

## Briefing Note on use of the 'Shropshire Hills' identity

This briefing note outlines the policy and rationale for the consistent use of the 'Shropshire Hills' identity in promotion, and how developing the connection with a high quality landscape and environmental standards will benefit both conservation and the economy of the area. Anyone promoting or describing the area is encouraged to do so in ways compatible with strengthening this identity.

The Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14 states as Policy 40 "Opportunities should be taken to strengthen the integrity and identity of the Shropshire Hills as an area of exceptional landscape value. Consistent use of the 'Shropshire Hills' identity should be given greater prominence in tourism and other forms of promotion, along with the special qualities of the AONB and opportunities for visitors to adopt a sustainable approach."

The Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Shropshire Hills & Ludlow 2011-16 has as its first Strategic Objective "Raising Awareness - To strengthen the identity of the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow and raise awareness of it as a leading rural tourism destination."

The hills and landscape of the AONB are central to most people's attachment to the area. Historically, a consistent identity for the area has not been strong however, and local residents' attachment has tended to be focussed to their particular locality, or to Shropshire in general. Along with raising awareness of the AONB itself, the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership has for some years been promoting more consistent use of the 'Shropshire Hills' identity. The rationale for this is to help strengthen the area's sense of place, to support sustainable tourism by associating this with environmental quality and sensitivity, and ultimately to lead to more support for the area's conservation. This approach has gained considerable support from both communities and the business sector. Examples of initiatives in support of this include:

- Adoption of the Shropshire Hills identity in tourism promotion
- Joint Shropshire Hills Events & Visitor Guide
- Shared logo with the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre
- Promotion of the Shropshire Hills Shuttle Buses
- Road signs at key locations showing 'Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'
- Branding through the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme

Consistent use of the 'Shropshire Hills' identity means avoiding other identities, including 'South Shropshire Hills' and 'South Shropshire'. (South Shropshire District no longer exists following local government reorganisation in 2009, and the AONB in any case extends beyond the former South Shropshire District, to Wenlock Edge, the Wrekin and areas north of the Stiperstones).

Use of 'Shropshire Hills' without 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' or 'AONB' attached will be appropriate in many cases, such as where not referring exactly to the designated AONB. For tourism promotion purposes the destination brand 'Shropshire Hills and Ludlow' has been adopted, to make the most of the complementary draw and recognition of both (see below for agreed values and messages for promotion of the Shropshire Hills & Ludlow as a destination).

## Notes on correct description of the Shropshire Hills AONB

Where the AONB is specifically mentioned, this should be done accurately:

- The correct title of 'Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' should be used. The words have capital letters as it is an official designation.
- Ideally the acronym 'AONB' should only be used after title has been used in full, or is visible alongside e.g. in a logo, in order to aid understanding.
- Care should be taken to avoid common mistakes such as 'ANOB'.
- It is preferable to use the whole title together, as in 'A quarter of the county is designated as the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' rather than 'The Shropshire Hills are designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.
- It is not correct to say that a particular location (e.g. Carding Mill Valley, Brown Clee) 'is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Rather it is 'within the Shropshire Hills AONB'.
- If you wish to include extra words of description about the AONB, the AONB Partnership will be happy to advise, please contact us.

## Use of logos

Logos for the Shropshire Hills AONB, and derivations of this including the Shropshire Hills Shuttles, Shropshire Hills Buy Local Be Sustainable, Shropshire Hills & Ludlow and Shropshire Hills Tourism are held in copyright by Shropshire Council as host authority for the AONB Partnership. Their use is strictly controlled by licence agreements and they may not be used without permission. To enquire about licencing, please contact the AONB Partnership.

## Agreed Values and Messages for tourism promotion, from the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Development Partnership Marketing Strategy [www.shropshirehillstourismpartnership.org.uk/](http://www.shropshirehillstourismpartnership.org.uk/)

### Values

Tourism promotion for the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow should convey:

- An authentic experience of a stunning landscape and exceptional historic towns,
- A reputed centre for local food and drink and environmentally conscious businesses.

### Messages

- This is a diverse area, based on its uniquely varied geology, with wild hills and gentle valleys.
- A range of different market towns all have their own character, and there are many pretty villages. Ludlow has a national reputation as a market town of outstanding character and for its food.
- There are fantastic views, tranquillity and dark skies, along with excellent opportunities for walking to suit all abilities, and for both challenging and relaxing activities.
- The area is unspoilt due to its 'off the beaten track' location on the English-Welsh border, but is nevertheless relatively accessible to many parts of England (and Wales), and well linked to transport networks, including public transport.
- There is a great richness of wildlife (particularly from the mix and transitions of upland and lowland) and of heritage and historic features (especially hillforts, Offa's Dyke, castles associated with the border location, mining relics and a great variety of traditional buildings).

*The wording of these messages is not necessarily intended to be used verbatim, but rather to inform and guide promotional text.*

Briefing Note last updated August 2012