

# A STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS AND LUDLOW 2011 – 2016



[www.shropshirehillstourismpartnership.org.uk](http://www.shropshirehillstourismpartnership.org.uk)

## Key areas of progress 2011-12

### Raising Awareness

- Destination values and messages agreed
- New destination logo agreed and being rolled out
- Marketing Strategy completed
- Improvements to websites – Shropshire Hills Tourism, AONB, town websites
- Further co-ordination of printed material
- 2012 Much Wenlock PR campaign included walking/cycling in The Shropshire Hills

### The Hills experience

- Significant increase in walking promotion, especially through Walking with Offa
- Wide range of successful events during 2012

### The Market Town experience

- Logo agreement enables linking each town's identity with overall destination
- Improved information and promotion

### Local Food

- Successful events during 2012, Ludlow Food Festival, Discover Local etc

### Orientating & informing visitors

- Operation of Visitor Information Centre (VIC) network
- Progress with funding for Bishop's Castle Town Hall project
- More use of IT – apps, etc

### Sustainable access & management

- New 'Wenlock Wanderer' Shuttle bus, and new service from Ludlow planned for 2013
- Days Out developed through Walking with Offa
- Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme developing, new Directory published

### Supporting local enterprise

- Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme training events and awards
- HF Holidays now run the Long Mynd Hotel, with a strong focus on walking

## Summary of Actions, with draft update of progress at 24 Sept 2012

	Action	Priority	Year	Financial Implication	Key Agencies	Progress
<b>1</b>	<b>RAISING AWARENESS</b>					
1.1	Agree core destination values and messages	*	1	Low	DDP, AONB, SHT	Completed. Agreed and adopted into Marketing Strategy Feb 2012. Briefing note on Shropshire Hills identity revised and circulated.
1.2	Agree and disseminate a visual identity and supporting text		1-2	Med	DDP, AONB, SHT	New logo agreed. Guidelines and licencing in progress.
1.3	Assemble a good photo collection		2-3	Med	DDP, AONB, SC, ST	Tim King has Flickr account. Scope for further co-ordination.
1.4	Improve the branding and performance of the existing website to operate as a high profile website for the destination	*	1-5	Med	SHT, DDP, AONB, ST	Improvements made winter 11/12. Logo, etc to be added.
1.5	Develop and implement an online marketing strategy		1-5	Low	DDP, SHT, ST	Marketing Strategy (all aspects, not just online) completed Feb 12.
1.6	Maintain a suite of key destination print		1-5	Med	DDP, AONB SHT, ST,	2012 Brochure & Events guide produced. Discovery Map to be reprinted. 2013 Brochure & Events guide in preparation.
1.7	Pursue an active PR campaign	*	1-5	Med	DDP, AONB, SHT, SC, ST, VE	Currently done by individual organisations. Strong content on Wenlock Olympic connections in 2012. PR contract let for Discover local promotion.
1.8	Establish and maintain a presence in Shropshire promotions		1-5	Med	DDP, ST, SC	Opportunities to strengthen coverage and align with area Strategy.
1.9	Pursue opportunities in selected target markets		2-5	Med	DDP, AONB, SHT, ST, VE	Walking with Offa activity. New 'Things to Do' pages on AONB website. Joint 'Walkers Are Welcome' towns publication.
<b>2</b>	<b>DELIVERING THE HILLS EXPERIENCE</b>					
2.1	Give priority to maintaining a high quality landscape as a primary resource of sustainable tourism	*	1-5	Low	AONB, SC, CBs, NT, FC	Many activities by a variety of organisations contribute to this action.
2.2	Provide and promote opportunities to experience the distinctive landscapes and heritage of different parts of the Hills	*	1-5	High	AONB, SC, CBs, NT, FC	Area initiatives in progress at the Wrekin, Stiperstones & Corndon, Clee Hill. Use of four main areas for promotion in print and on web.
2.2	Maintain and promote a range of high quality, varied walking experiences available all year	*	1-5	High	SC, AONB, CBs, NT, FC	Walking with Offa has added to opportunities available. Collaborative promotion by Walkers Are Welcome towns.

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2.4	Maintain and promote a range of cycling and mountain biking opportunities, for access and enjoyment		2-5	High	SC, AONB, NT, FC	Opportunity being examined to pursue proposals through Local Sustainable Transport Fund. New cycling web page on AONB website.
2.5	Further develop and promote the potential of the area for horse riding		3-5	High	SC, AONB, NT, FC	No new activity on this? Shropshire Riding website needs some updates.
2.6	Facilitate pre-booked and on-demand access to a range of outdoor experiences	*	2-5	Low	PS, AONB, DDP	Info added on new Activities page on AONB website. Need to work out how to improve co-ordination.
2.7	Provide opportunities to experience and understand the area's geology and wildlife		3-5	Med	AONB, CBs, NT, HBs	Wide variety of action by many organisations. Scope for more co-ordination.
2.8	Promote opportunities to engage creatively and practically in rural and cultural heritage themes and activities linked to the landscape		3-5	Low	PS, AONB, DDP, NY, HBs	Discover Local events. Events for national Heritage Open Days 6-9 Sept (Church Stretton & others).
<b>3</b>	<b>DELIVERING THE MARKET TOWN EXPERIENCE</b>					
3.1	Develop the unique identity of each town in relation to the destination brand	*	1-2	Med	MTs, DDP, SC	Family of logos for each town linked to Shropshire Hills agreed and to be implemented under licence.
3.2	Provide effective information material for each town		1-5	Med	MTs, DDP, SC	This is mostly in place? Proposal for reciprocal info on all towns in DDP area. Church Stretton is commissioning new maps of local traders
3.3	Provide a high quality of visitor facilities, services and amenities	*	1-5	High	SC, MTs, PS	Each town will have their own priority areas for improvement.
3.4	Deliver a creative experience of the town's heritage, through sites, trails and interpretation	*	2-5	High	MTs, SC, PS, HBs, NT	Much is in place. Scope to review and identify gaps.
3.5	Coordinate and promote a programme of events between the towns		2-5	Med	MTs, DDP, AONB, SC, SHT	Offer made to include more towns events in the joint Shropshire Hills Events guide for 2013
3.6	Encourage and support a distinctive retail experience		3-5	Med	MTs, SC, PS	Buy Local website, Local to Ludlow.
3.7	Provide clear access links between the towns and the countryside		2-5	Low	AONB, MTs, SC	Walking with Offa Days Out leaflets linked to towns have helped this. Car free walks on Shropshire Way web page.
<b>4</b>	<b>DELIVERING THE LOCAL FOOD EXPERIENCE</b>					
4.1	Promote and develop the area's high profile food events, spreading their outreach across the area and the year		1-5	Med	SHT, ST, LL, PS, DDP, LEP	Much activity going on. Opportunity to look at co-ordination, seasonal spread, etc. Ludlow Food Festival Sept 12.

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4.2	Maintain and seek to expand the presence of food outlets of national renown		3-5	Low	PS, DDP, SHT, LL, LEP	Market driven.
4.3	Raise the quality and accessibility of catering available throughout the area for all budgets	*	2-5	High	PS, DDP, SHT, ST, LL, LEP	Opportunities to do more.
4.4	Promote a range of opportunities for visiting, experiencing and purchasing from local food and drink suppliers		2-5	Low	PS, DDP, AONB, SHT	Buy Local Trade Fair event 2012. Ludlow Food Festival Sept 12
4.5	Strengthen the availability and creative use of local produce in catering outlets	*	1-5	Med	PS, DDP, AONB, SHT, LL, LEP	Buy Local Trade Fair event held 23 Feb 12.
<b>5</b>	<b>ORIENTATING AND INFORMING VISITORS</b>					
5.1	Maintain an effective network of VICs, visitor centres and information points across the area	*	1-5	High	SC, AONB, DDP, MTs	Consideration of relocating VIC in Church Stretton. Refurbishment under way of Bishop's Castle VIC, HLF grant awarded.
5.2	Maintain an effective system of information gathering and dissemination	*	1-5	Med	DDP, SC, ST, SHT, AONB, VE	Proposal for DDP rep on VIC Steering Group. Events being gathered for joint Events guide 2013. Proposal for DDP digest/ bulletin to partners & businesses.
5.3	Maximise on opportunities for visitor orientation and interpretation presented by the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre		2-3	Med	SC, AONB	Crucial visitor orientation role of the Centre for the area need to be prominent in choices about future operation. Consultation events being held Autumn 2012.
5.4	Ensure that accommodation hosts are well placed to orientate and assist their visitors	*	1-5	Med	SHT, DDP, PS, AONB, SC	Shuttles Familiarisation visits held Spring 2012.
5.5	Strengthen the effectiveness of identity and directional signing		3-5	High	SC, AONB	Proposals to improve signage for Church Stretton should retain Shropshire Hills links.
5.6	Expand the use of creative i.t. based information and interpretation tools		3-5	Med	DDP, AONB, ST	App-based material available through Walking with Offa project. New visitor-oriented Church Stretton town website being continually upgraded.
5.7	Provide for visitors with special information needs		3-5	Low	AONB, MTs, DDP	Some provision made. Good opportunity for review.
<b>6</b>	<b>PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT</b>					
6.1	Pursue visitor management actions that reflect the AONB Management Plan	*	1-5	Low	AONB, SC, NT, FC, CBs, SHT	Many actions contribute to this. e.g. Long Mynd access group. New coach drop-off point in Church Stretton (July 2012)
6.2	Develop and promote creative day visit and holiday options based on public transport	*	2-5	Low	PS, AONB, DDP, SHT, SC	Walking with Offa Days Out.

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6.3	Encourage and assist tourism enterprises to promote public transport options to their guests		1-5	Low	DDP, SHT, SC, AONB, PS	Shuttles familiarisation trips for businesses, spring 2012.
6.4	Maintain, expand and promote the use of the Shropshire Hills shuttle buses		2-5	High	SC, AONB, DDP, SHT	New Wenlock Wanderer service for 2012, and new Ludlow service in preparation for 2013.
6.5	Pursue other innovative forms of alternative transport provision		3-5	Med	SC, AONB, PS	Shropshire Link promoted through Walking with Offa. Electric bikes available for hire and promoted.
6.6	Expand and support the proportion of enterprises pursuing sustainable tourism management	*	1-5	Med	DDP, AONB, SHT, SC, CBs	Shropshire Hills Sustainable Business Scheme is maintaining memberships and pursuing renewals. PR contract to promote.
6.7	Pursue options to generate support from visitors and enterprises for conservation		3-5	Med	AONB, CBs, DDP, SHT, PS	Income from Walking with Offa activity being reinvested in projects. Information gathered on similar schemes for an area-wide initiative.
<b>7</b>	<b>SUPPORTING LOCAL ENTERPRISE</b>					
7.1	Raise the quality of service in tourism enterprises		1-5	High	DDP, SHT, ST, PS	Training and awards through Sustainable Business Scheme.
7.2	Develop and deliver relevant business advice and skills training		2-5	Med	DDP, SHT, ST, LEP	Discover Local events.
7.3	Encourage creative business to business networking		1-5	Low	DDP, SHT, ST, LEP	Activity by area tourism groups, Farm Holiday group, Sustainable Business Scheme.
7.4	Establish positive dialogue between investors and planners		3-5	Low	SC, AONB, DDP, SHT, LEP, PS	Policy development on tourism through Site Allocations & Management of Development (SAMDev).
7.5	Encourage investment in innovative tourism products that relate well to the area's character and appeal	*	1-5	High	PS, SC, AONB, DDP, LEP	HF Holidays investment in Long Mynd Hotel.

**Key to abbreviations used in the table**

AONB	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership	MTs	Market towns
CBs	Conservation bodies	NT	National Trust
DDP	Shropshire Hills and Ludlow DDP	PS	Private sector
FC	Forestry Commission	SC	Shropshire Council
HBs	Heritage bodies	SHT	Shropshire Hills Tourism
LEP	Marches LEP	ST	Shropshire Tourism Ltd
LL	Local to Ludlow	VE	VisitEngland

High priority actions are shaded in grey.

For more information see <http://www.shropshirehillstourismpartnership.org.uk/>