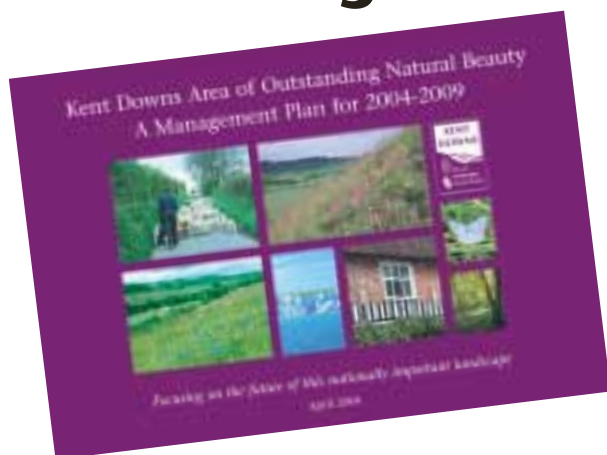


Kent Downs Bulletin

July 2004

Includes
our new
address

New Management Plan for the AONB



The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – one of England's finest landscapes – now has a Management Plan that sets an ambitious vision and programme of action for the future.

The Management Plan reflects the input of the Kent Downs communities, local authorities and other organisations that care for this wonderful landscape.

The preparation of the new plan was a requirement of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and represents a very positive future for some of the most beautiful countryside that Kent has to offer.

The Management Plan has been adopted by all local

authorities with part of the Kent Downs within their boundary and has been described by the Countryside Agency as representing **exemplary practice**.

For more information on the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan visit www.kentdowns.org.uk or contact us on 01303 81570.

Website update

The Kent Downs website has just undergone a thorough update! Log on to see the changes and additions, including an excellent new interactive visitor map! Don't forget that this Bulletin can also be viewed and downloaded from the site.

www.kentdowns.org.uk



Kent Downs on the move

From the end of June 2004 the AONB Unit will have a new home. We will be working in a 16th-century barn situated in East Brabourne near Wye. The conversion of the redundant barn has been made possible by a grant from Defra, (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and support from the Countryside Agency. Please find opposite a 'cut out and keep' sheet of our new contact details with a map of the office location on the reverse.

Kent Downs AONB Unit

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Penstock Hall Farm
Canterbury Road
East Brabourne
Ashford
Kent TN25 5LL

Telephone: 01303 815170

Fax: 01303 814254

Email: mail@kentdowns.org.uk

For individuals the address will be:
firstname.surname@kentdowns.org.uk



www.kentdowns.org.uk



LEADER + success

We are delighted to announce that, working in partnership with Swale, Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils we have secured a grant of just over £80,000 from Leader + to support a sustainable rural tourism project for two years in the Mid Kent portion of the AONB.

The new project will:

- provide training and support for tourism businesses,
- support local community groups to develop promotional packages for their patch,
- encourage local purchasing
- promote the area for carefully managed visits.

The project is expected to start in late summer 2004.

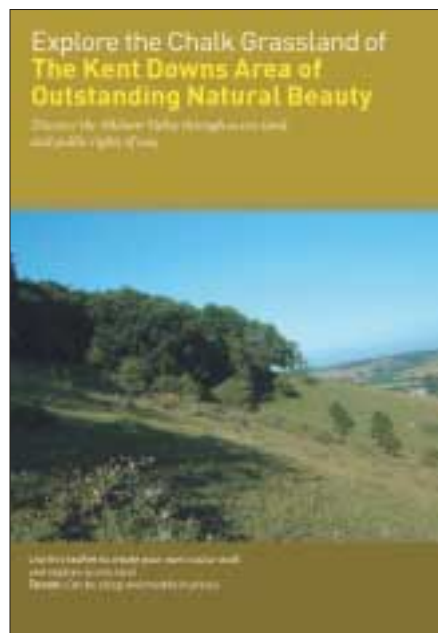
Match funding for the project comes from Swale, Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils, Swale Tourism Association, the Maidstone marketing group, Tourism South East, Leeds Castle, South Eastern Trains and local businesses.



Pooling skills and resources

The Kent Downs AONB has developed closer working links with Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) through the attachment of a member of the Unit to the local Countryside Stewardship Team. Frances Clayton is working two days per week on programmes that bring mutual benefit to the Kent Downs AONB and to Defra. The first outputs being a series of walk leaflets to encourage people to explore the Kent Downs and understand the role played by landowners and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme in conserving and enhancing the AONB.

The Kent Downs AONB



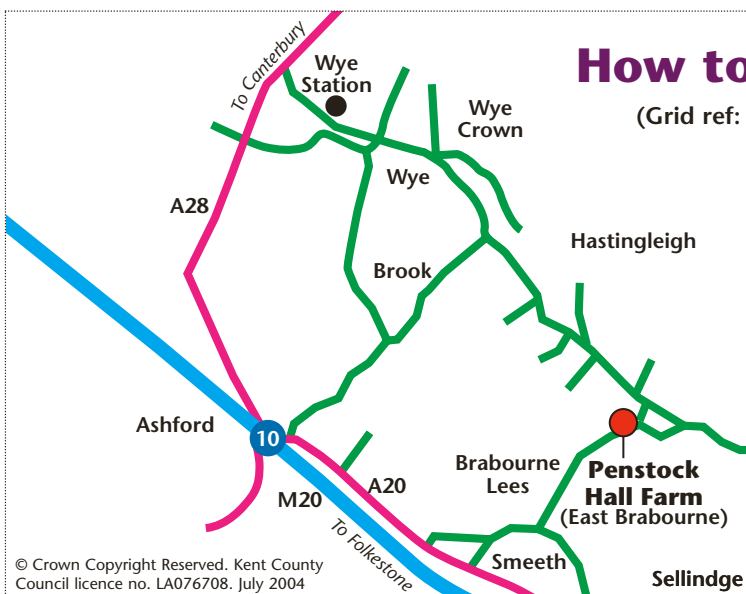
Farm walk, Godmersham

Management Plan review process suggested that benefits could be gained for the protected landscape by working more closely with landowners and raising awareness of the value of the AONB to them. This attachment will facilitate greater awareness of the AONB (a target area for Countryside Stewardship Scheme in Kent) within Defra and will enable the AONB Unit to be fully aware of, and better influence for the benefit of the AONB, CAP reforms and changes to Agri-environment Schemes.

This attachment is also an opportunity to enhance current AONB work such as the Farm Walks Programme, a farming focus in the Spring/Summer 2004 issue of The Orchid newspaper and promotion of Agri-environment Schemes as a mechanism for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.

How to find us

(Grid ref: TR 098 418)



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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, Food 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)



www.kentdowns.org.uk