

04/05/07

Welcome to the E-bulletin of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Partnership. We hope this will help to raise awareness of issues and activity in the AONB. Please feel free to forward it to anyone you think may be interested. To subscribe or unsubscribe to the circulation list, please contact the SHAONBO mailbox.

Consultation on Volunteering - proposed Friends of the Shropshire Hills group

Over the past five years lots of people have given up their own time to be involved in the Blue Remembered Hills project and have achieved wonderful things, from writing a book about the Upper Onny to commissioning a toposcope for Brown Clee and surveying veteran trees. We would like to continue to involve people in the work of the Shropshire Hills AONB and are developing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to form a "Friends of the Shropshire Hills" group. If you are interested in volunteering, we'd like to know what you think and what interests you. Please could you fill in survey attached and e-mail it back to us.



Friends of AONB survey Apr 07.doc

Carbon Footprint

The AONB Partnership has undertaken a carbon footprinting exercise with Marches Energy Agency, covering the office building, business travel by staff and Partnership members, and staff commute. It is estimated that the total carbon footprint of the AONB Partnership is around 41 tonnes CO₂ per annum. As well as identifying ways of reducing our CO₂ emissions, the survey suggests ways to save money - not least that it appears we may be paying electricity bills to our landlord of over double our actual consumption! A carbon offset payment of £820 (£20/tCO₂) was paid for 2006-7 towards Marches Energy Agency's Project Carbon. This will be used to fund energy saving measures in businesses and community organisations within the AONB, generating further carbon savings, financial savings and raised awareness.

Sustainable Development Fund - all spent for now

The 23 projects supported in 2006-7 are now completed, with final reports and grant payments being finalised. Unfortunately for 2007-8 the money available from Natural England has been cut to £70,000. The Grant Advisory Panel considered 17 projects at the end of March and offers are now being made. This means that unless more funds become available, no further applications can be taken this Financial Year. Project Ideas may still be discussed with Cath Landles (01588 674084), but this will need to be based on what you might do from April 2008 to March 2009.

Regional strategies - struggling with sustainability

We have made two responses recently to consultations on stages of two important West Midlands strategies - the Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy. The big questions about how the region's economy mitigates against and adapts to climate change, and balances economic activity with the environment are critical to the long term future of the AONB. In the Shropshire Hills, the right kind of economic activity (e.g. in farming and forestry) can sustain the quality of the landscape, and the quality of the landscape can in turn sustain other economic activities (e.g. tourism). Our overall vision for the economy of the Shropshire Hills is of this virtuous circle of environment-led regeneration, in which a pattern of relatively small-scale dispersed enterprise will be key to maintaining the right balance. Our responses suggest that these strategies haven't yet gone far enough to address these important issues. See:

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/publications/documents/ConsultationonRESPolicyChoices.pdf>

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/publications/documents/ResponsetoRSSStage2-SpatialOptions.pdf>

Funding Guide for Environmental Projects

South Shropshire Partnership have recently produced a guide to grants for environmental projects.

See: <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/publications/documents/GRANTfinderdoc2.pdf>

Down to Earth Rea Valley 2007

The last round of the community landscapes element of the Blue Remembered Hills project is this year operating in the Rea Valley/ Minsterley area, with a specific focus on young people. Work has already been done with Mary Webb Secondary School and its 9 feeder primary schools, and will link with the

Year of Food and Farming starting in September. For more information contact Diane Monether on 01588 674086.

Forthcoming projects

We have secured Natural England project funding this year for further work on local products, including a food and drink directory, networking events for producers and tourism businesses, and work on wood products and wood fuel. We are also able to extend Mike Kelly's excellent work on coppicing riverside alders through a further winter of activity.

Staff Changes

Elizabeth Ronan, one of our Admin Assistants has left us and we wish her well with her B&B business in Bishop's Castle. Clare Fildes our Blue Remembered Hills Project Officer has accepted a job with Advantage West Midlands to help implement the Rural Development Programme for England.

Your comments or thoughts on these issues or any others to do with the AONB are always welcome.

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