

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 11 September 2008

title: Bowland Tourism Environment Fund Project Update

submitted by: Director of Development

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1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Members on the range of projects which have been supported through the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund.

1.2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCILS AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES:

- Council Ambitions: Projects supported through this fund contribute towards protecting and enhancing the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Community Objectives: Projects supported through this scheme will help to improve access to the countryside and will help to maintain, protect and enhance all natural and built features that contribute to the quality of the environment.
- Corporate Priorities: Projects supported through the scheme will contribute towards conserving the countryside and supporting our rural communities.
- Other: The Bowland Tourism Environment Fund supports the work of the Forest Of Bowland AONB team.

2.0 INFORMATION

2.1 The Bowland Tourism Environment Fund was established in 2000 to encourage tourism businesses, visitors, local communities and groups to work together in caring for the Forest of Bowland landscape.

2.2 The fund is available thanks to visitor donations and contributions from tourism businesses made to the scheme from across the Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These donations are made via a "pin badge" scheme, which asks for donations of £1 to the scheme in exchange for a Forest of Bowland postcard and pin badge and a chance to win a 1 or 2 night stay in a Ribble Valley Hotel or Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

2.3 Over 40 businesses including hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, post offices, restaurants and cafes take part in the scheme providing postcards and pin badges to visitors in return for a donation to the scheme.

2.4 The partnership involves The Forest of Bowland AONB Team, Ribble Valley Borough

Council, Lancaster City Council, Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board, Pendle Borough Council, Wyre Borough Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, The Environment Agency and Lancashire County Council. Ribble Valley Borough Council are the accountable body for the funding received and provide all administration in relation to collection and payment of the monies.

- 2.5 The partnership meets on a quarterly basis and the administration and organisation of the meetings is carried out by the Forest Of Bowland AONB Team at Lancashire County Council. A grant panel made up of representatives from Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board, The Forest of Bowland AONB Team and a representative from the relevant district tourism or regeneration departments assess the applications for eligibility and fit and approve or refuse the application as appropriate.
- 2.6 Public, private, voluntary, individuals, businesses or community groups can apply for funding through the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund and all projects must be carried out within the Forest of Bowland AONB itself or bring clear benefits to the AONB if located within a 2 kilometre radius.
- 2.7 Up to 100% grant funding is available for suitable projects up to a maximum of £500.
- 2.8 Projects applying to the fund must achieve at least 3 of the following objectives:
 - Demonstrate commitment to the project by the way of match funding, maintenance, in kind contributions or fundraising.
 - Improve the appearance of tourism, heritage and community facilities
 - Help improve, conserve and protect important landscapes and habitats in the Forest Of Bowland
 - Providing information for visitors about Forest of Bowland special qualities and facilities in the area
 - Improve access for all sectors of the community
 - Maintain the landscape and access to it to improve visitor enjoyment
 - Improve and promote the built and cultural heritage of the area
- 2.9 The scheme is promoted through the Ribble Valley Borough Council Website, The Forest Of Bowland AONB website, Tourist Information Centres and through Parish Councils and Community Groups in the Forest of Bowland.
- 2.10 The partnership has recently looked into the possibility of expanding the scheme further to develop a visitor payback scheme similar to those operating in the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District. This would increase the amount of funding coming into the scheme and therefore allow for more projects to be developed. Discussions are ongoing around this issue.

3.0 PROJECTS ASSISTED

- 3.1 Since November 2006 the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund has supported the following projects:
- 3.2 **Sabden War Memorial - £500** was awarded to Sabden War Memorial Trust towards the cost of a war memorial in Sabden Village. The war memorial will provide a lasting monument to the 72 village men who died in conflict. It will also provide a historic focal point in the village for the benefit of residents and visitors to the Forest of Bowland AONB.

- 3.3 **Interpretation Boards in Sabden - £500** was awarded to Sabden Parish Council for two interpretation boards to be sited in appropriate places in the village of Sabden to help illustrate the history of the village and to point out interesting focal points in the village and the surrounding area. This project developed following a conservation area appraisal carried out by Ribble Valley Borough Council, which highlighted the lack of information on the history of the village.
- 3.4 **Knowle Green Village Hall - £500** was awarded to Knowle Green Village Hall Committee towards the cost of Knowle Green Open Gardens Festival. As well as gardens to visit, visitors to Knowle Green during the festival could enjoy the exhibition of local history in the village church and could also look and buy paintings by the local arts group. The festival helped to attract visitors to the Forest Of Bowland.
- 3.5 **Brennands Endowed Primary School - £400** was awarded to Brennands Endowed Primary School for an interpretation board, which details the schools origins and history and includes old photographs and old maps of the village. The building is always of great interest to visitors to Slaidburn and the board now helps to answers some of the frequently asked questions which visitors to the village have.
- 3.6 **Chipping War Memorial - £500** was awarded to Bowland with Leagram Parish Council towards the renovation of Chipping War Memorial.
- 3.7 **Longridge Heritage Trails - £500** was awarded to The Longridge Partnership towards the production of the Longridge Heritage Trail Leaflets.
- 3.8 **Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team - £500** was awarded to Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team for the printing of Safe Rambling Leaflets.
- 3.9 **Clitheroe Walks - £500** was awarded to Clitheroe The Future for the design and printing of The Clitheroe Walks Leaflets.
- 3.10 **Dalehead Church, Gisburn Forest - £495** was awarded to Dalehead Church to produce a leaflet for visitors to the Forest of Bowland highlighting some of the 130 plant species that grow within the Biological Heritage Site at the church.
- 3.11 **Chipping Parish Council - £500** was awarded to Chipping Parish Council for the erection of a new visitor information board in the village, which will provide a permanent display area for the Chipping Village Walk leaflet. The board will also contain information about local businesses and places of interest in Chipping based on the Welcome to Chipping leaflet produced by the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- 3.12 **Lancashire Cheese Trails - £500** was awarded for the production of 3 cheese trails for Lancashire which helped to create attractive walks for tourists and locals and also helped to promote distinctive local produce “ Lancashire Cheese”
- 3.13 **Goldshaw Booth Parish Council - £500** was awarded to Goldshaw Booth Parish Council to enable them to carry out improvements in Newchurch-in-Pendle. This included the refurbishment of an overgrown and unkempt site with an inappropriate modern lamp post to create a more sensitive area with new signs, improved sight lines and a new Victorian lantern which is more in keeping with the area.
- 3.14 **Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council - £500** was awarded to Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council towards the cost of producing a Caton-with-Littledale village walks leaflets. The leaflet contains four circular walks which draw attention to the wide

range of special birds that can be seen along the route including the rare hen harrier which is the symbol of the Forest of Bowland.

- 3.15 **Dry Stone Walling - £310.80** was awarded to BTCV training to provide guidance and instruction to a group of 12 volunteers on the techniques for dismantling, repairing and rebuilding a senescent dry stone wall to its original dimensions. This project was carried out in Calder Vale in the Forest of Bowland.
- 3.16 **Bleasdale Parish Hall - £500** was awarded to Bleasdale Parish Hall Committee to enable them to employ a local environmental artist to re-lay the existing hawthorn boundary hedge to reinvigorate the neglected hedge and to instruct members of the community on hedgerow maintenance. The whole community including children through community workshops were also involved in creating a hand carved rustic seat for outside the village hall.
- 3.17 **Barley Parish Council - £466** was awarded to Barley Parish Council towards the cost of repair and refurbishment to a number of village benches, the laying of cobbled areas for new finger posts, plantation of a selection of cultivated and indigenous plants which provided colour in the village and the purchase of 12 bird boxes to attract wild birds to nest in the area.
- 3.18 **Wennington Community Project - £295** was awarded to Wennington Parish Council towards the cost of new benches and the upgrading of two local paths and roadside walks in Wennington village.
- 3.19 **North Lancashire Bridleway - £500** was awarded towards the cost of a leaflet and map for Phase 1 of the North Lancashire Bridleway. The leaflet provides information on the Forest of Bowland, accommodation along the route for horse and rider and also gives information on the Birds of Bowland that can be seen along the route.

4.0 Pipeline Projects

- 4.1 **Bat Box Scheme - £500** towards the cost of creating 4 new bat box schemes as roost sites for regionally important bat species in and around the Ribble Valley. This project is being carried out by The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside.
- 4.2 **Guided and Self Guided Walks Programme - £500** towards the cost of a walks programme supporting the use of Bowland Transit Services and other bus services in the Forest of Bowland. This project is being carried out by the Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for Melissa Watts, extension 4424