

## AONB Partnership update

The Partnership Committee met on Wednesday March 16th at Draycott Village Hall. A summary of the 2011-2012 key achievements was presented. These included:

### **The Black Down and Burrington Ham Access management and interpretation project work:**

- An archaeological management plan was produced
- A bid was submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund
- Boulders and bollards were installed at entrances to prevent illegal vehicle access
- Stone pitching work to protect Beacon Batch Bronze Age barrow on which the trig point stands
- Signs are to be installed by the end of March clarifying footpaths and bridleways and to provide 'gateways' to the area.

**Avon Wildlife Trust's Avon's Wildflower Grasslands project and Somerset Wildlife Trust's Living Landscape project – rebuilding biodiversity** with applications submitted for agri-environment schemes and habitats surveyed.

**The AONB Young Ranger scheme was successfully delivered.** A review of the scheme identified it as one of the best examples of excellence.

**AONB Volunteer hours** recorded totalled 1,379 hours. Work undertaken by the **AONB Planning Liaison Officer** included 23 applications recorded for monitoring purposes, 12 applications for major or significant development commented on and nine national and 20 local consultations responded to. The officer also represented the AONB at various meetings including National Grid and events on wind energy, low carbon projects and green infrastructure.

North Somerset Council's decision to withdraw 100% funding from the Partnership was considered at length. It was acknowledged that the other four local authority partners have reduced their contributions but by continuing to make a contribution they have enabled the AONB Partnership to apply for the full Defra allocation of £181,052 available to the Mendip Hills AONB.

NSC have confirmed that although they are unable to contribute to the Partnership they will be able to make a contribution of £10,000 to the Black Down and Burrington Ham project.

**Parish council support 2011-12** – contributions totalling £1,530 were reported: Cheddar £500 (TBC), Compton Martin £100 (for Young Rangers), Churchill £100, Loxton £100, Rodney Stoke £50, Ubley £250 and Wells £430 (for Young Rangers).

**Sustainable Development Fund** grants totalling £54032 were awarded to 13 projects. Projects included Osprey Outdoors and Music on Mendip.

**Osprey Outdoors** is a local, not-for-profit, community interest company working with groups across Somerset. One of their projects is a weekly Conservation Volunteering Day, for a group who meet on Mondays at three pick-up points - Weston-super-Mare, Worle and Banwell.

They work with the National Trust, the Somerset Wildlife Trust, the Avon Wildlife Trust and Fernhill Farm in Compton Martin, carrying out a variety of conservation tasks. With the aid of funding from the Mendip Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund they have been working all winter.

They have planted hedges and trees, and have learned how to lay a hedge with the assistance of some local National Trust volunteers. They have also cleared areas of scrub making it accessible for grazing.

They would love to see more people involved with this group and have room in the bus if you want to join them. If you are interested in finding out more, please call 07778 913192, or email [mail@osprey-outdoors.co.uk](mailto:mail@osprey-outdoors.co.uk).

**Music on Mendip, May 8th at Dolebury Warren, 12- 4pm:** Don headphones and with a small computer tucked into your pocket wander the high hilltop and Iron Age fort of Dolebury Warren in the Mendip Hills and enjoy a unique musical experience. The music has been composed by Churchill Community School students working with sound artist Duncan Speakman.

You will be able to borrow headphones and handheld computer on the day (you will need driving license or bank card that can be used as ID and deposit). Park at Churchill School and take the mini-bus. Full information about the project on [www.localjourneys.org.uk/mom](http://www.localjourneys.org.uk/mom)

**SDF funding totalling £37,000 will be available in 2011-12.** The maximum grant will be £5000, except for exceptional circumstances.

**Bristol College students bagging stone for stone pitching on Beacon Batch, Black Down**



**Beacon Batch stone pitching**



The Mendip Hills AONB Unit is the voice of the protected landscape, working with landowners and the local community to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. [www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.mendiphillsaonb.org.uk)  
01761 462338. e-mail: [mendiphills@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:mendiphills@somerset.gov.uk)