

# Kent Downs Bulletin

Issue 2

June 2003

News and Updates from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Express your views



**The draft Kent Downs Management Plan and Action Plan 2004-2009 is now available and out for consultation. The new AONB management plan represents a great opportunity to conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB – we need your help to make sure we make the most of this opportunity.**

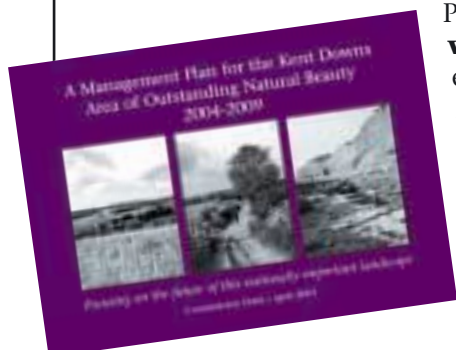
The draft Plan has been prepared in response to new statutory duties within the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. The Act requires local authorities to publish a management plan setting out their policies for the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, and how each local authority will achieve this. 'Relevant authorities', namely all statutory undertakers, government departments and public bodies also have to demonstrate a new duty of regard for the AONB in their actions and decision-making.

Both draft plans have been prepared in discussion with many organisations and individuals. This includes important feedback from the questionnaire from readers of our Orchid newspaper, as well as workshops and meetings with public bodies, parish councils, farmers and landowners, our JAC and Executive.

We are seeking views and comments on both plans through the consultation process. The draft Management Plan and Action

Plan is available on our website: **[www.kentdowns.org.uk](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk)** as is an electronic consultation feedback form. Alternatively, contact us for electronic or paper copies by emailing **[kentdowns@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentdowns@kent.gov.uk)** or telephoning **01622 221522**.

**All comments need to be received by Monday June 30th 2003.**



## Mid Kent Downs Project

A variety of positive work has taken place, including chalk-grassland restoration in Painters Forstal, restoration of an old cherry orchard in Eastling, and completion of fencing and hedging to protect the SSSI at Boxley Warren. There were a number of additional hedging projects including another kilometre along the Pilgrims Way in Hollingbourne; making a total of over 4km here since 2001! The project also carried out a colourful community consultation in Selling attended by over 70 people – the results of which will contribute to a new management plan for Perry Wood in the parish. Good news in Lenham as work started on the first wildlife site recently acquired by the 'Heaths Countryside Corridor Project'. Also, the 'Orchards Heritage Project' has been gathering



steam with a community 'Blossom Day' in Lynsted. There's much more to come including a consultation in Hollingbourne on 14th June and another volunteer litter-picking task at Boxley Warren on 28th June, followed by another suite of landscape conservation projects later in the year.

**[www.kentdowns.org.uk](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk)**

## Farm Walks

Another programme of Farm Walks will be taking place this year. These walks are led by the farmer and have proven to be extremely popular. They provide an opportunity to understand the important role played by farming on the landscape of the Kent Downs AONB. The walks also demonstrate the variety of farming in the AONB – including organic production, livestock, arable, Countryside Stewardship, woodland, cherry and apple orchards. Some of the walks even offer local produce sampling! For more details contact Frances on 01622 221507.

### Bilting Grange Farm

Bilting, nr Ashford  
6 June, 5pm

### Court Farm

Upper Halling  
7 June, 3pm

### Wye Downs

Nr Wye  
13 June, 5pm

### Pent Farm

Postling, nr Hythe  
14 June, 5pm

### Dunn Street Farm

Westwell, Nr Ashford  
20 June, 5pm

### Hollingbourne Farm

Nr Hollingbourne  
22 June, 3pm

### Little Olantigh Farm

nr Wye, Ashford  
27 June, 5pm

### Torry Hill Farm

Frinted, nr Sittingbourne  
29 June, 4pm



## INTERREG funded project starts – Major new funding for the Kent Downs AONB

Over the next two years the 'Transmanche Integrated Landscape Project' will be spending £750,000 on conserving, enhancing and improving access to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and surrounding areas. Projects that have been supported so far include: Village Design Statements, Landscape Conservation Schemes, Urban Fringe Enhancement – "Kent Downs Around Towns" Programme, The Farm Walks Programme and Chalk Grassland and woodland site management schemes.

The Transmanche Integrated Landscape Project is a partnership project between the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Kentish Stour Countryside Project, the White Cliffs Countryside Project, and two French partners, namely the Parc Naturel Régional des Caps et Marais d'Opale and the Office National des Forêts. The project is supported by the European Regional Development Fund Interreg IIIa programme, the Countryside Agency, Kent County Council, and all other project partners.

## Funding for 'Green' Tourism

The Kent Downs has been successful with two funding applications to develop sustainable tourism. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is supporting a project on the eastern end of the AONB. £28,500 will go towards two studies which will research the opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the AONB and support local businesses. Both research projects aim to prepare practical sustainable tourism projects that can be delivered on the ground.

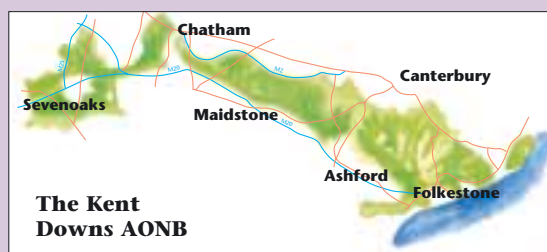
A further £15,550 from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) will be available for training of tourism businesses, raising awareness of sustainable practices, encouraging businesses to work together to support the local economy and for targeted promotion of the AONB.

## HLF Project Planning Grant Success

We have been successful in our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for support to develop a 'Landscape Partnership Scheme' application. The HLF have agreed funding for £31,790 and the Countryside Agency and English Nature have matched this. The Project Planning grant will be used to fund an Officer who will work up a detailed application – this work is likely to take a year. We hope to develop a significant bid, which will focus on conserving and enhancing the Chalk Downland element of the Kent Downs landscape and improving access to it.

### What is an AONB?

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are designated by the Government to conserve and enhance irreplaceable areas of precious countryside. There are 41 AONBs in England and Wales. The Kent Downs was designated an AONB in 1968 and covers about a quarter of Kent from the White Cliffs of Dover to the London and Surrey border.



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The Kent Downs Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) is an alliance of 21 national and local organisations which co-ordinates policy and action to conserve the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**Members – County and Unitary Councils** Kent, Medway and London Borough of Bromley. **District and Borough Councils** Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Swale and Tonbridge & Malling.

**Countryside Agency, Country Land and Business Association, Environment Agency, English Nature, Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, National Farmers Union, Kent Rural Community Council, Kent Association of Parish Councils.**



This project is part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

