

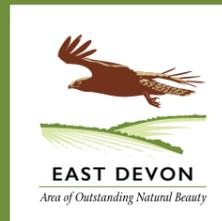


EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

East Devon Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty
Partnership

ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19



Front cover image: *Branscombe*
 Right: *East Hill Strips*
 Back page: *Harvest time, Sidbury*



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Cllr Graham Godbeer
Chairman, East Devon
AONB Partnership

PROUD OF ITS
TOP PERFORMING
DELIVERY

This Annual Review provides a brief snapshot of the work of the AONB Partnership and team over the last financial year, working with our partners on environmental, community and rural economy projects and activities across the AONB.

The Making it Local (MIL) EU rural development funding programme for East Devon and Blackdown Hills AONBs will be effectively complete by the time this Review is in print. The programme has been a key support mechanism for our rural economy and whatever your views are on the EU, it has clearly had a significant impact on businesses and communities in the area. A vacuum remains in its wake as there is no clear succession programme to follow this hugely successful investment in the AONBs as a result of our status with Brexit.

At a time when species extinction and climate change is so high in the public profile,

our role in conserving and enhancing our landscape and biodiversity has never been more relevant. The delivery of the HLF funded Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project with project managers Devon Wildlife Trust and our engagement in the River Otter Beaver Project are key areas of activity, alongside our support to community projects via the Sustainable Development Fund. We are also developing partnerships to help protect our trees and woodlands, such a fundamental component of East Devon's landscape character and bolster against the impacts of Ash dieback disease.

Our Farm Facilitation programme is encouraging collaboration between farmers in the management of the countryside and we have delivered a range of events and workshops this year to support this, alongside our collaboration with the Princes Farm Resilience Programme on behalf of the Princes Countryside Fund.

Our work with local communities has been exemplified through the Lottery-funded Legacy to Landscape project and our partnership with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) on the East Devon Way and wider areas of the AONB. These projects have engaged people in the countryside through art and conservation activity, enhancing understanding, appreciation and well-being. The creative relationship with THG is developing positive opportunities for both organisations and we look forward to further developments over the coming years.

Our Defra funding agreement, so critical to our success in delivery, ends in March 2020 and the team and the National Association are working hard to ensure the AONBs are well placed to assist in delivering the government's 25 year Environment Plan through our recently revised AONB Partnership Plan.

The Glover review of designated landscapes will undoubtedly present challenges, but I am sure there will also be opportunities for AONBs. In my final year as Chairman I look forward to a future where those opportunities are fully exploited, and the Partnership is appropriately supported by its local authorities to enable it to continue to play a key role in this special landscape.

COMMITTED TO
CONSERVING AND
ENHANCING OUR
LANDSCAPE

Ladram Bay



LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

Improved coordination and influence in the management of the distinctive landscape and historic environment features of the AONB, to ensure they are maintained, enhanced, understood and appreciated.

ENGAGED A DIVERSE RANGE OF PEOPLE

Legacy to Landscape

The Legacy to Landscape project (L2L) entered its final year and thanks in large part to our enthusiastic project co-ordinator, Ruth Worsley, and the excellent support of our local partners, the project has engaged a diverse range of people in and around the historic Shute Estate and Coly valley.

Once again we have held a wide range of activities looking at the heritage of the area. We use a wide definition of heritage, which included discovering ancient documents in archives and transcribing them, following the route of the proposed, but never built, Colyton Canal and a demonstration by Colyton's own wheelwright. Wildlife is also included so we visited wildflower meadows, tracked dragonfly's and damselfly's down the river and learnt all about the grey long eared bat. Our volunteers also helped enhance their environment through the

collecting of seed from the rare Heath Lobelia and planting Devon apple varieties, including the Crimson Victoria which originates from Shute. We also assisted with an event at Shute Church, where volunteers collected together a staggering 83 varieties of local apple to help orchard owners identify the trees in their orchards.

The project was largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and over the three years engaged with over 4000 people at 142 different events. We have ambitions to continue the fantastic activity the project has inspired and are working with partners to see if we can develop a new dimension that will attract external funding for a further 3 years.

For more information visit www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/our-work/wildlife/legacy-to-landscape



Volunteers spreading mulch around King John's Oak to retain soil moisture.



Seeing how it's done, Colyton's Greg Rowland Wheelwright for the Queen demonstrates. Photo: Helene Buse



Woodbury Castle (Steve Bennett)



Ancient Ash tree, Roncombe valley

Ash Dieback

Ash trees hold a strong cultural, landscape and wildlife place in the UK. Home to almost 1000 species and a highly valued wood for tools and furniture, the importance of our ash woodlands has been calculated annually at over £230m in social and environmental value.

Of England's 10.2% woodland cover in total, 12% is Ash. East Devon AONB, with 18% woodland cover, has around 22% Ash and so Ash Dieback will inevitably hit the AONB hard.

In many East Devon woodlands, lime and field maple, oak or aspen may fill the ecological and landscape gap left by ash. In urban or parkland locations, sycamore may provide a similar function. For silviculture, we may struggle to find broadleaved species that resist squirrel damage as well as ash, so we may need to be open to the idea of more softwoods like Douglas fir or Scots pine, which can provide an income and carbon storage, protection from soil erosion and still offer ecological benefits when compared with some alternative habitats. Whatever our objectives, we need to be planning and planting now to mitigate the impact of the disease.

Since 2012 government has invested over £6 million in research to protect ash from pest and disease threats. As well as basic research into the biology and pathology of the disease, scientists have sequenced the ash genome and the Ash Dieback fungus. Good progress has been made in screening for tolerant trees and conserving the genetic diversity of our native ash trees. The first planting of tolerant ash trees will take place in 2020 and these trees may allow us to develop seed orchards of tolerant trees.

The Devon Ash Dieback Forum (to which East Devon AONB belongs) has produced a set of useful leaflets covering the disease, the importance of ash trees and choosing alternative species. They are promoting the Devon formula of 3-2-1: for every large ash tree removed, three should be replanted to replace it, for a medium tree, replace with two trees and for small trees, replace one for one. Devon Wildlife Trust are taking forward a project called Saving Devon's Treescapes, supported by East Devon AONB, to encourage everyone to get involved with celebrating Ash in our landscape, and planting replacement trees for the future.

AONB Heritage Conference

An established feature in the AONB calendar, the AONB Heritage Conference event continues to attract a diverse range of knowledgeable and stimulating speakers who serve to raise awareness of the rich heritage of the AONB and beyond. The conference, supported by Devon County Council, promotes and raises awareness of the heritage of the AONB and wider areas, as well as promoting action for the historic environment.

This year's conference theme, 'Art, Literature and the Historic Landscape' explored the relationship between art and our landscapes, touching on the role of historic imagery in modern planning and coastal management, the connection between poetry and our experiences of landscape, and the use of art as an engagement tool for exploring the landscape.

Heritage Conference flyer



A detailed flyer for the conference, including a program schedule with times and topics, a list of speakers, and contact information for booking and payment. The program includes sessions on registration, coffee, a keynote by Prof. Robin Milnes, a lunch break, and several talks on topics like 'The Branscombe Project' and 'The Branscombe Project: From and Place, the Case of East Devon'.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE

The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.

East Devon Catchment Partnership

The Catchment Communities Conference, on Friday 19 October 2018, brought together community representatives, land owners and managers, as well as practitioners from the East Devon Catchment Partnership, with a view to working together for the future health of the river catchments of the Axe (including Yarty), Otter, Culm and Clyst.

Neil Parish MP gave the key note speech, setting the context for East Devon catchments and highlighting the opportunities to work together in partnership. A range of interest groups including farmers, farm advisory groups, community action groups, species recovery projects and angling groups, spoke about the great examples of the breadth of projects and action already underway in our catchments.

Delegates shared their knowledge and success stories and came up with fresh ideas for collaborative projects. There were three workshops identifying the big issues affecting our catchments, exploring solutions together and networking to forge alliances.

Following the conference, some of the delegates took part in an hour-long tour of the grounds of Deer Park Country House and the River Otter.

The passion, drive and enthusiasm of the delegates was very clear on the day. Delegates were keen to focus on ways of working together to drive existing projects and initiatives forward and develop new projects, including those led by individual communities or developed through the East Devon Catchment Partnership (who hosted the conference).



Woods for Water and Natural Flood Management (NFM)

The Woods for Water project is being coordinated across the rivers Axe and Otter by the Blackdown Hills AONB with East Devon AONB. Links have been developed with Devon County Council flood team to fund Natural Flood Management actions in key sub-catchments.

The main purpose of the Woods for Water (W4W) programme is to stimulate woodland planting and management that will benefit water bodies suffering from phosphate and sediment problems. A secondary element of the project is to apply SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) measures in existing woodlands and proposed planting areas that are outside the scope of Countryside Stewardship.

The emphasis is on new woodland and tree planting under Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant or others e.g. Woodland Trust. The project has focused on those parts of the Otter & Axe catchments that are most failing Water Framework Directive (WFD) water quality targets. It has also sought to link to the NFM project by targeting those sub-catchments upstream of settlements that have a significant number of properties at risk; namely the Coly and Corry.



Leaky dams are being installed through the NFM project to slow the flow.

The W4W programme has created 5 woodland schemes, 3 small planting areas and 5 SuDS totalling around £60k of funding investment in the East Devon catchments. In addition, six farms have installed SuDS measures under the NFM programme, with 47 leaky dams (large woody, brush, flow spreaders), 2 watercourse crossings, 609m watercourse fencing and a cross drain.





Ash firewood

Woods to woodfuel

This year, with support from the Forestry Commission, we undertook a joint review with the Blackdown Hills AONB on the opportunities and barriers to supporting the effective management of woodlands and their potential as a resource for woodfuel. The review carried out visits to a range of farms and land-holdings across the AONBs and found the following headline issues:

- Environmental and ecological reasons appeared to be one of the primary motivations. Financial return was highly rated by some, but was a lesser factor for owners of recreational woodland and a charitable Woodland Trust. Improving amenity and farmland diversity were also recognised drivers.
- Barriers included accessibility (especially gradient and soil conditions), lack of woodland infrastructure, abstraction (size of timber, lack of abstraction points), poor quality of timber, safety factors around some stands and demand for specific tree species.
- There was a general concern over grant aid in relation to the complexity of applications; a sense that it is primarily for start-up schemes and seemed not to assist in continuation and consolidation. It was also evident that the degree of uncertainty around the future of subsidies and the agricultural economy in general, combined to make landowners more reticent to make

potentially large investments in what may be long-term returns.

- Many woodland owners would consider the involvement of community woodfuel and/or conservation groups to assist in management.
- Local wood processors would be willing to utilise local sources, but larger companies require higher quality timber than is available and a reliability of supply that could not be met locally. Imported timber is often pre-treated, milled, of high quality and cheaper than local suppliers.
- Smaller companies are interested in smaller loads but have specific species requirements.
- There are viable opportunities to create employment in arboreal management and to develop a practical skills base in all aspects of woodland, forestry and timber management.
- There is a general view that while the present timber economy is buoyant, that local woods remain very much on the margin of economic viability and that quality and supply are such that it may take a significant period of time and economic and social investment to bring them into secured viability.

If you have a small woodland that you would like some advice on, contact the AONB team.



BIODIVERSITY

The conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity and geological assets of the AONB.

River Otter Beaver Trial

The five-year River Otter Beaver Trial (ROBT) is now entering its final year, and the emphasis is on the completion of the research work, and the development of the outputs for government. The population size of beavers on the River Otter is becoming increasingly difficult to assess accurately, but the most recent winter survey combined with trapping data from 2019 identified seven breeding pairs, and a further six locations where a focus on feeding behaviour suggests one or more resident animals may be holding a territory. With many young animals in the population, there are likely to be a number of singletons in this second category.

A second beaver mortality was detected in 2018/19, and the body recovered from Chesil Beach. Although it was confirmed as originating from the River Otter, the body was too decomposed to provide any useful information.

The ROBT Steering Group are preparing for scenarios where the beavers are permitted to remain on the river beyond the end of the trial and are producing a Beaver Management Strategy Framework that outlines how beavers could be managed in the River Otter. This will be published in summer 2019. As part of the preparations for scenarios where beavers are permitted to remain in the wild on the River Otter, the stakeholder engagement work has become particularly focused on those key stakeholders that may have a role in the future management of beavers and their effects.



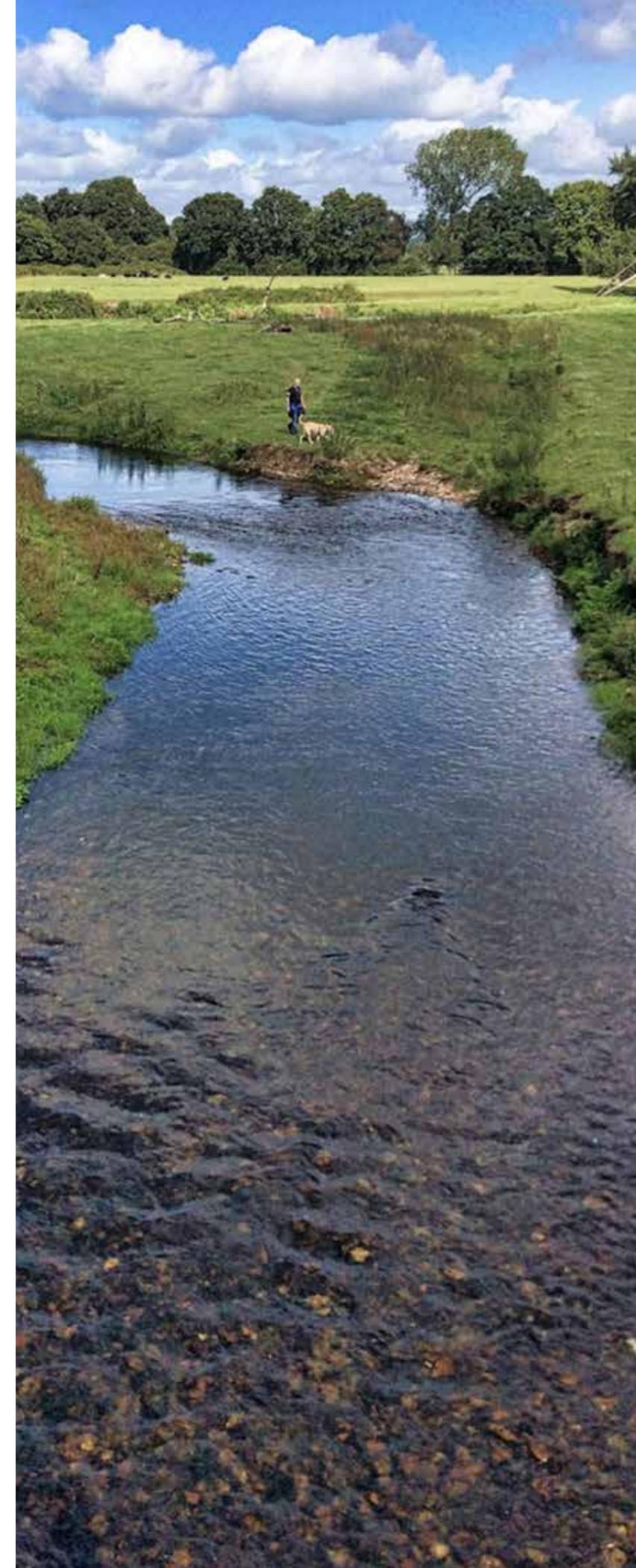
Some signs of beaver activity are obvious!

MYTH-BUSTING FACTS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF ADDRESSING CONCERNS

As they colonise new areas of the catchment, the opportunities to study impacts and interactions with existing land-use and river users are increasing. Where issues are raised, often through the 'beaver hotline' email address, a rapid response is provided, with advice and support to resolve any impacts. Where concerns about beaver feeding on large trees are raised, fencing and sandy paint are being used to protect those trees. Riverside orchards are high risk areas and proactive work with orchard owners/tree nurseries is ongoing.

A Protocol for Passage Assessment of Beaver Dams (The PAD Protocol) has been developed to guide the manipulation of beaver dams to aid fish passage during the autumn fish migration season.

The astonishing levels of interest in beavers and their ecology and management continues to generate a large number of opportunities to speak to stakeholder groups and provide information. A further 90 beaver events/presentations were provided in 2018/19, engaging with around 4,000 people. This brings the total for the whole Trial to 352 events and approximately 16,000 people. Many of the presentation attendees come with genuine questions and concerns - the provision of accurate information and 'myth-busting facts' is a very important part of addressing these concerns.



Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat project

A partnership of 17 organisations including fellow AONB's and conservation bodies have been busy delivering this county wide £2m Heritage Lottery Funded project. Lead partner Devon Wildlife Trust deliver the five year initiative that will develop policy, work with landowners, provide advice, inform people about the bats, deliver education programmes and create habitat improvements across Devon.

During the year the project has worked with Farway, Branscombe and Beer Primary Schools and Millwater School; the project has Bat Buddy Awards which the schools work towards, with Millwater School receiving a gold award this year. With Partners they have organised hedge planting and laying so volunteers can help to improve bat commuter routes through the countryside. They have also organised a number of bat walks to show how the bats use the countryside to feed and travel and how conservation work for the bats also benefits other rare species by enhancing connectivity and improving the quality of the habitat. For real night owls, bat emergence talks have been organised outside a roost giving people a chance to see and count the bats at dusk as they come out to feed.



Farway Primary School learn about bat predators. (Helen Parr)

Bat Friendly Beer, an initiative to celebrate that the community has these rare creatures in their parish, has gone from strength to strength with several talks and events being organised by the community and supported by local businesses.



Local people have really helped the project and got behind the Devon Bat Survey. They have placed bat detectors in a hedge or orchard and left them for 4 nights to count the bat calls whilst you sleep. This has helped to build up our knowledge of the presence of the 17 species of British bats across Devon and the AONB.



Setting up a bat detector

COAST

The conservation and enhancement of the high quality and internationally significant coastline

Jurassic Coast Trust

In the past two years, from transition from Local Authority structure to an independent charitable trust, The Jurassic Coast Trust has established a baseline of sustainable income that has enabled the creation of exciting new projects that closely align to organisational aims.

The Trust was delighted to be one of the partners responsible for bringing Dippy to Dorset and creating the Natural History Adventure outreach programme, which engaged over 20,000 visitors, schools and local communities along the breadth of the Jurassic Coast. The Trust has created key pieces of work, which have become resources for delivery partners across the coast, including the Jurassic Coast Story Book and the Learning Framework, which

considers all audiences living, working and visiting the coast and how all partners can tailor communication to capacity build and achieve outcomes.

The new membership scheme continues to grow and has been successful in securing funding to deliver new projects, such as the Jurassic Coast Volunteer Network, which aims to build passion and skills for a new generation of volunteers.

The Trust is currently creating the new 5 year Partnership Plan for the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and partners; this will articulate the vision and mission for collaborative working to achieve core aims, as identified by partners.



THE NEW
MEMBERSHIP
SCHEME
CONTINUES
TO GROW

Beach management plans

Last year we reported on AONB involvement in beach management plans at Seaton and Sidmouth. With regular cliff falls at the eastern end of the Sidmouth seafront there remain anxieties around the impact and erosion levels of the coastline.

At Sidmouth, a draft outline business case has now been produced for an additional rock groyne to the East of the town to help retain a beach in front of the cliffs there, and the replenishment of the town beach as well as raising of the splashwall along the back of the esplanade to manage the risk to flooding to the town. At present, there is a shortfall in the funding required to be provided locally and East Devon are in discussions with various organisations to seek to address this.

In Seaton, the plans are to improve the existing concrete and rock revetments and a draft outline business case has been produced. Unfortunately, due to the relatively low number of properties benefiting from any proposed changes, funding is unlikely to be available within the current Environment Agency programme. Again, additional partnership funding is likely to be required to get approval for the project.

IMPACT AND
EROSION LEVELS
OF THE COASTLINE



Sidmouth
seafront

FARMING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

a sustainable farming and land management sector that helps conserve and enhance the character of the AONB



Looking at the benefits of mixing chicory, bird's-foot trefoil and other herbs with grasses.

East Devon Farmers Group - farm facilitation

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) facilitation fund supports people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. It builds on the principles of partnership working to deliver environmental benefits supported through earlier farmer-led Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and farmer clusters.

Our East Devon Farmers Group, now consists of over 60 farms, sitting in the heart of the AONB, and we are delivering the initiative with FWAG SW and the Devon Greater Horseshoe bat project, as joint advisors.

The Group meets roughly monthly depending upon the challenges of the farming calendar. With the hot dry summer

our alternative forage crop trials proved very timely and generated much interest, being a highly visible field of green in a parched landscape. This mix of grasses and herbs roots more deeply in the soil so can access moisture and nutrients not available to pure grass mixes.

The Group submitted 11 applications for Countryside Stewardship grants for assistance with enhancing the environment and landscape of the AONB.

We have also expanded the support we give these farmers and have helped organise a farm safety day and a book keeping course for members and have connected them with other training opportunities being offered locally, including IT skill development run by Cosmic and Business Advice supplied by East Devon District Council through B.I.P.

For further details contact Pete Youngman at 01404 310012 or pete.youngman@eastdevonaonb.org.uk

Princes Countryside Fund – Farm Resilience Programme

East Devon AONB Partnership is delighted to be partnering with The Prince's Countryside Fund to deliver The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme, with support from the EDDC's East Devon Business Centre, Honiton.

The aim of the programme is to support family farm businesses to improve their confidence, efficiency and resilience. An added bonus of the programme is that it brings together like minded small-to-medium sized family farm enterprises in local networks, to help them review their current activity and identify opportunities and improvements that can be made on-farm to build resilience, and to help sustain a diverse farming sector in the UK.

The Programme structure comprises of a series of group workshops and one-on-one meetings with local co-ordinators. A key feature of the programme is the Business Health Check Tool; an entry-level benchmarking tool designed to demonstrate the benefits of improved record keeping on farm, and allow anonymised comparison against similar businesses.

The initial 5 workshops were delivered in 2017-18 then during the summer of 2018 we carried out on-farm visits to help the families develop their farm action plans. There were then two final workshops one focused on succession planning and the final event looking at farm diversification and making better use of redundant farm buildings.

Further details can be found at www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/farmresilience

BUILD RESILIENCE
AND HELP
SUSTAIN A DIVERSE
FARMING SECTOR



Resilience programme family farm members

ACCESS, RECREATION AND TOURISM

A sustainable access, recreation and tourism sector that is in keeping with AONB purposes and does not harm the conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

East Devon Way

This long-distance walking route through the heart of the AONB is a key area of work for the team and this year we have been focussing on improving our website presence and making further enhancements to the routing, in particular on the pebblebed heaths. In addition, we have partnered up with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) in Honiton to deliver an art-based engagement programme on the route, which was part of an exhibition we held alongside our 2018 Annual Meeting.

Art on the East Devon Way focused on engaging a diverse range of people on the route, including primary and special school students, through the medium of art. A series of events were delivered across summer 2018. Our positive partnership with Emma Molony and Anna Aroussi at the THG secured funding from Defra/AONB, Tesco, Northbrook Community Fund, Parishes together Fund and the Arts Council.

The success of the collaboration with THG has led on to a successor project which will get underway in 2019. 'Tree to Sea', involving contemporary art and artists, revisits the work of local Victorian antiquarian Peter Orlando

Hutchinson, who painted many well-known East Devon scenes. The artists will work with coastal communities, schools, Sidmouth Museum and boatbuilder/storyteller Gail McGarva.

Gail will use her Story Boat to bring to life the heritage of East Devon coastal communities, including Beer and Sidmouth, through creative writing, music, visual art and craft.

The Sidmouth and East Devon Walking Festival, encompassing the East Devon Way, continues to grow and had another successful year in 2018. The East Devon Way provides a focal point for this now well-established event and walkers will have the opportunity to complete the whole route through 4 stage walks across the festival period.

The festival will take place 22-27 September 2019. For further details see www.visitsidmouth.co.uk/sidmouth-events/sidmouth-walking-festival

2019 WALKING FESTIVAL
22-27 SEPT



Art on the East Devon Way

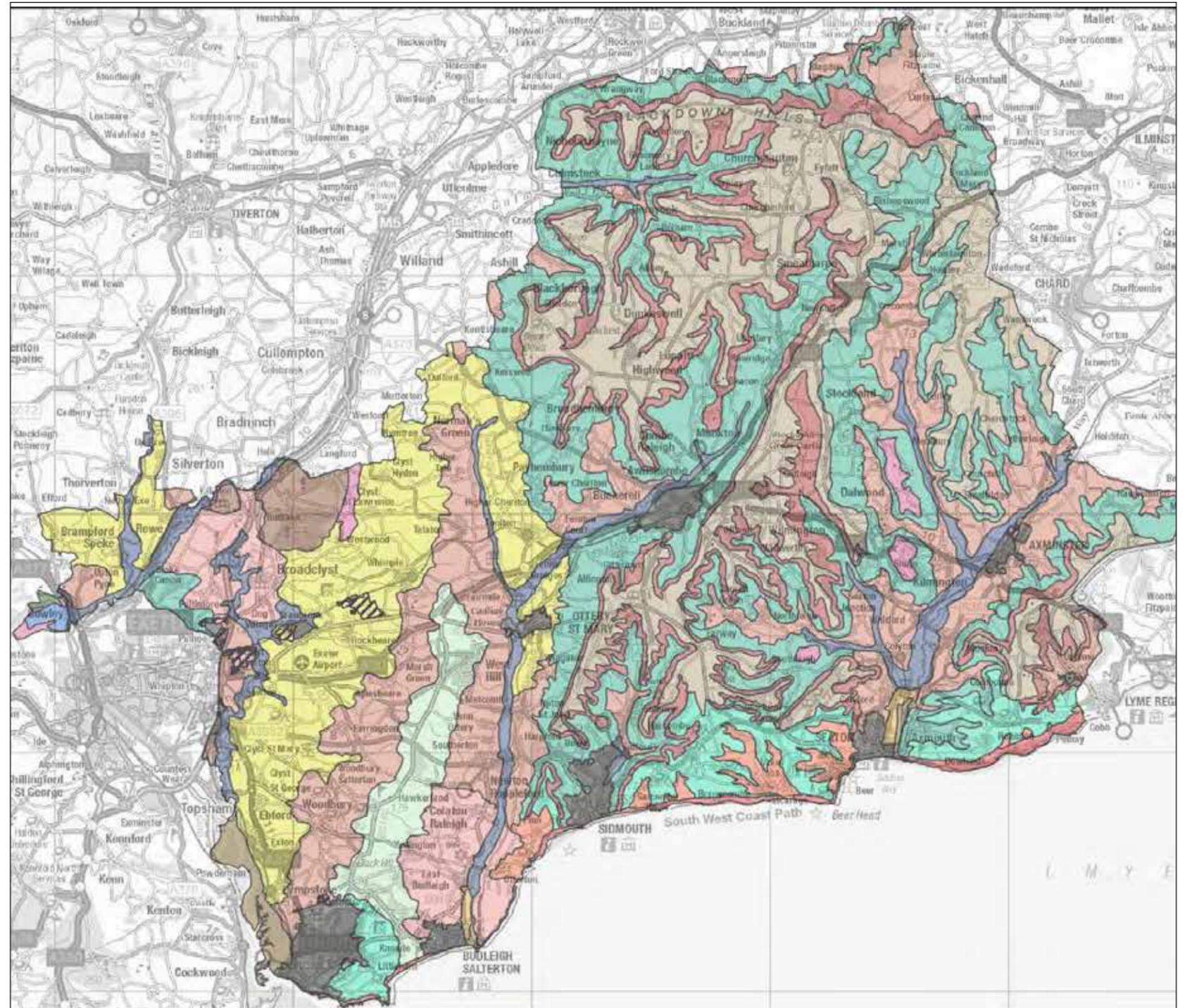
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Planning development and policy protects the special landscape character and tranquillity of the AONB and will enable appropriate forms of social and economic development that are compatible with the landscape, so conserving and enhancing the environment

Landscape character

Through the AONB team, the AONB Partnership continues to respond to planning consultations, where resources allow, under a protocol with the local planning authorities. Although not a statutory consultee, our involvement often involves consultation with the statutory consultee for AONBs, Natural England and we use the landscape character assessment models available at National, County and District scale to frame our responses.

The District Council wide landscape character assessment for East Devon (including both AONBs) was revised across 2018-19, updating the assessment model in line with the broader County level assessment and following nationally accepted protocols. Over the last 20 years or so, the landscape character assessment model has become much more embedded in the planning process and an integral part of medium to large scale development proposals across rural areas. The revised assessment will be incorporated into future consultation responses from the AONB and serve to guide strategic approaches to landscape management across the area.



Landscape character map of East Devon including all of the Blackdown Hills AONB into Somerset



AONB Partnership Plan

The plan for the AONB is a statutory document which is required to undergo a review every five years. It guides the work of the AONB Partnership and Team and is a key part of our business plan relationship with Defra, our main funder.

This year we undertook a light touch review of the plan, given the uncertain circumstances we are currently in but used the opportunity to confirm our priorities for future action and targets. Internal and external consultations were carried out across 2017/18 alongside regulatory assessments to ensure the plan policies were 'sound'. The renamed Partnership Plan was adopted by Devon County and East Devon District Councils in March 2019 and will be supported by an annual delivery plan.



Julian Glover and Sarah Mukherjee (right) visiting Dorset AONB and the Jurassic Coast.

Glover review

On 27th May 2018 Environment Secretary Michael Gove committed to conserve and enhance England's most cherished landscapes as a review launched into the nation's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Nearly 70 years after the country's National Parks were first established, opening up the countryside and allowing more people to connect with nature, an independent panel will look at how these iconic landscapes meet our needs in the 21st century – including whether there is scope for the current network of 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks to expand.

The review, led by writer Julian Glover, will also explore how access to these beloved landscapes can be improved, how those who live and work in them can be better supported, and their role in growing the rural economy.

Weakening or undermining their existing protections or geographic scope will not be part of the review, which will instead focus on how designated areas can boost wildlife, support the recovery of natural habitats and connect more people with nature.

Undertaking a review is one of the key commitments of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan, which outlines our vision for improving the environment over a generation by connecting people with nature and helping wildlife to thrive.

The AONB responded to the review on behalf of the Partnership and the National Association for AONBs coordinated a prospectus for feeding into the review.

You can read more about the Landscapes review here: www.gov.uk/government/news/national-parks-review-launched

RURAL ECONOMY AND SERVICES

A sustainable rural economy that serves to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the landscape



Making it Local

After two rounds of additional funding received from EU exchange rate adjustments, the Making It Local final budget of £1.9m has enabled approximately £1.6m support to project allocation across the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB wider area. The programme is now 98.5% committed with £1.58m allocated to projects supporting 52 local businesses including farmers, foresters; rural businesses and community groups, creating 73 jobs in the local area. A final project approval meeting is scheduled for autumn 2019 and the programme will complete financially in late 2020.



Otter Dairy new facilities supported by Making it Local

Summary funding and outputs for Making it Local (2017-2022)

Priority	No. of projects	Value (£)	Jobs supported
1 Support to increase farm productivity	18	546,828	8.5
2 Support for micro and small businesses (non-agricultural) and farm diversification	23	585,229	46.8
3 Support for rural tourism	4	353,394	12.95
4 Provision of rural services	1	11,040	1
5 Support for cultural and heritage activity	2	24,140	0.88
6 Support for increasing forestry productivity	4	57,653	2.4

The Making it Local programme has had a significant impact on the rural economy of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs and we are in dialogue with economic development officers at Devon County Council on how the AONBs can continue to support future Rural Development funding to our rural communities.

SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT ON THE
RURAL ECONOMY

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Improved access to services and facilities and the active participation in community and appropriate landscape related social enterprise

SUPPORTING SMALL SCALE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Sustainable Development Fund

Thanks to Defra support we continue to operate a Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to support small scale community initiatives across the AONB. The SDF panel comprises Alistair Handyside (CLA), Ian Todd (NFU), Greg Page-Turner (FSB), Geoff Pook (EDDC) and Ruth Angell (Donkey Sanctuary). The fund can provide funding up to £4k, with applications requesting more than £1k SDF being decided by the panel and those seeking under £1k SDF delegated to the AONB Manager. All applications undergo an officer assessment and project scoring to ensure funding is allocated to proposals that are in support of AONB management plan policies and achieve a minimum threshold.

The SDF Panel applications are considered on a rolling application window and determined by majority decision. Last year's SDF supported a wide range of projects across the AONB and geared the funding by over three times.

Recipient	Project outcomes	Recipient status	SDF claimed (£)	Project value (£)
Axminster Heritage	A garden themed upon the plants that Thomas Whitty originally used to introduce the colourful patterns in Axminster carpets	Charity	3,554	4864
Devon Wildlife Trust	Bat conservation through building of a purpose-built bat roost.	Charity	4000	21000
Thelma Hulbert Gallery	Connecting communities to their environment through art.	Council	3000	17900
Axe Vale and District Conservation Society	Enhanced audio interpretation of nature reserve	Charity	1800	2410
Total			£ 20,007*	£64,888

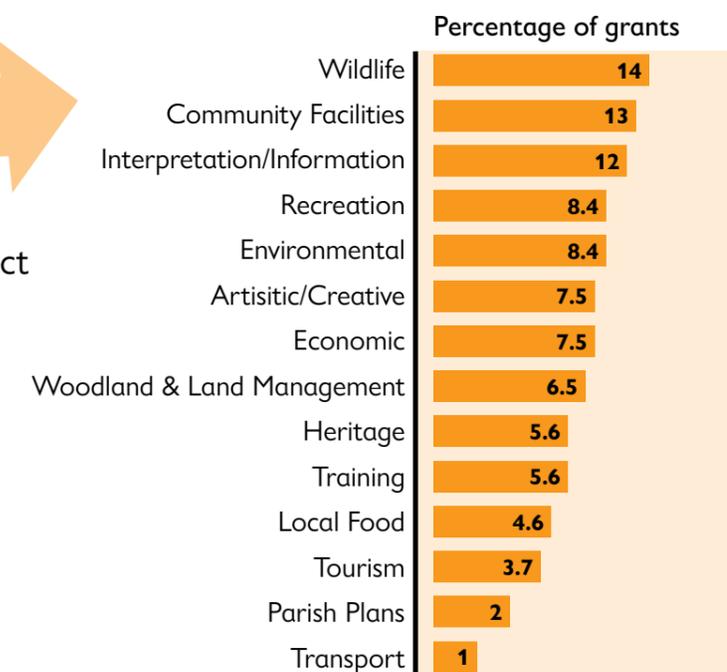
*Includes admin fee

Recipient	Project outcomes	Recipient status	SDF claimed (£)	Project value (£)
Seaton Town Council	Development of a round town heritage trail	Council	1,897	2550
RSPB	Development of bat hibernaculum	Charity	536	4081
East Devon Excellence	Promotion of tourism destinations and accommodation providers to encourage repeat visits	Business group	2,302	8800
Honiton Millennium Green	Environmental enhancements to public open space in Honiton.	Charity	2,718	3200

SDF grant multiplier effect 2009/18



Grant allocation by category % (2009/18)



COMMUNICATION, AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

A greater awareness of the AONB, the purposes of the designation, the role of the Partnership and the range of opportunities for involvement in environmental education

The Acland Award and Annual AONB Meeting

Our 16th Annual meeting was hosted at the Beehive community building in Honiton.

With a theme of wellbeing, the event focused on recognising the benefits of an outdoors lifestyle and the role the natural environment plays in our wellbeing. We enjoyed keynote presentations from Dave Stone, Chief Scientist at Natural England, Virginia Pearson, Director for Public Health at DCC and artist Anne-Marie Culhane.

This year's Acland Award, which forms an important part of our Annual Meeting, also focussed on art, well-being and the environment. Once again, we had some excellent submissions from a wide range of organisations, demonstrating the breadth and depth of activity across the AONB.

Top awards went to:

Winner - Axe Vale and District Conservation Society - for their varied community conservation and activity programme

Highly Commended - Otter Valley Association - for their walking and community programmes

Commended - Wild East Devon and Leisure East Devon for their education/conservation and healthy walking projects.



Annual Meeting Q&A session



Acland Award winners 2018

AONB Ambassadors

Our February Ambassador networking meeting is now a regular slot in the calendar and this year we hosted our Ambassadors at the AONB HQ, Kennaway House.

Delegates received an AONB update on our work to conserve the landscape, heritage and wildlife in East Devon AONB; Sustainable Tourism in East Devon from Alistair Handyside, Chair of the South West Tourism Alliance

(also our East Devon AONB Vice Chair) and insights into the varied projects and valuable work of our recent Acland Award 2018 winner - the Axe Vale and District Conservation Society.

The trademark 'speed networking' session was replaced with a series of 'lightening' talks from our network members and received a big thumbs up as a better format for all concerned.



Field visit to the river Coly

July field event

Our field events are aimed at our Ambassador network and Partnership as well as other interested parties. This year's event focused on the importance and role of trees in our landscape, in particular their relationship to water quality and flood risk.

Presentations were provided by a wide range of partners engaged in projects across the AONB including Forestry Commission, Devon Flood



Risk Team, Blackdown Hills AONB and West Country Rivers Trust. A short walk along the nearby river Coly explored issues of flood risk and natural flood management further.

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

The Partnership will act as ambassadors for East Devon AONB, influence policy and decision making affecting AONBs and work to secure funding for the long-term coordinated management of the area, annually reporting on its actions

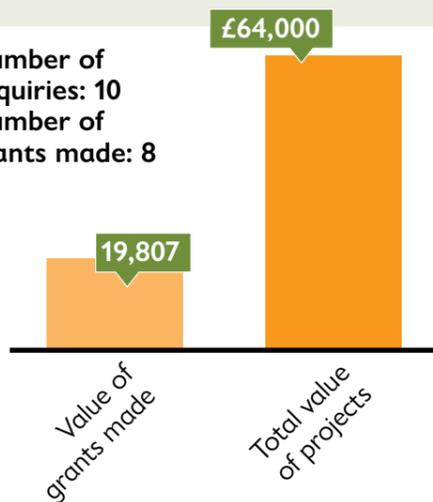
Staffing and operations

Core budgets were slightly over for this year with variations on staffing and travel costs, the latter as a result of increased engagement with National AONB programmes under the Taking the Lead HLF funded transition programme which is seeking to enable the AONB family to adapt and develop under current public sector austerity measures.

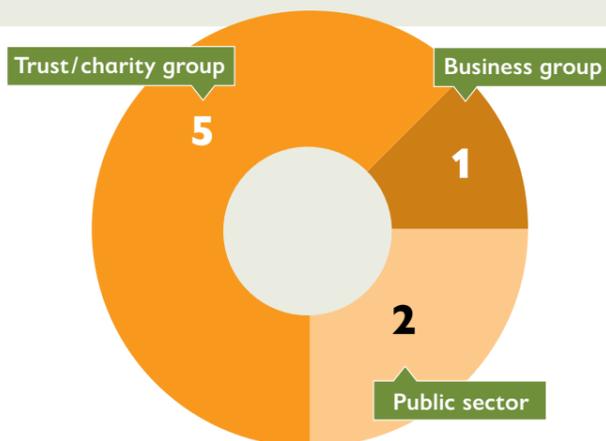
Our projects budgets supported additional work associated with the Management Plan review and survey work, IT equipment and research/development for a citizen science monitoring project. We have also been revising our website and developing a successor HLF project to the successful Legacy to Landscape activity. Data/evidence has also been collated which we hope will assist our proposals for a Defra Test and Trial project under the emerging Environmental Land Management System.

SDF grants

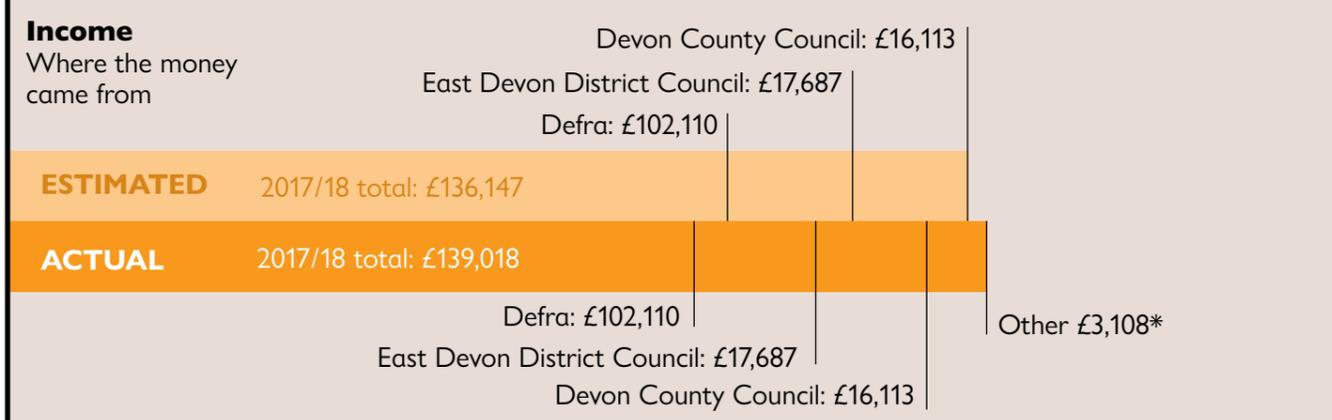
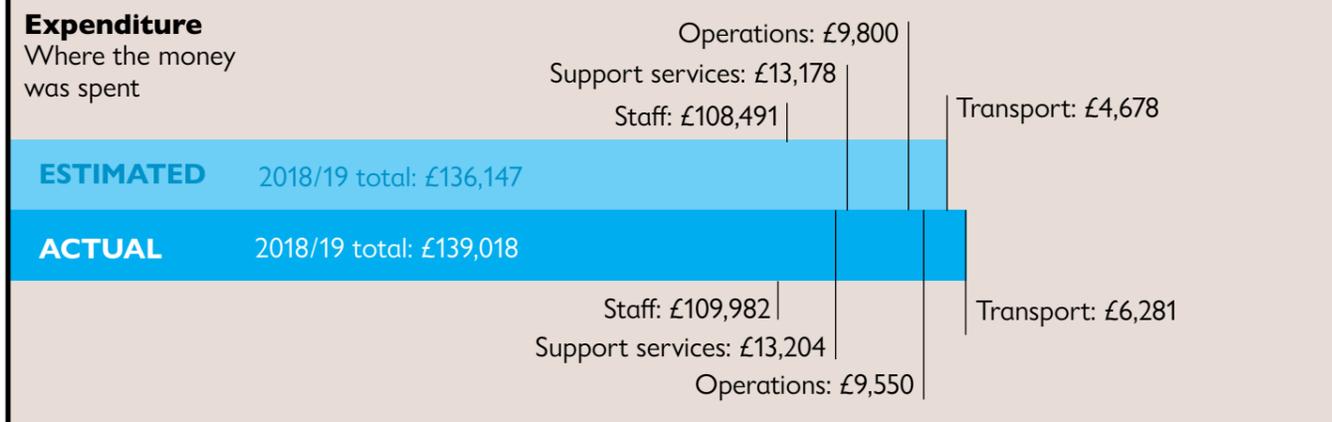
- ✓ Number of enquiries: 10
- ✓ Number of grants made: 8



SDF fund recipients



Core Funding



* includes £1500 in kind support from EDDC

Defra project funding

■ Estimated ■ Actual

Sustainable Development Fund



East Devon Way



Project Development



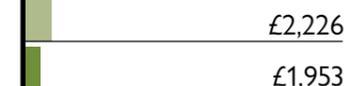
Legacy to Landscape



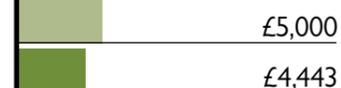
Management Plan Review/Research



Ambassador Scheme



Natural Capital



Totals



Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A designation for the 21st century

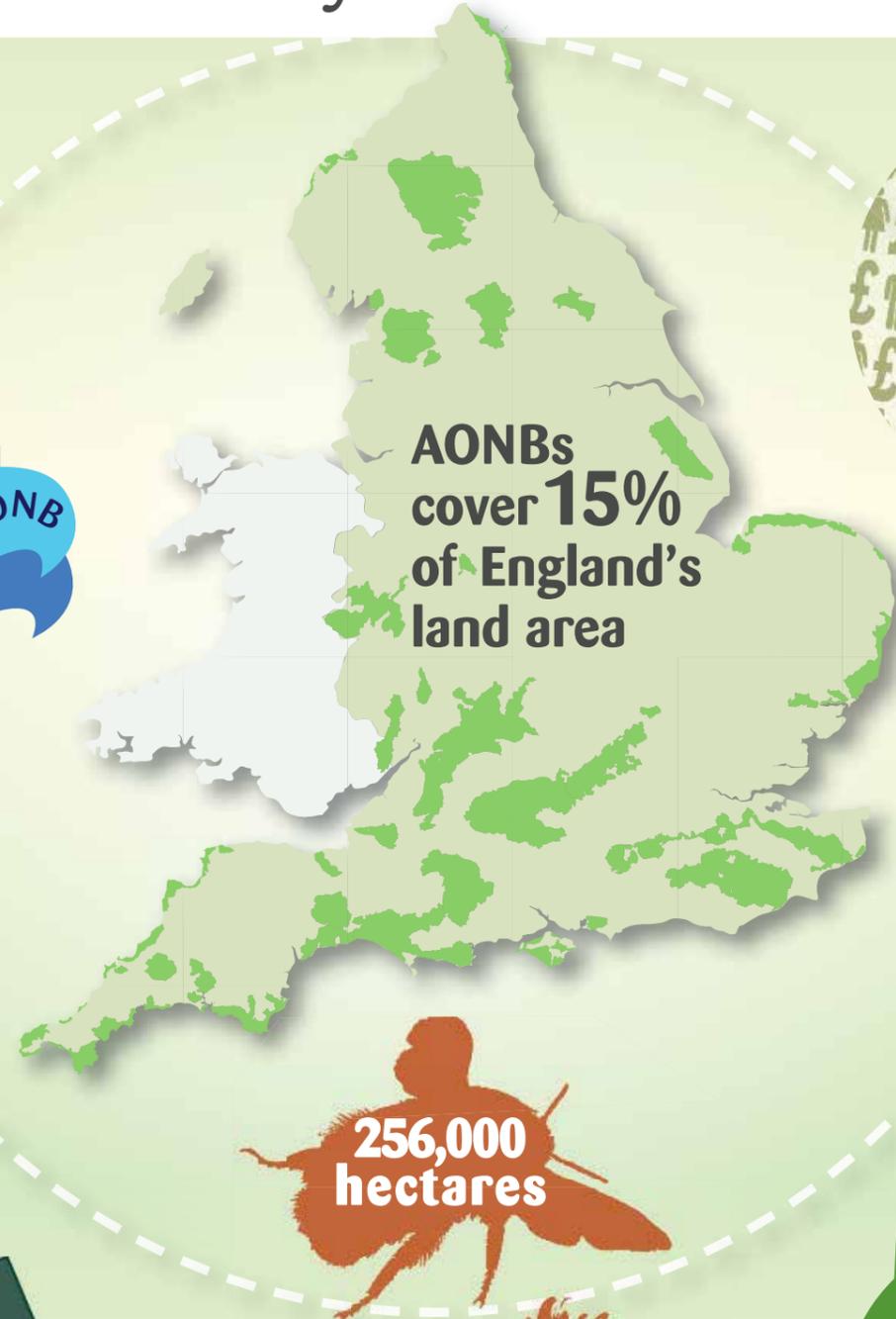
Landscapes
for life
.org.uk

THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
Areas of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

>19,312km of footpaths
and bridleways pass through
AONBs including 10 National Trails

Just under
1/5th
of the English coast is in an AONB

Peat soils in
AONBs store
millions of tonnes
of **CO₂**
per year

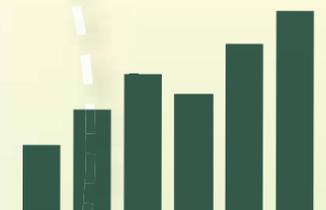


AONBs
cover **15%**
of England's
land area

Public spending
on AONBs is
LESS THAN
20P
PER PERSON
PER YEAR



AONB
volunteers
put in over
457,000
work days
a year, worth
£36.8m
to conserve the
landscape and improve
access



GVA of AONBs is
£16.5BN
– similar to that of the
city of Leeds

156m
people
visit AONBs
annually,
spending in
excess of **£2bn**
and supporting
thousands of jobs
and businesses

AONBs are
home to over
1 million
people

256,000
hectares

of SSSIs are
in AONBs –
protecting
some of our
most important
wildlife habitats

x10
AONBs
provide excellent
VFM. Every public £1
invested is turned into
£10 by the AONB
partnerships

MORE THAN
66%
of people in
England live within
1/2HR
travel of an
AONB

EAST DEVON AONB AT A GLANCE



LANDSCAPES FOR LIFE

The National Association for AONBs is the national voice for 46 AONBs across the UK



- AONBs are about managing positive landscape change
 - AONBs are strategic national assets covering 8,000 square miles and involving 700 elected members
 - AONBs are locally managed nationally important landscape areas
- Visit landscapesforlife.org.uk for further information.

1963

DESIGNATED IN 1963



COVERS 32% OF EAST DEVON (268 KM²)



HOME TO APPROXIMATELY 30,000 RESIDENTS



40 MILE EAST DEVON WAY LONG DISTANCE FOOTPATH



OVER 100 EAST DEVON AONB AMBASSADORS



58 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS



855 LISTED BUILDINGS



14 SITES OF SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC INTEREST



29 MILES OF COAST INC SOUTH WEST COAST PATH



ALMOST 18% WOODLAND COVER



The East Devon AONB Partnership is a joint initiative:

- Hosted by East Devon District Council
- Core funded by Defra (75%), East Devon District and Devon County Councils (25%)
- Guiding the implementation of the AONB Management Strategy and the work of the AONB team.

FUNDED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:

