



# Our Land in the High Weald AONB

Presentation by Gerry Sherwin  
To the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee  
Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2013



**Our Land is a collaboration between protected landscapes, businesses & private sector partner [responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com) to develop and promote sustainable rural tourism.**

**[www.our-land.co.uk](http://www.our-land.co.uk) provides a national platform for Protected Landscapes & is the leading place online for a visitor to find a locally distinctive rural holiday in a collection dedicated to National Parks & AONB's.**

**All things are engaged in writing their history....**

**Not a foot steps into the snow, or along the ground, but prints in characters more or less lasting, a map of its march. The ground is all memoranda and signatures; and every object covered with hints.**

**In nature this self registration is incessant.**

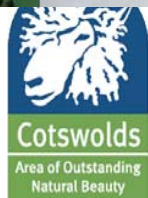
**Ralph Waldo Emerson 1850**

**“There is a powerful, resurgent interest in re-discovering natural and cultural Britain”**  
BBC’s Kate Humble



## Our Land’s story:

1. 9 Protected Landscapes in SE England gained fund of £1 million from RDPE administered through DEFRA to promote & develop rural responsible tourism
2. Tendered for private sector partner: [responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com) Project to be self financing beyond funding period (post March 2014)
3. Created a name to complement the Protected Landscape brands. Launched web platform Oct 2011
4. Ultimate goal is to be able to represent and market all UK Protected Landscapes



# Our Land aims and objectives

## Project aim

- To create a place where protected area brands can collectively promote responsible/sustainable tourism by developing and promoting a range of protected landscape focused short breaks and holidays to visitors.

## Core objectives

1. Manage positive change within the tourism sector to the benefit of the environment, culture and heritage of the protected landscapes.
2. Increase visitors' enjoyment and knowledge of the special character, quality and biodiversity of the protected landscapes.
3. Benefit the local rural economy and services by developing innovative, sustainable tourism businesses, increasing visitor spend and occupancy levels and retaining visitor spend in the local economy.
4. Contribute to the growth in sustainable tourism by developing and promoting more sustainable tourism opportunities within the protected landscapes.

### Vision

Where a visitor makes a conscious (or even second nature) connection between their experience & the landscape\*

### The Mission

Discover and share the conservation stories of the landscape via;

- National promotion to visitors
- Local development of tourism businesses
- Commercial sustainability
- Collaboration between public & private sector

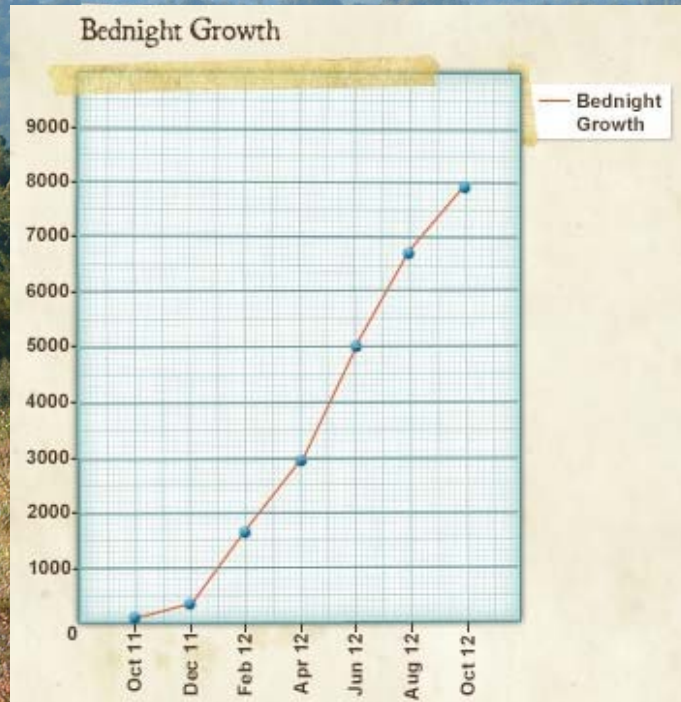
# Achievements to date

**900+**  
tourism businesses  
representing  
**1000+**  
experiences,  
places to stay &  
things to do

**20,000+**  
bed nights  
generated

**23** business  
networking &  
development days  
held & attended  
by **120+**  
business reps

**20** business  
networking,  
training &  
development  
days planned  
this year



**5200**  
Facebook  
& **900** Twitter  
followers

**20+**  
marketing partners  
national & regional  
media coverage

**370,000**  
unique web  
visitors\*  
\*including  
responsible  
travel.com

**1/2 m**  
combined visitor  
database  
**12,000** Our Land  
visitor database



# And in the High Weald

92  
tourism businesses  
74 accommodation  
17 activity providers  
1 tour operator  
representing  
**116**  
experiences

1270  
bed nights  
generated

2 business  
networking, training  
& development days  
held last year &  
5 planned this year

**OUR LAND** EXPERIENCES TO TREASURE

HOLIDAYS, ACTIVITIES & SHORT BREAKS  
in National Parks & AONBs

Home Late availability National Parks & AONBs to visit Accommodation Activities Map About us Contact us

Search for High Weald holidays, 2013 and 2014

Type: all types of holiday in High We  
Activity: all activities

SEARCH HERE

*Cross Leaved Heath*

**High Weald holidays**  
The High Weald is less than an hour from London on the train, rising between the North Downs of Kent and the South Downs of Sussex.

The High Weald is full of romantic routeways created by drovers' pigs since Neolithic times, and is scattered with timber-framed farmsteads.

**Best sellers** 2 reviews Travel guide

Share Tweet Pin it Email

**Browse High Weald holidays for ideas**

See all  
116 High Weald holidays

Jump to  
Accommodation only (89)

Types  
Bed and breakfast holidays  
Budget travel holidays  
Campsites & caravan parks holidays  
Cycling holidays  
Family holidays  
Farmstays holidays  
Hotels holidays  
Luxury travel holidays  
RSPB holidays  
Self catering holidays  
Short breaks holidays  
Special interest holidays  
Special requirements holidays

**East Sussex tree house accommodation, England**  
An open plan tree house in rural Sussex, from £124 - £249 per accommodation per night (sleeps 2)

**Kent self catering cottage, Stone in Oxney**  
Award winning old Victorian cottage on a working farm, from £400 - £700 per cottage per week (sleeps 6)

**Brede campsite near Rye, High Weald**  
Peaceful camping in the heart of the Sussex countryside, from £10 - £20 per accommodation per night

**Mushroom walks in Sussex**  
Mushroom walks in the wilds of Sussex, from £18 - £40 per half day

# Events programme

- \***Historic Farmsteads at Finchcocks**
- \***Is Your Page Sitting Pretty? at Scotney Castle**
- \***Activities Taster Day at Ashdown Forest**
- \***Not Enough Beds Filled in My Inn at Wakehurst Place**
- \***Stepping Out from the Doorstep TBC**
- \***Are You on You Tube Flimwell**



# Our Land partners

Our Land not only promotes rural tourism but works in partnership with Protected Landscapes to develop & strengthen rural tourism & aims to work in collaboration with local partners & DMO's.

## Our Land partners with...

- Protected Landscapes
- Membership organisations
- Tourist Boards & DMO's
- Commercial companies
- Local enterprises
- Charities
- Local businesses

Joint campaigns, partner pages, site/product pages, blogs, reciprocal links, joint product development / awareness raising events...

## Our Land partners and supporters

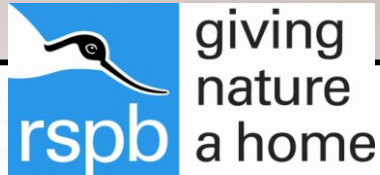


## Conversations with more ...



# Working in partnership

Collaborative marketing – e.g. with RSPB – currently focusing on Futurescapes and now national communications



The screenshot shows the RSPB website interface. At the top left is the 'OUR LAND EXPERIENCES TO TREASURE' logo. Below it is a navigation menu with links: Home, Late availability, National Parks & AONBs to visit, Accommodation, Activities, Map, About us, Contact us. A search box is titled 'Search for RSPB holidays, 2013 and 2014' and contains filters for Activity (all types of RSPB holiday), Country (all countries), and Location (all locations), with a 'SEARCH HERE' button. To the right is a large image of a starling perched on a branch. Below the search box is a section titled 'RSPB holidays' with a small RSPB logo and text: 'The RSPB have the ambition of saving nature; everything that flaps, flutters, creeps and crawls, and are passionate about showing people what makes our threatened wildlife so special. Discover our nature reserves, events and volunteering opportunities, start saving nature today.' At the bottom, there are social media sharing options (Facebook, Send, Tweet, Print, +1, Email) and a 'Browse rspb holidays for ideas' section with the heading 'Get inspired!' and a sign-up form for alerts with fields for Name and Email, and a 'Sign up' button. Below the sign-up form are three holiday listings with images: 'RSPB Farnham Heath, Surrey Hills, England', 'RSPB Pulborough Brooks, South Downs', and 'RSPB Broadwater Warren, High Weald'. Each listing includes a brief description and admission price.

Collaborative competitions - e.g. OS & Visit Kent

- 3000+ entries
- Over 50 % of entrants opted-in to partner databases
- 50% open rate of co-branded emails
- Reciprocal database marketing - dedicated co-branded Ezine sent weekly 150,000+ recipients
- Featured in Protected Landscapes marketing – on and offline
- Extensively promoted through both parties' social media



# Working in partnership



facebook  Our Land Home

Our Land Competition Ads Manager

admin tools You are in admin mode - [view tab in visitor mode instead.](#)

**Like us to enter!** ▲

**Win a 4 night break in award winning Grade II listed barn**

**WIN a 4 night break for 2** in award winning barn at Fair Oak Farm!

**Plus 5 x winners** each receive copies of latest books *Lost Lanes* & *Wild Guide* from Wild Things Publishing

Stay in the heart of the Sussex & Kent countryside at award winning Fair Oak Farm & discover the High Weald's ancient routeways, tracks & sunken lanes with new publication *Lost Lanes* from Wild Things Publishing.

Logos at the bottom of the page include: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Our Land Experiences to Treasure, responsibletravel.com, Fair Oak Farm, and Wild Things Publishing.

March 2013 - joint competition with Wild Things Publishing & Wild Swimming, featuring the High Weald AONB

## Snapshot:

- 2000 Competition entrants
- 1200 new Facebook likes
- 1177 Database growth

# Working in partnership

## Our Land & Virgin Balloon Flights

• Our Land joins Virgin Balloon Flights **Love Our Landscape** campaign to raise £10,000 working with;

- **Wildlife Trusts**
- **Woodland Trust**
- **Princes Countryside Fund**

• Our Land provides one of ten Virgin raffle prizes distributed to database of 80,000+ visitors

• Our Land 'things to see & do' mapped on Virgin Balloon Flights' 'Love our Landscape' interactive campaign map



### Our Land partnership with Virgin Balloon Flights



Our Land is delighted to be working in partnership with Virgin Balloon Flights



#### 'Love our Landscape' Campaign

In June 2013, Virgin Balloon Flights launched their 'Love our Landscape' campaign. Love our Landscape pledges to raise £10,000 to fund farming, wildlife and woodland projects with 3 chosen charities; the Princes Countryside Fund, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust.



- Destinations
- Chilterns
  - Cotswolds
  - Cranborne Chase
  - Exmoor
  - High Weald
  - Isles of Scilly
  - Isle of Wight
  - Kent Downs
  - New Forest
  - North Wessex Downs
  - Ring of Gullion
  - Shropshire Hills
  - South Downs
  - Surrey Hills

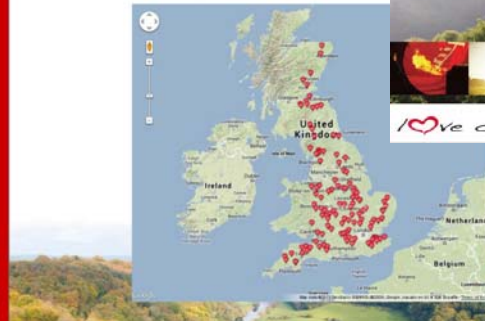
- Places to Stay
- Beach holidays
  - Bed and breakfast
  - Family accommodation
  - Hotels
  - Self catering
  - accommodation
  - Unusual accommodation

- Holiday Types
- Budget travel
  - Cycling holidays
  - Family holidays
  - Honeymoon ideas
  - Luxury holidays
  - Short breaks
  - Special requirement
  - Things to see and do
  - Walking holidays



#### interactive map

We want to engage you in different locations but our biggest offer your balloon flight and your own site. To view our map of the United Kingdom, please click on the map icon on the left hand side of the page. You can also view our map of the United Kingdom on the right hand side of the page. Click the map icon to view the different types of sites.



# The future beyond RDPE



## Transition

- Commitment from responsibletravel.com & SCC
- On-going marketing activities & partnership development
- Establishing independent legal entity
- Identifying management structure
- Protected landscape brand ownership & engagement

## Future income streams

- Page upgrades
- Membership & commissions
- Sponsorship
- Marketing partnerships
- Local project support
- Grant applications
- And potentially advertising

## Exploring opportunities beyond the South East...

- Collaboration at heart – protected landscapes, local partnerships and businesses
- Shared platform for protected landscapes
- Working with Our Land marketing partners
- Our Land as the resource / delivery mechanism
- Meeting management plan objectives
- Growth via quality, authentic, value added experiences
- Making more of assets such as walking, cycling, adventure, sports, F&D, wildlife, history, culture

# Joining Our Land

FREE starter option – limited offer  
£2,500 – Intermediate option  
£5,000 – Advanced option

Since March 2013 a further 13 protected landscapes in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland have joined Our Land, bringing to overall total number of member landscapes to 21



CAIRNGORMS  
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
ÙGH DARRAS PAIRC NÀISEANTA A'  
MHONAIDH RUAIDH



CRANBORNE CHASE  
AND WEST  
WILTSHIRE DOWNS  
One of the  
AONB Family



EXMOOR  
NATIONAL PARK



malvern hills  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Quantock Hills  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Contact us



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**Our Land is funded for three years (2011-2014) with nearly £1million from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which is administered through Defra. The host authority is the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**



The European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development:  
Europe investing in rural areas



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs