

### **Item 3. AONB Team Work Programme update**

#### **1. Summary**

This paper presents a brief update on work programme items.

#### **2. Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Team Work Programme – updates on recent work**

**TAKING ACTION - on the ground and in our communities - to conserve and enhance natural beauty and to promote enjoyment and understanding.**

##### Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme (selected updates)

Around 500 visitors attended the Hay Meadow Festival in the Shropshire Hills on Sat 24<sup>th</sup> June.

Photos at <http://www.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk/2017/06/hay-meadow-festival-gallery/>

'Buzz in the Borders' is being supported this year by Cath on a paid basis. Completed John Muir Award with Home Education Group and Churchstoke School and sessions at Norbury After School Club. Series of adult autumn events planned. Film at <https://vimeo.com/224651884>.

LPS Board visited the 1784 Pontesford Engine House, where works were recently completed.

Two of our Young Rangers, along with Education Officer Jon Bielstein, attended the 2017 Europarc International Junior Ranger Camp at Habkern in Switzerland in July.

'Curlew Country' active blog, see <https://curlewcountry.org/2017/08/03/oakdale-chick-saga/> and <https://curlewcountry.org/2017/07/31/end-2017-breeding-season-project-summary/>.

Ongoing delivery on many other LPS projects. Active discussions around development of legacy projects and exit arrangements for the end of the scheme in March 2018.

##### River Clun Recovery Project (WREN funded)

Work on five gateways recently completed at Shelderton Farm.

Current work is planning, costing and delivery of WREN funded outputs Plan at Recovery Site 1 (Bush Farm) and at a number of sites in the middle and lower catchment. Also planning and costing work proposals for partnership funded elements – Environment Agency "Unmuddying the Waters" fund and Woodland Trust for new tree planting.

##### Other Clun/Teme catchment delivery work

Alison and Mike attended Freshwater Pearl Mussel training in Cumbria.

Natural Flood Management proposal put forward for sites near Clunton and in Upper Clun.

Discussions re follow-up work from recent survey of fords.

Habitat opportunity mapping being carried out on Upper Teme area for Natural England.

Exploring project with Environment Agency, Cranfield University and Shropshire Council re innovative solutions to highway outfall issues.

Tree planting scheme in preparation with Woodland Trust (MOREwoods) at Lake House, Clun.

##### Sustainable Tourism delivery

Shuttles restarted in July (did not run during June). 800 passengers carried in 10 days in July.

Improved parking arrangements at Carding Mill Valley to address issues.

Support to EU funded tourism co-operation project, developing themed on-line marketing.

##### Schools & education

John Muir Award - Planning for Sept start with Clunbury and Farlow Primary Schools. Organising Wildlife Watch training for teachers with Shropshire Wildlife Trust on Sept 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

Project development - See agenda item 8.

**INFLUENCING OTHERS - lead and champion the delivery of public benefits from the AONB, working strategically and collaboratively from policy to grassroots level.**

#### AONB Management Plan

Scoping for Management Plan review started (see agenda item 7).

#### Planning

Took part in national survey of planning pressures for housing – questionnaire and interview.

Discussions with Shropshire Council officers re future casework and planning policy.

#### Local partnership working

Wrekin Forest Partnership meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> June. An additional meeting is to be called by Little Wenlock PC to look at car parking issues at the Wrekin.

Shropshire Hills & Ludlow Destination Partnership held 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

Clun Catchment Partnership to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> Sept with field visit. Also input to Clun Steering Group, Clun Field Officers Group and Teme Partnership.

Attended first Board meeting of new Marches Local Nature Partnership.

#### Input to other strategies & schemes

We are leading the review of the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Sustainable Tourism Strategy. An on-line survey of businesses is under way, and a consultative workshop planned for the autumn.

Support to Western Power electricity undergrounding scheme at Acton Scott – going ahead.

Input to Environment Agency consultation on potential new Water Environment grant scheme.

#### Communications & public awareness

Heartland arts project – most activities now completed. Singing workshops have been particularly popular. A final celebration event is being arranged on Sept 16<sup>th</sup>.

Summer newsletter issued and regular output on Facebook and Twitter.

New web page created for John Muir Award work -

<http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/enjoying-the-shropshire-hills/learning/>

Help with guided walk at Leintwardine for Ludlow Slow Food Festival.

2016-17 Annual Review in preparation.

Attending Redlake Valley Woodland Fair on 7<sup>th</sup> Oct.

#### Local authorities and Partnerships

James and Phil with Neil held a meeting with Lezley Picton, Shropshire Council Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, and have a further meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September with Peter Nutting, the new Leader of Shropshire Council.

#### Evidence base

Initial scoping and data gathering for next 'State of the AONB' report to inform Management Plan review.

#### Support for groups

In discussion with SWT and NE re possible Clee Hill farmer project/Facilitation Fund application.

Advice to Clee Hill group regarding viewpoint toposcope.

**MANAGING OUR BUSINESS - develop a robust, effective and financially sustainable AONB organisation.**

Transition process to Conservation Board

Formal resubmission to Defra regarding Conservation Board proposal made on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, following receipt of informal comments on revisions from Defra.

AONB Partnership

Summer Tour held jointly with AONB Trust and Friends on 7<sup>th</sup> July.

AONB Team and office

Annual appraisals in progress.

Heather Scott completed her year's placement from Harper Adams University.

Notice has been given on one of our four office units to save money. Old files and equipment are being sorted to make space. Increases to Business Rates are being appealed.

AONB Trust

First AGM of the Trust held in July. Trustees supporting recruitment push for Friends membership. The Trust has issued 19 grant offers from the AONB Conservation Fund for 2017-18 totalling £21,800. Cath is providing support and admin on a paid basis.

Web domain name registered [www.shropshirehillsaonbtrust.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehillsaonbtrust.co.uk).

National Association for AONBs

James and Phil attended the AONB Conference in Winchester in July. Key points circulated.

NAAONB are putting the Shropshire Hills AONB forward to host one of five visits to AONBs by the Defra Minister Lord Gardiner this autumn. Main focus to be *"highlighting the role of the designation (and its associated Partnership/Conservation Board) in supporting the rural economy through helping young people enter the world of work – apprenticeships, placements, work placement schemes etc."* The LPS traineeship scheme has been our main means of delivering this.

Nigel and Steph have been actively involved in the NAAONB Communications group.

Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB

New leaflet produced for joint event on 7<sup>th</sup> July and press coverage obtained. New banking arrangements in place via AONB Trust with Standing Order facility, and potentially Direct Debits through Charities Aid Foundation. Gift Aid arrangements put in place and facility for on-line giving.

Volunteering

A business group from Parker Brinkoff did a day of volunteering with the Rivers project.

**3. RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Transition Board is recommended to comment on the work programme updates.**

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