

AONB TEAM WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Responsible Officer Phil Holden, AONB Partnership Manager
e-mail: phil.holden@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254741

Summary

This paper provides a brief update on AONB team work programme activity since the last meeting.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to comment on the information provided.

Background

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

The scheduled end of the Scheme was 31st March 2018. Short extensions to contracts for three of the LPS staff were all finished by 18th May. Most of the final claims and reporting work is completed. Work continues on development of a number of legacy projects.

River Clun Recovery Project (WREN funded)

Work on alternative stock watering has been completed on the Clunton Brook as part of the Environment Agency's 'Unmuddying the Waters' project. Contract works for improvement of several drinking bays are also in preparation, and aftercare has been carried out on tree planting sites. The River Clun was visited by staff working on the River Torridge in Devon.

Upper Teme habitat opportunity mapping

This contract for Natural England has been completed and follow-up work is in discussion.

Sustainable Tourism delivery

The Shuttles service started on 12th May with new operator Boultons. A new Shuttles Supporters scheme has been launched and is raising funds via the AONB Trust. The verifier for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is visiting in July.

'Our Common Cause' Upland Commons project

Cath Landles is acting as the Area Facilitator for the Shropshire Hills area of this national project. She has attended a training session at Dartmoor and is undertaking one to one discussions with key stakeholders at the three commons in our area involved in the project – Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty.

Project development

A detailed Shropshire Hills bid for inclusion in the Woodland Trust's national 'Trees Outside Woodlands' proposed HLF project was shortlisted but unfortunately not finally included. Follow-up work is going on with Woodland Trust to see if aspects of this can be implemented any other way.

A meeting with partners has been held for the proposed Monument Volunteers project. Meetings have been held with National Trust partners for the community and farm business aspects of the 'Stepping Stones' project.

An application was submitted for the Environment Agency/ Natural England 'Water Environment Grant' in partnership with Severn Rivers Trust. This would provide capacity for improved advice to farmers regarding the water environment.

The Marches Crayfish project is under way and surveys of native crayfish are being commissioned.

A temporary post is being developed to work on bringing the proposed Monument Volunteers project and Youth project to fruition.

We are involved in a Shropshire Hills Social Forestry network – looking to develop activity to benefit people's wellbeing in a woodland environment, especially for vulnerable groups.

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

AONB Management Plan

See item 6.

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

Conservation Fund 2017-18 final claims and 2018-19 grant offers are now mostly completed. A number of volunteers are helping with Friends recruitment at public events and shows.

Planning

Input is being provided to Shropshire Council regarding new guidance on poultry sheds and ammonia. A meeting with the South Planning team leader is arranged.

Local partnership working

Meetings have been held of the Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership, Wrekin Forest Partnership and Clun Catchment Partnership. We have had involvement with a Corve Dale Field Officers group regarding catchment management.

Input to strategies

Detailed submissions have been made to consultations on Defra agriculture policy and National Planning Policy Framework consultations.

We hosted a visit by Andrea Ledward, Defra Natural Environment Director.
Input has been made to Forestry design plan consultations and to a Conservation Management Plan for Offa's Dyke.

Communications & public awareness

The AONB 60th anniversary has been widely publicised, and plans developed for the Hay Meadow Festival on Sat 7th July, and 19th June event at Church Stretton.

Support for groups

Support has been given to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund project by Land Life & Livelihoods and the Upper Clun Community Wildlife group.

Support also given to Bishop's Castle and Church Stretton Walking Festivals.

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

Structure and governance

The decision was made by the Partnership not to pursue other independent structures and instead to refine Terms of Reference. Meetings of Management Board and a sub-group have been held to pursue this. The national Review of AONBs is getting under way (see item 7). Data protection training has been undertaken and systems updated.

Resilient Heritage project

(see agenda item 5)

List of Background Papers
The fuller Team Work Programme as submitted to Defra is available to members on request.
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