

## **The Blackdown Hills Parish Network (BHPN)**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the BHPN is to represent and act for the benefit of parishes wholly or partly within the Blackdown Hills AONB. The BHPN aims to identify, address and promote issues of common concern for these parishes and work for cohesion and consistency among the local authorities responsible for the AONB.

The common concerns of these Parishes are to:

- stimulate participation in local life and community decisions
- protect and enhance the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills
- understand then practically address the impact of climate change
- encourage sustainable employment and business
- promote accessibility and resilience of transport and better communication
- urge best practice in agricultural production
- increase a sense of place, identity and belonging
- support wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle
- work to combat rural isolation
- foster well-designed housing in small hamlet settings

### **Membership**

Membership of the network is open to all 39 parishes which lie wholly or partly within the Blackdown Hills AONB on payment of an annual fee. Each such parish has one vote at a general meeting exercised by either a Parish Councillor, Officer or delegate .

### **Meetings**

The network will hold an annual general meeting which will elect a chairman and a steering group to plan and direct activities. The AGM will approve a plan of activities for the coming year, explain expenditure for the year past and be a forum to discuss best practice and raise understanding on current issues.

The constitution, nomination process and membership fees shall be approved by the AGM or at a special meeting called for by at least five parishes. Parish Clerks will receive notice of meetings and an invitation to submit items for consideration.

### **The Steering Group**

Membership of the Steering Group shall be elected at the AGM. This group will hold meetings and guide activities; organise representation on the AONB Management Partnership; decide on priorities to pursue and represent the network to outside bodies.

## **Officer**

The network shall appoint an Executive Officer who will also act as the responsible financial officer. This appointee will organise meetings, deal with correspondence, apply for grants, track expenditure, monitor progress against plans, draw up agendas with the chairman and record meetings.

## **Rationale**

The BHPN exists on the basis that agreed collective action on shared aims is more likely to achieve results which benefit communities than any single parish acting alone. The 39 parishes within the scope of the network face common challenges which are not determined by parish boundaries, nor by any single District or County boundary.

Final 21 Oct 2022 agreed at AGM