



# Agenda

## Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

**Friday, 17 November 2017, 10.00 am  
Council House, Malvern Hills District  
Council**

**Avenue Road  
Malvern  
WR14 3AF**

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**Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee**  
**Friday, 17 November 2017, 10.00 am, Malvern**

**Members**

**Elected Members:**

Mrs G Rees (Chairman)	Malvern Hills Conservators
Dr K A Pollock (Vice Chairman)	Worcestershire County Council
Mr T Baker	Malvern Hills District Council
Mr S Bosley	Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
Mr J Fryman	Worcestershire Association of Local Councils
Ms E Holton	Herefordshire County Council
Mr A Johnson	Herefordshire County Council
Mrs C O'Donnell	Malvern Hills District Council
Mr P A Tuthill	Worcestershire County Council
Mr C Williams	Forest of Dean District Council

**Non-Elected  
members:**

Mr W Barnes	Forestry Commission
Prof R Bryant	Hereford & Worcester Earth Heritage Trust
Ms S Faulkner	NFU West Midlands
Mr I George	Historic England
Ms D Griffiths	Natural England
Mr M Hammond	Hereford and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
Mr J Hervey-Bathurst	County Land & Business Association
Dr R Williams	Campaign to Protect Rural England

**Co-Opted Members:**

Mr A Lee	Herefordshire Local Access Forum
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**Agenda**

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	<b>Apologies and Substitutes</b>	
2	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
3	<b>To elect a Chairman</b>	

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Thursday, 2 November 2017

Item No	Subject	Page No
4	<b>To appoint a Vice Chairman</b>	
5	<b>Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting</b>	
6	<b>Natural Capital Scoping Study</b> To receive a presentation from Oliver Hölzinger (Consultancy for Environmental Economics & Policy - CEEP) on a Natural Capital Scoping Study for the Malvern Hills AONB.	
7	<b>Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project</b> To receive a presentation from Karen Humphries (Project Officer) on the delivery of this Heritage Lottery supported project.	
8	<b>Speed reduction on the B4208 at Castlemorton Common</b> To receive a report from Paul Esrich, AONB Partnership Manager.	1 - 4
9	<b>Sustainable Development Fund</b> To receive a report from David Armitage, AONB Partnership Assistant Manager.	5 - 6
10	<b>Information Items</b> To note the items for information.	7 - 10
11	<b>Verbal Reports from Partners</b>	
12	<b>Dates of Future Meetings</b> <u>2018 Dates</u>  20 April 2018 9 November 2018  Both at 10.00am in the Council Chamber at Malvern Hills District Council.	
	If you have any other contributions that you would like to bring to the meeting, please contact Paul Esrich tel: (01684) 560616.	

# MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## 17 NOVEMBER 2017

### SPEED REDUCTION ON THE B4208 – AN EXERCISE IN PARTNERSHIP WORKING

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#### Background

1. In November 2016 Worcestershire County Council consulted on a Traffic Regulation Order for a new 50mph speed limit on part of the B4208 in the parish of Castlemorton (the B4208 forms the boundary of the AONB in this area). The request to reduce the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph came from Castlemorton Parish Council and was supported by the County Council ward member.
2. The Malvern Hills AONB Unit responded to this initial consultation with the following:
  - Support for lowering the speed limit as proposed in the hope that it would reduce damage to livestock and vehicles from animals that have strayed from the common.
  - A request that strong consideration be given to extending the 50mph zone to the entrance to Welland village, for the same reason.
  - A request that any changes in traffic management infrastructure such as the number and/or size of signs which might be required to facilitate a change in speed limit are sensitive to the very high quality and open nature of the Unenclosed Commons landscape and are in accordance with the AONB Guidance on Highway Design.
3. In May 2007 the AONB Unit was informed that:

*'Following investigation, assessment and careful consideration of all views expressed, including objections, the proposal has been authorised for implementation, by the Network Control Manager, without modification on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017. Bearing in mind the environmental significance of this area, great care has been taken with regard to the mandatory signage, necessary to ensure that this speed limit is enforceable. All of the repeater signs will be mounted on existing street furniture and only the terminal signs, at the northernmost end, and the 6 side roads will require new posts.'*

#### Scheme details and consultation

4. The AONB Unit made contact with the Senior Traffic Schemes Engineer in charge of the scheme who readily provided a copy of the works order plans showing what signage was being proposed and where. The AONB Unit

Manager carried out a site visit examining each of the signs proposed. This visit confirmed that many opportunities had indeed been taken by the Council to minimise the impact on the local landscape. However, a small number of concerns were communicated by the Unit to the Schemes Engineer. These focussed on:

- The number of speed repeater signs being proposed.
- The height of some posts being proposed for use, especially given the low lying and open nature of much of the landscape.
- The size of the signs being proposed.

5. A response from the Schemes Engineer suggested that some alterations/improvements could be made to the proposed works in one or two areas and these were subsequently incorporated. However, in general terms it stated that the proposed post heights and sign diameters were necessary to enable the police to enforce speed limits and were related to regulations and Department for Transport (DfT) guidance.

6. At this point the AONB Unit made contact with John Stock for some advice. John is a Technical Director with WSP with over 40 years' experience in highway design and the operation of roads. He also wrote the AONB Guidance on Highway Design. John very kindly looked through the proposed works order plans, engaging a WSP colleague (Jeremy Clarke) in the process.

7. John and Jeremy both felt that further landscape-related improvements could be made to the proposed signage scheme, especially with regard to the size of the repeater signs being used. The WSP representatives felt that these could and should be 300mm diameter signs, rather than the 450mm size which were proposed. They suggested a small number of additional amendments to the scheme, informed by the Department for Transport guidance on reducing signage clutter. A report containing the proposed amendments was sent to the County Council's Traffic Schemes Engineer. This prompted further consideration of the matter within the Council, including further liaison with the police. The County Council concluded that the size of the repeater signs specified (450mm) were appropriate and should be used.

### **Summary – Lessons learnt**

- **Use of Highway Design Guide** – Worcestershire County Council began from a good starting point, having proactively used the AONB Guidance on Highway Design to help produce a scheme of works which included a number of compliant elements such as attaching new signs to existing posts where possible, not marking the road with coloured paint etc.
- **Adding value** – detailed inspection of the proposed signage works by the AONB Unit led to a small number of suggestions for landscape-related improvements which the County Council did accommodate in

a revised scheme of works. One or two additional comments suggested by WSP were also incorporated. The Council's Senior Traffic Schemes Engineer dealing with this job demonstrated a willingness to listen and to be flexible.

- **Engaging specialists** – the Unit was extremely fortunate that colleagues from WSP gave their time voluntarily to assist the AONB Unit in discussions with County Council Engineers on this matter. There is no doubt that WSP involvement led to stronger and more reasoned arguments being made, informed by references to Department for Transport guidance and regulations. It enabled the Unit to push the matter of landscape sensitive signage as far as possible.
- **Interpretation of Government Guidance** – traffic experts in the County Council and in WSP disagreed on the size of signs which were necessary/desirable in this case. Department for Transport regulations do allow for smaller signs to be used with special reference made to the desirability of reducing impacts on special landscapes. However, the County Council, in consultation with local police, felt unable to go this far, primarily due to fears about safety and difficulties with enforcement.
- **The future** – it is hoped that this exercise will make it more likely that the Highway Authority in Worcestershire will deliver landscape-sensitive improvements in the AONB in the future.

## Recommendations

### 8. The Committee is recommended to:

- a) **Note the report.**
- b) **Discuss any issues arising from it with regards future traffic management schemes in the AONB.**

## Contact Points

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: [worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Specific Contact Points for this report

Paul Esrich, Manager, Malvern Hills AONB Partnership

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## MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 17 NOVEMBER 2017

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2016/17 – UPDATE REPORT

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#### Background

1. The table below shows the Sustainable Development Fund's grants for the financial year 2017/18. The budget is £26,000 and the amount committed is £18,205, leaving c. £8000 to distribute.

#### Summary

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Committed</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
Chase End Hill: Biodiversity Improvements	£3,800	
Car Club: Birchwood Car	£1,000	£1,000
Coombegreen History Booklet	£1,305	
Eastnor Woodyard Centre Interpretation Panels	£2,000	
Malvern NCT's tent for baby feeding & changing at events	£700	£702
Geosites Maintenance	£1,500	
Craft workshops on recycling rubbish	£1,700	
Welland Phone Box Info Centre	£1,200	
Orchard Mental Health exercises	£500	
Enclosure Leaflet	£1,000	
Homeopathic Gardening: pestle and daughter	£1,000	
MHC Bike leaflet	£500	
Tank Quarry Interp	£1,000	
Crayfish Extermination	£1,000	
Totals	£18,205	£1,702
Total SDF Budget (no admin reduction)	<b>£26,000.00</b>	
Uncommitted	£7,795.00	

#### Recommendation

1. **The Committee is requested to:**
  - 1) **Note and comment on the report.**
  - 2) **Contact David Armitage with any projects that might be suitable for this fund.**
  - 3) **Consider whether our local authorities should make more inquiries of this fund**

## **Contact Points**

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

David Armitage, Assistant Manager, Malvern Hills AONB Partnership

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# MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## 17 NOVEMBER 2017

### INFORMATION ITEMS

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Management Plan ref.  
(abridged)

LP2 Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features that have been significantly degraded.

Project

#### Landscape Improvement Grants

These small grants are aimed at encouraging small landowners, or those outside other grant scheme to do environmental good. Currently we have seven proposals for hedge planting, tree planting, pond restructuring that amount to a total of c.£5,000.

#### Route to the Hills

The AONB Units sits on the board and has also been actively involved in the project management group of this £482,000 project run by Malvern Hills District Council. It aims to provide a route from Gt Malvern Station to Rose Bank Gardens in Malvern and thus onto the hills. Along the route there will be various installations to tell of the glories of Malvern. After a long run-up, some of the information boards, themed benches, guide books and sign posts have been produced. Meanwhile, the community programme is gathering pace: a community play about the history of Malvern was held in the summer and other events are planned. For more details, see <http://www.routetothehills.co.uk/>

#### Malvern's Commons – keeping them grazed

The past experience of the Unit on securing grazing for the commons at Castlemorton has been lent on, in the current efforts. Much of this has involved visiting other commons, where successful schemes have been implemented, to gather evidence.

BP5 Undertake survey and research to provide decision-makers with accurate and appropriate data.

#### Finding Rare Species in the Malverns

Early in 2017 the AONB Unit commissioned the preparation of a grant application to the HLF Our Heritage programme. The project proposal centred on working with volunteers and landowners in the north of the AONB to help collect data on some of our rarest and most iconic species, including Lesser Horseshoe bats and Dormice. The bid for £60k was successful and a two year project has now begun, being taken forward by a part time Project Officer - Lucy Grove. Lucy is being managed by the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre but the AONB Partnership is providing some match-funding and this is a project that is of much interest to us. As such the AONB Unit will be closely involved and requests that all support is given to Lucy in her work.

BP3 – Enhance the wildlife value of the countryside and achieve greater connectivity between key habitats within the AONB and between the AONB and the countryside beyond

FP1 – Encourage the take-up of grant options and management practices that benefit the distinctive natural and historic environment of the AONB.

BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in planning policy and guidance and in decision-making.

#### Highways Verges Management Pilot Project

This pilot project - to improve the value of highway verges for plants and pollinators in the Worcestershire part of the AONB - has now commenced. Early in October 2017 Ringway staff cut back the wider highway verge throughout the project area. They were followed by staff working for a company called Biosphere who collected the cut material from some of the wider verges in the area. This vegetation was transported to the Pendock green waste facility to be composted. This is the first year of a project which – subject to funding- could last for up to 5 years. Further management works to be explored include further removing the nutrient content of certain verges and strewing them with green hay from species-rich grasslands nearby.

#### Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The AONB Unit is compiling a draft bid to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for an area of land west of the Malvern Hills. This is a government supported fund to support people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. Discussions with a number of landowners have been taking place to ascertain levels of interest locally. The scheme is expected to be highly competitive so even if a Malvern Hills AONB application is submitted there is no guarantee of success.

#### Development Management

As usual the Unit has commented on a number of development management applications. Of particular interest to the area is Severn Trent Water's application to discontinue the British Camp Reservoir, with one scenario being complete removal and landscaping over of the site. Severn Trent has asked Malvern Hills District Council for a Screening Opinion as to whether this work would constitute Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development. Severn Trent believes it does not. The AONB Unit and a number of other partners have argued that the importance of the landscape and the possible significance of the reservoir means that EIA would be appropriate. The Council has not yet made its decision.

#### Leaflet for new owners

An AONB leaflet to be sent to new purchasers of land and property in the AONB has been produced. This has been developed in conjunction with local estate agents, with the intention that it will be provided to (prospective) new purchasers through those agents. We also intend to circulate the new publication to local solicitors as another delivery route. The purpose of the leaflet is to welcome people to the AONB, to give them a 'heads-up' on what is different in the AONB and to encourage them to make contact with the AONB Partnership whilst considering change.

HP1 Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment of the AONB.

#### Gas Lamps and their Electric Mimics

The Unit has had a strong association with Malvern's gas lamps, having funded their re-design through SDF grants. There are 3 lamp projects in the wings: to refurbish and supply around 8 lamps on the Route to the Hills project; put lamps in front of Malvern Library; and grant-seeking to replace 11 missing gas lamps in Malvern Wells. The AONB Unit is involved to varying degrees in these projects.

### **Recommendation**

**Members of the JAC are requested to note this information report and contact the AONB Unit if they wish to be involved in any consultations or to receive further information on any of these agenda items.**

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