

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
4<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**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 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016 for the Study Tour.
- B. Encourage a good attendance on the Tour.
- C. Extends an invitation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for a hosted visit to the Wye Valley AONB.

***Key Issues***

- Traditionally the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is held on the last Friday of September, but in recent years this has clashed with various local authority meetings.
- This year the date is set at 23<sup>rd</sup> September when there appear to be no conflicting Council meetings.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- It was intended to invite the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) to join the Tour, however the date clashes with a full NPA meeting. A separate invite will be made to visit the Wye Valley AONB.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September, which is the second year of this week celebrating AONBs.

***Reasons***

The Annual Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is hosted by the JAC and has gained a good reputation over recent years and is achieving 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.

Through the Future Landscapes Wales programme, the AONB Officer was invited to give a presentation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) in April. The presentation is available to view on the BBNPA webcast-site (Item 26 - from 1:58:31) [http://www.breconbeacons.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/221021](http://www.breconbeacons.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/221021). During the meeting the AONB Officer invited the BBNPA to join the AONB Partnership Tour. Unfortunately in ensuring that the Tour date did not clash with any Wye Valley local authority appointments the date chosen, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, is a full NPA meeting.

### ***Implications***

The programme for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour on 23<sup>rd</sup> September is still being finalised, however the Tour will focus on projects and management issues mainly in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. 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. As always an adequate lunch and transport will be included in the total cost of not more than £15 per person.

A separate event will be arranged in liaison with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

### ***Background***

Each year the JAC hosts the Annual Study Tour. The 2015 Wye Valley AONB Partnership Study Tour started at Symonds Yat Rock. The first visit was to Lancaut Church and the work of the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Youth Hostel Association staff gave a tour of St Briavel's Castle followed by a delicious lunch there. Afterwards Tarmac staff hosted the group at Stowfield Quarry where expansive views over the quarry operations were appreciated. Next the Tour went into the woods at Braceland to the mindSCAPE project log circle, where the project co-ordinator from ArtSpace Cinderford explained the work with dementia sufferers and their carers. The Tour conclude on the river bank by Biblins Bridge with various Forestry Commission staff outlining activities, including their involvement in the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

Outstanding Week - 2015 was the first year of what is intended to be an annual week celebrating AONBs. The AONB Partnership Tour falls within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Outstanding Week: 17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016.