

Press Release

9th October 2007

Last chance for Black Poplar Grants

Over the last five years the Blue Remembered Hills project has been helping to conserve and care for black poplars in the Shropshire Hills.

As the project draws to a close this is the last chance to take advantage of funding set aside for this important tree. Grants are available for tree surgery, fencing or both. Mike Kelly, River Valleys Officer for the AONB Partnership, is also able to offer advice on the best way to care for these trees.

The black poplar is one of Britain's rarest trees. Shropshire can lay claim to the tallest black poplar in the country and the most famous – the Aston-on-Clun Arbor tree. Although nationally rare, the valleys of the Shropshire Hills are ideal for black poplars and we have a small but significant number of trees locally.

As well as managing existing trees, the Blue Remembered Hills project has been planting young trees and since the project began in 2003 more than 500 have been planted in the Shropshire Hills. Mike Kelly explained "There is an estimated 7,500 native black poplars left in the UK, only 600 of which are female, therefore help is needed to ensure the survival of one of Britain's rarest and tallest trees."

If you know of a black poplar in the Shropshire Hills which would benefit from the grant please contact Mike Kelly, River Valleys Officer for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, on 01588 674091 or email mike.kelly@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

ENDS

Editors Notes:

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The Blue Remembered Hills project, developed by the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, is a major 5 year Heritage Lottery project to involve people in protecting key landscape features in and around the Shropshire Hills AONB.

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 41 AONBs in England & Wales. This designation is recognition of the national value of the area's landscape, and brings duties on local authorities to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

The management of the AONB is guided by a statutory Management Plan produced by the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership which comprises 5 local authorities, 31 other organisations and independent community members. The AONB staff team are funded by the Countryside Agency and the local authorities, and work with others to implement the AONB Management Plan. Shropshire County Council manages the AONB Office.
