

**MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**20 April 2018****INFORMATION ITEMS**

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**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**

**Project**Landscape Improvement Grants

These small grants are aimed at encouraging small landowners, or those outside other grant scheme to do environmental good. Five grants were provided for hedge planting, tree planting, and pond restructuring that amounted to a total of c.£4,485.

Route to the Hills

The AONB Unit 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. 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.

Finding Rare Species in the Malverns

This project - which 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 - is progressing well. A small launch event in February 2018 was attended by over 30 local people and led to the surfacing of new species records and offers of land for survey. Two workshops for local volunteers on Lesser Spotted Woodpecker have recently been completed.

Highways Verges Management Pilot Project.

Funding to this project has been bolstered following an application to Natural Networks (a new grants project funded by the European Structural Investment Fund and managed by Worcestershire County Council). Tender documents have been drafted and an invitation to tender for additional management of the verges over the next three years will soon be issued. Sites to deposit grass arisings following cut

## **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.**

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

and collect operations in the area have been identified and one area has been prepared.

### Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The AONB Unit was successful in its 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 local natural environment at a landscape scale. A group agreement has now been signed and activities will commence from 1 April 2018 for a period of 3 years.

Two new guidance notes to inform development in the AONB have been drafted. The first deals with external lighting and the second identifies key principles to consider when new development is visible in views. These guidance documents will be subject to consultation in April or May.

### Light from Dog Poo: catching the world's ear

With help from the Sustainable Development Fund, a local Malvern company has developed a biodigester to turn dog poo into methane that will light a gas lamp. The story was released to the Guardian newspaper over Christmas, and it caught the ear of the world. Calls came into the AONB unit from all around the world for about a month. The company is now gearing up to take advantage of this unexpected publicity.

## **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 Point

County Council: 01905 763763

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

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