

PROPOSED CLEE HILL HERITAGE PROJECT

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Summary

This paper gives a summary of the proposed Clee Hill Heritage Project.

Background

In 2011 the Clee Hill Partnership was formed to bring together a wide range of community organisations and interests with public sector bodies. The remit of the Partnership is as follows (from the Terms of Reference): *"The Clee Hill Partnership aims to bring together relevant partners to work together for the sustainable natural, cultural and economic future of the Clee Hill area in the county of Shropshire."*

A smaller group is focusing on the development of a new heritage project for the area. Project development has been overseen by the Clee Hill Partnership but the lead partner for management and delivery will be the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership. A new member of staff will be employed to develop this work if the Stage 1 bid is successful.

Aim and objectives

The aim of the project is to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of Titterstone Clee and surrounding area for the benefit of local people, visitors and the local economy. Benefits should include:

- Better conservation of the local heritage for future generations
- Better understanding of the importance of the commons and their management
- More people aware of how special the hill is
- More activity for young people
- More people actively involved in looking after the hill
- More income to the area from visitors
- A more joined-up approach and better communication

Project activity

The project will aim to encompass a range of activity focused on improving the conservation of key natural and cultural heritage in the Clee Hill area. Ideas so far include:

Conservation:

- **Cultural Heritage:**
 - Titterstone Clee Old Quarry - stabilise deteriorating ferro-concrete and other buildings, safeguard unprotected features on quarry floor, manage vehicle access and erosion issues
 - Scrub/vegetation control on monuments on the commons
 - Bitterley incline and yard

- Benson's Brook Hydro Scheme - management of woodland, access and consolidation of built remains
- **Natural Heritage:**
 - Commons management - Sharing expertise in commons management and farming techniques and traditional skills including grazing, scrub management and traditional breeds.
 - Local Wildlife Sites - management advice and owners club

Community Participation:

- Activity and learning for young people – Green Team, Young Rangers and John Muir awards
- Community Wildlife Group - wildlife surveying and monitoring
- Clee Hill Commoners Association- sharing understanding of commons management, oral history of the common
- Clee Hill Wardens - support and training
- Archaeology group - research of archaeology and cultural heritage
- Events programme
- Woodland and scrub management
- Reducing vandalism, litter and dumping

Access and interpretation:

- Improved access to cultural and natural heritage features
- Visitor information and interpretation
- Improved interpretation in a range of businesses.

An application will be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to finance a project, with a project application for WREN funding for match funding being developed in the delivery phase.

Area covered

The project will include Titterstone Clee and the surrounding common, Bitterley incline, yard and Benson's Brook, smallholdings that reflect the quarrying history and local communities from across the area.

Timescales

The Project Development Group will aim to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund by 17th March 2014. If successful, Stage 1 funding will enable the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership to employ a full time project development officer for 15 months dedicated to drawing together a detailed Stage 2 application and carrying out considerable community consultation. The Stage 2 funding would then be used to deliver project activity over the following three years (2016- 2019).

Budget

The budget is just over £1.0m.

Draft bid

The draft bid can be found on the Shropshire Hills AONB website:

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/looking-after/projects/clee-hill-heritage-project/>

Any comments on this will need to be submitted to Clare Fildes **before 14th March**, as the Stage 1 bid must be submitted to HLF on 17th March.

4. Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note the proposals and the opportunity to input comments to the further development phase if the stage 1 bid is successful.

List of Background Papers http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/looking-after/projects/clee-hill-heritage-project/
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 follow on from earlier discussions with Partnership members.
Appendices none