

## Agenda Item 13

**Committee:** High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee  
**Date:** 11th March 2011  
**Title of Report:** High Weald AONB Unit - Staffing Update  
**By:** High Weald AONB Director

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Joint Advisory Committee is recommended to note the report.**

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#### 1.0 Volunteers

1.1 Members will be aware that the High Weald AONB Unit welcomes interest from anyone who would like to volunteer their skills and experience to benefit the AONB. The AONB Unit has a good track record attracting volunteers to undertake a variety of work that the AONB Unit staff are unable to do due to constraints on time and/or financial resources.

1.2 Currently the AONB Unit is particularly fortunate to have secured volunteer assistance, expertise and guidance from:

- A group of local residents from Rolvenden Parish (Kent county, Ashford District), who have helped to test the initial historic routeway survey methodology developed by the AONB Unit. The residents' valued contribution has allowed a refinement of the methodology and has increased the understanding of settlement development in the High Weald and the evolution of the rights of way network in Rolvenden parish. Currently the residents are continuing to survey all the historic routeways within the parish.
- Residents from two other parishes (Lamberhurst - Kent county and Tunbridge Wells Borough and Danehill & Chelwood Gate – East Sussex county and Wealden District) have recently shown a keen interest in undertaking the same survey in their own parishes and will soon be attending a training day designed and led by the AONB Unit.
- Dr Bill Vorley, Principal Researcher of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has recently contacted the AONB Unit offering to volunteer for two months over the summer as part of a sabbatical programme run by IIED.

The IIED is an independent international research organization widely recognized as leading specialists in sustainable development. Dr Vorley lives at Tonbridge and has a particular knowledge and experience of land use, resource use, farmer organization and marketing, and connecting residents with farming and landscapes. He is a Board member of Sustain, the sustainable food and farming alliance and a former programme director of the Institute for Agriculture and

Trade Policy. A meeting to define and agree areas of work has been set up for mid-March.

- Lucie Kubalikova, currently studying for a Ph.D in Physical Geography at Masaryk University, Czech Republic has been successful winning a place to study abroad for three months. Lucie has chosen the High Weald for her studies and will be based at Flimwell during the summer working on increasing the understanding of the High Weald's rich geological heritage. Her studies will include, among other things, an analysis of the threats and risks to the geology of the area, proposals for geology-based activities and lessons for the use of local schools and adult colleges, and proposals for the appropriate management of vulnerable geological features such as sandstone outcrops.

## **2.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report and welcome the support offered by the volunteers to the High Weald AONB Unit.

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