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**Sent:** 23 January 2012 15:47

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**Subject:** Mendip Hills AONB Newsletter January 2012



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## Newsletter January 2012



**Welcome to our first monthly Email Newsletter that replaces our Email Update. We welcome feedback on its content and will be encouraging others to subscribe to it.**

**New AONB visitor gateway map boards** will shortly be installed at Cheddar National Trust shop, Axbridge layby, Burrington Combe, Chew Valley Lake and Ubley layby. The new boards have a large map of the AONB with places to visit and web sites for further information. **Pull up banners** will also be provided to King John's Hunting Lodge, Axbridge, Wells and Mendip Museum and Weston Super Mare Museum.



**Visitor Map Posters** sponsored by local Butcombe Brewery will be distributed to local pubs and other places used by visitors eg farm shops, tourist information centres. If you would like to display one of the full colour A2 posters please contact the AONB Office.



**AONB Village entry signs** – as the minimum order of signs was not achieved this project will be reviewed in the new financial year. The existing 9 AONB boundary markers are being repainted, cleared of vegetation and repaired where necessary.



**Annual AONB Heritage Seminar  
Saturday 24th March 2012, Wells and  
Mendip Museum** – information and

booking forms are now available from  
Mendip Hills AONB web site

[http://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/  
events/](http://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/events/) and Wells Museum web site [http://  
wellsmuseum.org.uk/](http://wellsmuseum.org.uk/)



**Priddy Circles** – the southern most circle of this Neolithic monument of international importance was damaged last year. Now subject to a police investigation. If you witnessed the damage between May 1st and June 22nd 2011 call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. The reported damage has made the top 5 of 'most popular' stories across the world on the Past Horizons online web site. <http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/07/2011/neolithic-monument-bulldozed-flat-in-england-provokes-outrage>



**AONB Young Rangers** for their January activity assisted the Hawk and Owl Trust's Mendip Raptor Project. The group made 8 Kestrel boxes that will be installed at a site in the AONB next month. The Young Rangers also took part in a raptor survey led by Chris Sperring of the Hawk and Owl Trust observing 4 short-eared owls hunting for food over rough grassland. <http://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/young-rangers/>



The **AONB Practical Task Volunteers** have been working on a range of projects to help conserve and enhance the Mendip Hills including a series of successful dry stone walling days. The new programme of tasks has been posted the web site and includes scrub clearance and replacing stiles on the Mendip Way. Tools and instruction are provided and all are welcome.

<http://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk/volunteering/>



A significant amount of **dry stone walling** has been undertaken along the A39 near the junction with Priddy Road funded by the landowner Simon Tudway Quilter. To assist the next stage of the walling, Somerset County Council has carried out highway tree works to remove trees along the line of the wall on Priddy Road. Tracy Reynolds, local waller, will start on this new length of wall later in the year. This work has made a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of the AONB landscape.

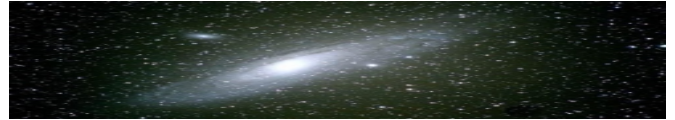


**Bristol Water** has announced its preferred site for a **new reservoir** to meet population growth in the region is at **Cheddar** to the south of the existing reservoir. The AONB Unit will be considering a response to forthcoming consultations. A key consideration will be any potential impacts on the landscape setting to the AONB. <http://www.bristolwater.co.uk/news/mainNews.asp?newsID=954>



## **2012 Star Count Week between Friday 20 January and Friday 27 January**

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the British Astronomical Association's Campaign for Dark Skies (CfDS) are asking people to count the number of stars they can see within the constellation of Orion. The results will help create a 2012 Star Count map, illustrating how light pollution is affecting the view of the night sky. The state of dark skies in the AONB is a key issue highlighted in the AONB Management Plan.



**Further information** about the Star Count Week is available via CPRE: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/2676-public-asked-to-count-stars-to-help-map-light-pollution>

Naturally beautiful and nationally protected, the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 49 AONBs in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.



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