

## Press Release

18th March 2008

### Sign up to the new Shropshire Hills 'Buy Local' scheme

Over 60 people joined the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership at the Longmynd Hotel for the launch of the new Shropshire Hills 'Buy Local- Be Sustainable' Business Scheme.

Clare Fildes, Development Officer for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, explained "The scheme is about supporting local businesses and encouraging them to think and act in a more sustainable way. This means improving their impact on the environment and the local economy to the benefit of people who live and work in the Shropshire Hills. Signing up to the scheme enables businesses to form a network to gain competitive advantage, get easy to follow advice on sustainability issues and share ideas with other like minded businesses. The scheme will also ensure businesses become better informed about sustainability and the Shropshire Hills, and get ahead of the game in terms of legislation which is likely to enforce a more sustainable approach in the future."

A new website [www.shropshirehills-buylocal.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehills-buylocal.co.uk) was launched as part of the scheme, by Tish Dockerty from tdky consulting. It was welcomed by the local businesses that attended. Peter Cook, Master Baker from Prices the Bakers said today: "Thank you for a very informative and enjoyable afternoon. The website looks great, and after having a quick flick around it I am sure some of our customers will find it very useful."

Customers looking to buy more sustainable, local products should have a look at the site, which allows them to search under a number of criteria and find a map of how to get to the businesses listed. There are also seasonal recipes and listings of those businesses that are involved with the Shropshire Hills Farmers Markets.

The programme for the afternoon included an introduction about the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), an explanation about the business scheme and a demonstration of the "Buy Local" website. Karen Thorne, from Hopton House B&B, shared activities that she does to make her business more sustainable and Matthew Lloyd, from Think Graphic explained how he had made the promotion and merchandising as sustainable as possible for the Sustainable Business Scheme.

Heart of England Fine Foods, Natural England, Marches Energy Agency, Business Link and the Sustainable Tourism Advice Network were on hand to answer any questions businesses might have, and a number of local producers and low carbon groups promoted their products and services.

Clare will be discussing the scheme at these forthcoming events:  
The Shropshire Way Seminar on the 4<sup>th</sup> April at the Ludlow Food Centre.  
The Ludlow Chamber of Commerce AGM on the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> April, venue to be confirmed.

More information can be found on the new website [www.shropshirehills-buylocal.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehills-buylocal.co.uk).

**ENDS**

**Editors Notes:**

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The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 40 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. Covering 23% of the county, the Shropshire Hills AONB extends from the Wrekin to the Clun Forest and from the Stiperstones to the Clee Hills. It is a diverse and tranquil area, with rugged hills, rolling pastoral fields, woods and meadows, picturesque villages and historic buildings, hillforts and ancient monuments.

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 acts as host authority for the AONB Partnership. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership plays three main roles:

- To develop policy and strategy for the area especially through the AONB Management Plan, and influence the policies and strategies of others
  - To take and co-ordinate action to conserve and enhance natural beauty, promote enjoyment and understanding, and further sustainable development
  - To support the involvement of the community in the management of the AONB.
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