

July 2011

Monthly update



1. I'm absolutely delighted to report that we have received a stage 1 pass for our application to HLF's Landscape Partnership (LP) Scheme for our project "***Touching the Tide – living with cultural and natural change on Suffolk's Heritage Coast***". As we know, one of the Suffolk coast's most defining features is its dynamism and the many associated stories. It is constantly being reshaped by the sea, both eroding and accreting, and all this in the context of some of the UK and Europe's most important cultural and natural features. It is this issue that the project seeks to address with local and visiting communities. It is about inspiring and engaging people with the heritage of this constantly-changing area. Strong community involvement in decision-making and delivery will be a key component of the project and it will build on the many examples of excellent coastal partnership work being done to date. The total project value is just under £1 million over 4 years, and a stage 1 pass within HLF's LP programme means that the full 90% HLF grant has been set aside. 10% of this grant is available now to undertake a one-year project development phase towards a stage 2 submission, which, provided HLF are satisfied, will enable us to draw down the full grant.
2. Following the launch of the Government's **Natural Environment White Paper**, which invited applications for 12 pilot **Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs)** a number of organisations from the AONB Partnership met to discuss applying for a NIA in the AONB. All organisations were in favour and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be submitting a NIA stage 1 application. The area of focus will be the South Sandlings to the fringes of Ipswich and the emphasis will be on:
 - a. the untapped opportunities for wildlife and people presented by restructuring Rendlesham and Tunstall forests, building on the recent Footprint Ecology work
 - b. targeted farm advice for specific outputs in specific locations
 - c. community engagement activities and habitat management
 - d. wider ecosystem service delivery wherever possible
 - e. creation of a physical corridor for people and wildlife
 - f. providing a context for delivering landscape and green infrastructure improvements arising from large-scale housing development in the fringes of Ipswich and Felixstowe peninsula.
3. As reported in previous monthly updates the Government are seeking to shrink 1000 pages of national planning policy to 60. The new **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** is available in draft at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>. Many commentators question the presumption in favour of "sustainable development", although existing national AONB planning policy has made its way into the draft NPPF. South East and East of England Protected Landscapes have developed a document outlining the development challenges faced by protected landscapes and that an effective planning system is essential to their protection. This will be used nationally to respond to NPPF consultations. The challenge document is available on the AONB website: <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/uploads/SEEPL%20Leaflet%20Fin%20Web.pdf>
4. The National Association of AONBs (**NAAONB**) annual conference was held in Cornwall this month. All conference speeches, including a very complimentary speech from Natural Environment Minister Richard Benyon MP, can be viewed on the attached link <http://www.landscapesforlifeconference.org.uk/2011/07/richard-benyon-mp-defra-message-to-the-naaonb-conference/>
5. The first of our annual reports from the AONB's **Coast and Estuary Wardens Scheme** is now available for download. This charts the first 18 months of the initiative and catalogues some of the issues raised by the volunteers. http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/uploads/10551%20SCH%20CoastEstuaryReport2010_WEB.pdf
6. **EU BALANCE Project** contracts are now out to tender for the Tourism Strategy project. This work will establish a range of AONB evidence on visitor profiles and will put an economic and quality of life value on tourism in the AONB. It will also benchmark the sustainable tourism offer here with other protected landscapes (National Parks & AONBs) and will develop mechanisms for tourism businesses to become true custodians of the AONB landscape, the backdrop for their tourism businesses.
7. **EDF Sizewell Nuclear New-Build team** held an AONB Partnership workshop this month, to inform their stage 1 consultation. The AONB is a significant issue that EDF have to consider and the workshop helped them understand the variety of AONB interests in the area and Partners views on natural beauty.
8. **Malcolm Farrow**, Communications Officer at the AONB, has now left the AONB Unit following the restructure. The role is now reduced to a part-time function and we are currently reviewing options for delivering communications.
9. Please note a **change of date** for the next AONB JAC and Partnership meeting. This will now be held on 28th September at the Burness Parish Rooms in Melton.

Nick Collinson

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