



Committee and Date  
Shropshire Hills AONB  
Partnership

7 February 2008

Item

**2**

Paper

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## SHROPSHIRE HILLS AONB PARTNERSHIP

### NOTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2007

**Responsible Officer** Tim Ward

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#### PRESENT:

##### Local Authorities

Bridgnorth District Council

Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council

Shropshire County Council

Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Cllr William Parr

Cllr Tim Barker

Cllr James Gibson

Cllr Denis Allen

##### Statutory/Voluntary Agencies & Individual members

Individual member

Alison Caffyn

Individual member

George Chancellor

Individual member

David Gibbon

Individual member (Chair)

Peter Norman

Individual member

Elizabeth Thomas

Parish Council representative

Dr Keith Bartlett

Parish Council representative

Jenny Collingridge

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

Claire Cox

Diocese of Hereford

Nick Read

English Heritage

Bill Klemperer

Institute of Chartered Foresters

John Voysey

Long Mynd & District Bridleways Association

Sue Lee

National Farmers Union

John Povall

National Trust

Pete Carty

Natural England

Kelda White

Ramblers Association

David Shelley

SASTAK/ Shropshire Machinery Ring

Julia Brereton

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Colin Preston

Shropshire Geological Society

David C Smith

South Shropshire Tourism Association

Ian Kemsley

Teme Catchment Fisheries Association

Tony Bostock

Upper Onney Wildlife Group/ Shropshire

Leo Smith

Ornithological Society

Walford & North Shropshire College

Jon Parry

## **Observers/Officers**

Bridgnorth District Council  
Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council  
Shropshire County Council  
South Shropshire District Council  
Shropshire Hills AONB Team

Karen Sinclair  
Karen Jones  
Karen Wilson, Tim Ward  
David Francis  
Phil Holden , Cath Landles

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves as there were several new members present.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lee Chapman (SSDC), Sue Cooper (Caring for Gods Acre), Bob Evans (Forestry Commission), Stewart Minton Beddoes (CLBA), Sally Powell (English Nature), Jane Bushell (Borough of Telford & Wrekin) and Neil Willcox (SCC)

### **2. Note of Last Meeting**

The note of the meeting held on 20 June 2007 was approved.

The AONB Manager informed the meeting that the AONB Office was on the mailing list for the papers for the select committee that had been mentioned at the last meeting but that to date nothing had been received.

The AONB Manager informed the meeting that it was thought that the planning application for the Biomass plant at Bishops Castle would be submitted in the near future.

The Chair apologised that he had not written to the statutory members regarding attendance at meetings but would do so in the near future.

### **3. Update and Progress Report on AONB Management Plan Actions**

A report had been circulated outlining the context of the Actions Update with the full review of the AONB Management Plan.

The AONB Manager reminded members that the Management Plan was the key statutory document setting out the priorities for the AONB area and that the actions section was updated annually with a progress report and new actions being added. He went on to say that a full five year review of the Management Plan was being undertaken and that preparatory work was being undertaken in three areas

- Review of relevant plans and strategies
- Evaluation of data on the condition of the AONB, especially relating to key indicators

- Review of recent relevant consultation material, including Down to Earth projects and Parish Plan questionnaires

The AONB Manager then gave a presentation which highlighted recent progress in the AONB.

Following the presentation the AONB Manager asked for comments and questions.

Mr Voysey asked whether action 1.1.5 related to the whole of Shropshire or just the AONB area. The AONB Manager informed him that it applied to the whole of Shropshire. Mr Preston commented that there was a complex web of people who each held information and that the aim was to bring all the information in to one place. Mr Smith commented that there was a need to make the very best use of resources.

Mr Bostock asked why the River Clun was not included in the list of rivers in point 3.3.13. The AONB Manager commented that the wording reflected the targets in the initial plan.

Mr Shelley commented that in the presentation the AONB Manager has stated that 97% of farmers find a lack of time prevented them carrying out conservation work. He asked what was meant by this. The AONB Manager informed him that during discussion with farmers it had become clear that the ever increasing burden of paperwork and the reduction of labour employed on farms was a barrier to conservation work being done. Miss Brereton commented that 70% of land was grazed but a lot of turf was going under the plough and this was bound to have a knock on effect on conservation and the environment.

After further discussion it was **resolved** that: -

The Partnership note the report and endorse the Actions Update for publication

#### **4. Rural Development Programme for England**

A report had been circulated outlining some of the connections between the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and the Shropshire Hills AONB. Jamie Inglis, Rural Development Policy Manager, AWM then gave a presentation on the programme. He informed the meeting that the RDPE was a new funding scheme for land based business, rural tourism organisations and other small rural businesses and that it would run from 2008 to 2013. He went on to say that the RDPE aimed to safeguard and enhance the countryside, improve the competitiveness and sustainability of rural businesses and help rural communities to thrive.

Mr Inglis informed the meeting that there were three main funding streams

- Axis 1 – Economic Competitiveness
- Axis 2 - Agri – Environmental and othe Land Management Schemes
- Axis 3 - Tourism and Rural Community Development

He went on to say that around 80% of the proposed budget was allocated to Axis 2 which covered things such as the Environmental Stewardship scheme, the English Woodland Grant Scheme, the Hill Farm Allowance and the Energy Crops Scheme. He added that there was flexibility between capital and revenue spend within the programme.

Mr Inglis then described how the programme would work and gave details of the members of staff involved with the programme.

The Chair asked how much of the funding available could realistically be available for the AONB area. Mr Inglis informed him that the matter was an ongoing process and depended on what projects were put forward.

Mr Allen informed the meeting that he was a member of the 2012 committee which was looking at ways that Shropshire could benefit from the 2012 London Olympics. He asked whether there was any way of speeding funding allocation. Mr Inglis informed him that whilst no money was being committed at the present time there was no reason that project development could not be started and that staff would be happy to talk to those involved with the project. Mrs Thomas commented that AWM had provided funding for the initial consultation work and that Ask Much Wenlock was the gateway to Wenlock Edge and too the AONB there may be knock on benefits to the area as a whole.

Rev. Read commented that the work of the AONB covered all three of the funding axes and asked whether this would affect the amount of funding gained. Mr Inglis informed him that the RDPE was keen to see activity across all the axes

Rev Read asked what the role of the Rural Hubs would be. He went on to ask whether a representative of the Hub should sit on the Partnership. Mr Inglis informed him that it was thought that the Hubs would be the first point of contact. The Chair expressed concern at this approach as some hubs were not as active as others, and the Shropshire Hub was under resourced and under managed. Mr Parry informed the meeting that he was in close contact with the Shropshire Hub as they were based at Walford and that he could possibly act as a link between the two organisations. Mr Inglis commented that the Hubs were at varying stages in their evolution and that they did represent a lot of producers who had great enthusiasm for what they were doing and that they were not operating in isolation as they worked closely with the Rural development Team.

The Chair thanked Mr Inglis for his presentation.

After further discussion it was **resolved** that: -

The AONB Partnership note the progress made in project work.

### 3. Break Out Introductions and Discussion of AONB Priorities

At this point in the meeting members split up into small groups and spent a short time discussing and agreeing four priority things they would like to see in the AONB in 5 years time. The AONB Manager informed members that the suggestions made would feed into the new management plan.

### 6. Election of Chair and Vice Chairs

The Chair reported that one nomination had been received for the position of Chair and two nominations for the positions of Vice Chair and that therefore an election would not be needed. He went on to inform members that he would only be seeking re-election for 1 more year and urged members to start considering who his successor would be.

It was **RESOLVED** that: -

Mr Peter Norman be elected Chair and Dr Jenny Collingridge and Mr Colin Preston be elected Vice Chairs of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership for the ensuing year.

### 7. Election of Members to the Management Board

The AONB Manager reminded members that there were four seats to be filled on the Management Board, comprising one representative from the Land Management category, one representative from the Community category, and two representatives from the Non-statutory Environmental and Amenity Organisations category. He went on to inform the meeting that one nomination had been received for each of the Land Management and Community categories and that three nominations had been received for the Non-statutory Environmental and Amenity Organisations category.

Following a ballot it was **RESOLVED** that: -

Mr John Povall be elected to the Management Board as the representative of the Land Management category.

Mrs Elizabeth Thomas be elected to the Management Board as the representative of the Community category, and

Mr Ian Kemsley and Mr Leo Smith be elected to the Management Board as representatives of the Non-statutory Environmental and Amenity Organisations category.

### 8. Shropshire Countryside Access Strategy

A paper outlining a proposed response from the AONB Partnership to Shropshire County Council's consultation on the draft Shropshire Countryside

Access Strategy 2008 – 18 had been circulated. The AONB Manager informed the meeting that the consultation period was drawing to a close and that the AONB response followed on from earlier discussions with the Rights of Way Team at the County Council.

Mr Kemsley commented that there was need to look at countryside access from a tourism point of view and he would like to see the rerouting of footpaths with tourism in mind. He went on to say that a lot of parish councils would take this on if there was a less bureaucratic process. Mrs Wilson informed him that new legislation was now in place with regard to applications to divert rights of way which would now make the process a long and expensive one. She went on to say that in the past the rights of way department had worked with landowners regarding the rationalisation of paths but that this was unlikely to happen in the future, but that the Access Team was trying to look at specific needs working in conjunction with landowners.

Dr Bartlett commented that a major problem with right of way was use by 4 by 4 vehicles. He went on to say that this was covered quite well in the policy. Mr Francis commented that he felt that the policy regarding off road vehicles was not strong enough and that the response made by South Shropshire District Council was much stronger in this respect.

Mr Barker commented there was more access promotion in towns and that he felt that the Walk for Life agenda fitted well with the strategy.

Mr Shelly moved and Mrs Lee seconded that the Partnership endorse the consultation response.

Mr Smith commented that the response made no mention of geological trails and proposed that this be added to the response. This was seconded and it was **resolved**: -

That the Partnership endorses the consultation response subject to there being greater mention of geological trails.

## **9. Report from Working Groups**

A paper informing members of recent meetings of working groups had been circulated.

Mr Preston advised members that the Hollies Farm would be coming onto the market shortly and that the Wildlife Trust would be launching an appeal to purchase it.

Miss Brereton advised members that the closure of the abattoir in Bishops Castle had been discussed at the Farming Working Group and that a public meeting had been arranged in November with representatives of AWM.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meetings of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership would be held on

Thursday 7 February 2008.  
Wednesday 18 June 2008.  
Tuesday 21 October 2008.