



**SUMMARY  
SHEET 8**

# Tourism, recreation and access



Cycling near the Wyche Cutting

This document provides a summary of key points taken from the tourism, recreation and access chapter of the AONB Management Plan (2009-2014). It is intended to provide a quick and easy reference guide for users with a specific interest in this subject. Those intending to quote from the management plan and those who require a more detailed understanding should consult the document in full, available at [www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk).

## Special features

- Unspoiled 'natural' environment.
- Dramatic scenery and spectacular views.
- Quiet rural lanes for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Visitor attractions such as The Malvern Showground and historic buildings and parks such as Eastnor Castle.
- Open access on foot, unfettered by stiles and gates, across a large part of the Malvern Hills and Commons.
- The proximity to centres of population, principally Malvern.
- Villages and market towns such as Ledbury (partly within the AONB boundary).
- Established trails and routes, such as the Elgar Route, the Cider Trail, Literary Guide and Discovery Walks.
- Opportunities to engage in a wide range of recreational activities including angling, equestrian activities, hang gliding, kite flying, model gliding, sledging, cycling, abseiling and walking.
- A range of cultural features and attractions including art, theatre, music, literature and gastronomy.
- Opportunities to participate in well managed and appropriately scaled field sports.

## Key issues

### Awareness of access rights

Access arrangements in some parts of the AONB can lead to confusion, especially in the transition zone between statutory rights of way and open access land. **(TP2, T02, T04)**

### Mountain biking

Open access rights on Malvern Hills Conservators' land do not extend to cyclists and some use paths and tracks that they have no legal right to be on. This problem may be compounded by a policy of minimal signage on the open access land. There is a shortage of hard data about recreational conflict and damage to the landscape. **(TP2, T02, T04)**



Paragliding in the AONB

*Continued overleaf*

### Traffic volume on quiet roads

Many of the AONB's small rural roads are used for walking, cycling and horse riding. Increasing volumes of traffic on these rural roads would compromise the tranquillity of the network and discourage their use for quiet recreational enjoyment. **(TP3, T01, T03, TR01, TR02, TRP1)**

### Visitor impact

New housing development in the area and government drivers to improve the nation's health could lead to a higher level of outdoor activity in the AONB. Better information on levels of use and impacts will be essential to help manage this change and to maintain the special features of the area.

It will also be necessary to think flexibly about creating and promoting greater opportunities for sustainable countryside access. This would include providing and managing green space and access close to where people live and work. **(TP1, TP2, TP3, T01, T02, T03)**

Opportunities to park in some parts of the AONB can be limited. This is particularly the case in villages where visitors may be more likely to contribute to the local economy. **(TP3, T03)**

### Visitor spend

Figures on visitor numbers demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of tourists visiting Herefordshire and Worcestershire are day trippers. Day visitors contribute far less income to the local economy than those who stay overnight. **(TP1, TP2, T01, T02, T04, T05)**

### Signage

In some areas a proliferation of signs could detract from people's enjoyment of the open countryside. The use of different types of sign and signs made from different materials can also contribute to a sense of disharmony in the landscape. **(TP2, T04, T05)**

### Standards of path repair

Overly formalised and heavily engineered paths can jar, especially in certain parts of the AONB. In general, the more 'natural' settings require a more sensitive approach to path and track management. **(TP2)**

### Interpretation and awareness

Some features of the AONB lack interpretation which could help to raise awareness amongst residents and visitors and enhance people's understanding of the need for conservation. **(T05)**

### Links between the rural economy and the tourism and recreation industry

Links between farming and forestry management and the tourism and recreation industry in the AONB are sometimes poorly developed. Information about local products and their availability is sparse. So too is information about local services, businesses and resources that can be used by the community and visitors. **(TP1, F05, T05)**

### Poor accessibility

For some sectors of society access to the countryside, tourism and recreation facilities, shops and other services in the AONB is poor. Little information is available about access opportunities for people who are less mobile. In some cases cultural barriers and perceptions may act as a deterrent to enjoyment of the countryside. **(T02)**

*Continued overleaf*



Horse riding near Mathon Court



Walkers and paragliders at Pinnacle Hill

## Guiding principles

- TP1** The development and management of tourism and recreation in the AONB should take place within an overriding framework of sustainability. It should be based on good evidence, respecting the character of the area and the needs of visitors for quiet informal recreation.
- TP2** Management of the access network and its associated infrastructure should not detract unnecessarily from the special qualities of the landscape.
- TP3** New car parking provision for the general public is unlikely to be acceptable around the southern Malvern Hills. Any promotion or publicity for this area should be directed at local and sustainable use.

## Strategic objectives

- T01** Encourage and stimulate sustainable tourism and recreational use of the AONB, providing a quality visitor experience that helps to protect the local environment, contributes to the health of the community and supports the economy of the area.
- T02** Provide enhanced sustainable access and accessibility to recreation and tourist facilities and the public rights of way network.
- T03** Pursue appropriate opportunities to spread recreational use to those areas which can sustain it and which will benefit from it.
- T04** Promote a simpler and clearer message to recreational users about access rights and responsibilities on the open hills and commons.
- T05** Encourage greater awareness and understanding of the AONB, the impacts of recreational use on its special features and the need for appropriate behaviour and sustainable management.



The Big Chill, Eastnor