

Community Governance Group  
Somerset County Council  
County Hall  
Taunton, TA1 4DY



# **QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Friday 24 July 2009**

at

**2.15pm**

in the

**Council Chamber, West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton**

To: The Members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

Julian Gale  
Group Manager, Community Governance  
17 July, 2009

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Norman Tottle (Community Governance) on tel (01823) 355571, fax (01823) 355529 or email. [natottle@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:natottle@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on the last page.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## AGENDA

### Agenda Item No.

1. **Appointment of Chairman** – to be appointed from the County Council representatives.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Appointment of Vice- Chairman** – to be appointed from the Taunton Deane Borough Council representatives.
4. **Declarations of Interest** – an opportunity for members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting.
5. **Accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2009**  
(copy appended ) **and to consider any matters arising.**
6. **Public Question Time** – The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting, or present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit.
7. **Report of the AONB Manager ( Paper A –attached).**
8. **Sustainable Development Fund Report ( Paper B- attached)**
9. **Report of the Rangers ( Paper C –attached)**
10. **Dates for JAC meetings 2009/10** – To agree dates for JAC meetings for the next 12 months
11. **Any Other Business of Urgency.**

**Note** : Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service, The Quantock Office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ. Tel No 01823 451884 or e-mail : [quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk)

## THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

### 1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Norman Tottle – tel: (01823) 355571, fax (01823) 355529 or email. natottle@somerset.gov.uk

### 2. Notes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Norman Tottle – tel: (01823) 355571, fax (01823) 355529 or email natottle@somerset.gov.uk

### 3. Public Question Time

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about **any matter on the Committee's agenda**. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. **The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total.**

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Norman Tottle, the Committee Administrator, **before the meeting**.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate.

The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.

**Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.**

### 4. Substitutions

Committee members are able to appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.

(24 April, 2009)

## **QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held in the Crowcombe Hall, Crowcombe on Friday 24 April 2009 at 2.15pm.

### **Present**

Somerset County Council	Mr A H Trollope-Bellew ( Chairman ) Mr J Edney ( Sub for Brig C Wolverson)
Taunton Deane Borough Council	Mr N Stuart-Thorn
West Somerset Council	Mr C Morgan ( Vice-Chairman)
Parish Representatives	Mr T Ayre Mr J Edwards Mrs C Parsons
CLBA	Mr H Warmington
Friends of Quantock	Mrs L Kelly
Somerset Local Access Forum	Mr R Conway

### **Also Present**

Mrs J Sansom (WQPC), Mr J Clarke ( Kingston St Mary PC), Dr P Radford ( Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society), Mr D Venner ( Bicknoller PC), Ms J Burton (SDC-Officer) and Ms N Penn ( Field Studies Council, Nettlecombe Court).

Apologies were received from, Brig C Wolverson (SCC), Dr C Guerrier (TDBC), Mr D Joslin (SDC), Mr A Bradford (SDC), Mr J Swayne (SDC), Mr T Taylor (WSC), Mr H Davies (WSC), Mr S Marston ( Natural England), Mr N Salter ( Forestry Commission), Mrs D Salvidge (QCA), Mr B James (SCC-Officer) Ms A Lamplough ( WSC- Officer), Mr J Luttrell, Mr D Edwards and Mr K Rogers.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

131. The Chairman and Mr Warmington declared personal interests as landowners in agenda item 7 – the SDF report.

## **MINUTES**

132. (1) The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

### **Matters arising**

#### **Minute 125 (2) – Quantock Hills Tick Project**

(2) It was reported that a project team had been set up to liaise with the PCT.

#### **Minute 125 (3) – Rights of Way- Restricted Byways**

(3) Tim Russell reported that a raised Ranger profile on bank holidays and weekends had some effect on illegal vehicular use of restricted byways on Buncombe Hill. The Parish Council were happy with the action taken. There would be some boosting of patrols during the summer.

### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

133. There were no public questions.

### **REPORT OF THE AONB MANAGER**

134. (1) The Report of the AONB Manager was received and considered by the JAC. The report contained items on the Management Plan Review, Officers Working Group and Finance issues and the AONB Service.

#### **Management Plan Review**

(2) The JAC noted that the Management Plan 2009-14 had been adopted by the core partners and that Natural England had formally accepted the plan and had provided some comments which were contained in a letter to the Chairman which was appended to the report.

#### **OWG and Finance**

(3) The JAC noted the key action points from the meeting of the Officers Working Group meeting held on 3 April including the potential visit by the Chief Executive of

Natural England to the Quantocks on 24/25 June. The final core funding contributions had been confirmed at the meeting including the reduced contributions from Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane and the effects these reductions would have on the AONB Service. A strong case needed to be made for reinstatement of the full funding contributions in time for the next funding round. West Somerset would be lobbying the other Districts to encourage reinstatement of full contributions and the Chairman said that he would again speak to Mrs Dawn Hill concerning the reinstatement of Sedgemoor's full contribution.

## **AONB Service**

(4) Emma Jane Preece, Landscape Planning Officer, had returned to work after maternity leave. The Spring Update newsletter and the Events Programme had been circulated with the papers for this meeting. Mr Ayre asked if campsites were on the distribution list for receipt of the events programme and a response was given that campsites, tourist information centres and libraries were included. The newsletter also went to local schools. Mr Morgan had attended the regional National Association of AONBs meeting in Bristol on behalf of the Chairman and had found it a very useful and interesting meeting.

(5) The JAC noted the progress with the Management Plan; supported the core funding issues contained in paragraph 2.2 of the report; and noted remaining items in the report.

## **REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

135. (1) The JAC considered and noted the report of the Development Officer for the period November 2008 to March 2009. In particular the JAC noted the problems with the SAP finance system and that further information was being provided for the woodfuel INTERREG IV bid which would delay the project start date if the bid was successful. In addition a meeting had been held with Tarmac, the owners of Triscombe Quarry, regarding future uses of the site.

(2) Mrs Sanson (WQPC) referred to complaints being received about the wetness of the Quantock Greenway in the vicinity of the Rectory at West Quantoxhead. Tim Russell said it was probably caused by a spring near the A39, but this would be looked into. Questions were also asked about external funding and the project to develop off-road cycling including a survey of current provision and to develop information for off-road cyclists.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND REPORT**

136. (1) The JAC noted the report on the Sustainable Development Fund including the projects funded during 2008/9 and the £60,000 funding to be allocated for 2009/10

(2) Questions were asked about the Charcoal for Dormice project and the amount of swaling undertaken during March - 16 burns totalling about 5 acres.

## **PLANNING REPORT**

137. (1) The JAC considered and noted the planning report following the return to work of the Emma-Jane Preece, Landscape Planning Officer. The recommendations contained in her 2007 report that looked at the future role of the Quantock Hills AONB in the planning process were listed in the Table contained in the report with a progress indicator. The report also outlined the development of two key pieces of work that were being developed :- Revising the Quantock Hills Landscape Character Assessment and the preparation of a Draft Planning Protocol.

(2) Mr J Edwards asked a question about the use of polythene sheeting and tunnels in the horticultural industry and the glare effects of this in the countryside and whether there were any planning controls that could be used. Mr Warmington said that with many insecticides now banned this was now used as a barrier against insects attacking crops. These were not permanent structures so there was no mechanism for control, but tinting the plastic was suggested to eliminate the glare effect. Mr Conway asked a question about injurious effects from industrial developers and the likely effects the expansion of Bristol Airport would have on the Quantock Hills. Chris Edwards said there was a consultation process and any increase in flights over the Hills should be opposed. Mr J Edwards also asked about the status of Village Design Statements in the planning process bearing in mind that the AONB Service had made a positive contribution to the creation and publication of these documents by communities in the Quantocks. Chris Edwards said that this would be looked at in the Planning Protocol in the context of design guidance.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

138. (1) Mr Ayre referred to car parking issues in Holford particularly the car park at Woodlands. Tim Russell responded on these issues.

(2) Mr Edney referred to recent anti-social behaviour at Ramscombe and the effect of this on Ben Bartlett and his farm as he appears to bear the brunt of this behaviour. It was noted that meetings with the FC had taken place about the lockable gate and its best location. Mr Edney asked that Mr Bartlett be kept informed as he felt "out of the loop".

(3) The next meeting of the JAC would be on Friday 24 July at 2.15pm.

( The meeting closed at 4.00 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

Qhjac.mins.24 April 2008

## REPORT OF THE AONB MANAGER

### **1 Management Plan Review and Delivery**

**1.1** The published Quantock Hills Management Plan 2009 -14 is included with the papers for this meeting, ensuring that the whole of our wider partnership has a hard copy. Inevitably there will be cases where this doubles up with a previously received copy, and we would be pleased to have any surplus copies back as we have kept the print run small for financial reasons. The plan is also available to download as a PDF from our website ([www.quantockhills.com](http://www.quantockhills.com)), and can also be viewed in a “flipbook” format which is very user-friendly.

**1.2** The draft Delivery Plan for consultation has now been completed and is being sent to potential partner organisations for comment on their involvement. This more detailed signing-up to Action Points recognises that we have produced a Management Plan for the Quantock Hills, rather than for the AONB Service, and that implementation of the plan will rely on partnerships and the work of others alongside our own activities.

**1.3** Work has begun on the Management Plan broadsheet – a type of “plan on a page”, but larger. The broadsheet will be A2 size, folded to A4, and will feature a large map of the AONB, along with Action Points, the vision and other key information. Communications Officer Georgie Grant is working on this as a priority before going on maternity leave.

### **2 Officers Working Group (OWG)**

**2.1** At the recent OWG meeting of Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July attendees were: Chris Edwards (AONB), Ian Porter (AONB), Jane Lillis (AONB), Barry James (SCC), Janette Burton (SDC), Ian Clark (TDBC) and Steve Marston (NE). Apologies were received from Angela Lamplough (WSC) and Anthony Trollope-Bellew (JAC).

**2.2** The latest draft of the Memorandum of Understanding was provided with the meeting papers. A number of amendments were agreed, however a critical clause about how partners

address redundancy payments (should they arise) awaits a Natural England policy decision before detailed discussion.

- 2.3** An AONB Service activity report was circulated addressing current staffing, finance, project, SDF and website activity. Most items are addressed elsewhere in this report or in the Development Officer's separate SDF update. Current finances are on track for the end of the first quarter, although new financial systems at Somerset County Council are presenting some monitoring difficulties. The AONB website is currently being revamped to be more usable and attractive to the public, while continuing to provide a valuable information resource for researchers, teachers and partner organisations. The new-look site should go live in late autumn.
- 2.4** The OWG discussed the consultation Delivery Plan and ongoing development of the 3-year rolling Project Plan. Finally the group was informed that the post-election County Council members on the JAC are Anthony Trollope-Bellew, John Edney and John Wilkins, their three wards geographically covering the AONB.

### **3 AONB Service**

- 3.1** Jane Lillis worked her last day as Support Officer for the AONB Service a week ago. Jane has left us to work full-time for the Exmoor Pony Centre at Dulverton, her contribution and support will be sorely missed at Fyne Court. The part-time (22 hours/week) post is being amended slightly to Support Assistant and the recruitment process is underway.
- 3.2** The new post of Volunteer Co-ordinator is currently being evaluated prior to recruitment for a 12 month period. This new post is intended to further enhance the AONB Service contribution to the Quantock Conservation Volunteers, managed jointly with the National Trust. The further development of already highly significant voluntary contributions to our "on the ground" work is intended to help compensate for the loss of a full-time Ranger post last year.
- 3.3** During this quarter the AONB Service took a stand at the Bath and West Show, promoting the partnership and our core messages to the visiting public. The team ran a

Quantock bats competition entered by more than 500 young visitors to the show. Three members of the team attended the annual AONB Conference held this year in Colerane Northern Ireland. As ever the networking and training opportunities were valuable and the site visits were particularly memorable.

- 3.4** Our Annual Report for the last financial year has been included with the papers for this meeting. We hope this is of interest and value to the JAC and wider partnership as a record of the variety, quality and quantity of work achieved under your guidance in this AONB.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

##### **4.1 The JAC is recommended to:**

- **Support the Delivery Plan consultation process**
- **Note the staff changes described in section 3**

CHRIS EDWARDS  
QUANTOCK HILLS AONB MANAGER  
July 2009

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

From: Iain Porter, Development Officer

24 July 2009

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND REPORT

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### 1. SDF 2009 / 10

- a. The AONB Service applied to Natural England for a combined grant for the 2009 / 10 year. This combined grant is for Core, Project and SDF budgets. Under this combined grant £60,000 has been allocated for SDF projects.
- b. To date a small number of applications have come in (Table 1). This is much lower than at similar times in previous years where we have usually had 15-20 applications in by the end of July. Promotional material went out in April as has occurred in previous years. We are going to send out further promotional material to the media and local parishes / community groups in the near future.
- c. The SDF Panel. Ann Guilding, Rural Enterprise Gateway went on maternity leave during March. Jane Birch has agreed to sit on the panel. You may remember that Jane sat on the panel for the first 2 years.
- d. Currently the SDF panel is made up of three members, JAC Vice-Chair (tbc at meeting), Jane Birch (representing business interests) and Mark Anderson (representing biodiversity). The panel meets once or twice a year and other communication is via e-mail or post. This has kept the time commitment to a minimum for panel members and means that applications can be decided quickly without having to wait for the next panel meeting. This panel has worked well over the last 3 years and I am keen to keep the same model for the future.

**Table 1:** Quantock Hills SDF applications 2009 / 10.

Ref	Title	Project Cost	Grant	Outcome
QH/09/01	Sustainable Showers	£9,135	£4,568 (50%)	Accept
QH/09/02	Woodland Play Centre Capital Investment	£35,480	£10,000 (28%)	Tbc
QH/09/03	Outdoor Play Website	£7,050	£500 (7%)	Accept
QH/09/03	Beech Hedgebank Restoration	£4,700	£3,525 (75%)	tbc

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### RECOMMENDATION:

1. The JAC notes the report.
2. The JAC to promote the SDF at suitable opportunities.
3. The JAC appoint the JAC vice-chair to the panel.

## Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

### RANGERS' REPORT

24<sup>th</sup> July 2009

#### 1 Introduction

This report covers the last six months and focuses on work and projects carried out or organised by the Rangers. It is hard to believe that at the beginning of the report period the hills were covered in snow! The report will be illustrated through a PowerPoint presentation where relevant Action Points from the Management Plan will be highlighted.

Rangers have managed a wide range of projects in habitat and access management and organised and led the current Events programme of guided walks. Work has continued to focus on commons/habitat management, access/recreation work and visitor management. Through all of this work, volunteers have provided valuable support to the AONB Service Rangers and are a much valued part of the overall team.

#### 2 Practical Management

Rangers and volunteers have been involved in various practical management projects. The variety of seasons dictates different elements of management on the hills: winter and early spring work is dominated by carrying out the swaling programme; summer months allow bracken control to be carried out whether by topping, bruising or spraying.

##### **Volunteers:**

Volunteers have assisted the Rangers with a range of tasks including: eco-burns (swaling), strimming car parks, litter picks, habitat mapping, nest box and fire beater maintenance. A comprehensive work programme (planned in three monthly blocks) is organised jointly with the National Trust, this working partnership is proving to be very successful and allows volunteers to experience a wide range of countryside management tasks.

Throughout this report period the Rangers have been particularly assisted by work placement volunteers, Tom Hawkesworth (from Bishops Lydeard) and Chris Pestaille (from Minehead).

##### **Bracken control:**

Andy Harris has been involved in helping to sort out this year's bracken control programme. Areas for spraying were agreed with Natural England and the commoners as a part of the current Commons Stewardship Scheme.

##### **Heathland management:**

Further work was carried out in the scrub removal programme on Great Bear. Cut material has been gathered into heaps to be burned at a later date. The site is already benefiting from the scrub removal, the open nature of the hilltop plateau has returned and it is hoped that the heathland habitat will re-establish quickly.

#### **Swaling (eco-burns):**

Good weather during mid to late March allowed essential heathland burns to be carried out. In total 45 hectares were successfully burned over a range of areas and heathland types. Strategic burns are designed to create important fire breaks in otherwise continuous blocks of heath. Once again, Rangers were ably assisted by our volunteers and joint burns were carried out with the National Trust on their property.

A huge amount of effort is put into the swaling programme, favourable weather conditions have to be utilised when available ... this results in long work days over a concentrated time period for all of those involved. Particular thanks must go to the following volunteers: Keith & Sue Edwards, Dave Pusill, Shelley Saltman, Martin Upson, Richard Deverell, Ron Carlson and placement volunteers Tom and Chris.

#### **Rhododendron removal:**

Invasive rhododendron has been removed on County Council property in the oak woods on Over Stowey Customs Common and near Warm Corner. The National Trust continues to 'eat away' at the rhododendron on the flanks of Vinnicombe. Significant work was also carried out on removing scattered plants from the northern SSSI and SAC woodland.

#### **Cothelstone Hill:**

For the second year Dexter Cattle are being used to graze areas of Cothelstone Hill. Last year's trial was a success and so the cattle have been put back up this year. The seven Dexter cattle are owned by Hazel Riley and some of the JAC members will know her from her valuable archaeological and heritage work carried out on the hills over the last few years, culminating in her book published by English Heritage.

### **3 Access Management**

#### **Open Access Land:**

Spring time is a particularly sensitive time on the open hill ... sheep are lambing, ground nesting birds are nesting and toward the end of the spring period red deer are calving. It is important that the public are reminded of these important events and the AONB Service issued press releases to get valuable messages across, particularly in relation to their responsibilities in relation to keeping dogs under control.

Rangers and volunteers made sure that our Dog Walker information signs were put out at main access points to the open hill. From March until the end of July dog walkers are required by law to keep dogs on a lead on Open Access Land.

#### **Public Rights of Way:**

Heavy snow cover during early February caused significant damage to many trees throughout the AONB. The unusually heavy weight of snow on very brittle, frozen branches caused rights of way to be blocked by fallen limbs. This created a backlog of work for the Rights of Way Group and the Rangers were called upon to assist with some clearance of important routes.

Volunteers assisted the Rangers in some of this work and well used routes such as the Rap around Cothelstone Hill and the popular bridleway down into Smiths Combe were priorities. A bridleway in Holford leading up onto Lower Hare Knap was also cleared with help from Martin Upson and Ron Carlson, volunteers from the village.

#### **4 Visitor Management**

The Quantock Hills are small in comparison to many Protected Landscapes and are used very much as a 'locals' playground ... this means that visitor pressure is year-round and people are naturally drawn to the hilltops. 'Management' of people and user groups is essential in ensuring that a balance is maintained between public enjoyment of the area and minimising disturbance to wildlife and habitats.

##### **Patrolling:**

Rangers regularly patrol the hills and are assisted by volunteers. Organised patrols also involve the Police (particularly at weekends and evenings). The snow fall in February attracted many visitors to the hills and required the Rangers to assist where there were problems and give advice to people.

During the report period we have had a number of Bank Holidays and school breaks, these always bring visitors to the hills and require a concerted effort by Rangers and volunteers to ensure coverage at these busy times. It became quite apparent early on in this report period that the hills were receiving a perceived increase in visitors, particularly in Ramscombe.

Patrols have focused on the forest area as there have also been some anti-social behaviour problems in Ramscombe. As a result, a new, lockable barrier gate has now been installed by the Forestry Commission at Seven Wells to help control nocturnal activity by vehicle use.

##### **Police:**

Rangers continue to liaise regularly with our local Beat Managers and Police Community Support Officers (who have begun to hold monthly Beat Surgeries at Fyne Court). PCSOs are keen to have a proper surgery base in the northern end of the hills ... discussions have suggested that the old AONB Office in Nether Stowey library would make an ideal location should it be available.

A Wildlife Crime Awareness Day was organised with the Police (Sgt Andy Whysall, Wildlife Crime Officer based in Dulverton). This was held at Halsway Manor on 6<sup>th</sup> May and aimed at bringing Police Officers and Rangers up to date with legislation

dealing with wildlife crime. This was very successful and included speakers from Natural England's Wildlife Crime Unit, CLA, Hawk & Owl Trust.

## **5 Heritage & Local Distinctiveness**

Positive work has taken place to repair and repaint some of the traditional road signs in the southern end of the hills. The AONB Service appreciates the work being carried out by Highways in keeping these distinctive (and historic) road signs in good order.

The road sign at the Ashfield turn off (on the A358) into Crowcombe was moved to the east side of the road. The sign now sits on a wide green area, is much more visible and far less likely to be damaged by passing vehicles. The sign is now fully restored and has its name collar.

It is comforting to see that Highways have adopted a cast-iron arm on the traditional road sign at the bottom of Crowcombe Combe relating to HGVs ... this sympathetic approach is unlikely to have happened prior to the traditional road signs restoration project and management plan guidelines.

## **6 Events**

Andy Harris continues to deal with requests for user-group activities throughout the AONB. Andy does this on behalf of the AONB as well as Forestry Commission in his role of Partnership Ranger. Activities are filtered for their appropriateness throughout this sensitive area.

Events this period have included:

Sponsored horse rides, charity walks, bush craft, school visits, mountain biking, orienteering along with frequent visits from rambler groups and D of E training groups.

The AONB Service Events Programme is now in full swing and walks so far have included:

Dawn Chorus, Blubell Walk, Jurassic Coast, Woodland & Heathland Birds and Nightjar Watching.

## **7 Rangers**

This has been a particularly involved time for the Rangers. It has become increasingly important to prioritise our workloads since Andrew Davis moved to New Zealand. In effect the AONB Service now only has 1.5 Rangers (Andy Harris divides his time 50:50 between his Forestry Commission and AONB Service).

Rangers have attended or managed a variety of meetings including:

Health & Safety, Police & Conservation Bodies, AONB Conference (Senior Ranger), CMA, QCMG, Deer Management Group, etc.

Quantock Rangers hosted a visit by Rangers and Volunteers from South Somerset District and Ham Hill Country Park on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. It proved very useful for others to see how the Rangers and volunteers here deal with visitor management issues.

Both Rangers (and Development Officer) took and passed their minibuss driving certificate, allowing them to drive minibusses for site visits, work tasks, volunteer training events, etc.

The annual Deer Count took place on March 1<sup>st</sup> results are attached as appendix one.

Tim Russell was asked to do a TV piece for Spotlight (SW regional TV news show) by David Braine the weather reporter. The theme was about how the weather affects people working out doors and a number of people were interviewed across the region. This gave the opportunity to discuss climate change and its potential affect on Quantock habitats, wildlife and working practices.

**Diary date - next JAC Rangers' site visit day is Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> Nov and will focus on swaling**

**Tim Russell – Senior Ranger**

**Andy Harris – Ranger**



## RANGER'S REPORT APPENDIX 1

# Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group



March 17,  
2009

***To all deer count helpers and members of QDM&CG,***

Please find below results of our latest deer count which took place on **1st March 2009**. Counting conditions were generally good with occasional sunshine, but cold wind on the hills.

Overall **680 Red deer** were seen - a very similar total to last year. For the second year running numbers seen were rather lower than in past years to the south and east of Lydeard Hill (with zero counts of red deer in Wind Down, Broomfield and Kings Cliff woods on the day), whereas numbers in the northern half of the Quantocks have shown far less change over the last five years. An encouraging result this year was that the count included a higher proportion of stags than recorded for some time (including 62 prickets, 70 young stags (2-4yrs) and 27 older stags >4yrs); with a few further mature stags also reported to be residing in areas well off the hill but which were not seen on the day of the count.

Numbers of roe deer recorded during the count totalled 39; this is higher than last year, but nevertheless likely to under-record actual numbers by a long way, as the present count is designed foremost to focus on red deer. No muntjac deer were seen on the day, but a number have been reported over recent months in the Cothelstone and Crowcombe Heathfield districts. Please report any other muntjac sightings to us if you encounter them during the year.

The next deer count is likely to be either Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February or 7<sup>st</sup> March 2010. Please let us know your availability nearer the time. Once again thank you to everyone who turned out at the crack of dawn to help and to all landholders for their continued co-operation with these counts. Regards , **Jochen Langbein & Andy Harris** (Deer count co-ordinators).

### **Quantock Deer Count Results 1 March 2009**

<b>Red Deer Total</b>	<b>Hinds &amp; Calves (of both sexes)</b>	<b>Prickets</b>	<b>Young Stags</b>	<b>Older Stags (&gt; 4 yr old)</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>Roe Deer Total</b>	<b>Muntjac Total</b>
<b>680:</b>	521	62	70	27	<b>---</b>	<b>39 (inc &gt; 13 bucks)</b>	<b>0</b>

**Comparison of Red deer count March 2008 and 2009 by region:**

<b>2009</b>			<b>2008</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>Hinds &amp; followers</b>	<b>Prickets &amp; Stags</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Hinds &amp; followers</b>	<b>Prickets &amp; Stags</b>
<b><u>A: North</u></b> (all count blocks lying north of the Crowcombe to Overstowey road)					
<b>396</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>63</b>
<b><u>B: Central:</u></b> (South of Overstowey Road to Great Wood / West Bagborough & including Aisholt Common , and Crowcombe Heathfield)					
<b>270</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>63</b>
<b><u>C: South-East</u></b> (all areas south-east of Lydeard Hill - includes Cothelstone Hill, Broomfield Hill, Wind Down & King's Cliff)					
<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>



