

Howardian Hills



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NEWS RELEASE

LAUNCH OF HOWARDIAN HILLS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009-2014

The first 5-year review of the Management Plan for the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has now been completed, as required by Government legislation. Following a consultation period in November and December 2008, the comments received were evaluated and the Plan amended accordingly. The new Plan was adopted by the County and District Councils in May 2009 and was also sent to Defra. It has now been published in its final format and distributed to local and regional organisations, Parish Councils and land managers.

The Plan contains Objectives and Actions to help guide the management of the AONB over the next 5 years, up to April 2014. The updated Plan contains new sections on sustainability, to help address the challenges that lie ahead (particularly in relation to climate change), and on conservation of the geodiversity interest of the AONB.

Launching the Plan after a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meeting in Hovingham recently, JAC Chairman Robert Wainwright said "The Management Plan is the result of consultation with many organisations and individuals representing a wide range of interests – from local community groups to archaeologists, landowners and local councils. The key focus is on maintaining the area as a living and working landscape, continuing to maintain the AONB as a place of natural beauty and tranquillity, for both residents and visitors. We will also be continuing our work to support local communities in dealing with the issues that affect them, through a focus on sustainable rural development."

"The previous Management Plan has been a great success and the revised one will allow us to face the challenges of the future with confidence. The high-quality management of the AONB landscape that is carried out by farmers, foresters and other land managers is plain to see. 60% of the AONB area is within the Government's Environmental Stewardship Scheme, whilst the Joint Advisory Committee directly grant-aided nearly 8km of new hedge planting during the life of the previous Plan. We need to build on this, to ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are conserved and enhanced for future generations."

The Plan, together with associated technical appendices and a map showing key sites within the AONB, is available to view at:

www.howardianhills.org.uk/11/Management_Plan.html

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers an area of 200 square kilometres, stretching from Helmsley to Malton, Howsham to Husthwaite. It was designated in 1987 and is one of 49 AONBs in England, Wales AND Northern Ireland, set up under the same legislation that created the National Parks. The landscape is characterised by extensive woodland, rolling agricultural fields, large country houses and designed parklands. The primary purposes of designation are to conserve and enhance natural beauty, whilst taking into account the needs of local rural industries and communities. Recreation should be managed so as not to conflict with these aims.
2. The Joint Advisory Committee's work covers nature conservation, historic environment, landscape and recreation. As well as providing advice and assistance to farmers and land managers wanting to enter Government conservation schemes, it also provides grant aid and carries out work directly. Examples of work funded by the Committee include hedge planting, wall repairs, habitat management, scrub clearance from ancient monuments, community development projects and renewable energy schemes. It also monitors development proposals, to ensure that new developments are sensitively sited in the landscape. See www.howardianhills.org.uk for further information.
3. The work of the Joint Advisory Committee is guided by its Management Plan 2009 - 2014.
4. The AONB Joint Advisory Committee is funded by Natural England, North Yorkshire County Council, Ryedale District Council and Hambleton District Council.
5. 2009 is the 60th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. The Act paved the way for the creation of today's family of 15 UK National Parks, 47 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), 294 National Nature Reserves and 2,900 miles of National Trails. To celebrate the anniversary the AONBs and National Parks have produced a series of '60 walks for 60 years', which can be found at: www.diamondsinthelandscape.org.uk.
6. For further details please contact the AONB Manager, Paul Jackson. Tel 0845 034 9495.
7. The attached photo shows JAC Chairman Robert Wainwright (right centre) and AONB Manager Paul Jackson (left centre) with a copy of the new Management Plan. They are joined outside Hovingham Hall by members of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee and AONB Volunteers, with 'props' illustrating some of the work areas that the JAC is involved with – agriculture, forestry, historic environment and recreation.

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