



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  13 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
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<u>Item</u>  <b>5</b>
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## **AONB TEAM WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

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### **Summary**

This paper provides an update on recent activity by the AONB Team.

### **Recommendation**

The Partnership is recommended to note the progress update.

### **Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Team Work Programme – selected updates on recent work since March 2017**

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

#### **Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme**

Stabilisation works have been completed at the [1784 Pontesford Engine House](#). This is the largest capital project within the Scheme and has taken a lot of time to negotiate.

[Ground- nesting birds](#). Curlew nests are being monitored, including a live streamed nest cam. To date 22 nests have been found. 8 have since failed due to crow predation and not having the fencing in place, whilst waiting for a full clutch of eggs to be laid.

[Impressions of the Past](#) – over 200 round ceramic tiles created with designs inspired by the landscape and Celtic symbols. These have been installed in a simulated wooden palisade fence at Poles Coppice, looking out to Earl’s Hill.

[Hay Meadow Festival](#) is to be held on Sat 24 June 10am-4pm at the Bog, Pennerley.

[Buzz in the Borders](#) is working with Churchstoke Primary School this summer.

Next month, two of our [Young Rangers](#), along with Education Officer Jon Bielstein are travelling to Habkern in Switzerland to take part in the 2017 Europarc International Junior Ranger Camp. They are one of 14 delegations from 10 different European countries.

[Interpretation](#) installation has been carried out at the mine sites: Tankerville, Snailbeach and Cothercott.

[Skills in the Hills events](#) – Hay Rake making 10-11 June, Axe handle making 22-23 July.

Marvellous Moths id sessions being held monthly May – Aug.

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

Conservation Fund now handed over to AONB Trust for contractual offers etc. Support still provided for applicants, Panel etc by the AONB Team for a small fee, according to a simple written agreement put in place on joint working.

2017-18 Conservation Fund grants offered as follows:

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Name of project</b>	<b>Amount of grant</b>	<b>Planned total project value</b>	<b>Rate of grant</b>
National Trust	Heartland - Art and Landscape project	£1,000	£36,700	2.72%
Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group	Improving access and biodiversity of Stretton Wetlands	£1,500	£31,625	4.74%
Severn Rivers Trust	Restoration of the Upper River Teme	£1,000	£15,940	6.27%
Four and Twenty Arts CIC	Blakemoorgate Wild Art Museum	£1,000	£2,450	40.82%
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	John Muir Award with 2 new schools (Farlow and Clunbury), increasing Wildlife Watch to 10 new schools and wildlife camera trapping project with Stuart Edmunds.	£2,000	£4,650	43.01%
Upper Onny Wildlife Group	Upper Onny Invasive Plants Project	£1,000	£2,760	36.23%
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Local Wildlife Site Restoration and Improvement	£1,000	£1,477	67.70%
Redlake Valley CBS	Community Engagement in Woodland Management	£500	£1,420	35.21%
South Shropshire Youth Forum	South Shropshire Youth Heritage & Conservation Programme	£2,000	£20,099	9.95%
Caring for God's Acre	Wildlife in God's Acre	£1,000	£6,419	15.58%
Butterfly Conservation	Wood White	£1,000	£10,615	9.42%
Lightfoot Enterprises	Woodlands for All	£1,000	£3,530	28.33%
Footloose	Biodiversity and music project with Stokesay School on the Long Mynd	£750	£1,097	68.37%
Grow Cook Learn	Shropshire Hills Discovery Walks	£2,000	£3,990	50.13%
Marches Meadows Group	Storage barn for equipment and hay	£500	tbc	tbc
Myndtown Combined Parish Council	Myndtown Combined Parishes Verges Project	£1,000	£7,025	14.23%
Corvedale CofE Primary School	Wildlife Pond Area	£550	£1,550	35.48%
Shropshire Mobile Farm	Farms and Flowers - Educational visits in school.	£1,200	£2,600	46.15%
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	Foundation for Common Land – Upland Commons Project	£1,800	£528,200	0.34%

Trust bank account now in place and new admin arrangements being made for Friends subscriptions to be paid direct to the Trust. New Friends leaflet in preparation. Joint Tour event planned for Fri 7<sup>th</sup> July, focussing on Conservation Fund.

## **River Clun Recovery project**

The WREN funded project is now half way through its four years. Alison Jones is the Project Officer and Heather Scott a student at Harper Adams is helping 2 days/week.

This winter 3,000 trees have been planted alongside the River Clun and Kemp. Once established, these trees will help to stabilise the riverbank and provide an excellent buffer between field and river, reducing soil and nutrient losses from the land. A further 1,000 trees are being planted by volunteers on a single woodland creation site near Mainstone.

Gateway works have been carried out. Liaison with landowners is being picked up to progress work on Recovery Site 1.

## **Sustainable Tourism practical delivery**

Leaflet Swap and tourism business networking event on March 29<sup>th</sup> at Stokesay Court organised jointly with Shropshire Hills Tourism, was very successful, and attended by over 100 people.

'Great Days in the Shropshire Hills' leaflet launched with Shropshire Hills Tourism.

Shuttles service started at Easter – publicity and promotion put in place. Numbers over the May Bank Holiday were good. Not running in June due to budget constraints.

Investigations into proposed 'supporter giving' pilot project.

## **Education & Events**

John Muir Award work completed with Kinlet School. 2017-18 programme set up with Clunbury and Farlow Primary Schools.

Guided walk in the Clun uplands put on as part of Bishop's Castle Walking Festival.

## **Project development**

Meeting with partners about proposed AONB-wide education project focusing on John Muir Award and Young Rangers.

Discussion on reformulation of Resilient Heritage bid for resubmission – after Defra decision on Conservation Board.

Attended Stepping Stones project workshop formulating detailed project proposals.

Invitation to join project steering group. Contracted to co-ordinate and carry out some farmer interviews as part of engagement process.

Upland Commons project to be resubmitted to HLF by Foundation for Common Land.

Proposals submitted to Plantlife for proposed national bid on road verge biodiversity project. Proposals also submitted to Highways England regarding possible trunk road verge project.

Workshop meeting held on possible Upper Teme ecological networks project.

Liaison with Herefordshire Radnorshire Wildlife Trusts regarding possible Marches project.

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

Comments submission on Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy and meeting requested with new Group Manager for Business Growth and Prosperity.

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Nature Partnership to merge with Herefordshire to form a Marches LNP, to facilitate better links with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Shropshire Hills Uplands Forum reports circulated.

Undergrounding – proposal being put forward for Church Pulverbatch Conservation Area.

The Heartland Project is in full swing with singing workshops, sculptures on the slopes of Carding Mill Valley and plans under way to set up camp 'Iron-Age' style on Earl's Hill in July.

Social media. Facebook page has 1,853 likes and Twitter 3,064 followers. Some staff attended an informal social media course run by one of our volunteers. Regular input to NAAONB's #outstandinghour on Twitter on Wednesdays 1-2pm.

### **Clun Catchment**

Clun Catchment Partnership meeting held 17 May.

Natural England's Freshwater Pearl Mussel specialist visited Recovery Site 2 and was favourably impressed with the works carried out.

Highways Sediment survey on the Redlake and Clun Catchment Fords surveys completed.

### **Planning**

AONB Manager attended the South Planning Committee meeting on 4 April 2017 and spoke against the Hurst Barn poultry application. This was granted permission.

An appeal regarding the Hoptonheath poultry application has been rejected by the Planning Inspectorate. This application was the subject of a Judicial Review brought by Clungunford Parish Council, subsequently refused by Shropshire Council, and then taken to appeal by the applicant.

### **Sustainable Tourism strategic work**

EU funded tourism co-operation project. Feedback from Gravity consultants who have had contact with over 100 businesses. On-line 'product' proposals are now in development.

Meeting of Destination Partnership 25 April.

Discussions held on renewal of European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

Renewal of Sustainable Tourism Strategy starting.

Involvement with county level tourism & environment co-ordination group 'Discover Shropshire'.

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

**Transition process**

Business Case for creation of Conservation Board refined to criteria set out in the Minister's letter. Informal comments are awaited from Defra before formal resubmission.

Attended NAAONB workshop on future priorities for the Association 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Meeting held with Natural England regarding joint working.

2016-17 Defra final claims and reporting completed. Year end budgets completed.

**Staffing**

Nigel McDonald (Sustainable Tourism Officer) is dropping from full time to 3 days/week from 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**List of Background Papers**

AONB Partnership Spring Newsletter

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKSHROPSHIRE/bulletins/18f204e>

Landscape Partnership Scheme newsletter 31 May 2017

<http://www.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk/2017/05/3276/>

[https://www.facebook.com/stiperstonesandcorndon/#\\_](https://www.facebook.com/stiperstonesandcorndon/#_)

**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