

## Agenda Item

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### FEEDBACK ON AONB PARTNERSHIP STUDY TOUR

#### *Purpose*

To feedback on the success of the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour.

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### *Key Issues*

- A total of 29 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour.
- There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused predominantly on the south Herefordshire part of the AONB.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.
- There is still the ambition for a joint initiative with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA), now probably sometime in 2018.

#### *Reasons*

The AONB Partnership Tour continues to be popular and is a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB particularly to local Ward members and the Town, Parish and Community Councils. The Tour has always traditionally been held on one of the last Fridays in September.

#### *Implications*

Of the 29 attendees on the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour, 11 were JAC members or officers, 3 were local Ward members not on the JAC, 7 were from Town/Parish/Community Councils and 3 others, including officers from Natural England. 9 came from Herefordshire, 8 from Gloucestershire and 7 from Monmouthshire plus 5 AONB staff.

The 2017 Tour looked at a selection of projects and issues between Ross and Lydbrook. The day started in Ross-on-Wye, looking at a partnership project with the Town Council, with funding from Natural England, to better understand and manage the grassland and riverbank along the town's prestigious frontage. At Goodrich Castle visitor centre English Heritage staff explained their work. Then Coppett Hill Common Trust members led the group up the hill outlining the Trust's management of the site, which was recognised through them winning the 2017 AONB Farming Awards. In the afternoon the two AONB trainee ecologists explained surveys and habitat improvements considered around the Garren and Gamber brooks under the National Grid pylons that may be eligible for Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) funding. The final visit was Lydbrook Bridge, closed in 2016 due to safety issues, but an important link for the Wye Valley Walk. The AONB Unit is currently working with Gloucestershire County Council on options for the bridge, prompting much discussion.

#### *Background*

The 2016 Tour visited sites in and around Tintern in Monmouthshire.