

Notes of Clee Hill project development meeting, Monday 22 October 2012 at Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership office, Craven Arms

Present:

Phil Holden	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager
Clare Fildes	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, Development Officer
Glynn Barratt	Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust
George Cummings	Friends of Clee Hill Village Forum
Chris Neal	Clee Hill Commoners Association
Richard Rallings	Natural England

Apologies:

John Hughes	Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Development Officer
Dan Wrench	Shropshire Council, Biodiversity Officer

A summary of project ideas which had previously been raised through the Clee Hill Partnership had been circulated. This was discussed, and an update incorporating some additional ideas from the meeting is included below. There was considerable discussion about the TCHT proposal to use the former Hopton School building as a visitor/ education centre. George said that a number of people in Clee Hill felt that an information centre should be in Clee Hill village. Glynn said that the school building was in good condition and the offer was too good to ignore. It was noted that there are two public meetings about the proposal, on 25 Oct and 13 Nov, and that information was also on the TCHT website <http://www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk/>.

Options for the scope and scale of a potential project were discussed, falling roughly to two types of grant offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF):

- a) Smaller 'Your Heritage' grant of up to £100k. This would have the advantage of achieving earlier delivery, and could lead on to further projects.
- b) Larger 'Heritage Grant' of £100k upwards, with a funded Development Phase. It was agreed that the importance of the hill and range of potential activities did justify a project of this scale. Development Phase would enable paid capacity to work up the detail. Agreed that it was not necessary to start from scratch – there were many ideas already, and the existence of the Clee Hill Partnership and progress through it provided a good vehicle for broader engagement, consultation, etc. This option was favoured.

There was a linked discussion on who the applicant organisation might be, with options seen to be Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership and Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust. With the broad range of project activities being considered, it was felt that the AONB's broad remit might make it the best placed to be the applicant. Phil and Clare clarified that the AONB Partnership would now be in a position to lead an application, but only in the scenario of a larger grant bringing new staffing. The AONB Partnership would not be able to project manage delivery of a Your Heritage grant from existing capacity.

The group did not feel it had the authority to make any firm decisions, but agreed to recommend to the Clee Hill Partnership the following:

- 1. That a project steering group be formed, with clear Terms of Reference and role, and linking to the Clee Hill Partnership to ensure involvement of all necessary parties.** A further date of Mon 10 December at 9.30am was set.
- 2. That the AONB Partnership lead, with further consultation and input from partners, a Development Phase bid to HLF for a Heritage Grant, with a target for submission of May 2013.**

Clee Hill Draft Project Ideas

N.B. All ideas are subject to further consultation, agreement, necessary consents, etc

Conservation:

• **Cultural Heritage:**

- Archaeological research and recording (level 4) of prehistoric hillfort/ enclosure
- Titterstone Clee Old Quarry - stabilise deteriorating ferro-concrete and other buildings, safeguard unprotected features on quarry floor, manage vehicle access and erosion issues
- Benson's Brook Hydroelectric installation
- Bitterley incline
- The Novers
- Stabilise old Stable block building on road from top quarry to radar station
- Scrub/vegetation control on monuments on the commons (bell pits, etc?)

• **Natural Heritage:**

- Joined up management of the commons – grazing, bracken & scrub management, etc. This can be existing/ planned activity through Upland Entry Level Stewardship or Higher Level Stewardship used as match activity and funding for an HLF project.
- Enhancement of ponds and pools on the hill
- Small scale tree planting/ restoration of semi-natural woodland e.g. in cloughs
- Heathland/ mire restoration on restored parts of the working quarry
- Continue survey work through Community Wildlife Group
- Measures to reduce litter and dumping

Skills:

- Upland Farm Skills Centre - sheep management, wall building, hedge laying
- Wardens/ Rangers – knowledge of farming, wildlife & heritage. Health & Safety.

Education:

- Activity and learning for young people - cultural and natural heritage
- Development of facilities and programmes at former Hopton School?

Community Participation:

- Improved communication and understanding
- Volunteering opportunities

Access and interpretation:

- Improved access to cultural and natural heritage features- including an industrial heritage trail
- Web-based information and interpretation, including the use of new media and events
- New guidebook for the area - archaeology, wildlife, mining
- Improved visitor information and facilities at Clee Hill village?
- Improved signage