

October 2011

Monthly update



1. Following last month's launch of the 2012 *Suffolk: Creating the **Greenest County Awards** (aka **Suffolk's Green Oscars**)* I now include the weblink to the AONB category's entry form <http://bit.ly/r3oMqZ>. The AONB award is once again kindly sponsored by Thorpeness & Aldeburgh Hotels. The link contains information about the award's criteria. Please forward it to anyone you feel may wish to enter.
2. Next Spring **4th Regiment Army Air Corp** is planning a 5-day March along the Suffolk Coast Path, from Lowestoft to Felixstowe, in support of the Army Benevolent Fund. The AONB Unit way-marks and promotes this long-distance route, which is one of 3 in the AONB, and as such we are supporting them in their preparations for this exciting event. The [Cicerone](#) Guide for our 3 long-distance routes will be out in February 2012.
3. As part of their Rural Economic Growth Review, Defra have produced some interesting statistics about the **value of tourism business in AONBs** and National Parks, from data generated by the Office of National Statistics. In the study, tourism businesses included accommodation, transport, food, beverage, leisure and cultural businesses. Suffolk Coast and Heaths is ranked 15th on the national list, which shows that 20% of all employment within the AONB is by tourism businesses, that tourism businesses account for over 16% of all businesses and that these businesses employ about 2000 people in the area.
4. The National Association of AONBs held its AGM on 14th October. The meeting was addressed by Natural Environment Minister **Richard Benyon** and his speech can be viewed here on YouTube <http://bit.ly/obEfvn>
5. We have now learnt that Natural England will be undertaking some preliminary desk work to assess the case we have submitted for an **extension of the AONB boundary into north Essex**. This progress is most welcome as a further development in this long-running story.
6. Unfortunately the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership's application for the South Sandlings to become one of **Defra's new Nature Improvement Areas** was unsuccessful.
7. I'm delighted to report that we have now appointed our Touching the Tide Development Manager. **Bill Jenman** will join the team on 3rd January 2012 to start work on this exciting HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme. Bill comes with a strong track-record in heritage project work.
8. The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB has at last entered the world of social media. As part of modernising and improving our communications we are now on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), offering a wider variety of E-platforms for people to follow our work. Twitter offers short sound-bites of information, while we are using Facebook to offer an interactive space for AONB images, downloads and our work.
9. As part of this re-vamp of communications **we have also analysed use of our [website](#)**. Over a one month period the site had 3,147 visits, 75% of which were from new visitors to the site. Those people visiting looked at an average of 3 pages per visit, and stayed on the site for 2 minutes. 61% of these came via a search engine, and most of them were looking for information about walking, so the most popular pages were those with information about walking in the area. This gives us some great insights into how people are using our website, enabling us to improve it to meet their needs and ensure that we increase traffic to the site. It's also great to know that such a significant number of people are visiting and using the site already.
10. Our **winter newspaper** is now out and distributed across the AONB in time for this week's half term. If you have not picked up a copy look out for it, or download it here <http://bit.ly/pd5RS4>. The newspaper is headlined with the Natural Environment Minister's visit here in the summer.
11. Following a competitive tendering process, we will be appointing [Ugly Studios](#) to deliver the BALANCE interpretation board contract which will see **50 new information boards** installed across the AONB.

Nick Collinson,
26th October 2011

www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

FOLLOW US ON 

 Find us on Facebook