

## MEETING NOTES

Mendip Hills AONB SDF Panel Meeting  
Wednesday 15 July 2009 10.30am– 12.30pm

### Panel members

Present: Nicola Epps (MDC), Ian Chedgy, Tony Sheppard, Martin Grass, Rachael Clarke & Sheila Petherbridge (MDC)

Apologies: Cllr Harvey Siggs (Partnership Vice Chairman) – Chairman, Simon Gardiner (Environment Agency)

Mendip Hills AONB Officer present  
Gail Graham - Development Officer

### Item

1.0 Minutes of Meeting held 29.04.09

These were approved with no amendments.

2.0 Update on SDF applications

Barton Camp Nature Trail 0910-001 A revised application was received; despite panel recommendations for the applicant to find additional source/s of funding this has not been actioned. The panel felt therefore unable to fund the 'slimmed down' proposal and wished to see a letter drafted to applicant explaining the reasons behind their refusal, but encourage Barton Camp to seek the additional match-funding for the original project.

Gail to draft refusal letter and circulate to panel for approval

3.0 Applications

3.1 Children's Walking Guide 0910-003 Panel members questioned funding two individuals as opposed to an organisation and queried the involvement of local schools in the project; however felt the overall benefits of bringing in more young people to the AONB outweighed the potential commercial aspect of the project. Additional conditions should include more involvement of local primary schools prior to publication and commitment from the authors to offer 3 local schools a free taster walk and offer 2 public guided walks.

Panel agreed to offer grant of £3,500 (48%) with additional conditions attached.

Gail to draft offer letter for approval

3.2 SWT Green Hay Project 0910-004 This application had been circulated prior to the meeting for approval due to project time constraints. Panel agreed to fund, but were keen to stress that applications should come through the quarterly panels and not on an ad-hoc basis.

Panel agreed to offer grant of £398.75 (43%).

Gail to draft offer letter for approval

3.3 Mendip Mountain Bike Trails 0910-005 The panel questioned the high costs of this project with low potential return (e.g. minimum commitment to update website) particularly when other local activity groups maintain their own websites free of charge e.g. cavers. Also felt that Black Down should not be further advertised when the current condition of paths is critical – addressing this issue was a priority. Panel agreed to reject application for funding.

Gail to draft rejection letter for approval

3.4 Cheddar Interpretive Sign 0910-006 The panel liked this community led project and were pleased to see that the Parish Council will maintain the board. They did feel that as the panel was to be sited in a garden for the visually impaired that the applicant could approach a charity such as the RNIB to ask for best-practise on creating something appropriate for the visually impaired. The panel would be happy to offer additional funding in order for any additional work to be carried out for this purpose.

Panel agreed to offer grant of £890 (69%), with the potential to increase offer if required for additional work.

Gail to draft offer letter for approval

3.5 Ignite Woodfuel Training Course 0910-007 Ian declared a potential conflict of interest in this application. The panel queried the breakdown of expenses and all thought the financial costs of the course seemed excessive. The timber industry has changed over the last year and is now quite robust so should be more self-funding. The panel thought the bid was too commercially focused but felt that one way to offer support was to supplement course places.

Panel agreed to offer grant of £1,400 (27%) to subsidise a maximum of 14 places on the course.

Gail to draft offer letter for approval

#### 4.0 SDF Process Review

The panel discussed issues concerned with updating the documentation which supports the SDF. Issues highlighted included needing more feedback from applicants about their projects, better publicity for and about the fund, more financial detail from applicants. Due to meeting time constraints, agreement that Gail will seek to update the documentation and circulate to panel for comment.

The panel also felt they would like to become more involved with maintaining contact with successful applicants. Each panel member will therefore take responsibility for following up SDF projects as follows:

- Barton Camp (0910-001) – Ian
- Children’s Walking Guide (0910-003) – Rachael
- SWT Green Hay Project (0910-004) – Sheila
- Cheddar Interpretive Sign (0910-006) – Tony
- Ignite Woodfuel Training Course (0910-007) - Martin

Gail to update all documentation for panel comment

Gail to distribute applicant contact details to panel

#### 5.0 AOB

Harvey Siggs has resigned as Chair of the SDF due to changing commitments following the local council elections. Nicola Epps has stepped into the role as Deputy Chair; a new Chair will be recruited following the restructure of the AONB partnership.

#### 6.0 Date of next meeting

16 September 2009 – 10.30am Charterhouse (tbc)