

MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

29 April 2016

MALVERN HILLS CAR CLUBS

Management Plan Policies

1. The AONB Management Plan policies relevant to this work are as follows:
 - a) LWP2 - Support community initiatives that promote the management of key habitats, appropriate renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, recycling, community transport etc.
 - b) TRP5 - Introduce and maintain measures to reduce car movements in the AONB, particularly during major events and at peak times.
 - c) TRP7 - Develop and promote sustainable transport options to meet local accessibility requirements.
 - d) VP1 - Support effective voluntary activity, in all its shapes and forms, that helps deliver the AONB Management Plan.

Background

2. In 2009 the Sustainable Development Fund provided funding to help set up a car club in Colwall. This has since expanded to cover the wider area of the Malvern Hills and, more recently, Ledbury. During that period the Sustainable Development Fund has contributed towards the purchase of three vehicles and three electric bikes. The club now has 12 vehicles based in Colwall, West Malvern, Malvern Wells and Ledbury. There are a variety of vehicles: small urban runarounds, people carriers and a pick-up. There are now 72 members of the club, all of whom are entitled to drive any of these vehicles according to their need at the time. Grants from Awards for All, Worcestershire Community Transport Consortium, and the Pickersleigh Project are used to bring cars to new areas. The vehicles themselves are self-financing, once bought.

3. Car clubs are well established in towns and work well with their denser populations. However there are few examples of them working in more rural areas, and this is one that does. It works, partly because of the time and dedication put in by club members into looking after the cars; using their skills such as with IT to build slick and labour-free booking systems; and marketing the club effectively. The principles pioneered in this club have been exported to help set up clubs elsewhere, such as in Hereford City.

4. The Club is aimed at reducing the number of cars on the road through sharing vehicles – a principle anyone who has travelled the West Malvern Road could only support. It is aimed financially at those who might otherwise have a second car, who would like access to a second car but can't afford the costs involved and who do under 6,000 miles a year. The average mileage over the fleet of 12 vehicles is around 5000 miles. The one dark cloud on the horizon is insurance costs which

have risen this year by 50% and now represent half the base running costs of the vehicles.

5. The electric bikes came along as an adjunct to the Car Club, with the same idea of reducing the number of cars on the local roads. Cycling in Malvern does pose a challenge to the lungs; the addition of variable electric assistance from the bike allows for just enough exercise to make the experience enjoyable. Indeed one of the markets for the bikes has been patients recovering from hip and knee replacements looking for a low impact form of exercise to build up their muscles again. Another market has been those who wanted to try out an electric bike in Malvern before buying them.

6. This is a project the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership can be proud to be associated with. It has made a contribution to social justice as well as reducing the number of cars clogging the roads; produced a sense of common purpose through the shared use of mutual asset; helped the injured to health; and produced a fine example of what dedicated people can do to improve the area they live in.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note and comment on the report, and**
- b) Consider joining the Car Club!**

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk

Specific Contact Points for this report

David Armitage, Assistant Manager, Malvern Hills AONB Partnership

Tel: 01684 560616

Email: darmitage@malvernhillsaonb.org.uk