



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership  19 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<u>Item</u>  <b>6</b>
--	-----------------------------

## **AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW - PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**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 updates Partnership members on the findings from the two month web-based public survey on the Management Plan review, and progress with the Review overall.

### **Recommendation**

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

### **Background**

Public survey - The public survey was adapted from one recently used by another AONB and was open during April and May. It was widely publicised, and 203 responses were received. The questions and analysis of answers are given in Appendix 1. The answers to Q8 are given in full for interest as it is not really possible to summarise these.

Workshop at 6<sup>th</sup> March Partnership meeting – the write up of this is given in Appendix 2.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping – Some comments were received from organisations and further discussions are needed, which will help to strengthen the Management Plan.

State of the AONB report - Discussions have been held with relevant organisations about the reasons behind some of the trends observed. There is some work still to do for the State of the AONB report to be completed and published.

NAAONB discussions with Defra - The NAAONB is actively engaging with Defra regarding proposals for new environmental land management schemes. This will feed into the Management Plan.

Response to agriculture command paper - A response to this consultation was submitted from the AONB Partnership, some of which will be relevant for inclusion in the new AONB Management Plan.

Revised timetable for draft plan publication for consultation - The timetable for approving a new draft Plan for public consultation has been put back from June to the October Partnership meeting. This should still allow time for the necessary stages to completion by the end of March 2019.

Planning meeting – a meeting between AONB Partnership representatives (including Councillors & Vice Chairs) and members of the Shropshire Council south Planning team is to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> June. This will focus on areas of the Management Plan which can be improved regarding policy and guidance on key planning issues. A corresponding meeting with Telford & Wrekin Council is also being held.

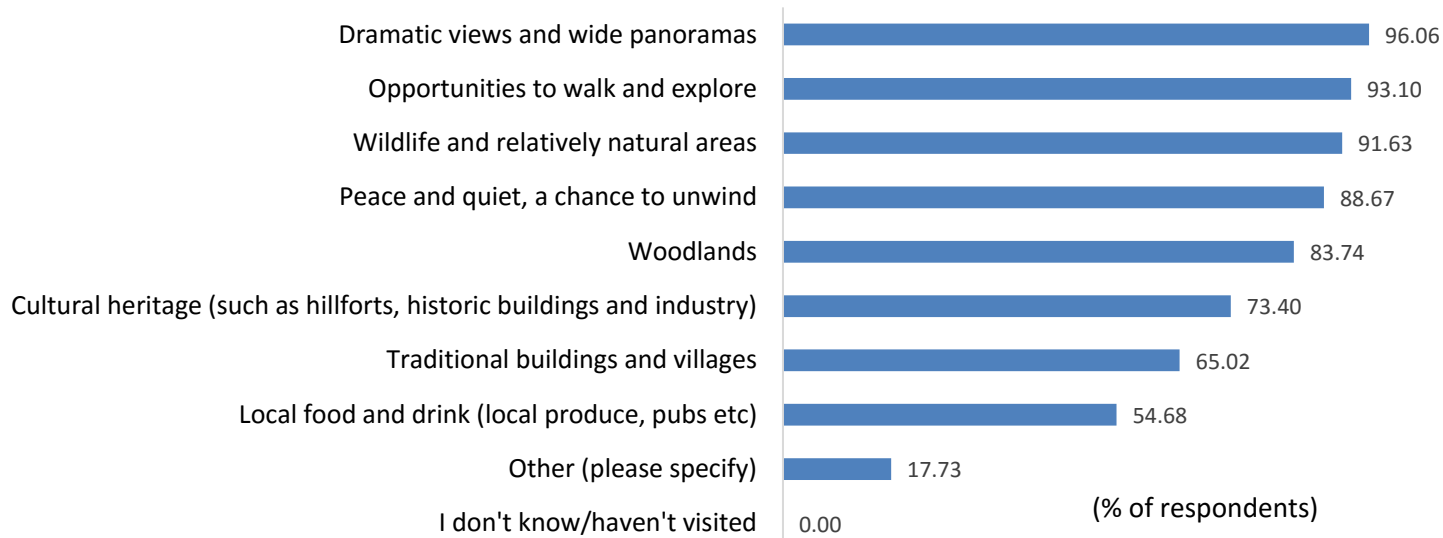
Natural Environment group – an officer focus group on natural environment and biodiversity priorities is planned.

Resourcing – Some additional help to support the Plan review may be contracted.

<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> Appendix 1 Summary analysis of Management Plan review public survey  Appendix 2 Write-up of workshop at AONB Partnership meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> March

## Appendix 1 Summary analysis of Management Plan review public survey

### 1. What do you value about the Shropshire Hills (tick all that apply)

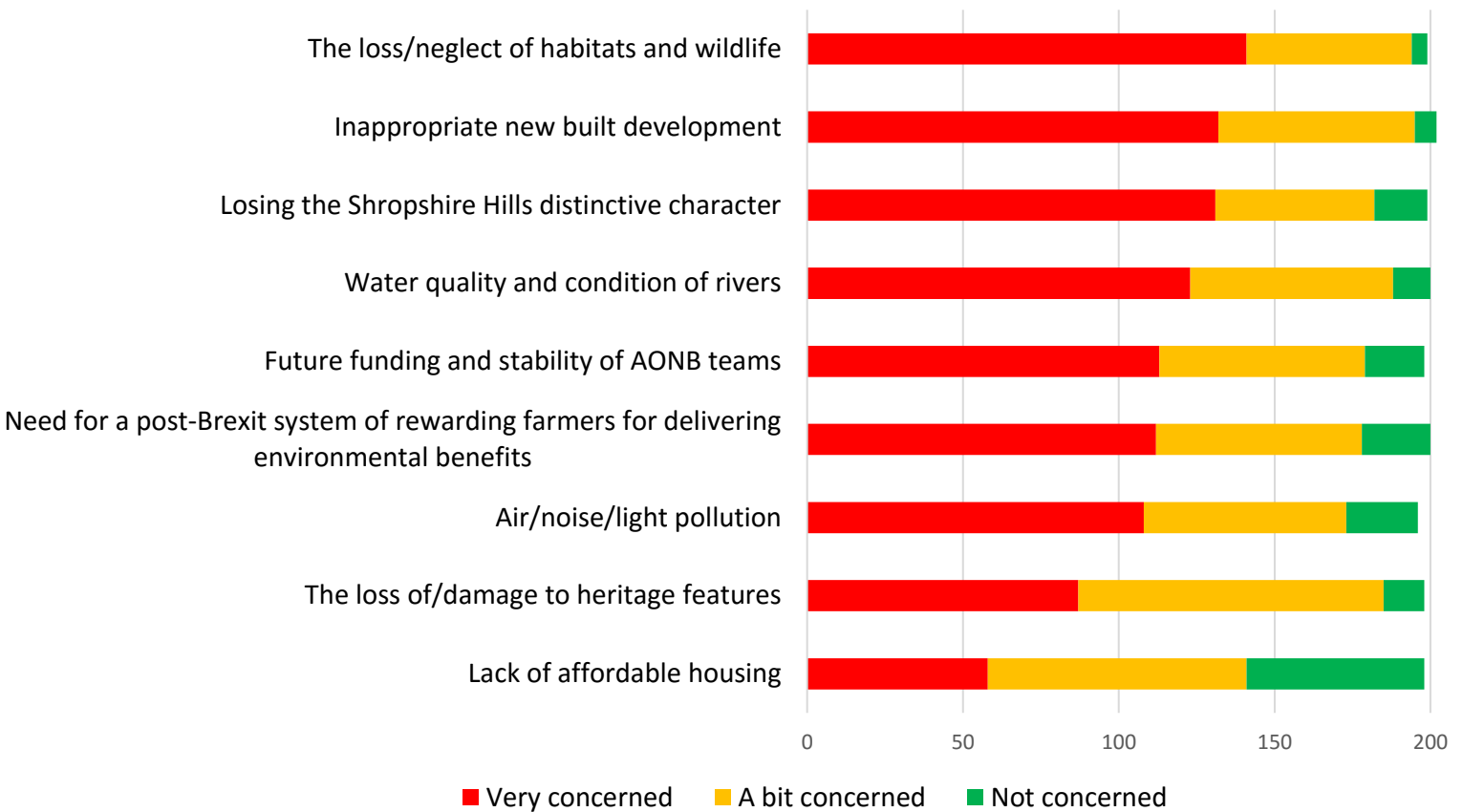


### 2. What ONE thing do you most value about the Shropshire Hills?



(Words used most often are shown larger)

**3. The Shropshire Hills AONB landscape is protected by law to conserve and enhance its special qualities. Do you share any of the following concerns about the future of the AONB?**



**4. What ONE thing concerns you most about the future of the Shropshire Hills?**

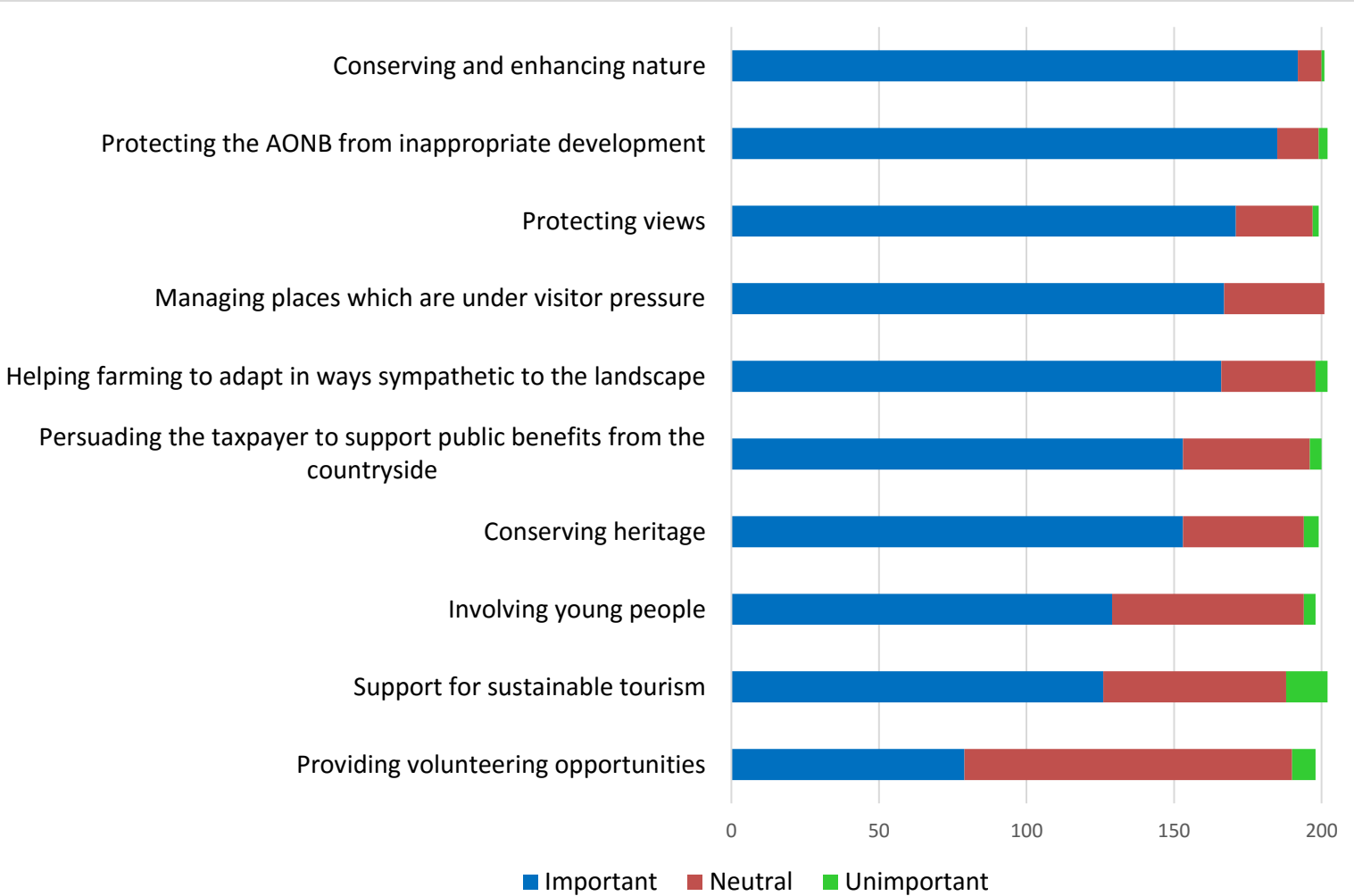


(Words used most often are shown larger)

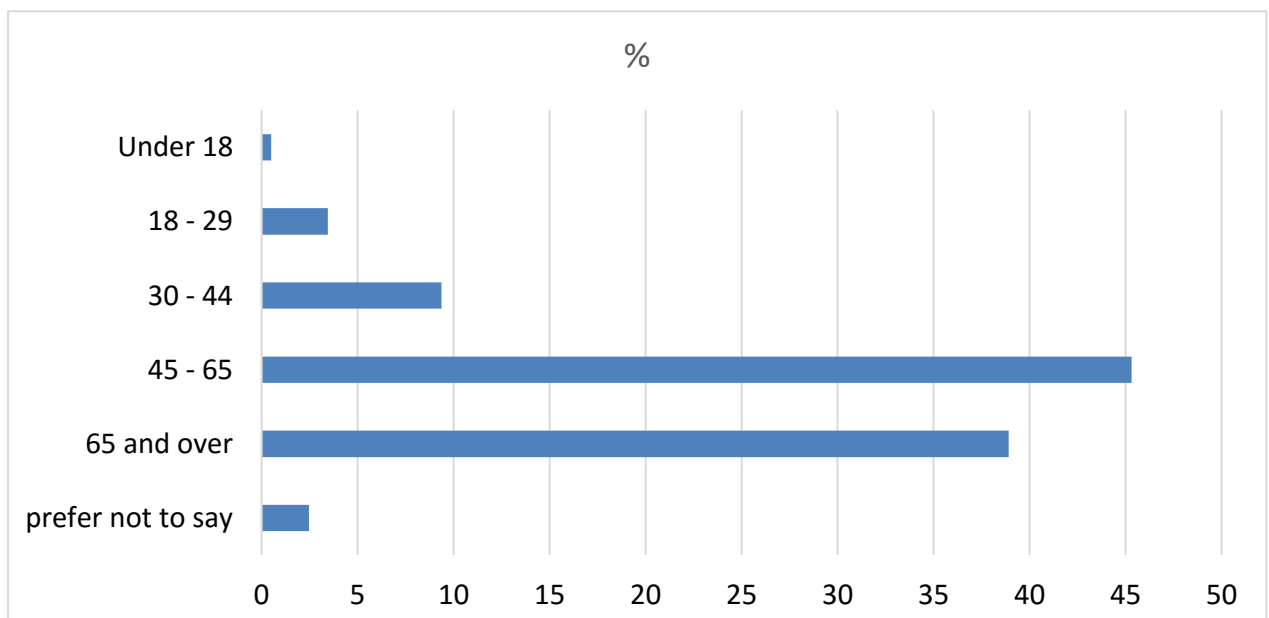
5. Which three words would you use to describe the Shropshire Hills?

Dramatic Space Unspoilt Rugged Tranquil Outstanding  
Quiet Special Peaceful Natural Beautiful  
Majestic Wild Unspoiled Stunning Amazing  
Scenic Remote Breathtaking Rural Green  
Accessible Historic Rolling Spectacular Relaxing Rural  
Wild Remote Quiet Fragile Beautiful Dramatic  
Peaceful Green Unspoilt Rugged Tranquil  
Serene Natural Wide Stunning Magnificent Walking  
Wildlife Magical Timeless Habitat Inspiring Farming  
Accessible Special Historic Invigorating  
Peaceful Calming Unspoilt Breathtaking  
Beautiful Heritage Natural Secret Tranquil  
Distinctive Wild Green Dramatic Living Rural Risk  
Unspoiled Biodiverse

## 6. Over the next ten years, how important are the following to you?



## 7. What age group are you?



## 8. Do you have any other comments about the future of the Shropshire Hills?

(comments listed in full)

<p>Provide more honeypot visitor attractions in urban situations to take pressure away from the more important wildlife areas and designated sites. Key wildlife species are being unduly disturbed.</p>
<p>If walkers are allowed to increase and walk over the LongMynd and Stiperstones during the nesting season, all the ground nesting birds will be lost. They should be closed to the walking public for the nesting season. If people really care about our birds, they won't mind not being allowed to walk up there during this time. They can still drive over the hills but should not disturb the birds by walking there.</p>
<p>Trial some 5m square exclosures on the moorland for 10 years to see vegetation changes. Also seek to create some wild areas with no grazing or other management and monitor wildlife. Areas as large as possible</p>
<p>Re-wilding, big-style, please</p>
<p>Erosion is a major issue</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>Keep them free and open, but don't tell the masses.</p>
<p>Do not allow taxpayers money to be used to support agricultural practises that denude the hills of wildlife.</p>
<p>Essential to preserve open wild spaces for future generations</p>
<p>I grew up in this area, although there is a risk to the area with the possibility of new inappropriate housing projects, it is vital that homes are supplied at a low cost for the 'younger' generation. I currently rent because house prices are so inflated, I would love to be able to afford my own home in the area and raise my family, but this is just not possible, currently. If 'cheap' homes were built in the area, there should be strict criteria for purchasers. For example, they have a sound local connection and have been born into the area. I also worry about increased tourism, especially to areas such as the Stiperstones and what effect this may have on habitats and landscapes.</p>
<p>We need to protect them for future generations</p>
<p>no but your survey suggests you have not thought much about the health benefits of access to the hills, or their contribution to the local economy. The survival of youth hostels in the area is important (they have disappeared in many parts of the country).</p>
<p>I think it's a wonderful assess for the area which has many years of brining people to the area, if looked after properly</p>
<p>As Birmingham, Wolves and Telford and Shrewsbury continue to grow having the green lung of the hills for uraban communities will become even more vital as well as for those of us lucky enough to live here</p>
<p>None</p>
<p>I worry about increasing visitor numbers due to population increase having a detrimental impact on the largely unspoiled landscape.</p>

Focussing tourism and associated development on other areas to take the strain off Church Stretton and Cardingmill Valley. Areas to the west of the Long Mynd - Asterton, Wentnor could benefit economically from tourism related development,
No
No
No
Shropshire Hills are unique and all the hills are different in their own way
No
No to building houses in the AONB. Keep it quiet, do not exploit for tourism. Those that appreciate quiet, peaceful countryside will find it anyway.
Finding ways to work with farmers and land owners to allow the hills to not become just a tourist destination is important. They are a working landscape and must not become a tourist driven economy like, say, the Lakes. Retaining and improving key species is important - e.g. curlew and pearl mussels.
farmers must be allowed to farm and not be restrained by environmental schemes etc
Difficulties of supporting and generating a thriving economy that keeps young families and people employed without jeopardising the existing landscape. Avoiding gentrification whilst conserving and enhancing the environment. Supporting farming whilst promoting biodiversity and sustainability. At its heart the Shropshire Hills are a working landscape and long may that continue.
Look after the Shropshire Hills - once spoiled lost for ever
They need & deserve to be strongly protected and supported
My concern is the gradual chipping away of the AONB
Frightened that they will be / are being developed in such a way that wild life cannot survive
Reduce/remove wild horses on the Mynd. Prevent cyclists from destroying further grassland. Encourage the National Trust to revert Carding Mill Valley to its former peace and quiet. I now refer to it as "the longest car park in Shropshire".
Conserve and protect please!
No. We're lucky to live in such a beautiful place that's protected and cared for by the National Trust.
No
Not always sure there is a holistic approach between AONB and County Council ?????
The future of the aonb should be safe guarded against Councils who should be legally prevented from agreeing housing developments which are contrary to the ethics of the aonb and to there own published standards and conditions for building schemes
The local Council and politicians need to be involved in an overall plan to improve habitats and wildlife.
None
it is important to preserve this beautiful andscape and not allow it to be ruined by development and too much tourism



Overdevelopment and new building seem the biggest threats, and should be prevented at all costs.
Would like to see traffic reduced and effective measures taken to stop motorcycles riding over the hills. Ban this organisation from using the area: <a href="https://www.greenadventuretours.co.uk/">https://www.greenadventuretours.co.uk/</a>
No
Access is it's greatest asset. There should be equal effort to preserve / maintain Public Footpaths, Bridleways & BOAT's. These are the greatest way to experience, engage and enjoy the environment.
Demographic profile too skewed to 60+
They may provide opportunities for natural flood management as part of their management
concerned about inappropriate developments in areas in or near AONB which affect the intrinsic nature of the area which should be championed and cherished.
I feel so fortunate to live in this miraculously beautiful place.
Just keep enjoying them
Work in partnership with those who have governed and kept the landscape
It is vital that our beautiful hills are preserved for the enjoyment of generations to come.
For everyone, for every creature, for every plant and tree.
No
-
No
no
We have a very special landscape, I don't want it to be spoilt in any way.
say no to glamping and chalets.
No
The Shropshire AONB as an authority is not doing enough to protect the area. They have stopped reviewing development plans.
Let's not lose this precious piece of heaven. If it goes...we will never have it back.
Mountbikers causing damage cycling off piste and planning permission being granted for inappropriate housing
don't let national and local politics dictate what is done or not done.
The AONB is above such short term considerations.
Keep the AONB safe for this and future generations
Conservation maintained appropriately for present and future generations to come. Ensure that the young understand the importance and discourage inappropriate use of the country side.
Tourism needs to be encouraged in a co-ordinator way with someone having this as their main job. People love it when they get here but many just pass through without stopping because they don't know what is here.

Need to be protected.
No
It is important they are protected whilst maintaining their tranquility.
They are important geologically and thus needs to be acknowledged in any future planning
We need to protect this fantastic landscape and environment for all concerned. This is likely to need compensation for farmers to allow them to make a living whilst managing the landscape. It will also need to manage inappropriate or potentially destructive visitor pressure. Also concerns around air and water pollution eg on rivers and from chicken sheds
Roads are now mostly too dangerous to ride on & there are not alternative bridlepaths which link up.  Footpaths are being obstructed & lost.  Locally the AONB has supported inappropriate development.
Include diversity
I would like to see the AONB extended to include Wrentnall and Church Pulverbatch which are two historic and beautiful villages worth preserving
Love our countryside
The ANOB needs to keep the balance between protection and providing an area for people to live and work in. I worry about the impact of Brexit on the support for the environment
We need to seize the opportunity for land subsidy to be acknowledged on numerous fronts, crop yield, land use, biodiversity support
If things don't change to preserve and protect wild areas the future will be disastrous and the Shropshire hills will not recover.
I am concerned about the amount of ivy that is suffocating the trees
Would like to see more tree planting
No
it is important to rejuvenate rural communities by using sites which had housing(now in disrepair) and building affordable homes on these sites in keeping with the landscape
No
no
Try to keep the Shropshire Hills shuttle buses running
A distinctive and beautiful place to live
With the state of many of our rural lanes travel will become increasingly difficult and dangerous for residents and tourists alike. Probably more so for the casual visitor.
.
We need to educate the General Public that the people who look after the landscape is the farming community, without a healthy farming community the landscape and biodiversity will deteriorate
The hills will not go away, so we should make sure they are properly looked after

An independent properly qualified group is required to comment on planning matters due to increasing pressures. The current arrangement does not have the funding or qualified personnel to provide the required expertise.

Don't commercialise popular areas

Farming has made the hills what they are. And farming is the key to their sustainable future. As long as the farming process itself is kept sustainable. If ALL user groups compromise then there is a potential for successful sustainable future. The environmental goals are to be highly prized but not at the expense of sustainable agriculture in the hills.

Some of your questions are subjective so I haven't answered them. retaining the habitat in the SH's is critical and encouraging better farming practices is a vital part of this

We need to invest in infrastructure that not only helps rural communities but tourists and visitors too.

It is sadly being opened up to more and more people for less and less effort by them, tourism is both a blessing and a curse. This was a wild place for people who could bother to get here, now it is open to all comers.

It's an amazing area that's relatively unspoilt. Keeping it that way is the future of its success especially due to its relative small size compared to other national parks/AONB. I love it!!

I think the future of the Shropshire Hills is very much in the balance and were we to lose any more of it to development, poor (modern) land/soil management we may never get it back. Brexit is a huge opportunity for the area as well as a potential threat. The Hills are under so much pressure with farmers needing to make a living, yet also being the custodians of our environment. They need more help and encouragement to farm as sensitively as possible whilst earning a reasonable living. Incoming people often do not really understand farming. There's sometimes an 'us and them' feeling. I think also incoming people - including people like myself! - need more opportunities to understand about how the land is managed and how farming works here. We've been here for 18 years and have fallen in love with the area. I also think the AONB has a huge role to play in the future of the Shropshire Hills, but many people do not know about the AONB, or what it is or does. So more publicity/public awareness would be really good.

The influx of visitors who expect to impose their urban lifestyles/values on the countryside is worrying

Protect them as much as possible

would be disastrous if became a National Park and quite wrong for the AONB to campaign or promote becoming one using public funds. However the area N and S of the A489 should be added into the AONB

Too many visitors are now using the area with no thought to others. I.e events that don't remove signs, farmers that offer inappropriate diversity i. E off road events and a lack of prospects for young people.

No

encourage more action rather than so much talk!

A local bus service is important to support the rural community & need to support local producers and Pubs

Don't try to diversify focal points (eg CMV), allow those who want to find solitude the opportunity to do so.

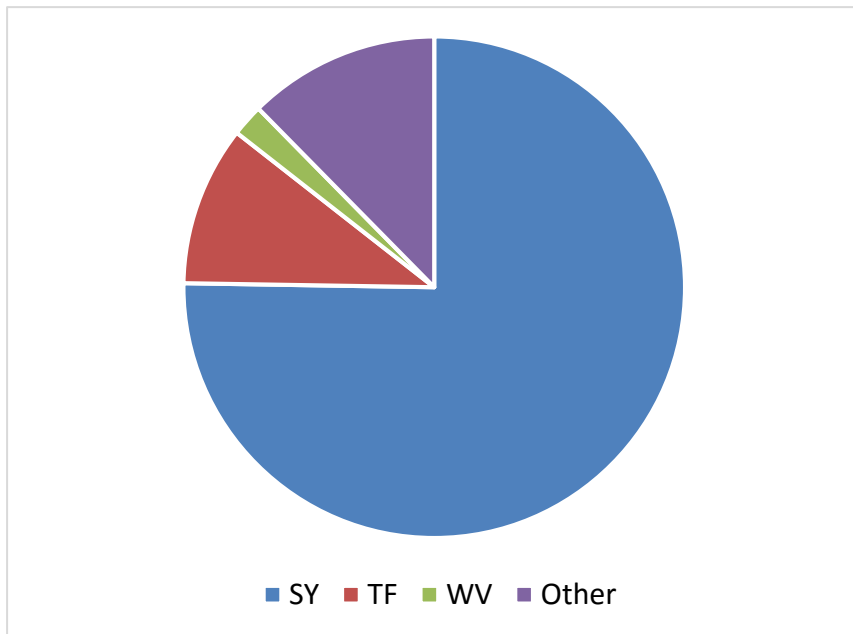
The future of the AONB is unclear
It's a very delicately balanced eco-system. To date, everything seems to be about right but I fear it wouldn't take much to tip said balance.
As a visitor who loves them please don't ever lose the peace, wildness and accessibility of them
Manage tourism in a way that protects the hills for the future
Need to maintain and enhance AONB and community partnerships in environmental conservation schemes
The Shropshire Hills are, luckily for those who live in or near, a nationally much underappreciated resource - their future depends on wise management.
The AONB needs to 'manage' the situation more rather than being just a talking shop for interested parties.
Better signage clearly stating where on the hills mountain bikes are not permitted, and clear instructions to give way to and have regard for walkers using those pathways used by mountain bikers
Preserve them at all costs
No.
No
Our area is unique and beautiful and I feel very lucky to have lived here all my life. It has many special qualities such as the landscape, wildlife and rich farming heritage. However I think what makes our area extra special are the people and communities that live and work here. Without them we are nothing, and we must fight to keep the area accessible for young people to be able to continue living and working here.
Making sure the local communities are supported - thinking about the next generation and listening to their voices.
We must protect the open spaces and natural beauty of our land and stop ruining it with Solar panels when they can be applied to new buildings and industrial units.
no
Do not allow inappropriate building to spoil this beautiful area
To stop encouraging more people to visit the area and for AONB to stop developing sites and activities that only they see as beneficial to the area.
no
Need for sustainability environmentally, demographically and economically
We must support the organisations which do the good work
No
I don't know that anything can be done about this, but I'm concerned that many visitors come to 'use' the AONB primarily to consume spare time and/or for exercise, which they could do anywhere. Many don't seem to look around them and get to know what's special/unique here, and so how they can help protect and preserve the landscape/heritage/nature themselves. I guess this might be addressed by ongoing projects with local schools, with enhanced interpretive content for visitors, with original arts initiatives - much of this happens, again maybe it needs higher profile... Meanwhile I see nothing but good from the AONB team!

Congrats and keep up the good work. If only you had more resources. Maybe we could find (or found) a trust to help; appealing for legacies for lasting support.

there needs to be more meaningful engagement at a community and business level with the AONB Partnership

Don't change its wildness, its a manmade landscape but its perfect as it is, it doesn't need to be improved to increase tourism.

### 9. What is your postcode?



## **Appendix 2 Management Plan Workshop responses from AONB Partnership Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Conservation and land management**

- 1. What new things does the Management Plan need to say on these topics?**
- 2. What are your top 3 – 5 actions that the Management Plan should include on these topics?**

- Examples of real success – the benefits of working with AONB/NE/NT etc (7 ticks)
- Need to sell the good ideas (6 ticks)
- More advice for landowners – demo events;  
coalition of the willing!;  
clarity of advice at local level (5 ticks)
- Get groups of landowners to work together (2 ticks)
- Government change in attitude will require farmers to do things differently – AONB ideally placed to help with transition (1 tick)
- Need to be positive, but need not to kid ourselves that there are not problems (1 tick)
- In wildlife look at new ways of reversing decline
- Make more info available to show trends
- \* Joined up in terms of groups & people working together
- Red Tape & barriers – more support
- Assessing impact of new techniques & systems on land, positive & negative?
- Appropriate land management e.g. maize
- Too many voices giving advice
- More resources required to give support & advice & manage change
- Could we use depth of volunteer knowledge to help
- Environmental improvement should be an input/output of the farm & should be rewarded
- Visitor pressure on landscape : damaging, need to disperse

### **Planning and development**

- 1. On which planning related topics do policies in the Management Plan need to change?**
- 2. On what topics are more policies or guidance needed and what should new policies or guidance say?**

- Need to work alongside the planners to provide the steer (7 ticks)
- Need to be more prescriptive re design guidelines and steer on acceptable development scale (5 ticks)
- Work with developers (5 ticks)
- Type of housing is an issue (1 tick)

## **Recreation, tourism and community involvement**

- 1. What new things does the Management Plan need to say on these topics?**
- 2. What are your top 3 – 5 actions that the Management Plan should include on these topics?**

- More about engaging communities, more on the ground, outreach. Low community awareness of the AONB. More work with local groups. Co-ordinating & mobilising local resources. Support & leaderships. More promotion of what the partnership does (8 ticks)
- Conservation tourism – small, managed, valued, linked to businesses (6 ticks)
- Dispersing use of popular PROW promoted routes. Encouraging people away from popular locations (5 ticks)
- Visitor survey, economic impact survey (monitoring different users) – needs repeating (3 ticks)
- car parking – public transport alternatives – cycling (1 tick)
- Identifying areas of AONB most suitable for recreation, farming ..... (1 tick)
- Revisit Clee Hills project (industrial archaeology, recreation, ...) (1 tick)
- Shuttle buses – support needed
- More support for pubs & similar facilities
- More funding needed to support economic development