

Quantock Hills AONB

Quantock Stargazing – Saturday 30th January 2016

Crowcombe Village Hall

Join local astronomer Simon Ould for a fascinating evening of guided stargazing. Including a high tech planetarium experience inside the Space Odyssey mobile planetarium. With a guided stargazing session outside (weather permitting, or an extended planetarium session). Event goes ahead whatever the weather, Suitable warm clothing and suitable footwear/wellies. Binoculars and telescopes welcome. Sorry no dogs £10 per adult, £7.50 per child To book go to <http://www.quantockhills.com/events/view>

Bushcraft – Tuesday April 5th

Cothelstone Hill

Hone your bushcraft skills and spend the day learning how to track animals whilst exploring the woods with the Quantock Rangers. Lunch will be cooked over a fire and there may even be the odd marshmallow (if you're lucky) Bring suitable warm clothing and sturdy footwear.

£10pp, to book go to <http://www.quantockhills.com/events/view>

Katy Coate, Support Assistant, Quantock Hills AONB

Fyne Court, Broomfield, Somerset TA5 2EQ. 01823 451 884

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9-5pm

www.quantockhills.com<<http://www.quantockhills.com/>>

twitter @quantockhills facebook Quantock Hills



Feeding the ponies is dangerous, warns Quantock Pony Commoner Association

Quantock Pony Commoners Association are warning members of the public that feeding the ponies on the Quantock Common is dangerous and could lead to serious harm.

There have been a number of incidents recently that show that due to an increase of Quantock ponies being fed by visitors, the ponies are becoming more of a nuisance to other visitors to the Quantock Hill. By feeding the Quantock ponies their behaviour changes over time, causing them to congregate in car parks and become not just a public nuisance, but by bringing them into close proximity there is a risk of injury. Naturally inquisitive animals, they form patterns of behaviour and have quickly learnt to associate cars with food. There have been recent cases of a pony breaking someone's leg, biting and causing vehicle damage. Please do not add to the problem and for your own safety stay well clear of the ponies and never feed them.

The ponies are owned by the Quantock Pony Commoners and provide valuable grazing for the hilltops helping to manage the vegetation. Around 50 ponies graze on the Quantock Hilltop, 30 mares on the Quantock Common and 20 on Aisholt Common. 11 farmers graze their ponies on the Quantocks and are members of the agri-environment scheme which is there to protect and enhance the special habitats of the Quantock Common.

Quantock Pony Commoners Association Secretary, Sue Hobbs says:

"Although it is lovely for people to see ponies on the Quantock Common we ask that visitors to the hills refrain from feeding the ponies. Not only does it put other visitors at risk having the ponies so close but also puts the ponies in danger by encouraging them to stay near the roads and car parks. A failure to do as requested could put the future of the Quantock Hill Ponies at risk"

Quantock Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) dates and locations

The next year's JAC dates have been set – see below. The meetings are held all around the hills, always at 2.15pm on a Tuesday and the public are welcome to attend. Papers are published on the website a week before the meeting so people can take a look at what's been happening within the AONB Service.

3rd November 15	Stogursey Victory Hall
9th February 16	Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall
26th April 16	Halsway Manor
19th July 16	Spaxton Village Hall

Here's a bit of extra info for you - The AONB partnership is made up of the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) with other interested organisations including: National Trust, RSPB, English Heritage and the Police. The Joint Advisory Committee forms a tight executive, acting as a watchdog for the AONB Service. The AONB Service reports to the JAC at least 4 times a year, papers for which can be downloaded from this site. The JAC is made up of our 5 core funders, Defra, Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council. Parish Council representatives for Nether Stowey, West Bagborough, West Quantoxhead and Holford, and the following organisations: Forestry Commission, Natural England, Friends of Quantock, Country Land & Business Association, Quantock Commoners Association and Somerset Access Forum.

The AONB partnership produces a Management Plan, which is a strategic document. This plan looks at how we would like to see the Quantock Hills in the next 20 years. It also looks at what work needs to be undertaken to achieve this vision. The AONB partnership works together to carry out this work. The AONB Service is tasked with ensuring that this works occurs, which may be through lobbying, monitoring and undertaking projects. By lobbying national and local government, and also organisations such as the National Trust we can ensure their policies will help to conserve the AONB rather than detract or damage the landscape. A wide range of monitoring is undertaken by the AONB Service from wildlife surveys through to planning applications to ensure there are no damaging activities occurring on or near the AONB. Various projects may include the recent Long-eared owl survey, which led to the enhancement of our knowledge of their population and nesting sites. Further details can be found in the Management Plan.