

# MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## 26 APRIL 2024

### INFORMATION ITEMS

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**Management Plan ref.  
(abridged)**

**LP3 Promote positive  
change to landowners,  
managers, developers  
etc.**

**BP4 Improve  
knowledge and  
understanding of the  
AONB's biodiversity**

**Project**

See FiPL update report.

AONB Landowner/farmer events

An event on regenerative farming with livestock took place at Baston Hall in November 2023 and a further livestock management walk, talk and discussion took place at Madresfield Estate in March 2024. The latter is one of a series of <https://www.pastureforlife.org/marches-programme/> events sponsored by FiPL in the Malvern Hills, Shropshire Hills and Wye Valley NLS.

White-clawed Crayfish

The MHNL Team organised an event for landowners and managers alongside the Whippets and Careys Brooks, to raise awareness of this endangered species and to discuss opportunities for beneficial land management. Partners from the Environment Agency, Natural England, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and local volunteers were all involved.

Colwall Hedges Project

Together with Colwall Parish Council and Colwall Orchard Group, we arranged and funded an evening event to celebrate the hedge survey in the parish, and all good things about hedges. 130 people attended, a barn owl and a kestrel

Water quality monitoring

5 landowners in the Teme Catchment within the MHNL have begun regular water quality sampling using equipment and support provided by the Severn Rivers Trust as part of a larger citizen science project.

Hope End Registered Park management

Fencing has recently been erected around an area of scrub woodland on Oyster Hill and 12 new trees have been planted in the eastern part of the park. This is the latest work to be completed with FiPL funding, in furtherance of the Parkland Management Plan.

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

**FP5 Support appropriate measures to monitor and control pests, diseases and invasive non-native plant and animal species to protect food production and biodiversity resources.**

**BDO1 The distinctive character and natural beauty of the AONB will be fully reflected in the development and implementation of consistent statutory land use planning policy and guidance across the AONB.**

#### Dingwood Management Plan and works

Phase 1 of Dingwood Park restoration was complete by March 2023, with parkland tree planting, shelter belt infrastructure and pond restoration. Phase 2 has also been completed, including restoring the traditional orchard and improving the conservation value of the hedging.

The Team secured permission from more than 50 landowners to allow the Forestry Commission to conduct a drone-based deer survey over the MHNL. Unfortunately the survey did not progress in the winter just gone due to the FC running out of money and because of delays caused by poor weather. We have been told that the survey will progress early in the winter of 2024/25. There is a potential FiPL Project in the pipeline for a Deer/Game Larder.

#### Planning

The National Landscape Team continue to assist in providing comments subsequently submitted by the National Landscapes Association, in respect of the recent UK Government consultations on extending further permitted development rights into protected landscapes.

The National Landscape Team Planning Officer has been actively involved contributing to a 'Task and Finish' Group run by the National Landscape Association to help identify and assess the potential implications of the new statutory duty, on relevant authorities, to seek to further the purpose(s) of designation of protected landscapes, particularly from a planning perspective.

At the time of writing, during the 2023-2024 financial year, the National Landscape Team Planning Officer made 140 representations on planning applications, including appeals. An annual review of the planning work undertaken by the National Landscape Team will be presented as a separate paper at the next meeting of the JAC.

The Planning Officer has enabled the Team to become more actively involved in planning matters, particularly at a decision-making level by Planning Committees. For example, he addressed members at the Malvern Hills District Council Southern Area Planning Committee meeting in November 2023, in objecting to a residential dwelling in the setting of the National Landscape at The Lovells, Welland. This application was refused partly on such grounds. In a more recent case in Herefordshire the National Landscape Team made an important representation citing the revised 'must seek to further the purpose' duty in the case of a long-running proposed 'outstanding dwelling' development at Glenwood Springs, Upper

**TP2 Provide a Quality public realm with good access and facilities that attract tourists**

**IP3 Raise awareness of the MHAONB and the significance of its designation**

**Vision 2040: people are connected emotionally, and spiritually to the area.**

**RP6 Increase the range of opportunities for those with restricted**

Colwall. The team consider that this application does not meet the high bar for such development in an open countryside location. This application was refused at Herefordshire Council's Planning & Regulatory Committee in March 2024, nearly two and a half years after being validated.

#### Malvern Wells Information Boards

Two information boards about grassland management on sites being managed by the Council have now been installed, with funding support from the NL Team.

#### Rebranding AONBs

AONBs have been rebranded as National Landscapes. We have yet to see what benefits this brings but the hope is that, amongst other things, a more unified 'feel' to this branch of the protected landscape will yield better funding.

#### Training for Parish Councils

The National Landscape Team hosted a webinar for Town and Parish Council members on 28 November 2023. This was to raise awareness of the National Landscape and the work of the partnership, as well as to explain recent changes to do with rebranding and legislation. It also provided an opportunity to tee up the Management Plan review.

#### Training for Malvern Hills, Herefordshire Council and Forest of Dean District Council staff

The National Landscape Team will be seeking to meet with planners and other officers at these three local planning authorities in the new financial year to raise awareness of the National Landscape and the work of the partnership, as well as to explain recent changes to do with rebranding and legislation, and the implications this has for strategic planning and development management, as well as a general planning discussion.

#### Art in the Landscape Project – Nature Calling

The National Landscapes Association made a bid to Arts Council England/Defra for funding for arts projects within individual AONBs. The purpose of this is to use the arts to engage people with the issues of our time around Nature. The grant was for £2M and there will be an opportunity in 2025 for MHNL to commission artists and take part in this landmark national programme.

Our programme of work to improve accessibility in the AONB was awarded £3,953 extra Access funding from DEFRA. This

**mobility and health  
impairments to  
experience the AONB**

was used to replace stiles with gates at Eastnor and to make track improvements above the Gullet.

We are open to projects for 2024/25. Please contact David Armitage.

**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

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