

2012
2013

malvern hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Annual Review 2012/13



Chairman's foreword



**Cllr John Raine,
Chairman of the
Joint Advisory
Committee**

Welcome to the annual review for the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, covering the period 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013. At a time of ever-diminishing resources in the public sector, the ability to access alternative funding streams is critical to our success in conserving natural beauty. With this in mind I was delighted to hear that the AONB Partnership had successfully secured development funding for its Three Counties Traditional Orchard Conservation Project. This looks like being a flagship project for the future. During the year partners have also enjoyed external funding success with the Route to the Hills project (page 17) and a Building Stone Heritage project (page 8).

The Malvern Hills AONB covers a relatively small area and can be greatly affected by what goes on outside of its boundaries. With this in mind, I am pleased that a hallmark of the Partnership's work this year has been to reach out beyond its normal area of operation. For example, the Malvern Hills AONB has joined with the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Environment Agency and several other bodies to form a new partnership for the River Teme Catchment, and to produce a plan for the care of this area. This is important because the Leigh and Cradley brooks in the AONB lie at the foot of this catchment, and the quality of water running through them depends in no small way on land management and pollution control upstream.

This year, the AONB Partnership has also led on a project to map the potential for creating new woodland around Malvern and to the East of the Malvern Hills. This is an area which may well see significant new built development in the years to come. New woodland creation in the area could help to mitigate the impacts on views from the Malvern Hills, whilst also ensuring a supply of green space close to where people live and work. It is very clear to me that the AONB Partnership needs to think about, and often be actively involved in, what goes on outside our formal boundaries if we are to be able successfully to protect and conserve the natural beauty within it.

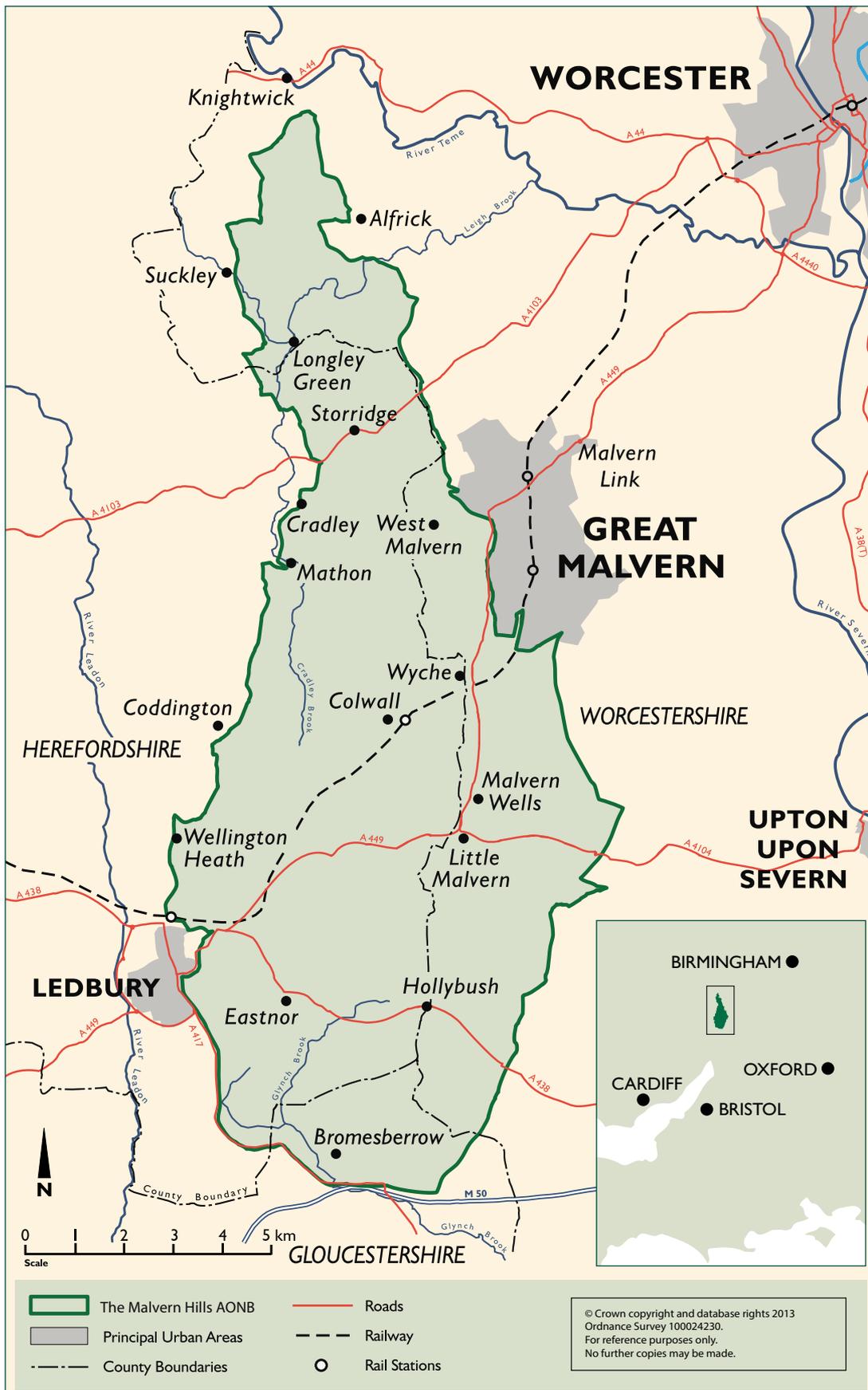
I want to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to all the AONB partners for their many and varied contributions this past year, and particularly to the small and highly dedicated team who form our AONB staff unit. Together, their efforts make such a difference to the protection and enhancement of our beautiful locality. I do hope you enjoy reading about all the Partnership's work over the last financial year and I would be very pleased to receive your feedback on the content of this annual review document, as well as on the work of the Partnership more generally and on how you see its future priorities.
(john.raine@malvern hills.gov.uk)

Cllr John Raine, Chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee

Reference Numbers

A reference number (given in brackets) is provided alongside each item of work mentioned in this annual review. This refers to a specific Guiding Principle or Strategic Objective contained within the AONB Management Plan. In this way the annual review demonstrates how the AONB Partnership is implementing the AONB Management Plan.

Location of the Malvern Hills AONB



Outline map of the Malvern Hills AONB

Landscape

Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Grants (L05)

The AONB Partnership provided just over £2,000 in grants to support small-scale landscape and biodiversity improvements in 2012/13. Three landowners shared this funding to help deliver a range of outputs including:

- 300 metres of new hedgerow planted.
- Ten disease-resistant Elm trees planted on the Bromesberrow Estate.
- Tree guards erected around fruit trees at Hollybed Common.

AONB enhancement grants are aimed at smaller landowners who are not in receipt of agri-environment support. Unfortunately this grant stream has been reduced in size because of budget cuts.



Collecting disease-resistant Elms from Pershore Nursery

Burying Overhead Electricity Cables (L02)

The AONB Partnership has continued to work with Western Power Distribution on a national scheme, established by the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM), to selectively bury a small number of overhead electricity lines. The aim of the scheme is to improve the beauty of National Parks and AONBs. In 2012/13 work in the AONB was carried out at Beggar's Ash, Wellington Heath and Woodfields Coppice. Over 1200m of overhead line was removed and replaced with underground cable. The views to and from these areas have been greatly improved. The scheme is set to continue into 2013/14.



Replacing overhead cables, Woodfields Farm

Three Counties Showground Landscape Proposals (L02, L03)

The AONB Partnership worked with the Three Counties Agricultural Society to develop proposals for enhancing the natural beauty of the Three Counties Showground. An evaluation of all areas and boundaries was carried out and recommendations for improvements were made. Suggested actions include orchard restoration, planting hedgerows to replace some fencing and removing some non-native trees. The proposals also relate to the colour of future roofing and building materials; for example, white roofs made green so as to appear less intrusive. It is hoped that some suggested changes can be taken forward and that these will make the showground more attractive to visitors as well as to those looking down from the hills. To read the full landscape report, please go to: <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/publications.html> and scroll down to reports and research.

In brief

- Colwall Orchard Group continued its work to conserve local landscapes by planting and restoring hedgerows and carrying out restoration pruning in seven garden orchards and four traditional orchards (L02).

Three Counties Showground from the Wyche Cutting



Management Plan references

L02 – Restore distinctive landscapes and landscape features.

L03 – Identify and promote opportunities for positive landscape change.

L05 – Seek resources to promote landscape management and improvements.

Biodiversity

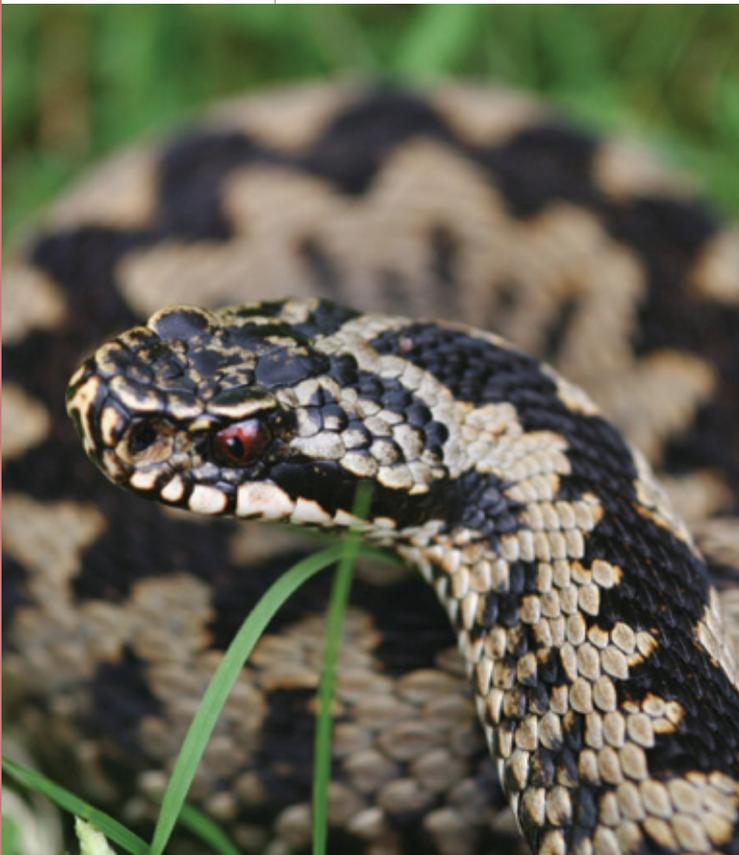


Traditional plum orchard, Evesham

Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project (B01)

The AONB Partnership was delighted to receive a first round pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and an offer of financial support for the development of a Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project. The project will support local people in the three counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire to learn about and to help manage traditional orchards. Other elements of the project include improving access and raising awareness of the cultural importance of traditional orchards. Working at the three counties scale is important in ensuring that local experience and expertise in this subject is shared with others. The Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project is a partnership initiative involving a wide range of partners. The development phase of this project is now underway.

For more information please visit; http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/orchard_project.html



Male adder

Adder Tracking on the Malvern Hills (B01, B03)

Adders are both a National and a Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority species. They are already rare and numbers are still falling. The Malvern Hills harbour approximately nine separate populations. In order to survive and maintain genetic diversity these populations need to interbreed. However, there may be barriers on the ground such as wide pathways or other exposed areas which prevent this from happening.

The adder tracking project aims to identify these barriers and their location and to make recommendations to enable the various adder populations to mingle and interbreed. This is a two year project (2012-14) being led by the Herefordshire Amphibian and Reptile Team. The adders will be tracked by surveyors who follow signals from small radio transmitters attached to the backs of the snakes. Some of the surveyors will be volunteers who have been trained to use the equipment.

Walkover Survey of Leigh and Cradley Brooks (B05)

A survey to identify issues which may be affecting water quality in the Leigh and Cradley brooks was carried out in November 2012 by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, working alongside the Environment Agency. The results will be used to inform discussions with landowners about possible future works that could help the watercourse achieve good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive.



Survey of Leigh Brook



Species-rich grassland, Hollybed Farm

Hollybed Farm Meadows (B01)

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust added to its portfolio of nature reserves in the area by purchasing Hollybed Farm meadows. This fantastic site contains species rich grassland and hedgerows, a traditional Perry pear orchard and alder woodland. The land has been entered into a Higher Level Stewardship scheme, which will provide funding for conservation works over the next ten years.

In brief

- The AONB Partnership produced two new guidance documents, for those managing garden orchards and unimproved grasslands in the area. These can be accessed at <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html> (B02).
- The AONB Partnership worked with a series of partners including Natural England, Severn Trent Water, the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, the Environment Agency and Severn Rivers Trust to develop a plan for the management of the Teme Catchment. For more information please go to: <http://severnriverstrust.com/pdf/Teme%20Pilot%20Management%20Plan%20final.pdf> (B02).
- Worcestershire County Council Countryside Service provided training and support to tree wardens, offered advice to orchard owners in the area and carried out orchard restoration in Suckley (B07).

Management Plan references

B01 – Conserve, enhance and expand key habitats and populations of key species.

B02 – Restore the condition of degraded habitats in line with local and UK BAPs.

B03 – Enhance the wildlife value of the countryside and achieve greater connectivity.

B05 – Undertake survey and research on the AONBs biodiversity resources.

B07 – Promote greater understanding and enjoyment of the biodiversity resources of the AONB.

Geodiversity

Community Earth Heritage Champions (G02)

Established by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust, the 'Champions' project equips local volunteers to understand and care for their local geological sites. There are currently six Champions sites in the AONB, supported by 23 volunteers. Whilst funding for this initiative has ended, volunteers continue their efforts and this year carried out a variety of small-scale works at local quarries. These included scrub clearance, guided walks/tours and small projects such as the design and installation of interpretation panels at Tank Quarry and Gardiner's Quarry. These panels were supported by a grant from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund.



Family fossil foray, Whitman's Hill Quarry



Casting fossils at Loxter Ashbed

Cast of Loxter Ashbed Rock Face (G01)

The rock face at Loxter Ashbed Quarry is fossil-rich but is unfortunately prone to rapid erosion. To preserve a record of the rock face for the future, the AONB Partnership helped to fund a cast of the exposed fossils. Loxter Ashbed Quarry is on private land. Access is available to groups by prior arrangement; please email loxterashbedquarry@yahoo.co.uk

1000 Years of Building with Stone (G02)

A Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust project which hopes to raise awareness and increase knowledge of stone built heritage in the area is now underway. Thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund the project - 1000 Years of Building with Stone - will run for three and a half years. Volunteers will be trained to understand stone and will record its use in structures such as castles, bridges, parish churches, barns and cottages. The project also aims to engage the public in their stone-built heritage by uncovering stories of local people who worked with stone, and by rediscovering lost quarries.

Management Plan references

G01 - Conserve the geodiversity resource in line with Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs).

G02 - Promote greater understanding of the geology of the AONB.

Historic Environment

Management Plans for Herefordshire Hill Forts (H04)

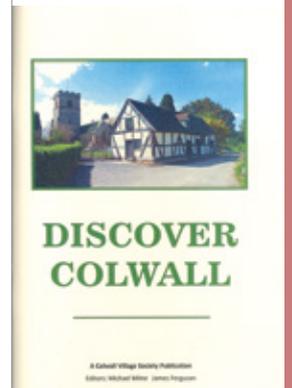
Conservation Management Plans have been produced for both Midsummer Hill and the Herefordshire Beacon (British Camp) on the Malvern Hills. Both hill forts are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and are among the most complex, interesting and visually striking features in Herefordshire. The plans outline the current condition of the sites and the threats facing them. They also contain a suite of recommendations which will be used to inform future management. The plans were prepared by Herefordshire Council's Archaeology Service and were funded by Natural England.



Midsummer Hill

Colwall Buildings Booklet (H02, H03)

A grant from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund was used to help produce and publish a 64 page colour booklet depicting interesting buildings and features in the parish of Colwall. Information for the booklet was prepared by volunteers, with the co-operation of the owners of the houses. The resulting booklet has been titled 'Discover Colwall' and copies are available for £5 from either Colwall Post Office or directly from Colwall Village Society.



Discover Colwall booklet



Restored cider mill, Hollybed Common

Cider Mill (H01)

The Malvern Hills Conservators put generous donations to good use on Hollybed Common during 2012. Work was carried out to conserve the traditional Mill Pond Orchard and to restore the remains of the old cider mill. An interpretation panel, including an artist's impression of how the mill may have once looked, has been installed for visitors. The work to conserve and enhance the traditional orchard will ensure it survives for future use and enjoyment. Careful management will also enhance the site as a valuable habitat for wildlife such as bullfinches, woodpeckers and vital plant-pollinating insects. AONB funding was used to purchase tree guards for the new fruit trees.

In brief

- Colwall Orchard Group has logged a number of archaeological finds from newly allocated allotment plots, including a flint flake which is the oldest evidence of human habitation in Colwall to date (H03).
- Historic Parkland continues to be maintained to a high standard at Bromesberrow Park (H01).

Management Plan references

H01 – Preserve, conserve and enhance. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas and features of historic interest.

H02 – Undertake surveys and research to secure and document information on the historic environment.

H03 – Promote greater public understanding of, and engagement with, the historic environment.

H04 – Prepare appropriate management documents for sites and features to guide future management.

Farming and Forestry

New Woodland Mapping (F03)

During 2012 the AONB Partnership commissioned a project to map the potential for new woodland creation in an area around Malvern and east of the Malvern Hills. The work involved assessing existing data sets on a field by field basis to discern where new woodland would fit with local landscape character and benefit biodiversity. It is hoped that the work will eventually support new woodland in the area which will help to:

- Enhance the public greenspace network.
- Improve permeability and connectivity for the landscape of species.
- Encourage sustainable and local wood fuel markets.
- Provide buffering for core areas of high value.

To access the full report, please follow the link and scroll down to reports and research; <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/publications.html>

Forestry Agreements (F02)

The Forestry Commission continued its excellent work to support and encourage good woodland management within the AONB. This includes the production of a Management Plan for three hectares of Ballard's Wood. Other works carried out during 2012/13 include:

- One and a half hectares of native broadleaved trees planted at Greystones (0.5ha), Sleepy Hollow (0.37ha) and Batchcombe Farm (0.51ha).
- Coppicing to benefit woodland birds at Park Wood (0.4ha), Dog Wood (0.54ha), Ravenshill (0.6ha) and Suckley Wood (0.8ha).
- Felling non-native trees and restocking with natives at News Wood and Wintercombe (5.6ha), Ravenshill (0.6ha), Ballard's Wood (0.45ha).
- Thinning nine and a half hectares of non native trees in Suckley Wood, to improve light levels to encourage woodland ground flora, for the benefit of butterflies and birds.
- 1200 metres of track repair and upgrade in News Wood.

Thinning in Ballard's Wood





Grazing on North Hill

Livestock Management on the Malvern Hills (FP1)

Grazing by cattle and sheep is seen as crucial to the management of the Hills and Commons. However, grazing is not without its problems or its costs. The Malvern Hills Conservators (MHC) commissioned a study to appraise the issues and options for achieving long term sustainable management of grazing on their land. The results will be used to inform the next MHC management plan. The study was part-funded by the AONB Partnership.

Environmental Stewardship (F01, F02)

Environmental Stewardship is a government scheme providing grants to land managers who deliver effective environmental management. Within this, the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme is targeted towards agreements that provide the maximum environmental outcomes. This year, a further five new HLS schemes went live in the AONB, covering a total of 188 hectares of land. Over the next 10 years these agreements will support a range of work which will be central to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Key elements within the agreements include:

- Restoration of the landscape for species-rich grassland.
- Bracken and scrub control.
- Orchard and hedgerow restoration.
- Management of archaeological features.
- Tree surgery.

In brief

- Sheep have been used to graze orchards on the Bromesberrow Estate (F02).
- Malvern Hills Conservators continued their grazing project, with support from the Higher Level Stewardship scheme. Payments are made to local farmers to exercise their common rights and aim to make the practice more economically viable (FP1, F02).
- Grant money from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund was used to research how to turn waste products from coppicing into a soil conditioner known as biochar (FP1).

Management Plan references

FP1 – Support a viable farming and forestry economy.

F01 – Promote the maximum take up of agri-environment and woodland grant schemes.

F02 – Bring characteristic habitats into favourable conservation condition.

F03 – Ensure that 90% of all new woodland planting is of broadleaved, semi-natural stock.

Community – Living and Working



Malvern Hills Conservators' volunteers

Boost for volunteers (C02, C03)

Vital conservation work carried out by Malvern Hills Conservators' volunteers was given a boost during the last financial year thanks to a grant from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund. Volunteers received training in species identification along with new hand tools and logo-embroidered clothing which has helped to make them more recognisable to the public.

The Conservators manage both the hills and commons in the area and carry out a range of tasks. If you are interested in volunteering more information can be found on their website: <http://www.malvernhills.org.uk/manage/volunteers.aspx>

New Community Orchard (C03)

A new community orchard was planted on an area of land adjoining the churchyard at St James' Church, West Malvern. The orchard was planted by volunteers with support from Worcestershire County Council's Greenspace Team. It is made up of 21 trees of apple, pear and plum, all of which are local Worcestershire varieties.

Further work is planned to help train volunteers on formative pruning to help manage the orchard for the future.

West Malvern Community Orchard





Colwall Orchard Group members with apple crates

Colwall Orchard Group (CO2)

Colwall Orchard Group was established to bring people together, from the village and beyond, to promote, celebrate and restore traditional orchards in the area. This year, funding from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund helped the group to purchase apple harvesting equipment and to connect an electricity supply to the apple packing shed. The group also planted new trees in the community orchard and a native hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site.

In brief

- Malvern Wells Primary School children planted 10 local variety fruit trees in the school eco garden, with support from Worcestershire County Council (CP1).



New hedgerow, Colwall Community Orchard

Management Plan references

CP1 - Enable vibrant communities to grow sustainably

CO2 - Develop an enhanced sense of ownership for, and appreciation of, the AONB amongst local communities

CO3 - Foster opportunities for training in conservation and agriculture

Built Development



Residential development, West Malvern

Building Design Guide (D04)

Further work took place during 2012/13 to refine draft text for the emerging AONB Building Design Guide. In particular, the AONB Partnership worked with English Heritage to ensure that the text would be consistent with emerging guidance on conserving historic farmsteads in the area. This work has led to delays with completing the AONB design guide. However, a six week public consultation exercise has now been completed and publication of the guide is expected shortly.

Dark Skies (DP4)

There is a growing interest in star gazing around the UK. Coupled with this comes a heightened awareness of light pollution and the impact this can have on the beauty of our night skies. A research project mapping the darkness of the night sky in different parts of the Malvern Hills AONB was carried out during the winter months of 2012/13. Findings revealed that many parts of the area are excellent for star gazing. It is hoped the results of this work will be used to inform development activity in the area so that future generations can continue to enjoy views of the stars and planets. The report will soon be available at <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/publications.html>

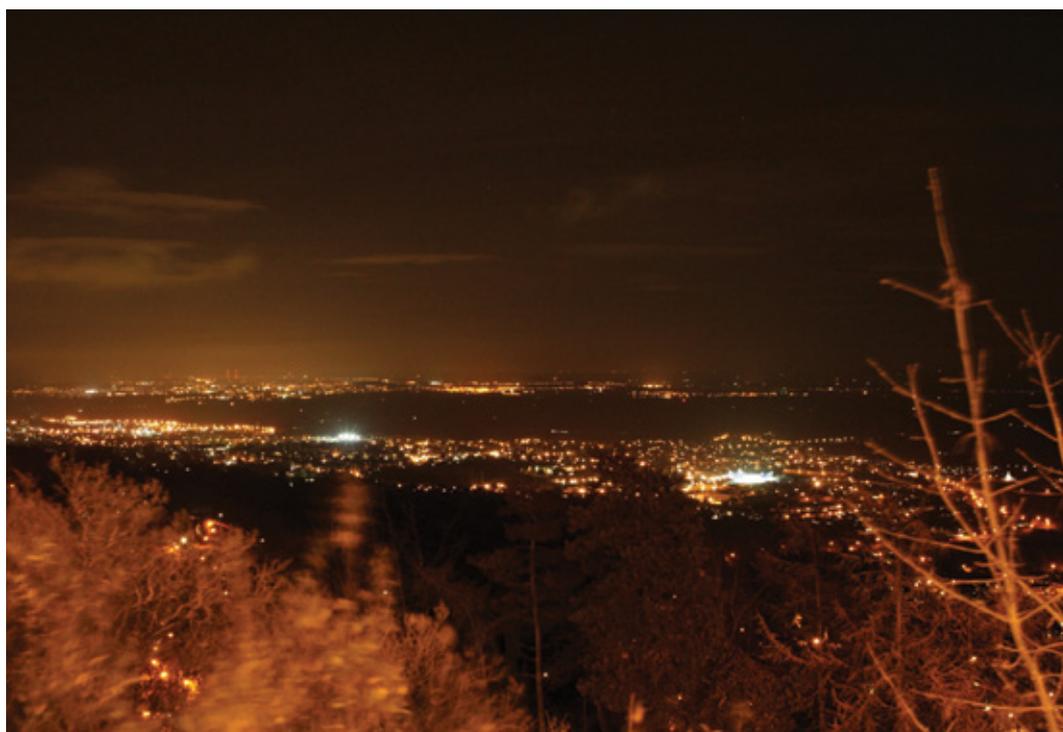
Management Plan references

DP1 – Reflect distinctive character and natural beauty in statutory land use planning policy and guidance.

DP3 – Development should be subject to high standards of design and sustainability that reflect local character.

DP4 – Lighting schemes in the AONBs rural areas should be kept to a minimum.

DP6 – Equestrian development should proceed in accordance with best practice guidelines.



The night sky from the Wyche Cutting



Low-impact fencing



Polytunnels at Bromesberrow

Good Practice in Horse Management (DP6)

Following the publication of AONB guidance on keeping horses in the landscape, the AONB Partnership has worked with a local landowner to establish a small 'good practice' demonstration site. The aim is to provide a working illustration of how the impact of keeping horses on the environment can be positive. Low-impact fencing, hedge planting and sward management regimes have all been implemented. Those wishing to visit the demonstration site should contact the AONB Unit on 01684 560616 or email aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk. Information on this demonstration project will also be made available on the AONB website.

Neighbourhood Plan for Colwall (D02)

Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work. Under the Localism Act (2012) communities will be able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built and to have their say on what those new buildings should look like. During the year Colwall Parish Council began work on the development of its own Neighbourhood Plan. This is the first for the AONB and is scheduled for completion in mid 2014. The AONB Partnership has supported the Parish Council in this task. In particular, AONB funds have been used to commission advice on the potential suitability of locations for future development in and around the existing settlement boundary.

In brief

- Technical consultation on the South Worcestershire Development Plan was carried out at the start of 2013. The plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination (DP1).
- Herefordshire Council consulted on preferred options for its Core Strategy. The Malvern Hills and Wye Valley AONB Partnerships submitted a joint response (DP1).
- The Malvern Hills and Cotswolds AONB Partnerships objected to the development of a wind farm at Strensham. Whilst the proposed development site is outside both AONBs, it was felt that the turbines would impact on views from and between these nationally important landscapes. Tewkesbury Borough Council rejected the planning application in February 2012 (D03).
- A new grain store was built on the Bromesberrow Estate. Its location and design are intended to reduce impact on the AONB landscape (DP3).
- Bromesberrow Place is now heated by a biomass boiler, powered by logs from local woodland (DP3).

Management Plan references

D02 – Support the production of community-led plans, strategies and statements that seek to guide appropriate development and conserve local distinctiveness.

D03 – Identify important and strategic views.

D04 – Develop a programme of guidance on key planning and design issues appropriate to the AONB.

Tourism, Recreation and Access

Spreading the Word (T05)

Two new AONB interpretation panels have been installed, one at the Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve and the other at Colwall train station. The panels aim to raise general awareness of the existence of the AONB and the work of the AONB Partnership. However, each panel also contains specific information about the locality in which it sits. It is hoped that a small number of additional panels will be installed in the future.



Interpretation panel, Knapp and Papermill Nature Reserve



Wyche Innovation and Geocentre

New Geocentre on the Hills (T01, T05)

A grant from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund was used to help purchase iPads for a new visitor centre located near the Wyche Cutting. The Malvern Hills Geocentre, which is to be officially opened in early summer 2013, is using up-to-date technology alongside large wall-mounted maps to provide information about the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, AONB etc. The new centre is located at the former Skot Transformers building near the Wyche cutting in Malvern and boasts the H2O café which serves a range of locally sourced/homemade lunches and refreshments. For more information visit: <http://www.geocentre.co.uk/>

Early success for Route to the Hills (T02)

The Route to the Hills project aims to provide a long-term strategic approach to improve and enhance the public open space in the centre of Great Malvern. The Project has been awarded a first-round pass and a grant of £51,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will be used to support a phase of development work, culminating in a Stage 2 application for a full HLF grant of £472,000. The Route to the Hills project is managed by a partnership of local organisations, including the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, with Malvern Hills District Council as the lead/recipient body for the grant.

Management Plan references

TP1 – Development and management of tourism should take place within a framework of sustainability.

T01 – Encourage and stimulate sustainable tourism and recreational use of the AONB.

T02 – Provide enhanced sustainable access and accessibility to recreation and tourist facilities and the public rights of way network.

GPS Framework Update (TP1)

A project to develop a Global Positioning System (GPS) framework for the AONB continues to make progress. The intention is to enable mobile phone users in different areas to access different types of data, including sound files providing local heritage information. This should reduce the need for expensive on-site interpretation, especially in localities where such interpretation would be inappropriate. During the year sound recordings were taken from a number of local people, discussing Eastnor Castle, British Camp and the management of woodlands. It is hoped that the framework, which will enable people to access this pre-recorded information, will be available soon.



Recording sound files, Eastnor

In brief

- Malvern Hills District Council worked with local businesses to develop a draft Economic Development Strategy for the area (T01).
- Malvern Hills Conservators provided training for owners on how to control dogs near livestock. The aim is to minimise conflicts and to support responsible access on the hills and commons (T04).
- To celebrate the Queen's 60th year on the throne, a chain of 2012 bonfires were lit across the United Kingdom, including one on the Worcestershire Beacon. Thousands came to see the fire burn through the night and the event received national media coverage (TP1).

Management Plan references

T04 – Promote a simpler and clearer message to recreational users about access rights and responsibilities on the hills and commons.

T05 – Encourage greater awareness and understanding of the AONB.

Jubilee bonfire, Worcestershire Beacon



Transport

New start for Roadside Verges (TRO2)

2012 was the first year in which a 'pro-conservation' management regime was introduced to four roadside verges in the AONB. The regime was agreed between AMEY, Herefordshire Council and the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. It involves cutting the verges at times which are most likely to benefit flora, as well as removing the cuttings from the site. This is a pilot scheme which will run for a three year period. Annual monitoring of the verges will take place to assess its success.



Wildflowers verge



Collecting apple juice in the new car club pick-up

Car club goes from strength to strength (TRP1, TR06)

Colwall Car Club added to its fleet of vehicles during the year with the purchase of a car for Malvern Wells and a pick-up truck. It is expected that the latter will be well used by the Colwall Orchard Group and Malvern Community Forest, two community groups who do important work in looking after the natural heritage of the AONB and surrounding areas. Both purchases were supported by grants from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund. Three years after its inception the Colwall Car Club now operates 10 vehicles across Colwall and Malvern and has 44 household members.

In brief

- Two major landowners in the AONB - Eastnor and Bromesberrow Estates - have continued to promote the use of sustainable transport to staff and visitors (TRP1).
- Colwall car club acquired a carrier to transport its electric bicycles to clients, this was also supported by funding from the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (TRP1).

Management Plan references

TRP1 - Local people and visitors should be able to access their desired destinations by sustainable alternatives to the private car.

TR02 - Ensure that all road and infrastructure improvements are designed and implemented to have minimum impact on the special character of the AONB.

TR06 - Develop, support and promote sustainable transport options to meet local transport needs.

Summary and Budget

AONB Unit Performance Indicators

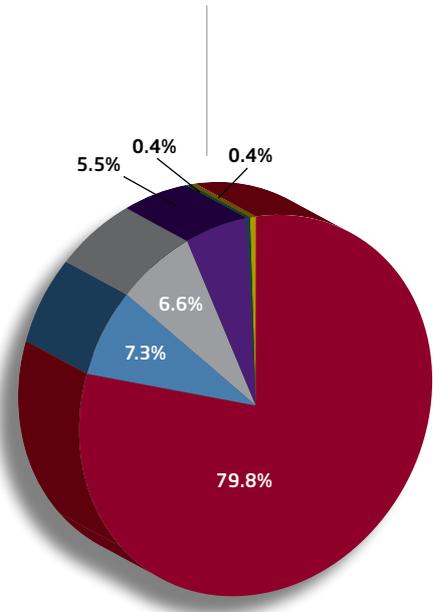
A framework for monitoring AONB Partnership performance is in place. The performance of the Malvern Hills AONB Unit in 2012-13 is summarised in the following table.

| Theme | Measure for the indicator | Definition | Performance |
|---|--|--|----------------|
| AONB Management Plan | The AONB Partnership has a current Management Plan which meets the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. | The Plan has been reviewed within five years of the last one; it conforms to the guidance for AONB Management Plans provided by Natural England; it has been formally adopted and published by all the relevant local authorities. | Yes |
| AONB Partnership | The AONB has an active and effective governance structure. | Record of regular Joint Advisory Committee and Steering Group meetings. | 5 meetings |
| | | AONB has undertaken a formal review of its governance structures within the last 5 years and had an adopted current set of terms of reference | Yes |
| AONB Staff Unit | The AONB Unit has staff resources to undertake its work. | Total the number of AONB staff, in full-time equivalents, that were directly managed and hosted by the AONB Unit, at the financial year end. | 2.6 |
| | AONB Unit staff invest in continuous professional development. | Of the total in the measure above, list the number who undertook and recorded a minimum of 30 hours of training, personal development or similar during the year. | 2.6 |
| Financial resources | The AONB Unit secures direct income to fund its work. | Total income received into the AONB Unit's own account from all sources during the financial year. | Total £213,897 |
| | | The percentage of the figure above which was received from Defra and Local Authorities | 95% |
| | | The amount received from Defra and Local Authorities | Total £202,977 |
| Leverage and "added value" | Additional resources mobilised by AONB Unit through its partnership work | Total direct funding received plus the total funding for projects and partnership programmes including matching income for SDF funded projects, total funds for HLF Project etc | Total £454,247 |
| | | The percentage of the figure above which was received from Defra | 35% |
| Financial management and reporting | Agreed timetable and requirements for financial management and reporting with Defra met by the AONB unit | The Unit submitted its final grant claim to Defra by the required date. | Yes |
| | | Published its annual report for the preceding year within six months of the financial year end. | Yes |
| | | Submitted its business plan and grant application for the succeeding financial year by the required date. | Yes |
| Partnership working with management communities | The AONB Unit is an active partner in the work of the National Association for AONBs. | The AONB Unit (through its host authority or partnership organisation) was a full member of the National Association for AONBs. | Yes |
| | | Was represented by attendance at the Annual Conference of the Association. | Yes |
| | | All AONB Unit core staff attended at least one other national or regional NAAONB sponsored event. | Yes |
| | The AONB Unit is actively involved in partnership working at a local level. | Total number of project steering groups, research initiatives, working groups and partnerships where the AONB Unit played an active and key role. | 8 |
| | The AONB Management Plan is formally endorsed and supported by partner organisations. | List the number of organisations who formally endorsed the plan when written and at the last review. | 7 |

AONB Unit Financial Summary

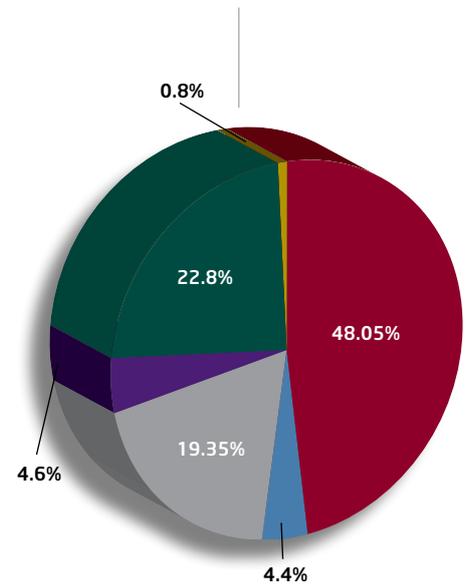
CORE INCOME

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Defra | 160,424 |
| Herefordshire Council | 14,647 |
| Worcestershire County Council | 13,268 |
| Malvern Hills District Council | 11,000 |
| Gloucestershire County Council | 766 |
| Forest of Dean District Council | 872 |
| Total | £200,977 |



EXPENDITURE

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Staff costs (inc travel and training) | 96,611 |
| Accommodation and office costs | 8,808 |
| Partnership budget | 38,927 |
| Partnership running costs | 9,237 |
| Sustainable Development Fund | 45,815 |
| Transfer to reserve | 1,579 |
| Total | £200,977 |



ADDITIONAL PROJECT INCOME¹

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Lottery Fund | 10,920 |
| Herefordshire Council | 2,000 |
| Total | £12,920 |

STAFF

The Unit structure for the year was as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| AONB Partnership Manager | Paul Esrich |
| AONB Partnership Assistant Manager | David Armitage |
| AONB Partnership Support Officer | Rebecca Baker/Sarah Baker |

¹Receipt in advance for Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project

AONB Governance

Joint Advisory Committee 2012-13

Elected Members:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Prof J Raine (Chairman) | Malvern Hills District Council |
| Mr P Bettington (Vice-Chairman) | Herefordshire Council |
| Mr J Fryman | Worcestershire Association of Local Councils |
| Mrs N Carless | Herefordshire Association of Local Councils |
| Mr C Smith ² | Worcestershire County Council |
| Dr K Pollock | Worcestershire County Council |
| Mr T Johnson | Herefordshire Council |
| Mr C Cheeseman | Malvern Hills District Council |
| Mr R Yeates | Forest of Dean District Council (also representing Gloucestershire County Council) |

Non-Elected Members:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Mr M R Allfrey | National Farmers Union |
| Mr A Fleming | English Heritage |
| Mr M Ashton | Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce |
| Mr J Hervey-Bathurst | Country Landowners and Business Association |
| Mr W Barnes | Forestry Commission |
| Prof R Bryant | Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust |
| Mr F Hill | Campaign to Protect Rural England |
| Ms D Griffiths | Natural England |

Co-opted Members:

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| Mr A Lee | Herefordshire Local Access Forum |
|----------|----------------------------------|

Steering Group 2012-13

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Andy Maginnis (Chairman) | Worcestershire County Council |
| Ian Rowat ³ | Malvern Hills Conservators |
| Ismail Mohammed ⁴ | Malvern Hills District Council |
| James Bisset | Herefordshire Council |
| Robert Niblett | Gloucestershire County Council |
| Nigel Gibbons | Forest of Dean District Council |

² Replaced by Mrs B Neilsen

³ Replaced by Mr Stephen Bound

⁴ Replaced by Siân Hughes

Photography credits

All photographs copyright Malvern Hills AONB Unit except:

Male adder - *Nigel Hand*

Family fossil foray - *Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust*

Midsummer Hill - *Malvern Hills Conservators*

Restored cider mill - *Malvern Hills Conservators*

Grazing on North Hill - *Malvern Hills Conservators*

The night sky from the Wyche Cutting - *Chris Baddiley*

Jubilee Bonfire - *Malvern Hills Conservators*

The following bodies provide financial support to the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership



Supported by



**Herefordshire
Council**

Supported by



**worcestershire
county council**



malvern hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
PARTNERSHIP

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