

**MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**18 NOVEMBER 2016****INFORMATION ITEMS**

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**Management Plan ref.**  
**(abridged)**

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

**Project**Orchard planting

The second batch of fruit trees needed to restock the traditional orchard at the Three Counties Showground should be planted out in late November 2016.

Innovation Fund – Orchard Planting

Natural England, through its Innovation Fund, has provided grants to plant one new orchard on an old orchard site, and to help restock four other orchards with traditional orchard trees. At the time of writing we believe we have the sites settled and the varieties chosen. The planting should take place this winter.

Route to the Hills

The AONB Units sits on both the board, and has 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 installations should appear before Christmas.

Landscape Grants

Much of this year's grants will be concentrated on restoring or replanting traditional orchards. Another two sites within the AONB are, at the time of writing, going to receive advice on the varieties to plant, and then hopefully a grant to plant.

Burying Power Cables in the AONB

We are in a new spending period for the next 8 years. The nominal budget is £2.3 million for the AONBs and National Parks of the West Midlands. However the actual spendable budget may be much smaller than that, as there were a number of unfinished projects from the last spending period, and the costs from then, become current costs. Western Power Distribution, the budget holders are currently calculating the available budget.

**LP5 Undertake surveys and research to better understand and monitor the condition, and rate of change, of landscape character**

**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**

**HP2 Identify and improve the evidence base of locally important heritage assets of the AONB in order to understand better the significance and condition of the historic environment, which will underpin future policy.**

#### Landscape condition monitoring

A report documenting 10 years of landscape change is now being finalised. Guidance on how to monitor environmental change in the AONB in the future is also being prepared. This is partnership work with the University of Worcester.

#### Making Space for Nature

Additional mapping has been completed. The Working Group established to progress this work has met. Creation of a draft vision/management plan for the northern project area and scoping for a new project to collect additional data should be completed by end of December 2016.

#### Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project

Our mid-term evaluation showed that good progress has been made across most areas of the project and it was approved by the HLF monitor. Key achievements thus far:

- 17 Community Champions recruited to the project and have attended 4 training days. So far they have given back over 300 hours to the project.
- 300 nationally rare 'local' fruit trees have been propagated and will be re-introduced into the areas they came from this Autumn.
- 31 traditional orchards are being restored by TCTOP volunteers
- Over 250 people have been involved with project activities to date.
- A project film is being made by a professional film maker and volunteers.

More information is available at: [www.tctop.org.uk](http://www.tctop.org.uk)

#### Local List

Work on a project to identify locally important buildings in one parish has stalled. Consideration is being given to other means of delivery.

**CO2 – Develop an enhanced sense of ownership...among local communities...through opportunities for involvement in consultation activities**

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

**BDP8 Support the recycling, re-use and limited extraction of small quantities of locally distinctive building materials, such as Malvern stone, where this is needed to help retain local distinctiveness in the built environment.**

**IP5 Raise awareness of being in the Malvern Hills as a special place to encourage sustainable activity.**

#### Neighbourhood Development Plans

Progress has been made with the development of a number of NDPs in the area. The AONB Unit has commented on a Regulation 16 draft plan (the final stage before referendum) for Cradley. It has also discussed advice and support which could be provided to Malvern Wells Parish Council should it wish to progress with preparing a plan. Natural England staff from across the country are visiting the area as part of training on Landscape Assessment in order to reference the landscape led approach which underpins a number of NDPs in the AONB

#### Guidance

Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development in the AONB has now been finalised and is available at:

[http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance\\_on\\_colour\\_use\\_screen.pdf](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance_on_colour_use_screen.pdf)

The Three Counties Agricultural Society has commissioned a developed palette of colours for use in future development at the showground.

#### Development Management

The Unit objected to an application for the development of new housing at Cradley. Herefordshire Council has refused the application. This may be appealed and if so is likely to end in a PI.

#### Stonebank

One of Malvern's signature building stones is the rock of the hills. Aware that much of this was going to landfill when buildings or walls were knocked down, and that stone-wallers often couldn't find stone to repair the structures; the AONB unit has rented a space on which to store stone until it's needed. The site is now operational and anyone with unwanted Malvern stone should contact David Armitage.

#### **Photo competition**

The AONB Unit's photo competition closed at the end of August 2016. Prizes have been awarded and a number of entries are on display in Exhibition Walk in Malvern. For further information see:

<http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/photography-competition-2016/>

## **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.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

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