

Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

PRESS RELEASE: - Friday, 1st December 2006.

Begins:

AONB Businesses marketing the Bittern Brand.

Tourism businesses within the Arnside/Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are working together to promote the area and its special qualities to highlight sustainable tourism opportunities for visitors. The AONB Service has been working with a group made up of around 40 businesses in the area to implement a sustainable tourism strategy for the AONB, which sits on the eastern shore of Morecambe Bay.

This winter the AONB Business Forum and the AONB Service are driving forward the 'Visit Bittern Initiative' for 2007, building on the successful publication of the "Visit Bittern" leaflet in February this year. The AONB Service organised a 20,000 print run for this introductory leaflet for visitors new to the area and distributed all the copies available. Plans to produce a revised "Visit Bittern" leaflet for 2007 are already at an advanced stage.

The new leaflet will be catching the public-eye at the Outdoor Show in Birmingham this coming March and putting in appearances at Tourist Information Centres across Cumbria and Lancashire in the near future. Look out for copies in the Pubs, Cafes, Shops, Hotels and Caravan sites around the AONB.

The Initiative will also launch a brand new web-site associated with the 2007 leaflet, www.visitbittern.co.uk, which will go-live in December. AONB Business Forum members will feature on the site, with details of places to visit, activities and dining out in the AONB.

Continues,

Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

PRESS RELEASE: - Friday, 1st December 2006.

Continued;

The web-site is designed to signpost visitors to individual business web-sites and provide other information concerning the AONB such as public transport links, walking and cycling routes, events and conservation issues etc.

The third element of the scheme this year is a new member of staff for the AONB and partners. Working with the RSPB and some of the business forum members, the AONB is hosting a marketing student placement for nine months. Jennifer Hessey, a student at University of Central Lancashire, is working part-time at the AONB Office and part-time at the RSPB Leighton Moss reserve. Her role is to develop and promote the Visit Bittern Initiative within the AONB, work up marketing ideas for RSPB and co-operate with AONB Businesses on individual marketing tasks.

Financial support for the Visit Bittern campaign has come in the form of grant funding from the 'Lancashire Rural Tourism Initiative' programme, individual business cash contributions and from the AONB Service, both as time and funds.

Ian Henderson, AONB Manager, said,

“We are pleased to be working with businesses within the AONB developing this joint initiative. The aims are both to encourage businesses to develop in a sustainable manner, while generating among the public a greater understanding of and interest in the special qualities of the AONB. The real attractions of this unique and nationally important landscape are there to be discovered, especially if you take time to explore on foot, by bike or on horseback.”

Ends.

Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

PRESS RELEASE: - Friday, 1st December 2006.

Editors Notes:

The Arnside/Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) forms part of the Morecambe Bay Limestones regional character area/natural area and is a unique landscape of national importance. It extends to approximately 75 square kilometres. The AONB, defined by the broad estuary of the River Kent to the north-west, the River Keer in the south and the A6 corridor in the east, spans the county boundary between Cumbria and Lancashire and includes extensive inter-tidal areas of the Bay itself.

Many generations of human activity and management of the area have shaped the AONB's intimate character. This cultural landscape is a tapestry in which improved agricultural pastures and intensively managed arable farmland are interwoven with large semi-natural areas including inter-tidal sands and mudflats, salt marsh, coastal mosses, species-rich limestone grasslands, limestone pavements, cliffs and escarpments and extensively wooded limestone hills. The AONB's rich mosaic of landscape also supports a wide range of wildlife habitats of national and international importance.

The statutory purpose of designation for all AONBs, originally as set out in the *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949* - is the "conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Area." More recent guidance and regulation explains that 'Natural Beauty' in the context of AONBs not only covers the aesthetic appearance of landscape, but encompasses flora and fauna, geological and physiographical features, as well as the cultural and historic landscape.

Arnside and Silverdale AONB is one of a family of 49 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Nationally and Internationally, they are represented by the National Association for AONBs, which is an independent organisation acting on behalf of AONBs and their partners to promote, conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscapes designated as AONBs throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

"Visit Bittern" is a co-operative marketing venture, organised by the AONB Service, working with businesses in the AONB – who are working together as the AONB Business Forum. The initiative aims to promote economic activity among tourism and recreation businesses within the AONB, while ensuring that business development does not conflict with the statutory purpose of designation of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB and thereby compromises the environmental qualities which attract visitors in the first place.

Information about the AONB, the work carried out by the AONB Service and Partnership and the "Visit Bittern Initiative" is available on our website: www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk

Contact: Ian Henderson, AONB Manager or
David Askew, AONB Officer

Arnside/Silverdale AONB Service,
The Old Station Building, Arnside, via Carnforth, Lancs. LA5 0HG,
Telephone: 01524 761034 Fax: 01524 761577
email: info@arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk