

**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5 NOVEMBER 2009**

AONB UNIT ACTIVITY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To receive details of the work areas and progress achieved by the AONB Unit since the JAC meeting in April 2009.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED

- 2.1 Appendix 1 gives separate details of the meetings and site visits that have been carried out by the AONB Manager, AONB Officer and AONB Assistant in the period April 2009 to October 2009. Appendix 2 gives full details of the projects that have been supported so far this year by the AONB Project Fund and the Sustainable Development Fund. Appendix 3 gives details of the Consultations that the JAC has received to date.
- 2.2 The final budget outturn for 2008/09 is detailed in a separate report on the Agenda. Natural England has carried out its tour of work completed in 2008/09 and the final grant settlement has been received.
- 2.3 The AONB Manager was heavily involved in the process of recruiting a new CEO for the National Association for AONBs during June and July. This was successfully completed and should lay the foundations for a step-change in the organisation from January next year.
- 2.4 The AONB Management Plan was approved by all the constituent Local Authorities in May and has now been printed. It is currently being distributed to all farmers, landowners, schools and Parish Councils in the AONB, as well as a wide range of partner organisations.
- 2.5 Work on countryside management has been proceeding well. A number of projects have been completed and more are planned for the winter months. Several hedge planting schemes are in the pipeline and contractors have been engaged to clear scrub from another section of the Park wall at Wiganthorpe. Full details of the grants offered and projects initiated are contained in Appendix 2.
- 2.6 The Sustainable Development Fund has been fully allocated, with a range of good projects being supported this year. Full details of the grants offered are contained in Appendix 2.

- 2.7 The AONB Discovery Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, held its final 8 Junior Ranger Club sessions at Easter. A further 2 full-day sessions have just been held, during the October half-term, mostly using our own resources. Details of the attendance at the Junior Ranger Club events already held are shown in Appendix 4. Work has also progressed with developing a bid for a new schools project, twinning AONB schools with ones in York and Hull.
- 2.8 The RAY Community Projects Officer, supported by the SDF, has been working with a number of local communities to both prepare and implement Parish Plans. Two taster events were held in June and July, with a workshop on composting and a grants drop-in session also held in September and October respectively.
- 2.9 The CAN DO Partnership's Lime & Ice Project has started one of its key component initiatives – the community archaeological investigation work on Yearsley Moor. Further details are contained in the Lime & Ice report on this Agenda.
- 2.10 The AONB and the work of the JAC has received publicity in a variety of publications. The AONB website has also been maintained and developed, with new pages of information being added.
- 2.11 A significant number of planning applications have been scrutinised, although many of these were for small-scale development and only minor comments were submitted, often on the choice of materials. This period however also saw the first applications for wind turbines in the AONB, for towers of 18.3m and 15m.
- 2.12 The latest edition of the AONB Newsletter was prepared in September and distributed in the week commencing 19th October. The JAC's Annual Report was produced in August and circulated in September to the wide range of organisations who work with the JAC to deliver our shared objectives.
- 2.13 The analysis of the grant recipients questionnaire returns for the year 2008/09 is included as Appendix 5. The small sample-size makes it difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions, although the feedback is still consistently positive. We plan to make some refinements to our administrative procedures for this winter, to ensure that all grant recipients receive a questionnaire.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the report be noted.