



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 31 st March 2021	<u>Item</u> 7
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PARTNER COLLABORATION FOR VISITOR MANAGEMENT IN THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS

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Summary

This paper updates members on collaboration between partners in the Shropshire Hills for visitor management during the 2021 season and especially in relation to post-lockdown pressures expected.

Recommendation

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

Background

The AONB Partnership team convened a meeting on 9th March attended by 15 people from partner organisations, in preparation for the visitor season, to share ideas and plans, see how we can work together better, and identify gaps where further joint work is needed. Organisations represented at the meeting were: Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, National Trust, Church Stretton Town Council, Bishop’s Castle tourism group, Ludlow Destination Partnership, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Forestry England, Natural England, English Heritage, Shropshire Hills Tourism, Shropshire Tourism.

The main priorities (slightly refined) of the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy were recapped, as still highly relevant:

- **Encouraging green business** – to achieve zero carbon in tourism
- **Dispersing visitors** – for better experiences, shared economic benefit and reducing pressure
- **Increasing enjoyment and wellbeing** – through active engagement with nature and heritage
- **Promoting and safeguarding what is outstanding** – an ethos of care and consideration
- **Working in partnership** – destinations, businesses, groups, local councils, communities

It was agreed that we don’t collectively have all of the tools or resources to manage pressures properly, and this is important longer term. Collaboration can help however, and planned and potential activity across six main themes to address visitor pressures was discussed:

Best possible public information, to prevent problems at source if possible

Key on-line platforms and sites, alignment of messages, listing of sites and locations

Managing popular sites and encouraging dispersal

Social media parking information initiative

Encouraging responsible visitor behaviour

Lessons from behavioural science – positive messages, connecting with people’s motivation

Monitoring and understanding visitor use

Lessons from 2020 Church Stretton visitor survey, potential data collection in 2021

Support for businesses, farmers and people impacted by visitor pressure

Co-ordinated messaging, troubleshooting capacity

Feed into longer term plans to develop and improve visitor infrastructure

Walking & cycling routes, small scale parking, sites with facilities

There has also been useful sharing of ideas and action through the National Association for AONBs. Further update will be given verbally at the meeting.

List of Background Papers None
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