

English Heritage



and

*Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*



## **Notes from the Historic Environment Action Plan Meeting**

**Thursday 11th June 2009 at 2 pm held at 29 Queen Square Bristol, BS1 4ND**

### **Purpose of the Meeting**

- The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 981 square kilometers of rural Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire. It covers parts of 9 different local & unitary authorities. See [www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk](http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk)
- The AONB has embarked on a two year project funded by English Heritage to create **Historic Environment Action Plans** for the AONB, running from February 2009 to January 2011. See [www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk)
- This meeting was hosted by the South West regional team of English Heritage to ensure that all local authorities are aware of the project, and are provided with an opportunity to feed into it. The meeting also aimed to look at ways the HEAP Project could inform the work that Local Authorities are already doing.
- The meeting also provided Local Authority officers to network with colleagues in adjacent authorities and counties.

### **Attendees**

Veryan Heal (Team Leader, English Heritage South West Region)  
Shane Gould (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage South West Region)  
Jen Nixon (Conservation Officer, North Dorset District Council)  
Vanessa Clarke (Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Council)  
Peter Herring (English Heritage Characterisation Team)  
Linda Nunn (Manager, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB)  
Emma Rouse (Historic Environment Action Plan Officer - Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB)

### **Apologies**

Ray Bird (Design and Conservation Team Leader, East Dorset District Council)  
Dave Clark (Heritage Conservation Team Leader, Mendip District Council)  
Neil Williamson (Environmental Design Manager, New Forest District Council)  
Claire Pinder (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council)  
Adron Duckworth (Conservation Manager, South Somerset District Council)  
Bob Croft (Historic Environment Service, Somerset County Council)

## **1. Welcome and introduction to Historic Environment Action Plans**

Shane Gould, English Heritage opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Peter Herring of English Heritage outlined the background to Historic Environment Action Plans.

- They were first discussed in reference to the Historic Environment Countryside Advisors and their work with Agri-environment Schemes. It was noted that their environmental colleagues were at an advantage due to the presence of Biodiversity Action Plans nested from a national level which provided them with a framework within which to act and provide advice. It was felt that an equivalent framework for the Historic Environment would be advantageous.
- Thinking around Historic Environment Action Plans evolved alongside the development of the practical applications of the new tool of Historic Landscape Characterisation, and the concept and possible structure of Historic Environment Action Plans was first introduced in the 2004 publication 'Using Historic Landscape Characterisation'.
- Since then a pilot project creating Historic Environment Action Plans has been undertaken on the Isle of Wight. This was adopted as SPG and feed into the AONB Management Plan. The Isle of Wight project alongside the new project for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB will be used as a basis for English Heritage to produce national guidance on Historic Environment Action Plans.

## **2. Brief Introduction to CCWWD AONB and the HEAPs projects**

Emma Rouse, Historic Environment Action Plan Project Officer, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB outlined details of the new project. The handout provided is attached as Appendix 1

- The Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) Project is a two year initiative funded by English Heritage running from February 2009 to January 2011.
- The primary aim of the project is the creation of a best practice model for the creation of Historic Environment Action Plans (HEAPs) within protected landscapes.
- The creation of HEAPs will facilitate the proactive and effective management of the historic and archaeological aspects of the AONB from a landscape perspective.
- Proposed actions can be adopted not just by the AONB team but by all the other members of the AONB partnership, and by anybody with an interest in the project area.
- Where appropriate, the proposed actions will be linked to the planning system or other established formal management structures and processes.
- Inputs into the HEAP include data from the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation, HER records, Heritage Designations, Heritage at Risk, Portable Antiquity Scheme, Research and Projects, CAAs, Parish Plans.
- HEAPs will be created for:
  - Historic Environment Landscape Character Areas covering the whole AONB

- Crosscutting themes e.g. routes and trackways or military archaeology
- Outputs would include:
  - A small number of SMART actions for the Historic Environment of the AONB with clearly identified timescales and funding mechanisms.
  - Statements linking existing projects and initiatives including practical links into planning system and community strategies etc. Engaging with strategic planning and land management in particular.
  - A series of methodological statements targeted especially at other protected landscapes
- The Steering Group is a key element for consultation and aims to have a wide cross section of individuals and organisations with an interest in the Historic Environment and the AONB. It is envisaged that this group will go on to oversee the HEAP when they are completed.

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Local Authority representatives to look at steering group list (attached as Appendix 2) and suggest other individuals who would have an interest in the project.

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Agri-environment schemes (in particular HLS) were identified as a key mechanism with which the HEAPs should engage. Especially providing clear targeting areas and engaging with joint character targeting statements. ER to have meeting with Roger Griffin, Natural England to discuss this.

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Contact needs to be made with Inspector of Ancient Monuments Hampshire (EH to provide contact)

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Possibility of using Heritage Estates as key land management contacts, EH to investigate.

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ ER to make contact with County Conservation Officers group – Vanessa to provide contact for Wiltshire

### 3. Initial feedback from the Historic Environment Sector

In order that Historic Environment Action Plans are of relevance to the work of Local Authorities participants were asked to provide an overview of current priorities, programmes, aims, or strategies. This will allow common themes or priorities to be identified. The information received so far is collated in table one below. Any additional feedback would be very welcome.

Local Authority/ Organisation	Current Priorities, Programmes, Aims and Strategies, Long term aspirations
New Forest District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CAA Management Plans</li> <li>▪ Local Distinctiveness Project to run over 3 years – characterisation exercise in built up areas alongside CAAs. Fresh guidance – aim to create quality development</li> </ul>
Mendip District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shepton Mallet THI £½ million 2008-12</li> <li>▪ Development Control Support – 300 app consultations/annum</li> <li>▪ Buildings at Risk Programme (5% reduction/annum)</li> <li>▪ Conservation Area Appraisals – Rolling programme (AONB focus? None in CCWWD)</li> </ul>

Local Authority/ Organisation	Current Priorities, Programmes, Aims and Strategies, Long term aspirations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Churchyard Monument Repair Grants</li> <li>▪ Local Listing Project</li> <li>▪ Heritage Matters?</li> </ul> <p>Corporate Plan Entries  Values – To be good custodians of our Environment  Goals – Enhancing Mendip as a Place to Live  Objective – Maintain and enhance Mendip's built and natural environment  Narrative – As a Council we want to ensure that our natural environment, our public spaces and the distinctive character and quality of the district continues to be regarded as special. We will work with our partners to maintain a high quality environment that we can be proud of. We will take a leading role in managing the way in which our natural and historical landscapes are used</p>
East Dorset District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Priorities - listed buildings, ancient monuments (with CC) and CAAs</li> <li>▪ Would like ideally like to see Local list of buildings in LDF – would require a four year time period – no commitment as yet to undertake</li> <li>▪ Countryside Design Statement – SPG – whole district as a whole</li> <li>▪ Encouraging Parishes to undertake Village Design Statements – build on SPG – EDDC give guidance on how fit into LDF</li> </ul>
Dorset County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long term aspirations</li> <li>▪ Extending Historic Towns project characterisation to smaller places</li> <li>▪ Extending NMP</li> <li>▪ Parish Champions (time restrictions) – build on impetus of Winterbourne project – parish liaison officer scheme</li> <li>▪ Dorset lacks enhanced buildings record and a volunteer vernacular building group. Ideally would like to improve records – identify priorities for further recording – documentary research &amp; social history</li> </ul>
Wiltshire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long term aspirations</li> <li>▪ Remedy current patchy buildings coverage in HER – identify local buildings of interest</li> <li>▪ Remedy current patchy knowledge of military sites</li> <li>▪ Extensive Urban Surveys to be made available via ADS</li> <li>▪ Wiltshire Buildings Record – Farmstead Characterisation Project – using volunteer basis</li> <li>▪ Move SMR onto new system – upgrade GIS capability</li> <li>▪ Develop targeting for HLS</li> </ul>
North Dorset District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing CAAs to be adopted</li> <li>▪ Identifying Article 4s in conservation areas using local civic societies to do further survey</li> <li>▪ Buildings at Risk Project – directory catalogued – identify priorities</li> <li>▪ Long term aspirations to identify farmsteads – assessments of area complexes and buildings – identify elements critical for local character.</li> </ul>
English Heritage (South West team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing work with SAMs</li> <li>▪ Conservation Areas at Risk – launch 15<sup>th</sup> June with regional stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Promoting Parks and Gardens at Risk Register</li> <li>▪ Looking at delivery through agri-environment schemes – HLS, working with Natural England to target types.</li> </ul>

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Input from other Local Authorities to be sought

#### **4. Draft Guidance Note**

Peter Herring provided an initial draft copy of the Historic Environment Action Plan Guidance Note and would welcome any comments on this.

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Comments on the draft Guidance Note to be sent to Peter Herring  
Peter.Herring@english-heritage.org.uk

#### **5. Next Steps**

The group felt that providing feedback and contributing to discussion as a sector group was very beneficial. It also provided an opportunity for local authority officers to meet and discuss current work and priorities.

**ACTION ARISING** ⇒ Group to meet again at end of year in one of towns adjacent to the AONB as a “technical group” for the HEAP project, to look at issues of especial relevance to the local authorities. PH and ER to look at HEAP timetable and set a date. Invitations will be sent to all relevant officers along with the notes of this meeting.

**Enc.**

**Appendix 1 - CCWWD AONB HEAP Handout**

**Appendix 2 – HEAP Project list of Steering group members and wider consultees**