

3/7/08



**Welcome to the E-bulletin of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership.** We hope you will find this a useful update of things going on 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.

### **LEADER in the Shropshire Hills**

The AONB Partnership received provisional approval earlier in the year from Advantage West Midlands to deliver the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme for England. This Europe-wide approach to rural development is focussing in the region on social and community issues, and our programme will aim to show how the high quality landscape of the Shropshire Hills can help people's wellbeing. A consultation event was held in May and we hope to appoint a Co-ordinator shortly and finalise the Strategy over the coming months. Around £200,000 per year should be available for projects fitting the programme's aims. For more information visit <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/partnership/Leader>.



### **Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme**

This scheme was launched by the AONB Partnership in March at the Long Mynd Hotel. It is an accreditation scheme based on appraisal of the approach a business takes to the environment, and also to the local community and economy. The scheme will provide the basis for a business network to share advice and good practice on sustainability. Further details about the scheme can be found on our local products directory website <http://www.shropshirehills-buylocal.co.uk>.

### **National AONB Conference in Shropshire**

From 9th - 11th July around 180 delegates from around the country will gather at Harper Adams University College for the annual conference of the National Association for AONBs. Jointly hosted by the Shropshire Hills, Cannock Chase and Malvern Hills, this is the first time the conference has been held in the West Midlands. The theme of the conference is Partnership Working – Adding Value in Valuable Landscapes. Keynote speakers include Defra Minister Jonathan Shaw and Mark Pearce of Advantage West Midlands. Field visits include the Wrekin, Long Mynd, Stiperstones, Clun Forest and Offa's Dyke.

### **AONB Management Plan Review**

The statutory Management Plan for the AONB is undergoing a thorough five year review. The AONB Partnership has been drafting a new Plan which will go out for public consultation in September. Priorities for the next five years include conserving and enhancing existing qualities of the area, keeping the countryside thriving, shifting to low carbon, adapting for the future, and continuing to raise the profile

and relevance of the AONB to local people. Contact us at [shaono@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shaono@shropshire.gov.uk) if you would like more information on the consultation.

### **Wind proposals generate energy**

Recent proposals both for larger wind turbines outside the AONB and for smaller ones within it have proved contentious, with a wide variety of views expressed. The Partnership's general approach is that action is necessary on CO2 emissions and wind has a part to play in this, but the nation's finest landscapes should not be compromised so that people can continue to use electricity wastefully. Energy conservation should go alongside development of renewables both at a national and local scale. The AONB Partnership is pleased to be supporting energy conservation advice in local communities by Stretton Climate Care and Lightfoot (linked to the Wasteless Society in Bishop's Castle) through its Sustainable Development Fund. We are interested in people's opinions on what scale of wind energy development should be allowed both in the AONB and nearby to it. Let us know what you think at [shaonbo@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shaonbo@shropshire.gov.uk).

### **Rivers Project**

The AONB Partnership has secured three years of funding from Natural England to continue our river habitat work, especially focussing on the River Clun. Land management practices in the catchment have a huge effect on the water quality of the river as well as bankside and gravel river bed habitats, which are important for invertebrates and fish, as well as the freshwater pearl mussel. This rare and fascinating animal is currently in sharp decline in the River Clun. The project will work closely with the Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative, offering advice and grants to landowners and raising awareness of our precious and vulnerable river wildlife. For further information contact [mike.kelly@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:mike.kelly@shropshire.gov.uk)

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Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - working together to conserve and sustain the landscape.

2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the Shropshire Hills AONB

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is funded by Natural England and five local authorities.

We aim to answer or acknowledge all enquiries (telephone, post, fax or email) within 10 working days.