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 63.1 The Chair welcomed Councillor Ian Nellins, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets & Green Economy, Shropshire Council, Adrian Cooper, Climate Change Team Manager, Shropshire Council, Dan Wrench, Climate and Carbon Project Officer, Shropshire Council, Jane Cullen, Chair, South Shropshire Climate Action, Nick Read, Joint Project Co-Ordinator, South Shropshire Climate Action and Fiona Morgan, Joint Project Co-Ordinator, South Shropshire Climate Action who would be contributing to the Climate Change agenda item and Jennifer Engwell who was the new officer representative from Telford and Wrekin Council
- 63.2 Apologies for absence had been received from Pete Banford, Hilary Claytonsmith, Charles Edwards, Rob Harris, Sue Lee, John Long, Dan Morris, Cecilia Motley, Gillian Preece, Leo Smith, Fiona Williams and Andrew Wood

### **64 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 64.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022 had been circulated

#### **64.2 RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership held on 22 March 2022 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

- 64.3 By way of update the AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that the AONB Business Supporter Scheme had been agreed and would be launched shortly.

## **65 Climate Change action in the Shropshire Hills**

- 65.1 Members received the report of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager which set out the structure and background for the Climate Change agenda item.
- 65.2 The Chair advised members that the NAAONB had been doing a lot of work on climate change involving small working groups and via the Lead Officers meetings and the National Conference and that a Statement of Commitment on Climate Change from AONB Chairs was recently agreed, and that with the Partnership's agreement he proposed for the Chair to sign this at today's meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Chairman sign the Statement of Commitment from AONB Chairs on Climate Action.

- 65.3 Members received a presentation from the AONB Partnership Manager which gave a background to the issues around climate change both nationally and within the AONB.
- 65.4 Members received a presentation from Councillor Ian Nellins, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets & Green Economy, Adrian Cooper, Climate Change Team Manager, and Dan Wrench, Climate and Carbon Project Officer, Shropshire Council, which gave an update of the work Shropshire Council was doing to address climate change issues.
- 65.5 Members received a presentation from Jane Cullen, Chair, Nick Read, Joint Project Co-Ordinator, and Fiona Morgan, Joint Project Co-Ordinator, South Shropshire Climate Action which updated them on the work being carried out following the publication of 'Next steps: A Climate Action Plan for the Ludlow Constituency to reach Net Zero by 2030'.
- 65.6 Following the presentations Members participated in "break out" groups looking at
- Land, agriculture, and nature-based solutions
  - Planning including renewable energy
  - Tourism and transport

Members were advised that discussion would feed into the development of a "draft climate action plan" for the AONB Partnership which would be brought to the next meeting of the Partnership.

## **66 Implementation of the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes - update**

- 66.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which gave an update on government and NAAONB activity around implementation of the Landscapes Review.
- 66.2 The AONB Partnership Manager commented that the government response to the review was mixed, with some parts being implemented but others such as

increasing resources for AONBs proving more difficult. He added that some of the measures proposed would need legislation before they could be enacted.

- 66.3 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that AONBs had recently received a 3 year financial settlement from Defra which provided a 14.7% increase in core funding for 2022-23 (over the base budget for 2021-22) which equated to an additional £29k, but with no increase in the subsequent two years.

#### **67 Likely one year delay to AONB Management Plan review**

- 67.1 Members receive the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which informed them of a likely move to delay the review of the AONB Management Plan by one year in order to align better with strategic plans and programmes and a national level.
- 67.2 The AONB Partnership Manager advised the meeting that subsequent to the publishing of the papers for the meeting a letter had been received from Lord Benyon confirming the ability for AONB Partnerships to delay the review of management plans and commented that he felt that it would be wise to do this. He added that a report would be brought to a future meeting regarding this.

#### **68 AONB Team - Work Programme Update**

- 68.1 Members received the report of the AONB Partnership Manager which provided an update of recent work by the AONB Team.
- 68.2 The AONB Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that this was a standard report which was brought to the meeting for information and that detailed oversight of the team's work was carried out by the Strategy & Performance Committee.

#### **69 Appointment of Partnership Member**

- 69.1 The AONB Partnership Manager informed the meeting that there was currently one vacancy on the Partnership and that an application had been received from South Shropshire Climate Action to join the Partnership. He added that Nick Read would be their representative.

#### **69.2 RESOLVED:**

That South Shropshire Climate Action become a member of the Partnership.

#### **70 Date of Next Meeting**

- 70.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Partnership will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 9.30am
- 70.2 Members were also reminded of the forthcoming tour on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date:





| <u>Committee and Date</u>         | <u>Item</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership |             |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022     | <b>3</b>    |

## SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB TRUST UPDATE AND TRUSTEE NOMINATION

**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 gives members an update on recent activity of the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust including launch of the Business Supporters Scheme, and seeks confirmation of a trustee nomination from the Partnership.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the update, approve the nomination of George Chancellor as a trustee, and members are asked invite businesses they know to become Business Supporters of the Trust.

### Background

The Shropshire Hills AONB Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation formed in 2016 to promote the conservation of the natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills landscape. It supports activities which protect the wildlife and heritage of the Shropshire Hills area and which spread knowledge and understanding of the importance of the natural environment. An important aim is to encourage local people and organisations to become actively involved in caring for the countryside around them.

The charity has up to eight trustees whose terms of 2-3 years are phased to ensure continuity. Four of the trustee seats are directly appointed by the other trustees, the manager of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is an *ex officio* trustee, and the AONB Partnership may also nominate up to three other trustees.

The current appointed trustees are Anthony Morgan, Alastair Warrington and Neil Willcox (with one vacancy). The AONB Partnership nominated trustees are Veronica Cossons and Charles Edwards. George Chancellor has served two terms as a trustee and then sat out for a year, so he is now eligible to be renominated by the Partnership and is the recommended nominee. George is Treasurer of the Trust.

The Trust's income comes from subscriptions to the Friends of the Shropshire Hills scheme together with funds from other charitable bodies (particularly from the Millichope Foundation) and general donations. It also receives donations for specific appeals such as the Fix the Fort project and Shuttles supporters. The main way the Trust's funds are used is in

awarding grants from the AONB Conservation Fund. Currently a total of around £12k - £15k is given annually in grants, of up to £2k each. The Trust seeks to expand the size of the Conservation Fund and the number of projects supported. Details of all the activities supported are presented on the Trust's website [www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/shropshire-hills-aonb-trust/conservation-fund-projects](http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/shropshire-hills-aonb-trust/conservation-fund-projects).

The Friends scheme was originally established by the AONB Partnership in 2008 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AONB, but with the creation of the Trust in 2016 it was agreed that the Friends should be seen to be supporting the Trust as well as the Partnership and all subscriptions from then have gone to the Trust.

At the AONB summer Forum in July 2022, a Business Supporters Scheme for the AONB Trust was launched. This will be an additional income stream for the Trust as well as a means of engaging with local businesses. Business Supporters will make an annual donation of £250 and will gain recognition, and opportunities to participate in events and projects. Members of the Partnership can help by inviting businesses they know who may be interested to become Business Supporters of the Trust through the scheme. Leaflets will be distributed to members at the meeting and further information is available at <https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/shropshire-hills-aonb-trust/business-supporters-scheme>.

|  |
|--|
| <b>List of Background Papers</b>   |
| None   |
| <b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b>  |
| The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.                             |
| <b>Environmental Appraisal</b>   |
| The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.            |
| <b>Risk Management Appraisal</b>   |
| Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.                         |
| <b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b>   |
| The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members. |
| <b>Appendices</b>  |
| None   |



|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Committee and Date</b><br>Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership<br><br>8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 | <b>Item</b><br><br><b>4</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|

## DRAFT AONB PARTNERSHIP CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

**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 a draft Climate Change Action Plan for the AONB Partnership.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the draft plan and consider what action they can take as the Partnership, as members and in their organisations and communities.

### Background

The national statement of commitment from AONB Chairs on Climate Action signed by our Chair at the 12<sup>th</sup> July Partnership meeting contains a commitment to “lead the development of a local action plan in our own AONB partnership by the end of 2022.” Appendix 1 contains a draft Climate Action Plan for the AONB Partnership, informed by the workshops undertaken at the July Partnership meeting, discussion at the Strategy & Performance Committee meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September and other discussions with the NAAONB collaboration group. It does not need to be a long plan, but this is a draft, and input from members is welcomed.

#### List of Background Papers

Notes of Partnership meeting and workshops 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

#### 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 Draft AONB Partnership Climate Change Action Plan

# Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

## Climate Action Plan

Draft at 31/10/22



### Summary

This plan sets out actions for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership (both the staff team and the Partnership group) to address the challenges of climate change. The AONB Partnership has a modest amount of influence and this varies across the topics and sectors of emissions. However the aspiration has to be to achieve net zero across the whole Shropshire Hills AONB, in a manner which is compatible with a credible global net zero scenario, and hand in hand with nature recovery. Evidence shows that per capita emissions in the Shropshire Hills are higher than the national average. This is partly a consequence of the rural nature of the area leading to higher emissions from domestic energy and transport, but is also linked to high levels of consumption. There is a long way to go and the current decade to 2030 is crucial.

### Some key points from topic narratives in the NAAONB Climate Change Framework:

**Nature-based Solutions** – Carbon offsetting mustn't harm nature or be used as an easy way out of deep emissions cuts in other sectors. Existing carbon stores in good habitats need to be protected, peatlands re-wetted and restored to stop emissions, and tree cover expanded in ways which also benefit nature.

**Agriculture** – GHG emissions from land and farming operations need to be reduced while continuing to produce food. We need more regenerative/ agroecological farming to improve soil condition and integrate farming with nature, as well as changes to the food system and diets.

**Sustainable tourism & transport** – Need to change tourism infrastructure and influence visitor behaviours, connect people better to nature, support active travel, and access for all.

**Renewable energy** – We need to be part of the solution to increasing renewables, in ways compatible with AONBs. We need a better national strategy and local planning for renewables.

**Building design & planning** – We need better resilience and sustainability in new buildings, retrofit for large numbers of older existing houses, and to take account of landscape sensitivity.

### AONB Partnership influence activity across the topics:

| Topic                           | AONB Partnership influence | Key AONB Partnership Influencing Activities                                    | Key AONB Partnership Delivery Activities   |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Nature-based solutions          | Significant                | Management Plan<br>Strategic input   | Peatlands project<br>Ancient Woodlands project<br>Farming in Protected Landscapes<br>Stepping Stones project |
| Agriculture                     | Moderate                   | Support for farmer clusters  | Farming in Protected Landscapes  |
| Sustainable Tourism & Transport | Modest                     | Strategic input<br>Support to businesses<br>Communications & public engagement | Shuttles<br>Walking & cycling promotion  |
| Renewable energy                | Low                        | AONB Management Plan<br>Consultation responses                                 |  |
| Building Design & Planning      | Very low                   | AONB Management Plan<br>Consultation responses                                 |  |

## Background

The **national statement of commitment from AONB Chairs** on Climate Action of April 2022 states that "AONB teams and partnerships must now more than ever confirm their leading role and ambition in addressing this challenge" and contains a commitment to "lead the development of a local action plan in our own AONB partnership by the end of 2022." This will set out a series of actions that the AONB Partnership can deliver - for short to medium term action up to 2030. It is not a full blueprint for climate change action for all of the Shropshire Hills AONB, but focuses on role of AONB Partnership (both the Partnership group and the staff team). The Colchester Declaration includes a pledge that 'by 2024, to ensure all AONB Management Plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero'.

The scope of this plan **covers both climate change mitigation and adaptation**, and actions will help to deliver net zero in the Shropshire Hills and well as increasing the resilience of the AONB to climate change. These two are not alternatives and must go hand in hand.

The AONB Partnership has been championing shifting to low carbon and nature recovery for a long time, and has championed the need to consider nature and the ecological emergency as integrally connected with climate, both in terms of the problems and of solutions. Virtually all of the actions in the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan contribute to nature recovery and lowering carbon emissions.

Recent specific activity on the topic has included:

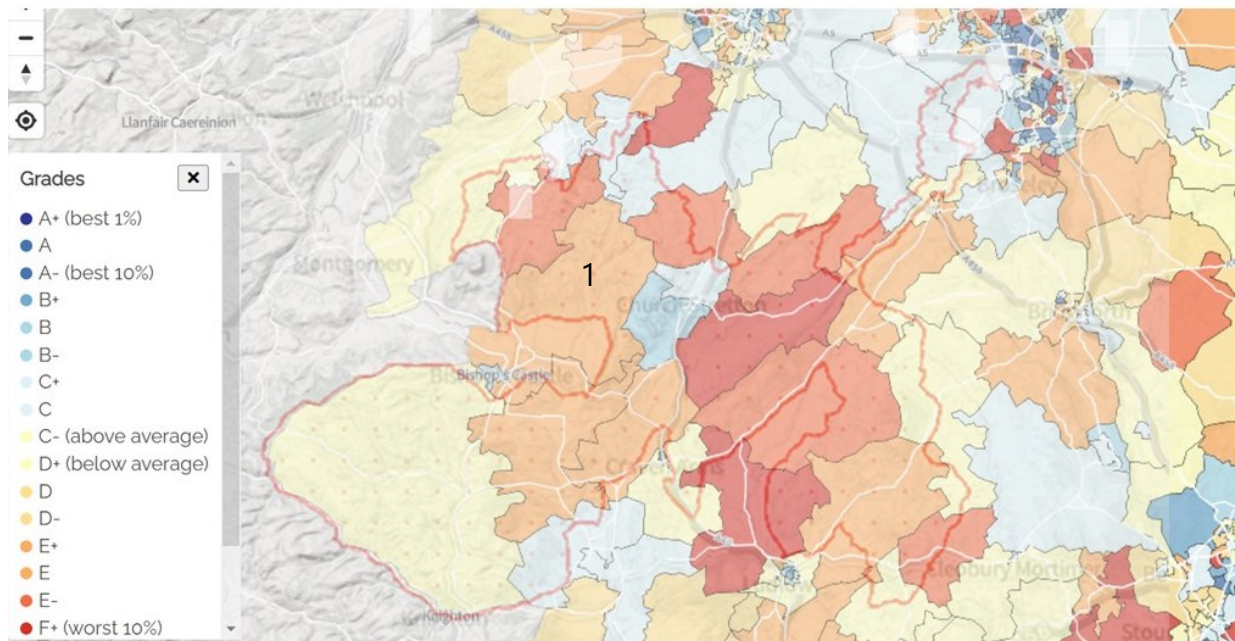
- Detailed recommendations made to the local authorities in October 2019 following declaration of climate emergency, and working with Council colleagues and working groups.
- Convened a gathering of local community groups working on climate and nature in Feb 2020 <https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/a-special-place/climate-and-nature-recovery/community-led-climate-action>
- Very active role over 2021-22 in the NAAONB Climate Change Collaboration programme -as part of the national core group, leading two of the five topic working groups, and being on the small group preparing the Chairs' Statement and the land carbon audit steering group.
- The team and some Partnership members have been closely involved with both Zero Carbon Shropshire and South Shropshire Climate Action.
- Held an AONB Partnership meeting July 2022 themed to climate change.

Clearly more needs to be done to respond to the urgency and extent of these issues. Following the Glover Review there is also now an active discussion in government about the updating of AONB legal purposes, potentially to include reference to climate change.

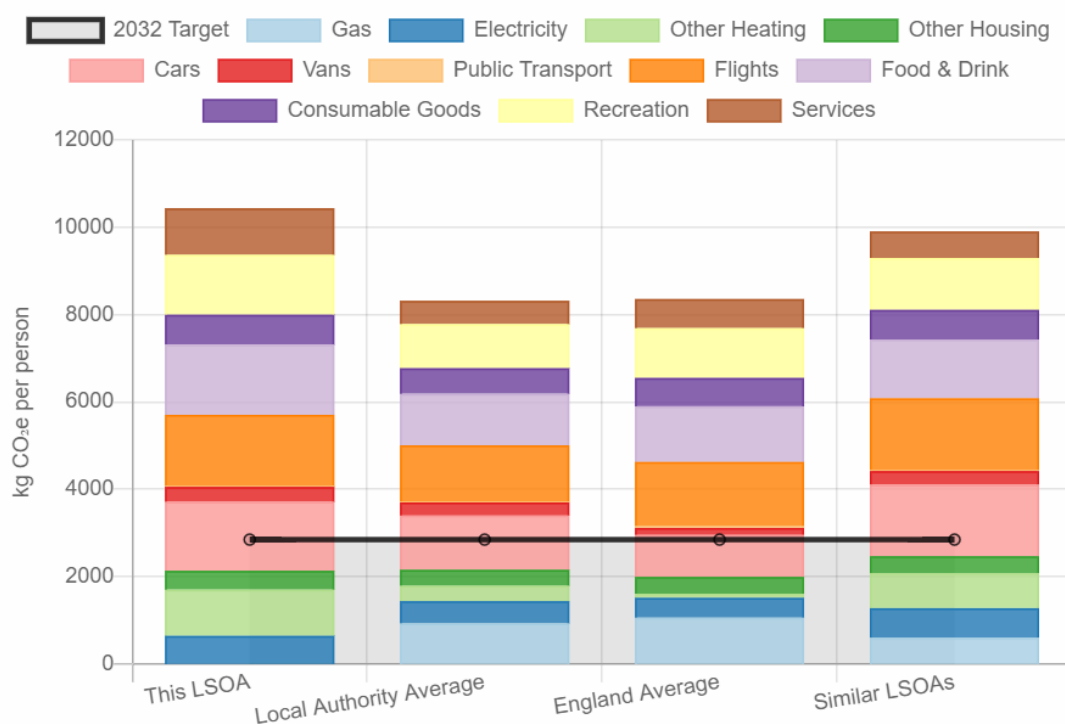
## Carbon emissions in the Shropshire Hills AONB

We do not have a full carbon audit specifically for the AONB, but we have access to data which will give similar insights. The figures below are from the Place-Based Carbon Calculator, a free tool which estimates the per-person carbon footprint for every Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in England, drawing on a wide range of data and research. <https://www.carbon.place/#8/51.482/-0.151>. Most of the AONB has higher than average carbon emissions (the orange and red colours).

Carbon emissions by super-output area in the Shropshire Hills



Breakdown of emissions in E01028991 a typical 'Remoter communities' LSOA (marked 1 on map)



The horizontal black line represents the UK's target footprint per person set out in the Committee on Climate Change's 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget, covering 2032 to 2037. It is intended to provide an indication of how far we must go in the next ten years to have any chance of reaching net-zero by 2050.

A 'corporate' carbon footprinting exercise for the AONB Partnership was undertaken in 2007 with results as follows:

| <b>Sector</b>             | <b>tCO<sub>2</sub> 2005/6</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Built Estate              | 19.14                         |
| Travel:                   | 24.01                         |
| <i>Staff Commute</i>      | <i>16.4</i>                   |
| <i>Business Travel</i>    | <i>5.47</i>                   |
| <i>Travel to meetings</i> | <i>2.15</i>                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>43.16</b>                  |

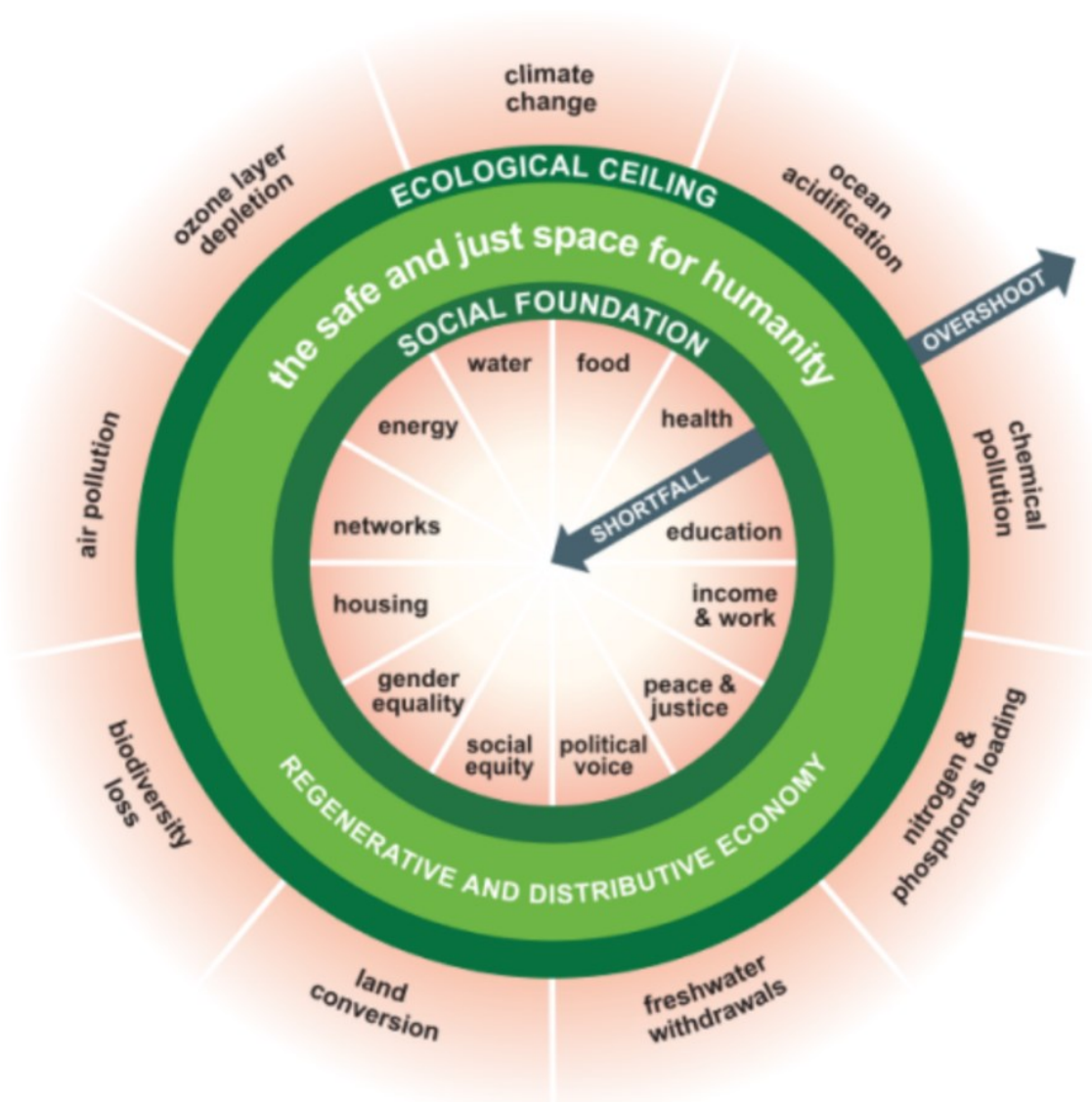
It has not been possible yet to conduct a comparable repeat audit across all these headings. However, business travel by the team in 2021-22 was 2,475 miles, compared to 23,665 miles in 2005-6, a decrease of 89.5%. Staff commute has decreased significantly due to ongoing higher levels of home working, and some shifting in the mode of transport. Heating and electricity use have decreased significantly due to downsizing to smaller and more energy efficient office premises, reduced space rented and more recently reduced occupancy of the office. There will of course be a 'hidden' increase in heating and electricity use in the homes of team members, which has not been quantified. Overall however the Partnership's carbon footprint is estimated to have reduced by around 60% since 2007.

The AONB Partnership's own carbon footprint is relatively small. Steps can and will be taken to improve this but the Partnership group and the team together have roles of delivery and of influencing which can have a much greater impact on reducing emissions. Direct delivery by the AONB team of 10 people is modest and targeted, and our methods also include convening partners and enabling others as well as delivering ourselves. More widely, the organisations represented by Partnership members have a lot of combined delivery capacity and the Partnership seeks to help them work effectively together. The Partnership encourages members to bring their knowledge and also to take back things to their organisations and/or communities. As a group it brings together many stakeholders and with the team has the capacity to support land managers and communities to take action.



## A new framework and goal

Urgent climate action is now almost universally pledged, but whether in protected landscapes, businesses or politics, it often jostles for position against other priorities and may even sometimes be seen as conflicting with other aims. Focussing solely on carbon carries the risk of unintended harm to nature and missing other dimensions of the broader ecological emergency. On the other hand, the prosperity and stability sought by traditional economic models will be drastically disrupted by climate breakdown as a result of business as usual or current trajectories. We need to integrate climate within a holistic framework setting an overall unifying goal – one of meeting people's needs fairly within the planetary boundaries that protect Earth's life-supporting systems.

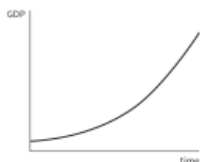


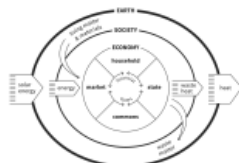


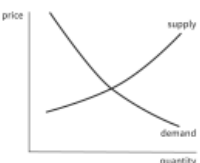
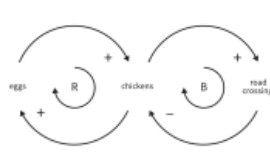




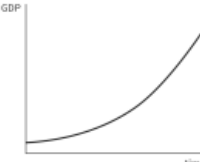
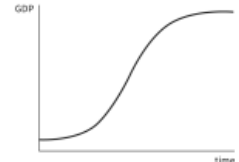


There is growing interest in application of the 'Doughnut Economics' model shown above, to geographical areas (including cities and National Parks).

There are related ideas in the 'circular economy' – eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products and materials, and in efforts to redefine measures of societal success beyond Gross Domestic Product. There is also a realisation that a 'just transition' is needed to ensure no communities are negatively impacted in the UK or overseas.



# Seven ways to think like a 21st century economist

| Seven Ways to Think:        | From 20th-Century Economics  | To 21st-Century Economics  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Change the Goal          | <br>GDP                             | <br>the Doughnut             |
| 2. See the Big Picture      | <br>self-contained market           | <br>embedded economy         |
| 3. Nurture Human Nature     | <br>rational economic man          | <br>social adaptable humans |
| 4. Get Savvy with Systems   | <br>mechanical equilibrium        | <br>dynamic complexity     |
| 5. Design to Distribute     | <br>growth will even it up again  | <br>distributive by design |
| 6. Create to Regenerate     | <br>growth will clean it up again | <br>regenerative by design |
| 7. Be Agnostic about Growth | <br>growth addicted               | <br>growth agnostic        |

April 2017 | Doughnut Economics Action Lab | For licensing visit [doughnuteconomics.org/license](https://doughnuteconomics.org/license)

See a series of seven excellent two minutes videos on this at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mkg2XMTWV4g>.

## **Vision for a future Shropshire Hills**

The scientific predictions of climate change impacts are important, but can be frightening and sometimes overwhelming, and there is a place for positive visioning as well as to motivate towards a positive goal.

In 2050 the Shropshire Hills, the UK and the world have reached Net Zero. Changes in economies and behaviour have improved people's wellbeing with more active travel and connection to nature. Regenerative agriculture is the norm and food security has improved. Habitat networks are strengthened and nature is recovering. The Shropshire Hills are enjoyed and understood by local people and visitors alike. Vibrant, diverse communities, with a strong sense of identity, live and work sustainably, supporting the local economy and conserving and enhancing the area's rich resources for future generations.

## **Climate change adaptation**

Projections indicate that global heating will result in warmer wetter winters, hotter summers, and more extreme weather events e.g. heat waves, torrential downpours of rain, extreme wind and storm events. These changes in climate are likely to create significant impacts which will affect all aspects of the economy, society, infrastructure and the natural environment.

Defra leads on the government's second national adaptation programme (2018-2023). NAAONB has been consulted on relevant work within the programme, and AONB organisations may at some stage be asked or expected to contribute to the regular reporting under the programme.

## **Action areas by topic**

The tables below set out actions for the AONB team, the Partnership and partners. These relate to the five topics considered by the NAAONB Climate change collaboration programme, addressed in the order of greatest influence of the AONB Partnership. This document doesn't aim to be a detailed source of information or analysis on all these topics – many other good sources are available.

The description of actions is deliberately kept short. There are different kinds of action, but what is apparent is that there are many things the AONN Partnership can do with regard to climate change, in essence by bringing it into everything we do.

For some actions it may be possible to calculate a carbon saving e.g. specific delivery actions such as peatlands and woodlands projects, or relating to office energy use. However many actions are based on influencing roles and for these it will not be possible to calculate a direct result in terms of reduction in GHG emissions. The actions should however be evaluated even if only informally to enable prioritisation of effort.

## Nature-based solutions

Overall goal - Safeguard the carbon stores in our landscape, reduce emissions from land and increase carbon sequestration, in ways which are compatible with nature. Halt and reverse the loss of good quality habitats and restore and recreate habitat networks across the landscape.

|   | AONB team | Partnership | Partners |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Continue development of Shropshire Hills peatlands project work to reach implementation stage of peatland restoration, initially in the Upper Clun catchment and then more widely | X         |             | X        |
| Optimise delivery through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme of nature-based solutions for climate   | X         | X           | X        |
| Implement Shropshire Hills AONB ancient woodland restoration project to help restore our best woodlands to the healthiest ecosystem possible                                      | X         |             | X        |
| Advocate for increase in appropriate tree planting and provide advice and guidance on suitable types of location, species, design etc.  | X         | X           | X        |
| Seek opportunities to support and implement Natural Flood Management measures including headwater restoration and flood plain restoration   | X         | X           | X        |
| Through consultation input, advice and projects, seek to safeguard existing habitats and develop habitat networks   | X         | X           | X        |
| Continue active involvement in Stepping Stones project  | X         | X           | X        |
| Disseminate and use recent Cranfield carbon audit of English AONBs to raise understanding of carbon in soils and vegetation and to identify the best actions and inform projects  | X         | X           | X        |
| Participate in development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy  | X         | X           | X        |
| Continue to explore and better understand the potential and implications of Carbon and Natural Capital markets  | X         | X           | X        |
| Seek support from businesses and consumers to end use of peat in horticulture   | X         | X           | X        |
| Explore possibilities for joint funding bids for Nature-Based Solutions through NAAONB  | X         |             |          |
| Explore the potential for biochar as a way of locking up more carbon in soils   | X         | X           | X        |

## Agriculture

Overall goal – Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from farming (including CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and N<sub>2</sub>O) while continuing to produce healthy and nutritious food, improving long and short term food security and enabling nature recovery.

|   | AONB team | Partnership | partners |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Support and promote regenerative and agro-ecological farming, in which improving the health of soils is a prime consideration               | X         | X           | X        |
| Use Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to support nature and climate friendly farming and help the Agricultural Transition programme | X         | X           | X        |
| Continue active involvement in Stepping Stones project, including facilitating farmer engagement and work with Upper Onny Farmers Group     | X         |             |          |
| Support and participate where possible in development of the Environmental Land Management scheme (ELM)                                     | X         | X           | X        |
| Continue active involvement in Our Upland Commons project   | X         |             | X        |
| Support and participate in the Shropshire Good Food Partnership, especially in relation to wise land stewardship and local food networks    | X         | X           | X        |
| Continue to work with Carbon land group of Zero Carbon Shropshire Land & Biodiversity group   | X         |             | X        |
| Promote a low carbon local economy with a strengthening of the local food sector  | X         | X           | X        |
| Support and promote events and case studies showcasing carbon and nature friendly farming   | X         | X           | X        |
| Promote and support larger volume hedgerows, new hedge planting and hedgerow trees, agro-forestry, wood pasture                             | X         | X           | X        |
| Support consistent models for farm advice, bringing farm business and environment into one unified plan                                     | X         | X           | X        |
| Support and encourage changes to uses of fertiliser and manure to lower GHG emissions   | X         | X           | X        |
| Support development of local supply chains for livestock feed especially proteins to reduce transportation                                  | X         | X           | X        |
| Support greater storage and retention of water  | X         | X           | X        |

## Sustainable transport and tourism

Overall goal – Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport and tourism while continuing to meet people’s needs (albeit probably reducing hypermobility trends of travel overall), and at the same time improving health and wellbeing.

|   | AONB team | Partnership | partners |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Promote and support active travel – walking, cycling etc through promotion and creation of walking and cycling routes and improvement of infrastructure | X         | X           | X        |
| Promote “Avoid – Shift – Improve” hierarchy of action to decarbonise transport  | X         | X           | X        |
| Continue to operate the Shropshire Hills Shuttles bus service   | X         |             |          |
| Continue an ongoing level of homeworking among the team and plan carefully to make efficient use of business journeys                                   | X         |             |          |
| Locate Partnership meetings to minimise travel, and encourage car sharing arrangements  |           | X           |          |
| Provide strategic input to encourage managing demand - people consuming and travelling less   | X         | X           | X        |
| Support improved public transport in the Shropshire Hills   | X         | X           | X        |
| Support for tourism businesses on sustainability  | X         |             | X        |
| Promote use of local food and products by tourists and visitors   | X         | X           | X        |
| Support roll-out of further EV charging points  | X         | X           | X        |
| Encourage greater use of speed limits and averaging speed cameras to reduce emissions   | X         | X           |          |

## Renewable energy

Overall goal – Facilitate an increase in generation of renewable energy in the Shropshire Hills which does not harm the special qualities of the AONB.

|   | AONB team | Partnership | partners |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Active dialogue with local authorities and stakeholders to improve guidance on renewable energy in the AONB         | X         | X           | X        |
| Provide input to assessment processes for renewable energy proposals, including landscape character and sensitivity | X         | X           |          |
| Highlight good examples of renewable energy within the AONB   | X         | X           |          |

## Buildings and energy efficiency

Overall goal – Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from domestic and commercial buildings.

|   | AONB team | Partnership | partners |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Work with Shropshire Council Estates team to identify energy efficiency measures for the AONB Partnership offices   | X         |             |          |
| Consider energy use including minimising car transport as part of a process to find new office accommodation        | X         |             |          |
| Through input to planning policy and casework support the highest standards of energy efficiency in new development | X         | X           | X        |
| Support programmes for retrofit of energy efficiency measures to existing buildings                                 | X         | X           | X        |
| Highlight good examples of energy efficiency within the AONB  | X         | X           | X        |

## **Engagement, communication and collaboration**

While our scope for direct delivery is modest, across all of the above topics we can work through engagement and communication with stakeholders and the wider public, and through collaboration – locally and nationally.

Through this we can support and encourage behaviour change for climate action by individuals, businesses and community groups, and we can influence strategic activity to optimise climate action while integrating with nature recovery and other ecological priorities.

- Use web, newsletter, social media and talks to engage people on climate action
- Explore Carbon literacy training for staff and potentially members
- Seek to integrate climate and nature into delivery of the John Muir Award
- Continue delivery of Young Rangers programme and develop Green Leaders
- Integrate climate strand within engagement through the AONB Trust, Friends and Conservation Fund
- Seek new opportunities to engage and re-engage young people and adults with nature, to harness their energy and improve their wellbeing
- Use insights from Climate Outreach's segmentation of the population, and appropriate messaging to inform engagement
- Support individuals to reduce their carbon footprint – promote carbon calculators. Support wildlife gardening, domestic food growing and composting, reducing food waste
- Make climate input in strategic work, responses to consultations, and work with partners
- Take opportunities through Defra to participate in the National Adaptation Plan
- Work collaboratively through NAAONB and with other AONB teams, including input to the creation of a collective, broad-level climate action plan for all AONBs
- Collaborate locally – with partners and communities, using the AONB designation to influence relevant stakeholders
- Work with other climate groups and plans in the area – including South Shropshire Climate Action and Zero Carbon Shropshire
- Promote and use the NAAONB Climate Action Framework and Toolkit
- Work with stakeholders and foster community links
- Take part in relevant events
- Include climate considerations in consultation responses
- Support activity and programmes to improve climate literacy – for staff and Partnership members
- Increase our understanding and evidence base
- Develop and include tangible climate action in the forthcoming review of the AONB Management Plan
- Seek funding opportunities to expand climate action
- Promote a framework of seeking to meet people's needs within planetary boundaries

## **Selected bibliography and further information**

Further information at <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>.

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Zawadzka, J.E., Keay, C., Hannam, J., Burgess, P.J, Corstanje, R. (2022). National Landscapes Carbon Audit & Metric (land management), Bedfordshire: Cranfield University.

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Ausden, M, Field, R, (2022) A guide to conservation land management and greenhouse gas emissions. Conservation Land Management Summer 2022 Vol 20 No2





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| <u>Committee and Date</u><br>Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership<br><br>8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 | <u>Item</u><br><br><b>5</b> |
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## OUR UPLAND COMMONS PROJECT

**Responsible Officer** Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager  
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### Summary

This paper gives members an update on the Our Upland Commons project operating in the Shropshire Hills AONB and other areas. The paper is in support of a presentation which will be made at the meeting by Renee Wallace, project officer for the Shropshire Hills.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the update and approve the nomination.

### Background

The written update provided by Renee is at Appendix 1.

|  |
|--|
| <b>List of Background Papers</b>   |
| <b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b><br>The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.                                      |
| <b>Environmental Appraisal</b><br>The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.                        |
| <b>Risk Management Appraisal</b><br>Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.                                   |
| <b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b><br>The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members. |
| <b>Appendices</b><br>Appendix 1 Our Upland commons in the Shropshire Hills – nearly two years in   |

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## Our Upland commons in the Shropshire Hills – nearly two years in

### 1. Introduction

The Our Upland Commons (OUC) project is a three year, £3M, 25 partner project helping to secure the future of upland commons on Dartmoor, in the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and the Shropshire Hills. It is led by the Foundation for Common Land.

This project follows on from the Our Common Cause (OCC) development project which ran just prior to the Covid pandemic which then caused a slight delay in the start of this, its delivery phase, but it finally got underway in February 2021.

The project has been made possible through funding from National Lottery players, grants from Esmée Fairbairn and Garfield Weston Foundations and the Shropshire based Millichope Foundation. The project also benefits from contributions from partners, in the form of time and expertise in kind, as well as direct financial support. Specific partners relevant to the Shropshire Hills include Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.

#### 1.1. Participating commons in the Shropshire Hills

Each of the four project areas has three main commons project delivery is centered around. In the Shropshire Hills these are Clee Liberty, Longmynd and Stiperstones.

The number of grazing commoners varies on these three commons, but all have active commoners associations.

### 2. Project delivery – four themes

All project activity is centered around four main themes:

- Collaboration
- Resilience
- Commons for all
- Commons for tomorrow

The first two elements are mainly aimed at supporting commoners, both as land managers but also in their wider business model, as commoning has an integral connection with the rest of the agricultural operations on their in-by land.

## **2.1. Collaboration**

*'Secure and support collaborative management of common land'.*

Examples of activities are shared learning visits (through my eyes), the Stiperstones shepherding service, shared infrastructure purchases, the Longmynd interpretation and facilitation project and activity relating to the visions that were drafted for each common during the development phase.

This project strand also aims to ensure that the role of commoners as land managers is fully acknowledged and the value of commoning as an agricultural land management system is safeguarded and widely known about and commoners are equipped and supported to partake in current and future management discussions and decision making on their commons.

## **2.2. Resilience**

*'Ensure that the health of commons is secured by supporting resilient commoning in a fast changing world'.*

These are turbulent and uncertain times for upland farmers with the future of upland farming as a whole under threat as we are going through BPS withdrawal transitions, development of new environmental schemes, a cost of living and food shortage crisis and the aftermath of a global pandemic. Activity relating to this project strand is largely driven by the pace at which the government is handling the transition and the uncertainty about what comes next and has centered around knowledge sharing with commoners.

The Foundation for Common Land has recently been awarded funding from Defra to carry out a Test & Trial project around the new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and commoners (through their commoner's associations) from Longmynd, Brant Fell in the Yorkshire Dales and Peter Tavy common on Dartmoor have been invited to take part in a fully funded and facilitated early trial. This work will produce much needed clarity, practical advice, templates, and other toolkit elements that will then be shared with commoners elsewhere.

## **2.3. Commons for all**

*'Reconnect the public with the natural and cultural heritage of common land'.*

A variety of activities around enjoying, learning and doing. This includes our events programme, where we raise the profile of commoning at local events and shows with our showstand and information and next year we hope to be expanding this further with our 'Take the Common to Town' initiative and other pop-up events.

Our work around a commons-based John Muir Award supports young people to learn more about commons and commoning and further an understanding at an early age.

## **2.4. Commons for tomorrow**

*'Enhance the environmental and ecological benefits offered by common land'.*

Activity under this theme includes historic environment projects on all three commons which an aerial LIDAR survey, community excavations, geophysical surveys, condition monitoring and wider talks on the features these undisturbed upland areas have protected for so many hundreds of years. Lots of opportunity for public participation and volunteering.

Our biodiversity and habitat work also part of this strand is helping us to further understand the threats and opportunities for certain key upland species.

The flagship whinchat project, through nest finding and chick ringing, has another year to run but already there is better knowledge why these migrant birds now only nest on the Longmynd, what habitat and other conditions they need to be successful and how joint management strategies by commoners and land owners working together can safeguard their survival.

Our butterfly and moth projects also help map and monitor key species. For instance, on Longmynd, prior to our project there was no knowledge (records) of small pearl-bordered fritillary, a butterfly on the UK red list and considered to be 'near threatened'. But this year we have found them and we are developing legacy plans to ensure management trials and volunteer effort can carry on after OUC finishes.

### **3. Acknowledgements**

Thanks go to the commoning community, our volunteers, contractors, project partners and landowners without whom this programme would pack a lot less of a punch. This programme aims to protect the centuries old farming practice of commoning, under threat but as relevant as ever, but it can only succeed as a collaborative effort.

For further information about the Our Upland Commons programme see [Our Upland Commons — Foundation for Common Land](#) (sign up for our mailing list!) and for anything Shropshire Hills specific email [renee@foundationforcommonland.org.uk](mailto:renee@foundationforcommonland.org.uk)

**Renée Wallace**

*Project Officer - Shropshire Hills*

**Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons**



**FOUNDATION FOR  
COMMON LAND**

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| <u>Committee and Date</u><br>Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership<br><br>8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 | <u>Item</u><br><br><b>6</b> |
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## STEPPING STONES PROJECT UPDATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

**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 gives members a further update on the Stepping Stones Project including recent project delivery and current work on a Sustainability roadmap and Needs Assessment. This is in support of presentations which will be made at the meeting by Andrew Hearle and Anam Choudhury of the National Trust.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the update.

### Background

#### Project overview

Stepping Stones is a landscape-scale nature conservation project covering more than 200km<sup>2</sup> in the Shropshire Hills AONB. The project is listed as one of the AONB's Area Initiatives contributing to the delivery of the AONB's Nature Recovery Plan and wider AONB Management Plan. The overarching aim of Stepping Stones is to connect wildlife habitats by strengthening and creating 'stepping stones' and corridors of wildlife habitat between the core sites of Long Mynd and the Stiperstones, extending to Stapeley Hill in the west and the Stretton Hills in the east.

In practice, this means creating and linking areas of heathland, flower-rich grasslands, broadleaved woodland via a network of wildlife-rich hedgerows, road verges, hillsides, and streamside wetlands. The project also aims to deliver a wide range of other public benefits such as cleaner water, regulated river water flow, carbon sequestration, conservation of the historic heritage, as well as opportunities for public recreation and benefits for personal health & wellbeing.

#### Project management

The project is currently led by the National Trust, who employ three FTE project staff: project manager, project officer and a part-time project coordinator. An informal strategic partnership oversees project delivery with contributions of staff time from the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, Natural England, and Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The project is delivered by working in partnership with people who live, work and visit this part of the Shropshire Hills. Currently, the project is working closely with a group of 19 farmers (Upper Onny Farmers

Group, coordinated by Cath Landles of the AONB Partnership), 10 local community environmental groups, as well as with numerous local communities, recreational groups, and volunteers.

#### Funding

The project has received external funding from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund for the period October 2021 until March 2023 and from the Defra Test & Trials Programme from February 2022 until June 2023. Summaries of funded activities are given in the tables below.

#### Towards a sustainable project

The project is looking to build on the successful work delivered to date and embark on the next phase of the project. Early in 2023 we will be commissioning a comprehensive Project Needs Assessment that will consult with stakeholders to identify the social, economic, and environmental needs of the communities living in this part of the Shropshire Hills.

A key outcome of the Needs Assessment will be the co-designing of projects that deliver the 50- year project vision and that are partnership led, measurable, and fundable.

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|--|
| <b>List of Background Papers</b><br>None   |
| <b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b><br>The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.                                      |
| <b>Environmental Appraisal</b><br>The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.                        |
| <b>Risk Management Appraisal</b><br>Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.                                   |
| <b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b><br>The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members. |
| <b>Appendices</b><br>Appendix 1 Stepping Stones Project delivery 2022-23<br>Appendix 2 Stepping Stones Sustainability Roadmap                          |



## Appendix 1 Steeping Stones Project delivery 2022/2023

### Green Recovery Challenge Fund Themes and Funded Activities

| <b>NATURE RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION</b>                                    |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Targets</b>  | <b>Main delivery partners</b>  |
| Enhanced management, restoration, and creation of wildlife habitats.          | 183ha hay meadow<br>68ha heath & upland grassland<br>12ha broadleaved woodland<br>Plant 11,000 trees and hedgerow whips   | Marches Meadow Group<br>Private landowners<br>CPRE Hedgerow Heroes Project<br>National Trust |
| Increased wildlife habitat connectivity by restoration of wildlife corridors: | 21km of roadside verge<br>5km of restored/new hedgerows   | Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project<br>Private landowners<br>National Trust                |
| Species conservation - Bats   | Radiotracking bats to map roosting and feeding sites in Steeping Stones' countryside  | Shropshire Bat Group   |
| Species conservation - Curlew   | Mapping Curlew nests and radiotracking chicks to track fate of curlew   | Shropshire Ornithological Society  |
| Species conservation - Dormouse   | Erection of Dormouse boxes for monitoring Dormouse populations & distribution   | Shropshire Dormouse Group  |
| Species conservation - Pine Marten  | Monitoring distribution of Pine Marten with 14 camera traps and 4 nesting boxes.  | Shropshire Wildlife Trust<br>Steeping Stones volunteers                                      |
| Species conservation - Bilberry Bumblebee                                     | Bumblebee ID training courses x3<br>Surveys of Bilberry Bumblebee (40 volunteer days)<br>Information leaflet  | Steeping Stones volunteers   |
| Non-native invasive species control   | Removal of Himalayan balsam - River Onny  | Upper Onny Wildlife Group  |
| Habitat opportunity mapping   | Analysis of habitat data and preparation of opportunity maps for 5 priority habitats  | Shropshire Council<br>Natural England<br>National Trust                                      |
| Species Action Plans  | Analysis of species distributions and development of costed Species Action plans for 5 priority species   | Shropshire Council<br>Natural England<br>National Trust                                      |
| <b>THE FARMED LANDSCAPE</b>   |   |  |
| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Targets</b>  | <b>Main delivery partners</b>  |
| Upper Onny Farmers Group – Coordinate and facilitate meetings and events      | Provide farm group facilitator for 8 meetings and events  | Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership<br>Upper Onny Farmers Group                                |
| Upper Onny Farmers Group – Organise programme of farm demonstrations          | Farm demonstration events:<br>- Hay meadow creation<br>- Wood pasture creation<br>- Wetlands and watercourses<br>- Holistic farming in practice<br>- Regenerative farming - visit to Cumbria organic dairy farm and sheep & beef farm | Upper Onny Farmers Group   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Provision of specialist on farm environment advice                           | i) Farm water management assessment and plan<br>ii) Woodland & heathland restoration and management assessment<br>iii) Hedgerow condition assessment and management plan<br>iv) Assessment of wetlands (rush pasture, wet flush) for Small pearl-bordered fritillary  | Upper Onny Farmers x6  |
| Promote community led events for landowners to explore farming & environment | Regenerative Agriculture Conference<br>Verges, Ditches, Hedgerows Conference  | MMCLT<br>Landowners  |
| <b>SUPPORTING COMMUNITY CONSERVATION GROUPS</b>                              |   |  |
| <b>Objective</b>   | <b>Targets</b>  | <b>Main delivery partners</b>  |
| Building capacity and capability of 10x Community conservation groups        | Health & safety and risk assessment<br>Effective Communications<br>iRecord training<br>Using Mailchimp<br>Dragonfly Identification  | Upper Onny Community Wildlife Group<br>Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group<br>Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group<br>Camlad Community Wildlife Group<br>Marches Meadow Group<br>Middle Marches Community Land Trust<br>Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project<br>Shropshire Dormouse Group<br>Butterfly Conservation<br>Caring For God's Acre |
| Funding of 10x Community conservation group's delivery programmes            | Purchase of machinery & tools (tractor, flail mower, hand tools)<br>Purchase of materials: fencing posts & wire, electric fencing, verge signs<br>Purchase of wildflower seed, shrubs, and trees<br>Purchase survey equipment: camera traps, nets, nest boxes<br>Site management: Norbury Hill bracken control, Cudwell Meadow pond creation, Anaerobic digester pilot<br>Survey: butterfly surveys, dormouse survey, breeding bird surveys, plant surveys<br>Promotion & publicity: Cudwell Meadow, Norbury Hill, Pontesbury showcase meadow, Long Mynd Butterfly Trail<br>Training: Riverfly monitoring, species identification | Upper Onny Community Wildlife Group<br>Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group<br>Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group<br>Camlad Community Wildlife Group<br>Marches Meadow Group<br>Middle Marches Community Land Trust<br>Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project<br>Shropshire Dormouse Group<br>Butterfly Conservation<br>Caring For God's Acre |

| <b>CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE &amp; HERITAGE</b>                                     |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Targets</b>   | <b>Main delivery partners</b>  |
| Listening project, giving people a stake in the future of the Stepping Stones landscape | <i>Listening to the Landscape</i> - an oral and photographic record of 24 local people and visitors' connection to the Stepping Stones landscape<br><br>Listening to the Landscape publication and Story Map | Project commissioned from professional Creative Artists<br><br>24 individuals who live, work or visit the Stepping Stones project area |
| Stepping Stones volunteer team (20 events)  | Fencing hedgerow planting<br>Yellow rattle seed collection<br>Hedge laying<br>Scrub management<br>Meadow raking<br>Yellow rattle seed sowing   | Stepping Stones volunteers (187 individuals)   |
| Stepping Stones volunteer training events (7 events)                                    | Hedge laying<br>Fencing<br>Scything<br>Archaeological site condition assessment  | Stepping Stones volunteers (44 individuals)  |
| Promotion of the historic heritage  | Assessment of the heritage of the Stepping Stones project area<br>LiDAR survey of Long Mynd to Stretton Hills<br>Public presentation of the heritage of the Stepping Stones project area                     | Fearne Heritage & Archaeology Consultancy<br>Local people and general public   |
| Heritage restoration and promotion of heritage conservation                             | Heritage restoration action plans for 4 sites  | Fearne Heritage & Archaeology Consultancy<br>4 local farmers<br>Volunteers   |
| Stepping Stones recreational routes   | Design, and printing 12 routes that link up key Stepping Stones sites for hikers, runners, cyclists and horse riders.  | Local cycling, running, walking and horse-riding groups  |
| Wildlife Gardening Project  | Series of training and online events:<br>Gardening for pollinators<br>Connecting with nature in the garden<br>Healthy gardens for thriving wildlife<br>Gardening to support cycles of nature                 | Stepping Stones Project<br>Natural Gardener<br>General public  |
| Community   | 3x Community field trips to explore the Stepping Stones landscape and showcase community conservation group activities   | Stepping Stones Project<br>Community conservation groups<br>General public   |
| Communication & promotion   | Monthly Newsletters – 300 members<br>Talks and webinars<br>Stepping Stones Introductory Film<br>BBC TV and Radio   | Stepping Stones Project<br>General public<br>Numerous local groups and societies   |

## **Defra Test & Trial Delivery Headlines**

| <p><b><i>Integrating Heritage into Land Management Plans Test &amp; Trial.</i></b> The principal aim of is to address where and how land managers and the bodies administering the new schemes will get heritage <b>data</b> and <b>advice</b> (with a particular emphasis upon the role of Historic England as an ALB and ALGAO as a delivery partner), testing different formats of data and advice provision within <b>Land Management Plans</b>.</p> |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b><i>Objective</i></b>  | <b><i>Targets</i></b>  | <b><i>Main delivery partners</i></b>  |
| Develop and test a methodology for integrating historic heritage into land management plans  | Retro-fitting heritage into 5 existing Whole Farm Plans  | Upper Onny Farmers (5 farmers)<br>Historic England<br>Stepping Stones project     |
|  | Integrating natural environment and heritage from the outset in a further 5 new Whole Farm Plans | Upper Onny Farmers (5 farmers)<br>Historic England<br>Stepping Stones project     |
|  | Pulling together both sets of Whole Farm Plans to evaluate wider landscape-scale opportunities.  | Upper Onny Farmers (10-15 farmers)<br>Historic England<br>Stepping Stones project |

STEPPING STONES SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP

| Key Steps                                 | STEP 1   | STEP 2   | STEP 3   | STEP 4  | STEP 5   | STEP 6   | STEP 7   |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| Key Activities                            | Stakeholders & Audience Development Plan.  | Confirming NT priorities for Stepping Stones Programme   | Stepping Stones Programme Development Group Setup.   | Stepping Stones Programme Needs Assessment.   | Stepping Stones Programme Identification and Planning.   | Discuss project proposition (incl costs and timescales) with NLHF Midlands Team  | Submission of EOI to NLHF and other relevant Funders.  |
| Why do we need to take these steps?       | <p>To establish a clear understanding of the current and future stakeholders of the Programme and enlist help of key players.</p> <p>To gain early support among all stakeholders on goals, plans and working together principles.</p> <p>To create a practical blueprint for growing audiences, increasing reach, building deeper relationships and doing those things to the best of abilities &amp; resources.</p> <p>To help address conflicts or issues early on and avoid duplication.</p> | <p>To confirm the scope for the next phase of the project.</p> <p>To identify NT’s priorities for a NLHF application: which activities NT will lead and those we will encourage partners to lead with our support</p> <p>To agree NT preferences for application and programme management</p> <p>To provide a clear statement of NT position and preferred options for an EOI prior to setting up a wider Programme Development Group with partners.</p> | <p>To support the delivery and evaluation of the current Stepping Stones Programme.</p> <p>To support the co-design of new programmes of activities and services beyond 2023.</p> <p>To represent the interest of relevant partners and stakeholders in projects.</p> <p>To create a bottoms-up and partnership culture in project design within the NT.</p> | <p>To ensure that the community's perceived needs are addressed and that they share in identifying solutions.</p> <p>To assess the interest, commitment and capacity of potential partners, volunteers and wider stakeholders.</p> <p>To evidence a thorough and committed approach to collaboration with stakeholders and partnership working in support of applications to funding partners, and approaches to donors and in-kind contributors.</p> | <p>Use the Needs Assessment Report as the basis on which to co-design a sustainable programme with key partners and stakeholders involved through the Programme Development Group and other means including digital platforms.</p> <p>Develop monitoring and evaluation framework to evidence the new and proposed Stepping Stones programme delivery.</p> | <p>To gauge level of NLHF interest in the proposition and take on board any indications for modifying the proposals to give greater certainty to the likelihood of a successful application.</p> | <p>To secure interest of the relevant funders in the design of a new programme.</p> <p>To secure short term, medium term and long-term funding.</p> <p>• <i>EOI Must be well evidenced, persuasive and align with the National Heritage and other funders Priorities and Outcomes.</i></p> |
| Resources and Board Approval Requirements | Community & Participation (C&P) Consultant, E&E Curator & SS Delivery Team.  | Project Board and wider Project Team workshop  | Community & Participation Consultant and SS Delivery Team.   | External Consultancy, supported by C&P Consultant and the SS Delivery Team.   | Funding Consultant supported by C&P Consultant/Delivery Team.  | Funding Consultant supported by C&P Consultant/Delivery Team.  | Funding Consultant supported by C&P Consultant   |
| Key Actions/ Outputs                      | Produce Stakeholders and Audience Development Plan/Spreadsheet detailing levels of participation (min-max).  | Confirm programme priorities for NT lead in a Heritage Grant application   | Organise a Partnership Day to discuss a draft action plan with key milestones, expectations. Secure consensus for sustainability.  | Develop a Needs Assessment Brief, secure its approval, recruit consultancy and produce the Needs Assessment Report.   | Build as project proposition: A clear, well-cited, and easily deployable project ideas and project plans.  | Funding consultant to meet with NLHF Midlands Team   | Submission of Expression of Interest for sustainable development and funding procurement.  |

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| <b>Committee and Date</b> |
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| Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership |
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| 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 |
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## FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES - SHOWCASE OF PROJECT ACTIVITY

**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 summary information about the programme, in support of the presentation which will be made at the meeting by Alison Jones.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the information provided.

### Background

We are now about two thirds through year 2, so slightly beyond the mid-point of the three year programme. To date we have had 40 applications – with 33 approved, six declined and one withdrawn. We have quite a large grant budget of £814,981 in 2022/23 due to reprofiling from Year 1, and applications coming in are not likely to be sufficient to spend all of this, however we currently project spend of around 75% of the grant budget. We have two further panels planned on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov and 14<sup>th</sup> Dec and projects coming forward at these panels will determine final spend for this Financial Year. The grant budget for 2023-24 is £691,142.

The Local Assessment Panel meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks. Alison Jones and other members of the team continue to work closely with landowners to develop projects. In some cases this means giving quite substantial support to applicants to ensure that strong applications can be made. We have promoted the programme at the Rea Brook Community Event in May and an NFU event at Clee Downton in June, and in regular AONB promotional activity. We are currently working closely with NFU and CLA on further promotion.

We hosted the FiPL Defra team on a visit to the Shropshire Hills AONB on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Summaries of the projects that have been awarded a grant are available at <https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/farming-in-protected-landscapes/farming-in-protected-landscapes-projects>.

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| <b>List of Background Papers</b> |
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| Further information at <a href="https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/farming-in-protected-landscapes">https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/help-to-look-after/farming-in-protected-landscapes</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**

None





| <u>Committee and Date</u>  | <u>Item</u>      |
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| Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership<br><br>8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 | <br><br><b>8</b> |

## AONB TEAM ACTIVITY BRIEF UPDATE

**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 gives members an update on recent activity of the AONB team.

### Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the update.

### Background

Some recent items of note are:

- We have secured Forestry Commission funding (in partnership with the Woodland Trust) for the Ancient Woodland restoration project and will very soon be recruiting a project officer.
- Rachel Glover started with the team as Natural Environment Officer on 5<sup>th</sup> September.
- Practical works have commenced on the Fix the Fort project on Caer Caradoc. Helicopter uplift of material has been delayed several times due to weather but will hopefully be done on the coming days enabling the main repair works to be carried out.
- The Young Rangers project has had a busy programme of events for October half term.
- We are in discussion with partners on proposals for use of Defra's allocation of some capital funding for 'Access for All'
- We are intending to apply to renew the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.
- The National Association for AONBs continues to work closely with Defra on implementation of Glover Review recommendations, including the rebrand of AONBs as National Landscapes, marking a step change in legal and delivery arrangements. The NAAONB's recent prospectus will be circulated to members separately to the meeting papers.

Full update papers are given to the Strategy & Performance Committee and are available to members on request. A summary of the team work programme is given in Appendix 1.

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| <b>List of Background Papers</b>   |
| None   |
| <b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b>  |
| The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.                             |
| <b>Environmental Appraisal</b>   |
| The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.            |
| <b>Risk Management Appraisal</b>   |
| Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.                         |
| <b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b>   |
| The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members. |
| <b>Appendices</b>  |
| Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Team Work Programme 2022-23 Summary                                    |

| Area of work   | Key actions   |
|--|---|
| <b>TAKING ACTION - on the ground and in our communities - to conserve and enhance natural beauty and to promote enjoyment and understanding.</b>                       |   |
| <b>Farming in Protected Landscapes</b>   | Implement Year 2 of new Defra funded programme offering grants for farmers and landowners, with advice and support.   |
| <b>Young Rangers project and Green Leaders</b>   | Deliver programme of practical activities including John Muir Award for 12-16 year olds, and Green Leaders activities for 17-21 year olds   |
| <b>Ancient Woodland Restoration project</b>  | Establish and commence new project for advice and restoration of ancient woodlands, in partnership with Woodland Trust  |
| <b>Stepping Stones project</b>   | Support delivery of 'Stepping Stones' project led by National Trust, especially farmer engagement for Environmental Land Management Tests & Trials  |
| <b>Sustainable tourism delivery</b>  | Manage 2022 <b>Shuttle bus</b> and plan 2023 service<br>Plan works to deliver the ' <b>Caering for Caradoc – Fix the Fort</b> ' project   |
| <b>Peatlands project development</b>   | Continue to develop detailed proposals, engage partners and seek funding  |
| <b>'Our Common Cause' upland commons project</b>   | Support delivery of national project led by Foundation for Common Land, including support for Area Group and Area Project Officer   |
| <b>John Muir Award</b>   | Lead John Muir Award programmes with selected participating schools   |
| <b>Develop other new projects</b>  | Including catchment and river work, nature-based solutions, health, diversity   |
| <b>INFLUENCING OTHERS - lead and champion the delivery of public benefits from the AONB, working strategically and collaboratively from policy to grassroots level</b> |   |
| <b>Climate &amp; Ecological Emergency</b>  | Active involvement in Shropshire and South Shropshire climate partnerships, NAAONB collaboration groups, Shropshire Council Officer group<br>Preparation of AONB Partnership <b>Climate Change Action Plan</b>                      |
| <b>AONB Management Plan</b>  | Continue implementation of the AONB Management Plan for 2019-24<br>Publish progress report and start preliminary work on Plan review  |
| <b>Sustainable tourism strategic work</b>  | Support delivery of <b>Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy</b> and development of county Destination Management Plan working.<br>Actively advocate for sustainable tourism at local, county & national levels             |
| <b>Planning</b>  | Comment on relevant <b>policy</b> documents and key <b>planning applications</b><br>Maintain and improve links with local authority planning staff and members  |
| <b>Input to other strategies &amp; schemes</b>   | Provide input to strategic <b>consultations</b> (non-planning)<br>Input to work on <b>Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b> and <b>Clun catchment</b><br>Comment on non-planning <b>casework</b> such as EIAs, watercourses and hedges |
| <b>Promote special qualities of the AONB and Partnership activity</b>  | Maintain and update <b>website</b> and regular <b>social media</b> output<br>Publish <b>E-newsletters and Annual Review</b> , give <b>talks</b>   |
| <b>Local authorities and partnerships</b>  | Maintain/strengthen links with relevant departments of each local authority<br>Input to Marches Nature Partnership, Teme Partnership and other groups<br>Facilitate the Clun Catchment Partnership and Wrekin Forest Partnership    |
| <b>National Association for AONBs</b>  | Active involvement with NAAONB and other relevant networks  |
| <b>Shropshire Hills AONB Trust</b>   | Support the Trust to develop charitable and business fund-raising   |
| <b>Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund</b>   | Support the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust to administer and award grants, and provide advice and support for projects   |
| <b>Friends of Shropshire Hills AONB</b>  | Administer Friends scheme and work with Trust to expand membership  |
| <b>Support initiatives led by others</b>   | Support projects and initiatives and respond to requests for information  |
| <b>MANAGING OUR BUSINESS - develop a robust, effective and financially sustainable AONB organisation</b>   |   |
| <b>Post Glover Review development</b>  | Work with NAAONB, Defra, AONB Partnership, National Landscapes Partnership and local authorities to develop work and structures   |
| <b>AONB Partnership</b>  | Facilitate, support and develop the AONB Partnership and Strategy & Performance Committee advisory structures   |
| <b>AONB Team</b>   | Hold team meetings, performance reviews, training and development   |
| <b>Finance, office, IT, Health &amp; Safety, legal requirements</b>  | Manage and administer AONB Partnership finances, develop income streams, continue to modernise working practices, ensure compliance in all areas  |
| <b>Evidence base and GIS</b>   | Collect data to support forthcoming Management Plan review  |
| <b>Volunteering</b>  | Involve volunteers through AONB-led and supported activities  |

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