

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 23rd September 2022 for the Study Tour and encourage a good attendance, at £20 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

- The Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour has not been held since 2019.
- This year the intention is to revive the Tour, to be held on Friday 23rd September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the part of the AONB around Ross-on-Wye and south Herefordshire.
- 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 pre-Covid had a good reputation as both an information exchange and networking opportunity, with 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 and around the AONB.

Implications

The date of 23rd September is proposed for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour because there appear to be no conflicting council meetings of the four constituent local authorities. In the interests of wider collaboration invitations will be made to other appropriate partner organisations and neighbouring Designated Landscapes; including the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, the Malvern Hills AONB and Shropshire Hills Partnerships, the

National Association for AONBs, Welsh Government's Climate Change and Rural Affairs Group and DEFRA's Landscape & Access Unit. In most recent years the Tour comprised of 2 mini-buses, driven by AONB staff, and there is the capacity to provide a 3rd mini-bus.

The programme for the Tour is still being finalised, but will include visiting one or two farm projects in receipt of Farming in Protected Landscapes funding, some river catchment and water quality issues and other initiatives and management issues in the area around Ross-on-Wye.

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 will be included in the total cost of £20 per person.

Background

Each year up to 2019 the JAC hosted the Annual Study Tour.

In 2019 a total of 28 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour which focused predominantly on the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. The tour visited a range of sites primarily associated with the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project. It also included the 'heart in the landscape' photo-opportunity in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

In 2018, 29 people attended the Tour, which 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 at Sollers Hope; the Canwood Gallery & Sculpture Park at Checkley; Haugh Wood; Ballingham Court Farm – 3x AONB Farming Award winners; Tresseck Campsite at Hoarwithy and the Duchy of Cornwall's Harewood Park Estate.

The 2017, 29 people attended Tour visiting sites between Ross-on-Wye and Lydbrook. The Tour visited the riverside at Ross, Goodrich Castle, Coppett Hill Common, Brelston Green and Lydbrook Bridge.