



Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) E-Bulletin November 2009 – Issue 6

Welcome to Issue 6 of the Malvern Hills AONB e-Bulletin. Please find below some brief information on the latest projects and initiatives in and around the Malvern Hills AONB. Please forward this email on to anyone else who may be interested.

Annual Report 2008/09

The AONB Partnership's Annual Report for the 2008/09 period is now available. The report summarises some of the work undertaken by a wide range of groups and organisations to conserve and enhance the AONB and to meet a number of different policy objectives. The Annual Report is available to download from:

http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/documents/MalvernHillsAONB_AnnualReport2008-09.pdf

What's in a view? – Update

A PDF summary of the Views report produced in March of this year, which identified key views both to and from the Malvern Hills AONB, has been sent to all AONB lead officers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and has generated much interest. The Views summary is available to download by clicking on the following links:

- http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/documents/MalvernHills-page-1_REV-A.pdf
- http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/documents/MalvernHills-page-2_REV-A.pdf

In order for the Views work to be formally recognised by planning authorities as a material consideration within the planning process, a Sustainability Appraisal report and a public consultation exercise must be undertaken. Discussions about how best to take this forward are underway with the relevant planning authorities.

Hedgerow Management Event

Landowners from around the AONB attended a Hedgerow Management event earlier this month. The event was run in conjunction with a number of partners including Natural England, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre. Landowners received information and discussed hedgerow management best practice. Information about the funding available to support this work in the AONB was also made available.

If you have any queries regarding funding/grant availability for hedgerow management please contact the AONB Partnership on 01684 560616 or e-mail the team on aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Malverns Heritage Project

The Malverns Heritage Project has now been completed. However the financial sustainability of each element of the project is all important. One good example of this is Holywell in Malvern Wells. Holywell was the site of the original bottling plant for Malvern Water. A new small-scale bottling plant has been installed in the building and bottles of Holywell water are now being sold in local restaurants and further afield. Some of the proceeds will be used to help conserve the listed well house.

Highways Design Guide

Roadside signage is being reviewed by the AONB Unit in conjunction with the local Highways Authorities. Whilst the main focus is, of course, safety, some roadside signage can be unnecessarily intrusive and can impact negatively on nationally important landscapes. The AONB Partnership intends to produce a Highways Design Guide with the Highways Authorities that puts the function of signs first. A number of sites have already been identified where such an approach would reduce the number of signs, and helpfully produce cost savings for the Highways Authorities.

Building Materials

This AONB is geologically diverse, and many of its older buildings were built quite literally out of the ground upon which they stood. Now that most of the old quarries and delves are closed, where can people go when they need materials to maintain the original integrity of their dwellings? The AONB Unit has engaged the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust to identify the main stone types used for buildings within the AONB. Once this is understood, we will see if there is a match for these from other suppliers.

One stone that is in short supply is the stone from which the Hills themselves are made. Many houses and walls are made from this distinctive 'Malvern' stone. Quarrying is no longer possible; yet people want to use the stone for extensions to their houses to retain the local character. Despite this strong demand and restricted supply, some Malvern Stone is still being skipped and shipped to landfill. To overcome this market failure, the AONB Partnership is in the process of setting up a 'stone bank' to act as temporary storage and prevent this valuable stone going to waste.

SDF Projects in progress

The Sustainable Development Fund has once again been distributing grants to a wide variety of projects. Just over £50,000 has been allocated to projects concerned with sustainable transport, home energy advice, advice and improvement to the local landscape, educational projects in schools and the training of local crafts people. This year the AONB Unit will be conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness of the fund over the years it has been running.

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 AONB Partnership can be found at <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/>