

## **AONB PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL STUDY TOUR**

### ***Purpose***

To endorse the date and outline programme for the Annual AONB Partnership Study Tour.

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC

- A. Note the date of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 for the Study Tour and encourage a good attendance, at £15 each.
  
- B. Invite representatives from our neighbouring Shropshire Hills and Malvern Hills AONB Partnerships and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and other appropriate partners.

### ***Key Issues***

- This year the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour will be held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the southern part of the AONB in Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- Invitations could be extended to representatives from our neighbouring Designated Landscapes and other appropriate partner organisations in the interest of sharing good practice and broadening collaboration.

### ***Reasons***

The Annual Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is hosted by the JAC and has a good reputation for networking and achieves good attendance from the wider AONB Partnership. The invitation to attend the Tour is extended to all members of the Joint Advisory Committee, to Senior Officers and County and District Councillors whose wards fall within the Wye Valley AONB and all Town/Parish/Community Councils that lie within the AONB. It is thus a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB. There is some capacity to increase numbers on the Tour and this could include invitations to neighbouring Designated Landscapes and other appropriate partner organisations.

### ***Implications***

The date of 20<sup>th</sup> September was chosen for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour because there appear to be no conflicting council meetings of the four constituent local authorities. In various previous years invitations have been extended to our neighbouring Designated Landscapes; in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. It is also proposed to invite representatives from the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, and also potentially from the National Association for AONBs, the Welsh Government Landscape and Outdoor Recreation team and DEFRA's Landscape Policy Unit.

In recent years the Tour has comprised of 2 mini-buses, driven by AONB staff, and there is the capacity to provide a 3<sup>rd</sup> mini-bus.

The programme for the Tour is still being finalised, but will include the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Green Infrastructure (GI) Project and other initiatives and management issues in the southern part of the AONB in Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire.

The event reaches a wide audience of AONB partners and interested parties and always proves to be very popular and informative for those who attend. Lunch and transport is included in the total cost of £15 per person.

### ***Background***

Each year the JAC hosts the Annual Study Tour. A total of 29 people participated in the 2018 AONB Partnership Tour. There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused on a selection of land management projects and issues in the Herefordshire part of the AONB north of Ross-on-Wye. The Tour visited Hurstans' Coronation Meadow, Sollers Hope; the Canwood Gallery & Sculpture Park, Checkley; Haugh Wood; Ballingham Court Farm - AONB Farming Award winners in 2008, 2012 & 2018; Tresseck Campsite, Hoarwithy and the Harewood Park Estate. Feedback from attendees of the Tour was extremely positive.

The 2017 Tour visited sites between Ross-on-Wye and Lydbrook. The Tour visited the riverside at Ross, Goodrich Castle, Coppett Hill Common, Brelston Green and Lydbrook Bridge.