

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) E-Bulletin July 2008 – Issue 3

Welcome to the latest Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) E-Bulletin. The bulletin contains information about some recent projects and initiatives in or affecting the AONB. Please feel free to forward this email on to anyone who might be interested. Any comments would be gratefully received.

Listed Buildings in good condition

The AONB Unit has worked closely with Conservation Officers in Herefordshire Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Forest of Dean District Council to obtain up-to-date information on the built heritage of the AONB. A survey of the condition of all Listed Buildings within the AONB (344 in total) revealed that almost 55% of buildings are in good condition with a further 31% in fair condition. A brief study of buildings of local (rather than national) heritage importance has also been undertaken in the area.

Miles without Stiles in Herefordshire

'Miles Without Stiles' refers to footpaths and tracks that are suitable for people who find walking a challenge and who have difficulty climbing over stiles and barriers. Herefordshire Council has just completed the production of its first ever Miles without Stiles trail guides – one for Colwall and one for the Cradley/Mathon area. The guides follow significant work on the ground to remove stiles and where possible to replace them with gates. The new trail guides will soon be available for downloading from:
www.herefordshire.gov.uk/circularwalks.

Management Plan review

The statutory review of the current Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2004-2009) is progressing well. A revised draft management plan for 2009-2014 is now available for consultation and can be downloaded from the Malvern Hills AONB website www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk. An Environmental Report which identifies the likely environmental impact of delivering the draft plan is also available for consultation. We would welcome any comments on either document **by August 22nd 2008**. Please visit the website for more information on how to take part in the consultation. Alternatively, you can email any comments to pesrich@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Cattle grids and water features

The Malverns Heritage Project (supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund) draws to a close later this year but continues to deliver well. A Public Inquiry into the installation of two new cattle grids at Chase End Hill was determined in favour of the AONB Partnership and the grids should be installed by the autumn of 2008. A number of small water features around the hills have been restored including Hayslad spout, Jubilee Spout and Lord Sandys spout. Work to refurbish Holywell and to add an education room has been delayed following the discovery of bats but refurbishment is expected to continue shortly, following appropriate mitigation measures.

Sustainable Development Fund – can we help to fund your project?

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a grant scheme to assist projects that promote sustainable development in the AONB. 13 projects shared almost £62,000 of grant in 2007/08.

Funding is now available for the new financial year (2008/09). If you have a project in mind please call Kate Mustard on 01905 766491 or email Kate on kmustard@worcestershire.gov.uk for further discussions and an application form.

Removing overhead powerlines – we need your help!

Central Networks (the electricity company for the West Midlands) is currently running a consultation exercise to gain customer's views. In one question they ask whether customers are willing to pay for the burial of overhead power lines in areas of national landscape importance. The additional cost per person for undergrounding lines is estimated to be between 5p and 15p to each average household bill. If you think this is good value for money and that our AONBs are worth improving in this way please visit their website and say 'yes' <http://www.eon-uk.com/distribution/stakeholderengagement.aspx> (question 8 under 'Our role in protecting the environment and responding to climate change').

Leading the way in monitoring geology

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust has devised a new approach to monitoring the condition of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS). This has involved widespread consultation and the resulting methodology is likely to become a national standard for use throughout the country.

Planning activity in the AONB

A report which summarises planning activity in the Malvern Hills AONB in 2007/08 has been produced. Some key statistics are as follows:

- No of planning applications registered: 187
- No. of applications for household alterations and extensions: 107
- No. of applications relating to equestrian use and development: 7
- No. of applications for new homes: 56
- No. of applications for renewable energy development (domestic): 1

Annual Report

The Annual Report for 2007/8 is now available on the Malvern Hills AONB website:

<http://malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/pages/documents/MHAONBAnnualReport07-08.pdf>

The report highlights the many achievements made by the Partnership over the last year.

A copy of the full report is available from Ehiller@worcestershire.gov.uk.

If you do not wish to be on the mailing list for future E-bulletins please feel free to contact the Malvern Hills AONB Office by email on aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk and we will remove you from the list. Further information on the AONB and the work of the AONP Partnership can be found at <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/>