

**MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7 DECEMBER 2018****INFORMATION ITEMS**

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.

**Management Plan ref.
(abridged)**

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

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

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.

ProjectRoute to the Hills

The Project is now complete and the final claim to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been made. Remarkably for such a complex project, the capital budget was underspent by only £1,000. Credit goes to Jo Cross of MHDC for managing this. For more details, see <http://www.routetothehills.co.uk/>

Finding Rare Species in the Malverns

This project involves working with volunteers and landowners in the north of the AONB to help collect data on some of our rarest and most iconic species. A series of training events – on dormice, lesser spotted woodpecker and otter – and surveys – for moths, bats Redstarts etc. - have taken place alongside pond dipping at Suckley School, to name just a few.

Highways Verges Management Pilot Project.

An invitation to tender for this pilot project was issued in the summer but met with no responses. It seems that people were too busy cutting grass to complete paper work! We have since reissued the invitation to tender and hope to commence this project in 2019, making use of Natural Networks programme funding (a new grants project funded by the European Structural Investment Fund and managed by Worcestershire County Council).

Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The AONB Unit successfully bid to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for an area of land west of the Malvern Hills. The Facilitation Fund is a government supported fund to help people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the natural environment at a landscape scale. The Malvern Hills group has now had its inaugural event which

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

covered the subject of tree disease and plant health, with presentations made by experts in both the public and private sectors.

Malvern Hills AONB Environs Study

The AONB Unit is working alongside the South Worcestershire Planning Authorities on a Malvern Hills AONB Environs study. This involves an assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of different areas of land around Malvern and further afield to different forms of development. The report will form part of the evidence base for the south Worcestershire authorities in considering the next development plan and future housing allocations. It should also be useful in helping us to better understand what constitutes the setting of the AONB in this area.

Malvern Town view study

A small grant from the AONB Unit was provided to Malvern Hills Town Council to enable it to undertake a study to identify key viewpoints from and across the town. This has helped to generate an evidence base which now underpins a key policy in the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan and should help to secure these key views for the future.

RO1 The development and management of recreation in the AONB should respect the character of the area whilst meeting the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation

Visitor Survey

The AONB Unit collaborated with the Malvern Hills Trust to commission and manage a small visitor survey at various points on the hills and commons. This helps to provide a much needed update to our understanding of user activities and opinions. A final report is expected shortly.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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