

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership report to AONB Conservation Fund on 'Our Common Cause' Upland Commons project, April 2018

Conservation Fund Ref: CF/1617/13

The Conservation Fund grant was for match funding towards the two year development phase of the 'Our Common cause' Upland Commons project. The grant was carried over from 2016-17, as the large HLF application, led by the Foundation for Common Land with the National Trust as accountable body, was rejected twice by HLF, but with invitations to reapply. The third application was successful, and the development phase of the project got under way in January 2018.

Though this is a national project in which we are one of four areas (with Dartmoor, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales), the Shropshire Hills is retaining a strong role. The appointee to the national Project Manager job was Joy Howells, previously working for us as the manager of the Stiperstones and Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme. Joy is actually based in our office in Craven Arms for this national role rather than working from home. This enables us to contribute something further in kind to the project in the form of office space and facilities, and helps to ensure good synergies.

The Shropshire Hills Area Co-ordinator role for the project was advertised publicly (as a services contract rather than an employed post). The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership bid for and won this contract to be fulfilled by Cath Landles with some support from other team members. This is now under way and Cath is meeting key stakeholders from our three participating commons – Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty. She has undertaken a training and induction day with the Area Co-ordinators from the other areas. A Shropshire Hills Area group meeting has been held for the project bringing a range of stakeholders together.

The main output of the two year development phase will be a stage two full application to HLF for the five year delivery phase, but other development activities include:

1. National Common Charter
2. Collaborative Visions for the three commons in each area
- 3.a Survey environmental and cultural assets
- 3b. Social and cultural cohesion studies Dartmoor and Yorkshire Dales
4. Skills audit
- 5a Identification of key audiences
- 5b Community Engagement and Activity Programme
- 5c Communication Plan and communications support
- 5d Engaging Wider Audiences - John Muir Award
- 5e Interpretation Plan
6. Peatland and wetland restoration study
7. Capital work development
8. Bracken Research
9. Evaluation
10. Electronic registers
11. Dartmoor Commoners Gather and familiarisation days