



A better future for the Shropshire Hills ...with your help



A vision for the future management of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The current AONB Partnership and the two Councils are proposing the creation of a new independent Conservation Board for the AONB.

About the Shropshire Hills AONB

Extending from the Wrekin to the Clun Forest and the Stiperstones to the Clee Hills, the Shropshire Hills AONB was designated in 1958 and covers 804km² or 23% of Shropshire and a small part of Telford & Wrekin. A charming mix of upland and lowland, the Shropshire Hills have a diverse geology, giving rise to craggy ridges, moorland plateaux and wooded scarps. The landscape of hills, farmland, woods, rivers and villages is rich in wildlife and heritage, along with scenic quality and views, tranquillity, culture and opportunities for enjoyment.

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

Unit 9 Drovers House, The Auction Yard, Craven Arms, SY7 9BZ
01743 254740 shropshirehillsaonb@shropshire.gov.uk
www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk



A Conservation Board has many advantages:

- A stronger, more independent voice solely for the AONB
- Able to take effective action balancing local and national priorities
- Better able to involve and engage local people and businesses
- Able to raise its own funds and manage itself more efficiently
- Higher profile, more resilient and cheaper to run

The need for this change is mainly due to ongoing structural changes in local government and growing pressures on the natural environment and funding availability. There is a need for more cost efficient, self-sustaining and locally empowered services.

Our aspirations are for the Conservation Board to be:

An independent partnership

- Involving and inspiring people
- Working for our special landscapes
- Enhancing natural and cultural assets

Delivering better outcomes for the AONB

Building on solid foundations

2018 will be the 60th anniversary of the Shropshire Hills being nationally designated for their 'outstanding natural beauty'. A staff team and Partnership for the AONB has existed for around 25 years. Creating a permanent independent body is a big step, intended for the long-term benefit of the AONB but it will build on our work to date.

The AONB Partnership has in the last five years:

- Brought in over £4.3 million of funding directly for the area
- Supported over 150 community projects and many businesses with grants and advice
- Led valuable project work on river catchments, heritage, woodlands, meadows and uplands, as well as sustainable tourism and access
- Involved hundreds of volunteers, and led around 270 events with more than 7,500 attendances.
- Led over 100 sessions with 33 different schools, with over 3,500 attendances and 224 John Muir Awards achieved.

A Conservation Board would continue to focus on our main legal purpose, which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. In addition, the new Board would have responsibility to increase public understanding and enjoyment of the AONB's special qualities. This means a better managed landscape with greater public involvement and social and economic benefits.

Delivering a better future for the AONB

The new Conservation Board would develop the work of the AONB Partnership, and do even more. It will bring individuals, organisations, businesses and resources together to champion the best interests of the AONB's landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage. It will continue to be supported by a dynamic team of specialist staff, and collaborate nationally as one of the 46 UK AONBs.

How would it work?

The new Conservation Board would be a relatively small, efficient structure with members from the two local authorities, parish and town councils, as well as specially appointed individuals. It would be supported by an advisory partnership to ensure the continuing involvement of wider stakeholders.

The Board would permanently take over from Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council, the statutory responsibility for producing an AONB Management Plan every five years. It would continue to be funded by Defra and the two Councils but with the ability to secure a wider variety of other funding sources.

What happens next?

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils are making a formal request to Defra this autumn to create a Conservation Board. Defra will consult with relevant organisations including Parish and Town Councils before making a decision about this. If they decide to go ahead, a legal order will go before Parliament. Once the Conservation Board is in place, staff and funds would be transferred from Shropshire Council.

What does your support mean?

The additional work created by Brexit means that strong local support will help encourage Defra to agree to create a Conservation Board.

The AONB Partnership is seeking support from organisations in the area, and our Chairman James Williamson is happy to talk to anyone about the proposal (tel 01588 630666).

You can also go now to www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk and tell us what you think. Thank you.

