

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 33 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour on 30th September.
- There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused around Ross-on-Wye, Brampton Abbots, Lydbrook & Welsh Bicknor in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire in the AONB.
- The tour visited a range of sites associated land-use and land management around various AONB projects and initiatives along with regenerative farming and recreation, including variously football, fishing and hostel accommodation.
- The time and dedication of the speakers and hosts is greatly appreciated.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.

Reasons

The AONB Partnership Tour returned post-pandemic and continued to be popular. It is a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB particularly to local Ward members, key officers and the Town, Parish/ Community Councils.

Implications

Of the 33 attendees on the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour, 9 came from Herefordshire, 6 from Monmouthshire and 8 from Gloucestershire. There were 9 JAC members, 10 Town/Parish/Community Council members, 7 officers, including from Welsh Government, Natural England and the Shropshire Hills AONB and 5 AONB staff. Feedback from attendees was very positive.

Sites and issues visited, and hosts or speakers were:-

- Ross Sports Centre: Tony Featherstone [Ross Sports Centre CIC] & Nick Critchley [Ross Junior Football Club – Girls Section]

- Townsend Farm, Brampton Abbots: regenerative agriculture and Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme; Ben Taylor-Davies [Regen Ben], Nick Critchley [AONB Development Officer] & Anna Stankiewicz [AONB FiPL Officer]
 - Lunch: Inn on the Wye
 - Lydbrook & Stowfield Fishery: some river issues; George Woodward [Ghillie]
 - Lydbrook Bridge / Stowfield Viaduct: bridge issues on the Wye Andrew Blake [AONB Manager] & Nicola Chidley [Principal Public Rights of Way Officer, Gloucestershire County Council]
 - Wye Invasive Species Programme Ellie Baggett [AONB Nature Recovery Officer]
 - Wye Valley Youth Hostel, Welsh Bicknor: the work of the YHA; Bryan Shekyls [Youth Hostel Manager]
 - Traditional Orchards - Noble Chafer Beetle & Orchard project; Ellie Baggett [AONB Nature Recovery Officer]
 - Welsh Bicknor Church – view restored church; Mrs Lorna Vaughan [Courtfield]
- As always the contribution of the speakers and hosts was much appreciated.

Background

The annual AONB Partnership Tour is traditionally held on one of the last Fridays in September. Tours were not held in 2020 nor 2021 due the coronavirus restrictions. In 2019 the Tour focused predominantly on the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. The 2018 Tour looked at a selection of projects and issues in the Herefordshire part of the AONB north of Ross-on-Wye. The 2017 Tour also looked at a number of projects and issues between Ross and Lydbrook. The 2016 Tour visited sites in and around Tintern.