



**Dorset**  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING  
NATURAL BEAUTY

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8<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Dear Board Member

**Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 2pm, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008,  
Weymouth Avenue Pavillion, Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester**

You are invited to a meeting of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Board. This meeting will include discussion on the draft AONB Management Plan, work programme update and boundary issues.

The meeting will start at 2pm (refreshments from 1.45pm). If you are unable to attend it would be helpful if you could send a briefed representative. Please confirm attendance to Katharine Wright on 01305 756782 or [k.wright@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:k.wright@dorsetcc.gov.uk).

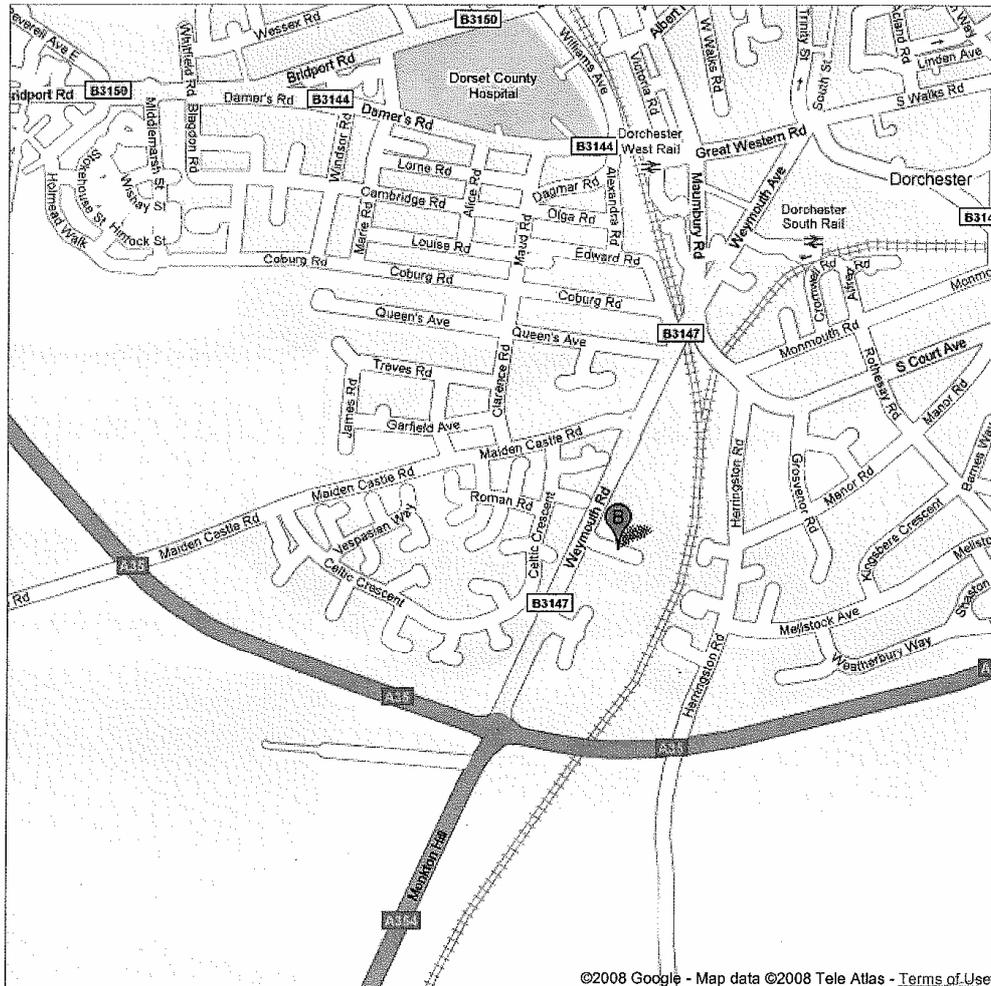
## **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**
- 3. Draft Dorset AONB Management Plan**  
To discuss the content of the draft management plan and agree changes required prior to circulation of the plan for public consultation on 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- 4. Management Plan Consultation Process**  
To receive a report from the AONB Communications Officer on proposals for the management plan consultation.
- 5. AONB Boundary Review**  
To discuss recent requests for review of the AONB boundary.
- 6. Membership of the Partnership Board**  
To discuss requests for representation on the AONB Partnership Board.
- 7. AONB Team progress report**  
To receive an update from the team on progress on the current work programme.
- 8. Updates from Heritage Committees and other partners**
- 9. Any other business**
- 10. Dates of next meetings**

# Directions to Weymouth Avenue Pavillion



B = Weymouth Avenue Pavillion, Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2RY  
From Dorchester - Before the roundabout taking you into the 'Tesco' Supermarke into the Sawmills  
From Weymouth/A354, continue pass the football ground on your right, straight on 'Tesco' roundabout and take the 1st right into the Sawmills



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## **DORSET AONB PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 08

The Dorset AONB Partnership met at Stratton House, West Dorset District Council, Dorchester

Present

Chair Tim Frost

Cllr Nick Cake (Purbeck District Council), Cllr M Snowden (West Dorset District Council), Cllr M Leicester (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), Andy Ackerman (Dorset County Council) (guest), Dr David Evans (West Dorset District Council), Andy Foot (NFU), Don Gobbett (Dorset County Council), Steve Marston (Natural England), Prof Vince May (Purbeck Heritage Committee), Kevin Morris (North Dorset District Council), Sarah Bentley (Dorset AONB) and Sue Mitchell (Dorset AONB).

### **Item 1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Peter Chamberlain (Devon County Council), Cllr Debra Croney (North Dorset District Council), Sarah Diacono (Somerset County Council), Kate Evans (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council), John Mortimer (CLA), Dick Preston (Forestry Commission), Sam Rose (World Heritage Team), and Simon Williams (Weymouth & Portland Borough Council).

### **Item 2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record. A suggestion was made by Dr David Evans that a letter of thanks be sent to Andy Price who has recently retired for his contribution to the establishment and management of the Partnership.

### **Item 3. Review of Achievements**

Team Manager Sarah Bentley gave a verbal report on the annual review, highlighting some of main achievements during the year 2007/8. The Team had delivered a programme with a total value of over £1 million. Grassland target measure 3 which had previously been of concern was now back on target. The Team had successfully secured Heritage Lottery Funding worth £159,000 for the South Dorset Ridgeway, various schemes to under-ground power lines were either completed or underway and the Landscape Character Assessment had been completed and launched.

**Resolved: The Board agreed the wording & outline of the annual review and the need to reduce the print run, and reports in the various Local Authority community magazines.**

Vince May suggested inclusion in of LA magazines that were outside the AONB, and backed up by Cllr M Snowden and Cllr N Cake. Cllr H Cox agreed the reporting in LA magazines was an excellent idea, and will contact Sue Hyde for 'Your Dorset'

### **Item 4. Update on Management Plan Review**

Team Manager Sarah Bentley gave a verbal report on the progress so far with the management plan review and comments so far received on the expediency consultation. The time scales and deadlines for various stages of the review process were confirmed, noting that the draft Management Plan must be out for consultation by 1<sup>st</sup> October and that Partnership Board meetings would need to tie in with this.

### **Item 5. AONB Funding and current work programme**

Sarah Bentley Team Manager gave a report on the budget allocation for the year 08-09 and delivery of current work programme. It was noted that Dorset AONB had done well in securing project funding from Natural England despite constrained national budgets. Budget figures from Natural England were expected to remain at the same level for the subsequent two years.

While this settlement was welcomed by all, particularly given the financial constraints Natural England was facing, it was noted that the core budget had remained frozen at the same level it has been for some years. As staff and overhead costs are all increasing, this would

result in a small shortfall in the core budget, particularly in a year with management plan production costs to be met. It was therefore proposed that the 10% administration fee from the Sustainable Development Fund be used to meet this shortfall. In addition, it was proposed that the winterbournes and rural roads projects also utilise some SDF funding.

Kevin Morris said that the team were to be congratulated on their grant offer, by being bold and taking a risk, and going for plenty of project money proved a great success. Steve Marston agreed with these comments

Work Programme: Sarah Bentley then reported on some of the other work that the team have been involved in: Tom Munro was assisting with development of a South West Protected Landscapes Interreg bid for European funding with partners in France. Sarah Harbige had been appointed as Ridgeway Heritage Officer starting on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Doug Harman: Landscape Character Assessment officially launched and working in partnership with WDDC and NE on a feasibility study regarding allotments, and dealing with planning applications. Sue Mitchell: Rural Roads Protocol adopted on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and also working on the Coastal Corridor plan and feasibility work to expand the role of Norden Park and Ride; Alison Turnock was continuing work on the Winterbournes project, with and AONB considering a one off 'chalk stream' conference. Sue Dampney was working on the Coast and Countryside editorial and working with Destination Dorset on sustainable tourism. The team linked up with Direct from Dorset and attended a very successful day at the local food festival in Cattistock.

Andy Foot asked about the continuation of Pastures New beyond March 2009, as he feels it's a very valuable project and adds much value. SB responded that plans for continuation were being explored.

**Resolved: SDF funding to be allocated to Winterbournes, Rural Roads and administration (10%) to go into core budget; remaining funds to be allocated through one-off funding panel meeting.**

#### **Item 6. Rural Roads**

Andy Ackerman, Head of Highways @ DCC gave a presentation on the newly adopted Rural Roads Protocol to the Board, and how it will be taken forward, requesting continued AONB team input / support in developing policies, guidance, pilot schemes and community awareness. After the presentation the board asked questions on some concerns that they had. These included: reduced lighting and cats eyes, influence of 'sat nav' systems, weight restrictions, lattice posts and street lighting.

**Resolved: The Board to agree for the Team to continue to provide the support required.**

#### **Dates for Next Meetings**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September @ 2pm – Weymouth Avenue Pavilion, Dorchester

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 - @ 2pm – Venue TBC

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009 @ 2pm Venue TBC

## Item 3. Draft Dorset AONB Management Plan

<b>Item for:</b>	Discussion and agreement
<b>Report by:</b>	AONB Team Manager
<b>Financial implications:</b>	Plan production costs including consultation, draft and final plan approximately £12,000
<b>Summary:</b>	Following on from the outcomes of the review report discussed at the last Board meeting, the team has developed a draft AONB Management Plan for 2009-14 (attached as Appendix 1). The plan includes a revised set of objectives, policies and actions to achieve a vision that looks 20 years ahead. A strategic environmental assessment has been undertaken for the plan, with some changes to policies made as a result. The Plan is due out for public consultation from 1 <sup>st</sup> October. The Board is requested to consider at this stage any changes required prior to the consultation. NB Partner organisations will have the opportunity to make detailed comments during the consultation; at this stage it is important to identify anything missing or anything that members feel is inappropriate and would not support.

**Recommendations:** The Board agrees any changes required to the draft plan and approves it with those amendments to go out for public consultation.

### Background

- 3.1 The draft Management Plan has been produced by the AONB Team with significant input and advice from its themed working groups and overseen by the Management Plan Review Working Group. The plan is due out for public consultation on 1<sup>st</sup> October and the Board's initial views are sought at this point to ensure that the plan is broadly representative of the Partnership's aspirations for the AONB. Detailed input from partner organisations can be made during the consultation phase and partners are not being asked to sign up to the plan at this stage, but to broadly endorse its content and flag up any issues of initial concern.
- 3.2 Board members are asked to come to the meeting with comments on the following:
- **General structure of the document** – bearing in mind that most people will use the document for dipping into particular chapters rather than reading it from cover to cover; there is some duplication so that chapters will work if read in isolation.
  - **Broad endorsement of objectives, policies and actions** – it is important that the Board feel confident in what is being proposed over the next 5 years.
  - **Anything missing** – any issues that are not adequately addressed.
  - Please note that the document will be professionally designed prior to the consultation, therefore comments on the presentation of the working draft are not required.
- 3.3 A strategic environmental assessment has been undertaken for the plan objectives and policies. Some minor amendments were made as a result of this process, though

most impacts are either positive or neutral. The assessment process was overseen by a one-off working group of 'independent' representatives to ensure that the assessment was robust. Appropriate assessment (for impacts on Natura 2000 sites) will be undertaken for actions when these are confirmed.

## Item 4. Management plan Consultation Proposals

<b>Item for:</b>	Discussion and agreement
<b>Report by:</b>	AONB Communications Officer
<b>Financial implications:</b>	Included within plan production costs above.
<b>Summary:</b>	This paper summarises proposals for the consultation process, including how the draft plan will be distributed, opportunities for discussion with the team and plans for the Annual Forum in November.

**Recommendations:** The Board approves the consultation proposals as presented and members assist with their delivery.

### Proposals

4.1 While many stakeholders have already been involved in the review and drafting of the Dorset AONB Management Plan, the forthcoming formal consultation period (1<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> November) offers everyone the chance to input into the management plan process, and for this input to be formally acknowledged and considered. This briefing note sets out current plans for the formal consultation period and action required now from the members of the Partnership Board.

### Available to all

4.2 The draft Management Plan will be freely available in both print and electronic format to anyone who wants to read it. Electronic copies (PDFs of each section) will be available on the Dorset AONB website with links to it from partner websites where possible. Print copies will be available in libraries and both print and electronic versions will be available on request to the Dorset AONB office. (We are also required to make the draft Management Plan available in other languages and formats on request.)

### Targeted distribution

4.3 We have identified specific stakeholders – both individuals and organisations – who we want to receive the draft Management Plan directly from us. These are:

Partnership Board members	Print copy by direct mail out
All statutory consultees	Print copy by direct mail out
Heritage Committee members	Email with website link via Committee Secretaries
Local Authority elected members	Email with website link via Committee Secretaries
Local Authority Heads of Dept	Print copy by direct mail out
Local Authority specialist officers	Email with website link

Parish & Town Councils	Alert letter in advance by email Print copy by direct mail out Email with website link to Clerks via D&PTC
Dorset Strategic Partnership	Print copy to Chair by direct mail out Email with website link to all Theme Group members via Group administrators
Community Partnerships	Print copy to Chair Email with website link to all members via Clerk
Local community planning groups	Email with website link to all contacts

### **Additional targeting**

4.4 We have identified specific organisations to target further in order to develop stronger links for the implementation of the plan or specialist input during the consultation period. Either presentations / led discussion will be made during scheduled meetings or new meetings will be planned for October and November:

- Heritage Committees
- Jurassic Coast Team & Dorset Coast Forum
- CLA Dorset Branch
- National Trust
- Wildlife Trust
- DSP Accessibility, Environment, Economy, Culture and Affordable Housing Theme Groups
- Local Area Partnerships
- Dorset CC Natural Environment & Education
- NFU Dorset Branch
- Destination Dorset
- DAPTC
- Dorset Countryside – Ranger and Access
- Natural England – Dorset Office

We also hope to organise meetings with the PCT, Dorset Play Forum and Dorset WI to discuss involvement in the implementation of the Plan.

### **Promotion**

4.5 To raise awareness of the consultation period, short articles will be sent to all Parish Magazines on our database, all local and county wide media press and radio as well as the local authority community newspapers. The Dorset Echo, Western Gazette, Marshwood Vale and Blackmore Vale magazines will be approached to carry feature articles picking up on issues within the Management Plan and achievements from the previous Management Plan for interest. A4 fliers will be produced for parish / town council notice boards, libraries and local authority reception areas.

### **Open door policy**

4.6 We would like to talk with people who have ideas or concerns about material within the draft Management Plan during the consultation period, so that written responses are as considered and informed as possible. We will invite people to contact the Dorset AONB Team anytime during the consultation period and will also hold five Open Door Days when anyone can drop into the office and find the team available.

## **Annual Forum**

- 4.7 The 2008/9 Annual Forum will be held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November (provisional date) at Athelhampton House to focus on the draft Management Plan in order to encourage debate, develop informed opinion and receive constructive feedback.

Parish Councils and Community Partnerships will be particularly targeted. As the management plan covers many topics, the aim of the day is not to consider everything but instead to find some topics that appeal to local interest and use these to explore AONB issues and build connections. The topics within the draft Management Plan which we feel will be of particular interest to this audience are:

- Coastal Corridor, including issue of zoning
- Rural Roads
- Hardy's Wessex and other cultural associations with landscape
- Local products
- Landmarks and local landscape change monitoring

- 4.8 Short presentations are proposed looking at the resource within the AONB and the changes, needs and opportunities for each topic. Workshops would follow, to look at the policy framework and actions within the Management Plan to stimulate discussion and encourage feedback. Delegates would select their two preferred topics to cover during the day. A surgery at the end of the Forum is also proposed so that delegates can meet to discuss individual chapters in detail with their authors or members of the Review Group.

### **Action required by all partners**

- 4.9 ALL partners are asked to
- Consider whether the appropriate representatives have been identified in this plan and whether the method / level of communication with them is appropriate.
  - Ensure that the appropriate Committees have the Management Plan on the agenda during the consultation / adoption periods and ask for input from AONB Manager if required.
  - Let us know if other mechanisms for the promotion of the consultation period or distribution of the plan are available within your organisation.
  - Send us an electronic version of your logo (in EPS format if possible), in both colour and black & white
  - Tell us who the web master of your organisation is if links / alerts to AONB website if appropriate.

## Item 5. AONB Boundary Review

<b>Item for:</b>	Discussion and agreement
<b>Report by:</b>	AONB Team Manager
<b>Financial implications:</b>	Resource needs for a boundary review would be considerable and no allocation has been made in existing financial plans.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Partnership has received a number of requests for reviews of the AONB boundary. The purpose of this paper is to summarise the previously stated position of the Board on this issue and update on Natural England's current position.

**Recommendations:** The Board confirms its previously stated position that there are a number of locations where the Board considers review and modification of the AONB boundary could be of merit subject to future Natural England policy and availability of resources; however, for the foreseeable future the focus for the AONB Partnership should be on delivery of activity to conserve and enhance the AONB, co-ordinating activity beyond the boundary where appropriate.

### Background

- 5.1 Three enquiries have been received concerning potential review of the AONB boundary. These include:
- Review of the boundary to include the area around Sherborne (enquiry by Sherborne Town Council)
  - Review of the boundary to include Wool (Wool Parish Council)
  - Review of the boundary to include Portland (Portland resident).
- The AONB Team responded to these requests based on the previous stated position of the Board and an update on the Natural England position, but agreed to raise the issue with the Board to determine whether any change in position may be appropriate.
- 5.2 The issue of boundary modifications was discussed by the Board in October 2005 in response to a request from the Countryside Agency. The Agency had agreed a set of tests for boundary modification and was compiling a list of potential AONB boundary modifications. The issue was discussed at some length and the AONB Board concluded that there were four areas where boundary modification may be required:
- The lack of join up with the World Heritage Site and potential benefits of extending the AONB boundary to include currently excluded parts of Chesil Beach and the Fleet (which are however defined as Heritage Coast and covered by European nature conservation designation) and parts of Portland also covered by European designations. With flora, fauna, geological and physiographic features forming the nearest to a statutory definition of 'natural beauty', there is a logic to the AONB encompassing the natural WHS.
  - Further inclusion of internationally important heathland areas in the south east of the county.
  - The area around Sherborne, which includes attractive and historically significant landscape.
  - Parts of the Blackmore Vale in the north of the county that have a strong and intact landscape character.

- 5.3 The Board's agreed position on the way forward was that:
- Those potential modifications deemed by the Board to be justified in terms of the quality of the natural beauty of Dorset should be lodged with CA to be considered for the short-list. This will ensure that boundary concerns are formally registered and retains the option to address them in the future if required.
  - The Partnership should make no further efforts within its current work programme period to pursue boundary modifications, beyond lodging concerns and potential locations with CA as above. Instead, the focus of Partnership and Team activity should be to deliver the action plan and deliver real outcomes 'on the ground'.
  - The Partnership will continue to co-ordinate some activities on a county-wide basis where that is demonstratively the most sensible approach and where it can be justified through resources put into those initiatives by organisations with wider remits (as currently applies with rural roads, woodlands and winterbournes).
  - The Partnership should explore with Natural England and local partners the opportunities to support positive 'AONB style' integrated management in specific areas outside the designated AONB. This could particularly focus on areas where an integrated approach to management within and outside the designated boundary would add value and promote a landscape character-based approach, and would focus on delivery of action rather than any suggestion of extending statutory AONB protection. Implementing such initiatives would need to be subject to identifying additional resources as the AONB budget is limited and should not be spread too thinly. This could usefully provide a more practical and cost-effective way of dealing with boundary concerns, but having the appropriate areas lodged as boundary issues would substantiate this approach and give the option to pursue boundary modifications later if required.
- 5.4 Natural England is currently reviewing its landscape policies, including AONB boundary modifications. The outcomes of this review are anticipated in mid-2009.
- 5.5 It must be noted that boundary reviews are resource-intensive, often needing public inquiry to reach consensus. The costs of the review would have to be weighed against the benefits of additional protection.
- 5.6 The Steering Group's recommendation to the Board is that, with Natural England's position currently under review and the need to focus limited resources on delivery of the management plan, the Board's previously stated position should be confirmed.

## Item 7. AONB Team Progress Report

7.1 In addition to developing the draft AONB Management Plan and strategic environmental assessment, the AONB Team has made significant progress on wider elements of the work programme. The following summarises team activity since the last Board meeting.

### Staff changes

7.2 Miles King replaced Ali Morse as Dorset Grasslands Officer in early June, co-ordinating the Pastures New grassland Local Area Agreement target. Miles is on secondment to the AONB Team from Natural England.

7.3 Sarah Harbige joined the Team in June as Ridgeway Heritage Officer, leading the South Dorset Ridgeway Project and also working one day each week on the Roman Town House for Dorset County Council.

7.4 David Rees, Dorset Woodlink Officer, left us at the end of August to return to the Forestry Commission in Wales. David had been with the team for 2 years, developing the Dorset Trees, Woods and Forests Strategy and co-ordinating a wide programme of woodland management advice and woodfuel industry development. It is vital that David's achievements and the momentum he created for Woodlink continue. The team is currently developing future plans for the project and will be recruiting a new officer.

### Chalk & Cheese Local action

7.5 The AONB Team worked closely with Dorset Squared to develop the Chalk & Cheese Local Action scheme, successfully securing £3.1 million for environmentally sustainable economic activity across West Dorset, Purbeck and Portland. The AONB Team developed the evidence base for the bid and will help with the administration of the funds. This funding will be a significant boost for the environment-economy initiatives that are central to Pastures New, Woodlink and other AONB initiatives.

### AONB Sustainable Development Fund

7.6 This year in bids to the SDF were in excess of £150,000 - from restoring ponds to specialist education cruises along the coast, but with just over £61,000 to offer, difficult decisions had to be made by the panel when they met on the 5<sup>th</sup> August. Below is a table of the successful applications:

Project	Claimant	SDF offer
Admin	AONB	£6,166
Winterborne Project	AONB	£5,500
Rural Roads	AONB	£2,500
Coombe Keynes Pylons	Coombe Keynes Parish	£5,000
Mobile Kitchen	Dorset Farmers Markets	£4,000
Purbeck Stone Outreach	Purbeck Keystone project	£3,015
Corfe Castle Pre School Community Building	Corfe Castle Community pre School	£3,000
Heritage Coast Cruises	Osprey Marine	£4,400
Community Allotment	Maiden Newton Allotment Assoc	£5,315

Purbeck Way Implementation	Dorset Countryside	£2,400
Purbeck Important Ponds Project	Dorset Wildlife Trust	£5,000
Dorset Arable Project	Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group	£2,130
Dorset Volunteer Ranger Service	Dorset Countryside	£3,000
Green Wood Training	Kingcombe Centre	£3,210
Dorset Veteran Trees	Dorset Wildlife Trust	£5,000
Dry Stone Walling	Dorset Countryside	780,00
Cemetery Wall Project	Langton Matravers Parish Council	£1,220
		<b>£61,636</b>

### **Pastures New Grassland Restoration Project**

7.7 Pastures New is a grassland restoration initiative developed by the AONB and Dorset Wildlife Trust as part of the Dorset Local Area Agreement Reward Element. The project aims to secure improved management for 2800 hectares of grassland across Dorset. There are three measures in the target: Measures 2 (grassland in good management) and 3 (grassland in excellent management) of the Local Area Agreement target are both progressing well, with measure 2 already ahead of target and measure 3 on target. Measure 1 involved management of a set of county wildlife sites currently in poor or unknown condition. This measure is behind target at the moment, but work is progressing well.

7.8 The Grassland Officer's work during the summer has focused on administering the capital grant to help landowners manage their sites.

#### Projects completed in the June-August 2008 period:

- West Stafford Meadow fencing (not SNCI but includes good quality wet grassland/rush pasture habitat)
- Hilfield Priory SNCI fencing and water supply
- Rose Hill Dairy fencing, Cheselbourne (not SNCI but a large area of pasture entered into management agreement)

#### Projects approved or underway:

- Pamphill Moor SNCI, Kingston Lacy; fencing
- Hill Street Farm fencing (SNCI quality grassland included in management agreement)
- Okeford Hill West fencing (grassland restoration adjacent to SNCI)
- Pentridge Meadow SNCI scrub management.
- Keepers Lodge Meadow (Buckland Newton) SNCI fencing
- East Holme meadow – wildflower seed sowing.
- North Dorset/DCC Countryside sites including SNCI; scrub clearance, wildflower seed sowing.

#### Projects awaiting approval:

- Home Eweleaze SNCI, Druce; scrub clearance
- Winterbourne Came, fencing
- Sandford Orcas – wildflower seed sowing
- Chitcombe Down SNCI (Woolland); fencing and scrub clearance.
- SNCI quality downland near Cheselbourne; fencing.

## South Dorset Ridgeway Project

- 7.9 The Heritage Lottery Funded project is now well underway with the following progress made:
- **Circular walks** – circular walking routes are being developed around the settlements of Broadmayne and Martinstown in collaboration with Parish Councils, Footpath Liaison Officers, DCC Rights of Way and landowners. Volunteers have been recruited to test the routes during September 2008. The walks will be launched in Spring 2009.
  - **Parish Maps** – Broadmayne Parish Council is the first parish to take part in the parish map element of the project.
  - **Oral history** – the next phase of the oral history project is now being publicised, building on previous work by trained volunteer recorders.
  - **Web site** – work has started on the South Dorset Ridgeway web site.
  - **Archaeology and research** – English Heritage will soon be publishing the results of the long barrow survey undertaken through the project last year. Further survey proposals are to be discussed at the next steering group meeting. Funding has been secured from English Heritage to implement the National Mapping Programme survey based on aerial photos for the Ridgeway area. The Project has offered a small grant to the South Dorset Community Archaeology Society to undertake research in Frampton and partnership projects are being developed with Abbotsbury Heritage Project.
  - **Arts events** – planning is underway for an art event in February 2009 and a number of arts organisations, artists and theatre groups have been contacted.
  - **Other events** – a joint walk with Natural England was run in June at the Valley of Stones NNR, attended by 13 people; a walk at Maiden Castle led by DCC Senior Archaeologist Claire Pinder was attended by 27 people; an illustrated talk was given to Poundbury Ladies Group about the project, attended by 34 people and a Bump-a-story storytelling event will be held at Bronkham Hill on 12 October, led by Tim Laycock.
  - **Teaching resources** – Wessex Archaeology and Pippe Brindley (Freelance Museum Educationalist) have been commissioned to develop teaching resources for use by local schools.
  - **Ridgway festival** – early planning for this event is underway, with contacts being made for arts and re-enactment events.
  - **Publicity** – a newsletter has been produced about the project; the project was featured in Dorset Magazine's August edition; articles have been written for local parish and arts newsletters.
  - **Roman Town House** – in addition to the Ridgeway Project, Sarah Harbige is also working on the Roman Town House and achievements have included the Dorchester Drama production of Antigone at the Town House in July, the Roman Festival in August and work underway on future events, interpretation and web site.

## Woodlink

- 7.10 Current funding for 2008-9 is almost all in place, thanks to intervention by Dorset County Council and we will be developing a bid to the Chalk & Cheese Local Action for central funding from 2009-2013. We are currently seeking staff coverage for the interim (to Mar 09) with a short-term secondment from Forestry Commission who see it as a valuable skills & experience development opportunity. We will recruit openly for a replacement member of staff for Mar 09 onwards. Draft County Tree Planting & Management guidance has been produced; based on Landscape Character Type. It will be uploaded to [www.dorsetaonb.org.uk](http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk) after it has passed steering group.

## INTERREG

- 7.11 The AONB Countryside Officer is on a steering group to develop bid to INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme (IVA) with partners from the South West AONBs

and National Parks and 4 *Parcs Naturels Regionaux* (AONB equivalents) in NW France. Submission of the bid is due in February, based on 'Sustainable Landscapes' - finding common solutions to shared problems, and raising awareness of environmental issues across the common space. Dorset bids include interpretation and management of coastal sites and the management of coastal tourism (towards Coastal Corridor Plan actions) and woodfuel development including shared training & shadowing opportunities for woodland managers and prospective woodfuel consumers (towards Woodlink actions).

### **Winterbournes & Wetlands**

- 7.12 A restoration report commissioned from Five Rivers consultancy earlier this year produced cost estimates for carrying out restoration work along the South Winterborne near Winterborne Came. This has been forwarded to the landowner for consideration. An application for funding for river restoration work has been submitted to Environment Agency. If this is unsuccessful, an application will be made to SITA Trust's Enriching Nature Programme for funding. The SITA application has been started but will require a considerable amount of time to develop.
- 7.13 Two conservation work sessions have been organized along the North Winterborne to remove the invasive annual species Himalayan balsam. A photographic survey of Himalayan balsam along the North Winterborne has been carried out to assess the effect of this work, and will be used to target further practical work days next year. A conference will be organized for next spring to discuss the future of the Winterbournes project and the proposal to develop it into a chalk streams project.

### **Coastal Corridor Action Plan**

- 7.14 Work is continuing on the development of the Coastal Corridor Action Plan, with a draft action plan due from the consultants in the next couple of weeks. Zoning work and spatial mapping of actions will be required as a next phase.

### **Rural Roads Protocol**

- 7.15 The Rural Roads Protocol will be officially launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. The AONB Team will be supporting its delivery through a programme of parish-based activities currently being devised. The Team has also been providing input to the B3157 coast road safety project, which will be delivered in line with the protocol. The team has undertaken a survey of fingerposts and historic road assets along the route to help inform development of the landscape conservation / enhancement aspects of the work. The AONB Access, Recreation and Transport Officer gave a presentation to a seminar for local authorities nationally at Snowdonia National Park illustrating how CROW Act Section 85 duties can be delivered, using roads and transport work in Dorset as case studies.

### **World Heritage / Strategic Transport Activities**

- 7.16 The Dorset AONB Access, Recreation & Transport Officer is co-managing a transport study with Devon County Council for the World Heritage Transport Strategy, looking at:
- Audit and feasibility of bus services for the leisure market along the coast
  - Effectiveness of Demand Responsive Transport for visitors, especially in Purbeck
  - Good practice examples of transport information
  - Audit of routes connecting train stations and bus stops serving coastal routes
  - Scope for introducing a park and ride facility connected to X53 service

A separate study is also underway to look at the role and potential to increase the significance of Norden Park and Ride as a hub for sustainable access to the Purbeck coast.

### **Hardy's Wessex Project**

- 7.17 The AONB Team has been providing input to the development of ideas for a Hardy Country initiative in central Dorset with the National Trust.

### **Allotment Project**

- 7.18 The AONB Team, working in partnership with Natural England and the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils, received a grant of £5000 from the West Dorset Partnership to take forward an allotment project. The project aims to promote the benefits of allotments and to identify measures in establishing new provision where demand is needed. A consultant has recently been appointed to conduct research and to produce information for Parish use. The work is expected to be completed after the New Year. For further information contact the landscape planning officer.

### **Making Connections – delivering the AONB Communications Strategy**

- 7.19 The following work has been undertaken on the communications strategy:
- **Dorset Coast & Countryside** – the autumn issue has been completed with features on vibrant villages and deer.
  - **Events** – the AONB has been represented at a number of events over the summer, including West Dorset's Big Green Day, Bridport Food Festival, Bridport Energy Day, Burton Bradstock Village Fair, Kingcombe Centre Open Day.
  - **South West Protected Landscapes Forum Communications Working Group** – regional communications work has included helping with the review of the National Association for AONBs communications activities; Dorset AONB has offered officer time to assist further with this. A Diversity workshop agreed 3 target conurbations where there was a need to investigate the needs of under-represented groups. These are Bournemouth / Poole, Plymouth and Taunton. Dorset AONB will be involved in taking this work forward. Discussions have also taken place regarding the Cultural Olympiad and what it could mean to AONBs in the South West. Celebration of Extraordinary Spaces and Extraordinary Journeys are two themes AONBs are linking with; Cornwall are developing a Landscape and Legend initiative.
  - **Press coverage** – has included features in Your Dorset, article to go in About Purbeck, West Dorset Community Link; Dorset magazine and various coverage in press and radio.

### **Planning Protocol**

- 7.20 Since the last board meeting, the AONB have comment on the following planning applications in line with the AONB planning protocol:
- Alaska Wind Farm – advice to PDC on the scope and content of the first application for a wind farm. This application has now been withdrawn with a modified application expected to be submitted shortly.
  - Kingcombe Cross – Advice to DCC on an application to extend a current agricultural recycling plant. No significant landscape issues were identified.
  - Bourne Park – advice to DCC on proposals for a new biomass plant with comments on appropriate materials and landscape mitigation
  - Seatown Defence works – advice to WDDC on an application to extend the current sea defence works at Seatown. Comments related to the use of stone type and other design details.

- Weymouth Relief Road – Ongoing advice to DCC on the landscape conditions for the scheme through the Environment group
- Clay Hanger Farm – advice to WDDC on application to convert existing agricultural building into facilities for a shoot. The scheme did not present any major landscape issues.
- Okeford Hill – pre application advice to NDDC on a proposal for a large stable block and accommodation. The proposals appear to present significant landscape issues for the AONB.
- Landers Quarry – advice to DCC on revised design details for quarry buildings.

7.21 **Consultations and Events** - The AONB Team have provided advice on the draft policies for the Shoreline Management Plan II process, advice to Wessex Water and the Forestry Commission on various schemes and input into the West Dorset Urban Extensions. The AONB has also been represented at a national tranquillity seminar and power line under grounding workshop.

### **Under-grounding power lines**

7.22 Western Power has changed its position on under-grounding of power lines and will work with AONBs and National Parks in its area to identify priority locations. This is excellent news, meaning that the west of the AONB will now be covered by this scheme, which is already successfully underway with Southern Electric in the east.