

## Mendip Hills AONB SDF Panel Meeting

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007

### Panel Members

Present:- Nicola Epps (Mendip District Council) Simon Whitmore (Mendip Society), Tony Shepherd, Simon Gardner, Rachael Clarke

Apologies: Cllr Harvey Siggs (Partnership Vice Chairman) Bob Handford (Bristol Water), Ian Chedgy, James Small (NFU)

### Mendip Hills AONB Officers present

Sarah Jackson – Manager, Jim Hardcastle – Development Officer

Item		Actions
	<p><b>Matters arising from meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007</b></p> <p>Further to Mendip Cross Trails Trust and Active Mendip receiving confirmation of Aggregate LEVY Sustainability Funding awards and requiring decision of SDF before todays meeting the following had been decided following agreement from the SDF panel via email:</p>	
1.2	<p><b>MCCT 0708-002a revised application for the High Down Way approved £11700</b> originally offered to the MCCT for Pen Hill section. This is now 8.7% of total cost. An offer letter has been sent.</p>	
2.2.0	<p><b>Active Mendip 0708-010 new application that included much of original bid Ref 0708-006 but now excluding the Burrington toilets was approved offer of £3000</b> 9.5% of total costs. Offer letter has been sent.</p>	
1.0	<p><b>Budget update</b></p>	
	<p>Funding available to award at todays meeting confirmed as:            £13562.50 unallocated + £2101 unused light pollution reduction ring fenced funding.            Total £15562.50</p>	
2.0	<p><b>Update on existing grant offers</b></p>	
2.1.0	<p><b>Fernhill Farm 0708-001</b> – EA site meeting has not taken place to confirm if scheme can progress. Simon to follow up contact provided by Andrew Wear to see if progress can be made.</p>	Simon to follow up EA contact
2.1.1	<p>As EA approval required for planning application to be submitted the planning application process has not</p>	

<p>2.1.2</p> <p>2.2.0</p> <p>2.3.0</p>	<p>begun. Concern that time is now short for obtaining planning permission and completing the work before the end of the financial year.</p> <p>It was agreed that if today's decisions on the new applications required any of the £16000 ear marked for Fernhill it would be considered to ensure the SDF funding was spent.</p> <p><b>Strawberry Line Cheddar to Wells</b> ecological survey grant has been claimed.</p> <p><b>SW Wood Fuel initiative</b> – Fernhill Farm awarded £10,000 grant from SW Wood Fuel project. There will be Fire walks programme in Spring organised across the region to promote awareness of the wood fuel scheme and showcase boilers etc. Sarah will circulate notes of SW Wood Fuel meeting held 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007 that summarise Wood Fuel project achievements to date.</p>	<p>Notes of meeting to be circulated</p>
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Applications – £15562.50 available</b></p>	
<p>3.1.1</p> <p>3.1.2</p> <p>3.1.3</p> <p>3.1.4</p>	<p><b>North Somerset Council Strawberry Line Heritage Trail – access and sculpture project 0708–009a</b> Project to improve 2km of bridleway leading to Trail and creation of sculpture and entrance to railway tunnel interpreting the geology</p> <p>Discussed at the last meeting Jim had met on site last night with Gareth Withers, North Somerset Officer. Cost of upgrading the bridleways has increased to £20,000. French drain to be installed (pipe with holes filled with gravel to weight it down). Route is to have a camber to aid drainage and although still subject to erosion should give 20+yrs wear.</p> <p>The Panel were not happy with the proposed art work as there was no indication that it had evolved through a community process or arts development work.</p> <p><b>The Panel agreed to fund 50% of the costs excluding the costs of the sculpture. The correct total figure was £37300 – £9000 sculpture= 28300 giving grant offer of £14150 subject to quotes for the surface and drainage work.</b></p>	<p>Sarah to draft letter for Chair</p>

3.2.0	<p><b>Horsewise- FWAG 0708-011</b> – Workshops to raise awareness and promote best practice advice on grassland management for horse owners. Sarah reported that the applicant had revised costs and had submitted outline agenda for workshops. The total cost of project is now £6410 with grant of £4810 being sort at 75% funding.</p>	
3.2.1	<p>Sarah also reported that the applicant since submitting is now aware that the Mendip Hills AONB together with Quantock AONB and Exmoor National Park are working on a regional seminar to discuss planning law and policy regarding equestrian development. It is hoped to attract RTPI support and regional funding for this event. It would be appropriate to then follow this regional event with county or protected landscape events for landowners.</p>	
3.2.2	<p>Suggestion was that if proposal goes ahead the handbook FWAG proposing should be produced as a pdf to be downloadable from a web site.</p>	
3.2.3	<p>Agreed that the proposal was good but it is not appropriate to run it this financial year as the SW event is unlikely to take place before the Spring.</p>	
3.2.4	<p><b>Agreed not to fund due to proposed SW regional event in Spring 2008</b> that will establish facts and clarify planning policy for the local events proposed by FWAG. AONB Service will involve FWAG in regional event and seek to fund local workshops organised by FWAG if there is not SDF in 2008/9.</p>	<p>Letter to be drafted for the Chair</p>
3.3.0	<p><b>Mendip Hills Wild Food Map 0708-012</b> Local person Adrian Boots proposes project to raise awareness of wild food. Funding is sought for initial stage to engage partners, prepare project plan, to commence work on survey methodology to then train volunteers to undertake wild food surveys.</p>	
3.3.1	<p>Sarah reported that she and Jim had met with the applicant to discuss the proposal and that it had potential to deliver part of the project proposal the AONB were planning for 2008/9 on series of wild walks. Sarah also reported that Harvey Siggs had</p>	

	expressed in his email comments concern with the idea of a map that might encourage indiscriminate access and appeared that SDF were being asked to fund the total wages of the applicant.	
3.3.2	Concerns raised about funding an individual but Sarah reassured Panel that payment will not be made until delivery of the feasibility/project report. The SDF was set up able to fund individuals and this is the first such application. Adrian Boots has regular column in Mendip Times and had attached his CV and is known to significant number of local landowners due to his role as an Advisor Conservation officer for Natural England and Defra amongst others.	
3.3.3	Concern expressed that there were too many ideas and the feasibility stage should focus on clear outcomes that might include walks leaflets, series of guided walks, awareness raising and a list of sources of local wild food that are accessible/appropriate.	
3.3.4	It was also felt that Adrian from his existing knowledge and links could undertake this work in less than the proposed 24 days as a desk top exercise. It was also agreed that if commissioning this work an appropriate fee would be £2000.	
3.3.5	Agreed that the AONB Service meets with Adrian Boots to agree the brief for the feasibility stage.	
3.3.6	<b>The Panel agreed to offer grant of £2000 considering this a reasonable cost for the feasibility. Together with the costs for the workshop and publicity the project would be viable at £4060 with SDF providing close to 50% match funding.</b>	Sarah to draft letter for the Chair
4.0	<b>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008 10.30am Charterhouse Centre</b>	