

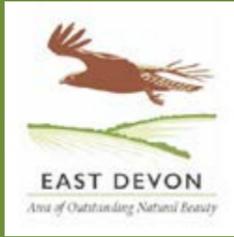


EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

East Devon Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty
Partnership

**ANNUAL
REVIEW
2019/20**



Front cover image:
View south, Bowd

Right: View east,
red bridge, River Otter,
Harpford

Back page: View north,
to Musbury Castle



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Alistair Handyside MBE
Chairman, East Devon
AONB Partnership

AMBITIOUS PLEDGES
FOR THE COMING
DECADE

As I sit down to write this foreword, we are in the grip of one of the most significant events the world has experienced since the Second World War.

At the tail end of this report period, COVID19 hit in the UK and we entered a long period of lockdown.

This highly transmittable disease has and will continue to change our lives, requiring us to reset our dial on what we now regard as normal.

Our 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.

Species extinction and climate change was high on the public agenda in 2019-20 and with the Government's 25year Environment Plan and Landscape Review, conserving and enhancing our landscape and biodiversity has never been more relevant.

The Landscape Review, undertaken by Julian Glover and a panel of experts visiting all AONBs and National Parks, formulated a wide-ranging report with 27 proposals and challenges for the future.

In parallel the National Association for AONBs launched a statement to government on the AONB commitment to nature - the Colchester Declaration, with ambitious pledges for the coming decade.

Our work with farmers and land managers will be critical to delivering the Colchester Declaration and alongside our existing Farm Facilitation programme, it was particularly pleasing to be part of the successful National Association for AONBs proposal for the national Environmental Land Management Test and Trials programme.

Our Defra funding agreement, so critical to our success in delivery and partnerships, has been extended to March 2021 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 beyond 2021.

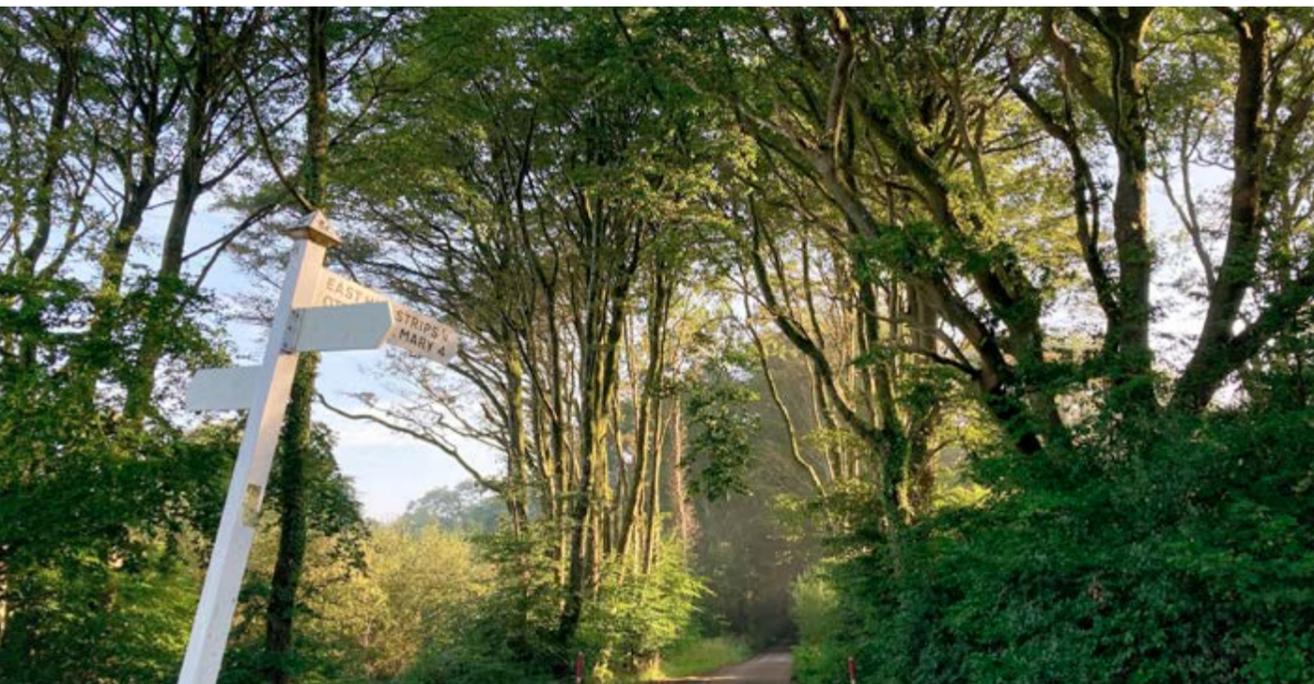
In my first year as Chairman, I look forward to charting our path out of lockdown and towards a greener and brighter future, where opportunities are fully exploited and the Partnership remains key to conserving and enhancing this special landscape for all communities.

TOWARDS A
GREENER AND
BRIGHTER
FUTURE



LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

Managing the distinctive landscape and historic environment features of the AONB, to ensure they are maintained, enhanced, understood and appreciated.



ONCE LOST, THEY
CANNOT BE
RECREATED.

Action for woodlands:

Rediscovering our ancient woodland and championing trees

This year we have provided support to two key collaboration projects across Devon that are focusing on woodlands past, present and future;

Both initiatives have emerged at a time when trees are receiving increasing public attention as an important component of mitigating and combating climate change, as well as assist in reducing flood risk, soil loss and erosion.

An Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) survey across Devon

The Ancient Woodland Inventory in England identifies and classifies those woods that share centuries of continuity on relatively undisturbed soils.

They cover only 2.6% of England, making up less than a third of our total woodland resource. As a group, they are our most important woodlands for their rich wildlife and cultural heritage. They create a link with the past: ecological touchstones in a changing landscape. Once lost they cannot be recreated.

The existing inventory has grown to become an essential reference tool for planners and developers, policy makers, landowners, foresters, conservationists, landscape historians, and many others keen to protect and restore these special wooded habitats.

However, it was originally developed during the 1980s, when computerised mapping was in its infancy, and as such has many omissions and inaccuracies.

This has, in some cases, seen ancient woodlands lost or damaged by development or inappropriate management simply because they are not recorded on the Inventory – this is particularly true of smaller sites.

Over time, our knowledge of different types of wooded habitats and their values has increased our understanding of ancient wood-pastures.

There have also been significant steps taken to restore some ancient woodlands damaged by conifer plantations, yet these positive changes are going unrecorded.

The basic methods for identifying ancient woodland have not changed, but policy, public awareness, technology, expertise and knowledge has, making a full update both more feasible and more urgent.



The AONB has provided support to a coalition of partners, coordinated through Devon Wildlife Trust, to substantially update the inventory across Devon.

The aim is to produce a substantially updated inventory, using a consistent and quality controlled methodology (as defined by Natural England here) to create an accurate record of ancient woodland and ancient wood-pasture in England, including recording any losses sustained or other changes since the Inventory was last updated.

The high-level objectives for doing this work are:

- To facilitate good development and speed up planning decisions so that all irreplaceable ancient woodland and wood-pasture receive the protection they need;
- To provide baseline data to focus improved management and restoration of ancient woodland, ultimately increasing their long-term resilience and value to society;
- To assist with targeting of woodland creation and tree planting that buffers and connects ancient woodland fragments to create more robust habitat networks;
- To increase understanding and involvement in the cultural history and ecological values of ancient woodland, strengthening public and professional support for ancient woodland.



Saving Devon's Treescapes (previously Trees Outside Woodlands)

Devon Wildlife Trust are taking forward a project called Saving Devon's Treescapes, supported by East Devon AONB and others, to encourage everyone to get involved with celebrating Ash in our landscape and planting replacement trees for the future. Devon's treescapes are stunning and crucial habitats for so much wildlife and make Devon the special place it is.

But our treescapes are under threat from ash dieback; which is estimated will kill at least 90% of Devon's ash trees in the coming years. It will affect everyone, but everyone can be part of the solution. The project is leading on fighting ash dieback on behalf of the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum and is looking for Devon's communities to get involved and help us to save Devon's our precious treescapes.



The Devon Ash Dieback Forum (to which East Devon AONB also belongs) has produced a set of useful leaflets including 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.

For more details on how to get involved with the project click [HERE](#).

Heritage conference

Each year we work with local historians and experts to convene an annual conference on the Historic Environment with the kind support of Devon County Council Historic Environment team.

An established feature in the AONB calendar, the event continues to attract great support and has provided a wealth of eminent and local speakers to stimulate and engage and raise awareness of the cultural heritage of the AONB.

The conference explored themes relating to the local distinctiveness of East Devon museums, the landscape that surrounds them and the history of their collections.

The 2013 Seaton Down Hoard Roman coin find in East Devon, presented by Bill Horner, was of particular interest to the audience.

The find, by a local metal detector and one of the largest in the country, was carefully excavated and is now on display in Exeter's RAMM Museum and on their website.



Heritage revealed

Towards the end of the financial year we used development funding to support a Devon County Council led proposal to undertake a survey of a historic farmstead/former roman villa near Bicton College.

The dry summer of 2018 exposed a great many new heritage sites in the landscape via aerial photography and the site at Bicton stood out as worthy of further investigation.

Survey's will be undertaken in a series of phases and it is anticipated the final results will lead to community engagement and on-site activity.



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE

The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.

Corry and Coly Natural Flood Management project

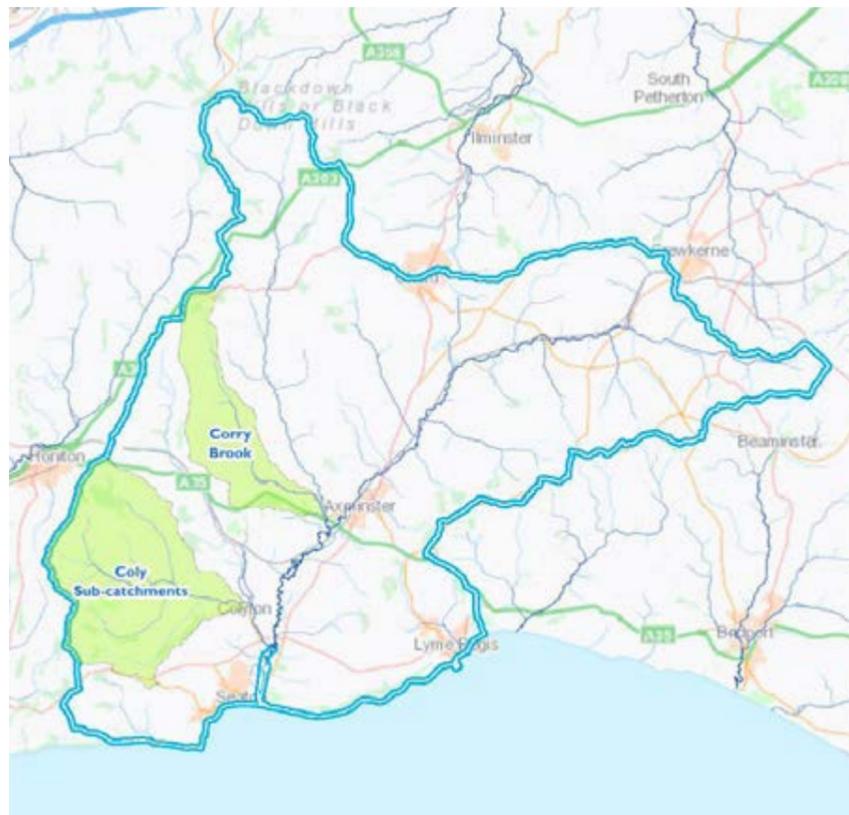
The Coly and Corry Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project focused on two East Devon sub-catchments of the river Axe.

Initiated in April 2019, with a completion date of March 2020, the main aim of the project was to reduce the risk of flooding to downstream properties (Dalwood and Colyton) via multi-objective natural flood management interventions.

The project's secondary aim was to reduce water quality failures in both catchments, under Water Framework Directives, linked to phosphate and sediment problems.

The project was set up by Devon County Council, through the Blackdown Hills AONB and the Flood and Coastal Risk Team, with partners from the Environment Agency, West Country Rivers Trust and East Devon AONB Team.

REDUCE
THE RISK OF
FLOODING &
WATER QUALITY
FAILURES



Chantry Bridge, River Coly

The Coly & Corry NFM project aligned with the Woods for Water (W4W) project (led by Devon County Council, Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission).

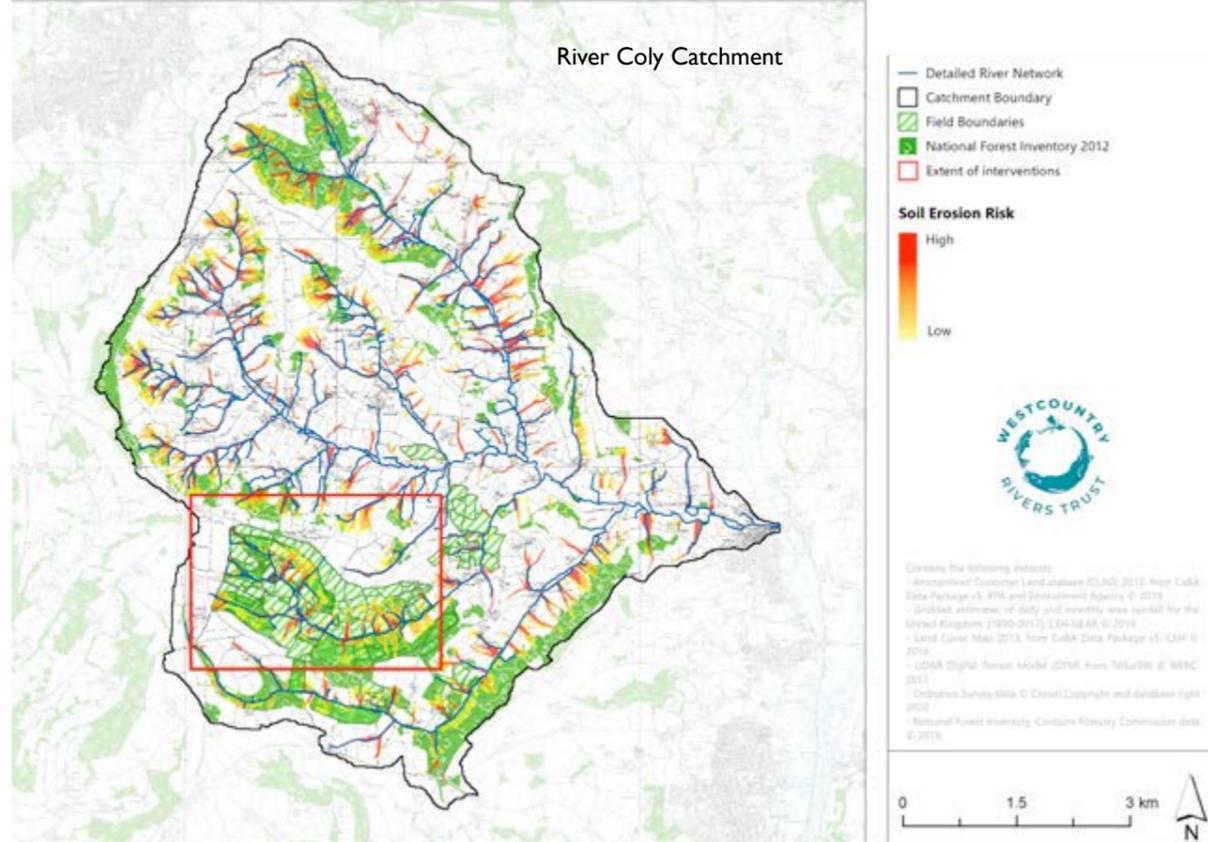
Using these two project funding mechanisms together, created a multi-objective approach to:

- restore natural process (where possible)
- alleviate flood pressure
- improve water quality failures
- enhance the landscape's natural capital and biodiversity.



Colyton Tannery - Photo credit Sheila Hancock

The project was set up under DCC via the Blackdown Hills AONB working with the Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC).



INTERVENTIONS AT SEVEN FARMS ACROSS THE TWO CATCHMENTS

Corry Catchment	Coly Catchment
Farm 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x Leaky Dams • 400m Stock Proof Fencing • 2 x Alternative Drinking Supply 	Farm 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 x Debris Dams • 2 x Large Leaky Dams • 4 x Small Leaky Dams • 700m Stock Proof Fencing
Farm 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x Flow Pond 	Farm 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x Leaky Dams • 300m Stock Proof Fencing
Farm 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 x Debris Dams • 9 x Leaky Dams • 130m Stock Proof Fencing 	Farm 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 x Leaky Dams • 3 x Flow Ponds • 3 x Cross / Buffer Drainage
Farm 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x Flow Pond • 2 x Flow Spreaders • 1 x Leaky Dam 	

Confirming areas of potential risk for un-managed surface water flooding

The project used hydrological connectivity and soil erosion risk mapping developed by West Country Rivers Trust to identify areas of potential risk of unmanaged surface water corridors to residential properties lower down the catchment.

This evidence was then used to engage landowners/farmers and ground truth higher-risk areas at the top of the catchment.

Several suitable sites at the top of each catchment where identified and grant agreements were formalised; land drainage consents (LDC) were secured alongside any planning requirements.

A project budget of £40k was used to grant aid interventions at seven farms across the two catchments which included:

- Floodplain reconnections
- Flow ponds
- Leaky debris dams
- Stock control measures

Monitoring equipment was installed on a number of sites to help assess the impact of the works.

It is hoped that future agri-environment and flood risk investments can help secure further interventions in the catchments, reducing flood risk and helping to improve water quality.



Leaky Dam



River Sid © Kyle Baker

BIODIVERSITY

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

The River Otter Beaver Trial

The River Otter Beaver Trial formally completed in Spring 2020. The government has now extended the River Otter Beaver Trial by six months while decisions are made about their long-term presence in East Devon - and potentially elsewhere in the country.

It's important the government has time to get this decision right; if beavers are given the green light to remain and to thrive once again throughout the River Otter and beyond, it will be one of the most important moments in English conservation history.

The final Science and Evidence Report on the project is a fascinating, comprehensive and detailed account of the 5yrs of activity and is available to read or download [HERE](#).

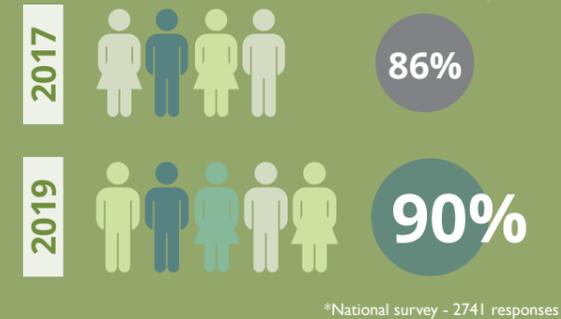
THE RIVER OTTER BEAVER POPULATION HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM TWO FOUNDING FAMILY GROUPS IN 2015, TO CIRCA 13 TERRITORIES BY 2019.



Summary findings from the report:

- Territory Capacity modelling work predicts that the maximum number of territories that the River Otter catchment could support is between 147 and 179.
- When asked about legal protection if beavers were to be formally introduced, 75% felt there should be strong legal protection, 20% said limited legal protection and 5% said none in 2017. By 2019 this was 79%, 17% and 4% respectively.
- A snapshot of the dams throughout the River Otter catchment (Oct 2019) identified 28 dams in six of the beaver territories; No dams have been constructed in the main stem of the River Otter.
- The effect of beaver engineering and feeding has delivered significant ecological benefits. New areas of wetland habitat created and managed, with documented benefits for amphibians, wildfowl and water voles. The changes in scrub canopy structure and increased water levels have enhanced a wetland County Wildlife Site.
- Electrofishing survey of one site found total abundance in the beaver pool was 37% higher than the other three reaches surveyed, with highest total fish biomass and more trout than in either the upstream or downstream control sites.
- Some dams could represent an obstruction to movement of fish in smaller streams specific flow conditions, but trout have been recorded passing two beaver dams during higher flows.
- No recorded impacts of beavers on forestry plantations, but small riverside orchards have seen beaver feeding on both windfall apples and the trees.
- In three territories, beavers have been recorded feeding on maize with 15 m² impacted in one case.
- The most significant financial impact was on 0.4 ha of organic potato crop where elevated water levels restricted machinery access. A flow device (beaver deceiver) was installed to reduce water levels successfully.
- There have been three instances where trees have been felled by beavers onto footpaths between 2015 and 2019. In each case, the landowner, Clinton Devon Estates, was swift in their removal.

People supporting Beaver re-introduction



Devon Greater Horseshoe bat project

This partnership with Devon Wildlife Trust and a range of other partners across Devon has been successfully delivering the HLF funded pan-county initiative.

Work has focused on policy development, advice, education programmes, habitat improvements and events for the rare bats across Devon. The AONB support has been through chairing the steering group and providing project development funds to support the initial development and delivery work – time and money well invested.

The project officers providing land advice are also part of the AONB Farm Facilitation Scheme.

In Partnership with the project we have developed and built a purpose-built bat roost in an ideal habitat for this rare bat, away from human disturbance and any light pollution.

This joint initiative was made possible as a result of the relationship that the AONB Team has built up with the landowner over many years.



Building the new bat roost/store in East Devon AONB

The bat roost project was funded using a combination of Sustainable Development Funds, Lottery Funds and AONB project funding.



Shute Apple Day - revisiting local traditions

Legacy to Landscape (L2L)

This very popular and successful project has drawn to a close as the three years of Lottery Funding has ended.

Such was the public support that we have maintained the momentum and the profile of the project with a limited number of events this year, whilst we prepared a further bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Whilst our initial application for follow up funding to NLHF was unsuccessful we were invited to resubmit in Spring 2020.

Since then however, due to COVID19 impact, we have been informed the bid has been withdrawn until further notice.

Watch this space!



King Johns Oak - the ancient tree central to the project

FARMING & LAND MANAGEMENT

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



Reducing & managing carbon on farms event

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.

The East Devon Farmers Group sits in the heartland of the AONB and currently has 69 signed up farms. We are delivering with FWAG-SW and the Devon Greater Horseshoe bat project as joint advisors.

Our event programme over the last year has covered a diverse range of land management practices and mechanisms including alternative forage crops, hedgerow management, mid-tier stewardship, parasite management, holistic grazing and on-farm carbon audits.

In addition to the Facilitation Fund supported events, we have also provided additional activities, which are aimed at extending the remit of the group. Examples have included a talk on linking animal behaviour to health and a visit to a demonstration milking unit at Shepton Mallet.

Farming for the nation

A National Association for AONBs collaboration

The East Devon AONB Partnership is part of a National programme of 'Tests and Trials' for a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

The scheme is being developed by Defra to replace the current Environmental Stewardship programme operating through the EU Agricultural Policy programmes.

Under the NAAONB, a nationally facilitated programme of trials, entitled 'Farming for the Nation', will be testing a range of approaches across 12 AONBs in England.

Each of the 12 AONBs is focusing on a different aspect of environmental land management.

The East Devon proposal is focused on the Umborne Valley and aims to work with farmers and landowners with small High Nature Value habitat (that is currently not qualifying for other schemes based on scale) to develop joint/collaborative ELM schemes as part of a wider nature recovery network.

WORKING WITH FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS WITH SMALL HIGH NATURE VALUE HABITAT



Farming in the Umborne Valley

PLANNING, POLICY AND ADVICE

Planning 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.

Policy

Our involvement in developing bat consultation zone guidance is still in progress.

We have been drawing on the model developed for the South Hams, which was completed in October 2019.

The approach is seeking to ensure that any proposed development influencing the proposed zones in East Devon, centred around Beer Quarry Caves Special Area of Conservation/Special Protection Area, triggers the necessary measures and checks to protect our important at-risk bat species.

In collaboration with the Devon Landscape Policy Group we have also provided officer and funding support for the creation of a Devon-wide farm building design guide.

The project will help to produce a guidance document that seeks to address the impact of the changing scale and nature of farming in our landscapes – supporting a future sustainable farmed landscape.

ADDRESS THE IMPACT
OF THE CHANGING
SCALE AND NATURE OF
FARMING



View from the East
Devon Way: Aylesbury
to Sidbury



View west from East Hill Stips

Guidance and consultations

Although not a statutory consultee, the AONB team is able to respond on behalf of the wider AONB Partnership on applications likely to have an impact on the landscape character of the area.

In addition to Neighbourhood Plans, we have commented on a range of planning applications this year.

This year we have also reviewed our role in the planning process with the local planning authority, in particular with respect to the pre-application process and what advice/guidance we can provide that will help applicants in their considerations.

A guidance document has been drafted and we hope to be in a position to finalise this and reconfirm the AONB role in the planning process this year.

L to R: Chris Woodruff, Lord Ewen Cameron (panel expert), Alistair Handyside & Graham Godbeer



The Landscape Review – aka ‘The Glover Review’

Last year we reported on the government review of landscapes being undertaken by Julian Glover and a panel of experts as part of a key commitment of the government's 25yr Environment Plan.

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 looked 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, focused on how designated areas can boost wildlife, support the recovery of natural habitats and connect more people with nature.

It concluded in 2019 and the final report made some 27 proposals for change.

A few key proposals are outlined below.

“National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service.”

We propose a new set of wording applicable to both National Parks and AONBs to read as follows:

“Recover, conserve and enhance natural beauty, biodiversity and natural capital, and cultural heritage”.

“New designated landscapes and a new National Forest.”

We think three of the larger AONBs should be considered for National Park status – the Chilterns, Cotswolds and Dorset (Dorset and East Devon AONBs).

Other areas to consider:

- A National Forest – Forest of Dean, Sherwood
- More joined up working across national landscapes

“AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes.”

To properly strengthen AONBs, we propose:

- Giving them the same reformed statutory purposes (ensuring that the ‘Sandford Principle’ also applies) as National Parks (Proposal 23). This reflects the reality that AONBs deliver the same purposes as National Parks.
- Increasing their funding (Proposal 27).
- Giving them statutory consultee status to strengthen their role in the planning system (Proposal 6).
- Renaming them as ‘National Landscapes’. Their national importance should be properly reflected by something much less unwieldy that elevates them alongside National Parks



RECOVER, CONSERVE AND ENHANCE

A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts.

The government has yet to formally respond to the Glover review.

There is work going on meantime within Defra to explore some of the key proposals, in particular those that can be implemented in the short to medium term.



Pearl Bordered Fritillary

The Colchester Declaration

In parallel with the Glover review, the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) worked with the family of AONBs to develop a response to the challenge that the review was setting; to articulate our collective ambition for nature across the UK.

At the 2019 National Conference in Colchester, the NAAONB launched the Colchester Declaration, detailing a commitment to nature and setting out a series of eight pledges that it would action across the AONB network in England and Wales over the next 10 years.

It called on the government to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable.

AONBs are working with key partners locally and nationally to put in place the mechanisms to realise the Colchester Declaration.

PROVIDE THE
POWER AND
RESOURCES TO MAKE
THESE TARGETS
ACHIEVABLE

The Colchester Declaration 2019

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient – the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency we are demonstrating our readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

We believe

1. Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people
2. AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife
3. Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
4. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change
5. The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges

We pledge

By July 2020

1. To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.
2. To prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB

By 2024

1. To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans
2. To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero

By 2030

1. That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition
2. That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/ restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals
3. That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place
4. That, by each AONB immediately adopting a species on the threatened list and by preparing and delivering a Species Action Plan, at least thirty species relevant to AONBs will be taken off the list by 2030

We call on Westminster and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make these targets achievable

RURAL ECONOMY & COMMUNITIES

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



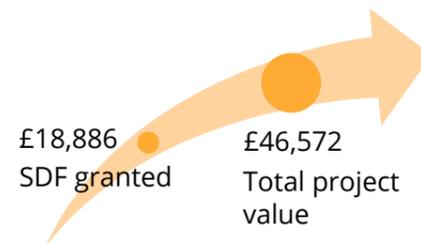
Open night at the Beer Men's Shed

Sustainable Development Fund

Thanks to continued Defra funding the AONB Partnership still operates a Sustainable Development Fund.

Through this fund we are able to award grants to small scale initiatives across the AONB that serve to add to community life, the character and wildlife of the AONB and support local services.

SDF grant multiplier effect



Our SDF was allocated as the table opposite shows, covering a range of projects across the AONB and gearing the funding by approximately x2.5.



Otter Valley Association heritage project



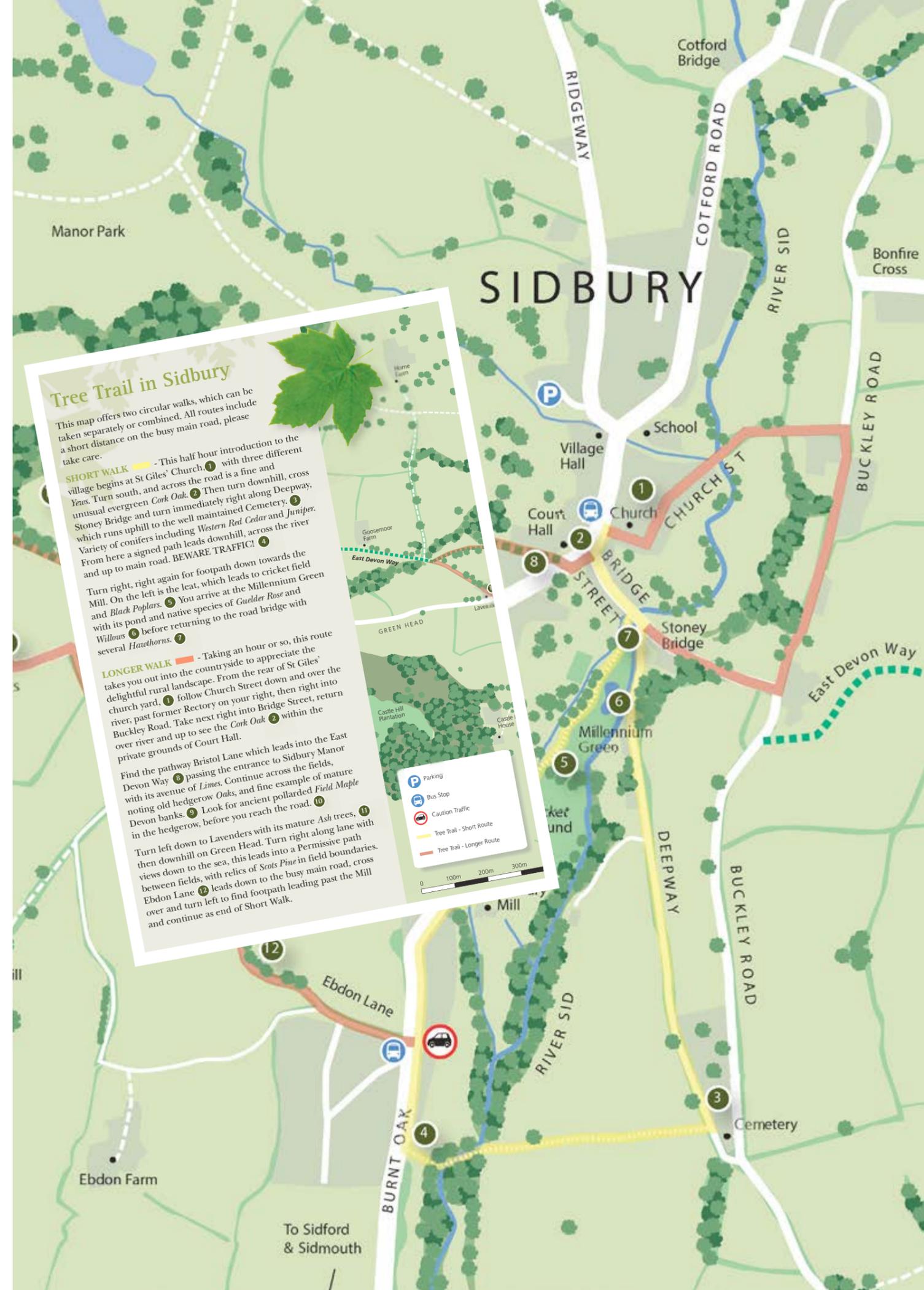
Brandy Head interpretation

SDF funded community projects

Applicant	Project	Grant £ (% grant)	Total £ Project Value
Shute Festival	Extracurricular activity setting up after school clubs a 'Wild Club' and a 'Land Art Club'. To develop skills and confidence in parents and volunteers to adopt the running of the clubs.	2500 (51%)	4880
Axewoods Co-operative	Chainsaw training for members to allow an increase in woodland management activity. A roof structure to the community log store to improve quality of logs given to fuel poverty residents.	1218 (56%)	2180
Musbury Moles Pre-school	Development of facilities to enhance the outdoor learning opportunities of Musbury School grounds and encourage other groups to undertake similar initiatives.	1395 (46%)	3015
Otter Valley Association Heritage Project	To trial a community engagement approach to heritage assets within the Parish of East Budleigh. Training volunteers to assess heritage potential and to develop a management plan for the Conservation Area. To then cascade these skills to other communities.	3012 (32%)	9300
Gittisham Parish Council	To enhance the wildlife value of an area of land donated to the community.	250 (55%)	450

SDF funded community projects (cont.)

Applicant	Project	Grant £ (% grant)	Total Project Value
Musbury Primary School	To survey the biodiversity of the school grounds then to utilise these for outdoor education. Making links to the history of the parish with a reconstructed iron age shelter .	3968 (47 %)	8350
Woodbury Wide Awake	Keble Martin was an illustrator and writer of the Concise British Flora. The project will commemorate this Woodbury resident's life. A series of talks are planned, and oral histories are to be collected.	1000 (15 %)	6435
Beer Mens Shed	Proposal to set up a men's shed group in Beer to serve the local area. Creating social contact for retired men whilst improving skills and generating self-worth through creating benches, nest boxes planters etc for the community.	1972 (74%)	2649
Nature Song	Taking primary school children into their local environment to encourage awareness and then to compose and make music to celebrate their awakening.	1500 (30 %)	4877
Bat friendly Beer	To purchase equipment that will allow the community to run bat awareness raising events beyond the lifetime of the Devon Bat Project. This matches a £1000 grant from that project.	344.20 (24%)	1444
Sidmouth Arboretum	To update the Sidbury Tree Trail leaflet to make better connections with the landscape, local businesses and to have a larger map.	360 (55%)	660
Brandy Head interpretation	To provide enhanced information about the heritage of the WWII building at Brandy Head after it has been converted to bothy style accommodation. To provide seating to encourage walkers to rest and enjoy the view.	965 (47 %)	2031
Otter Valley Association	To plant Scots Pine on a hilltop at Otterton, as future replacements for mature trees planted as part of the designed landscape connected with Bicton House	401.60 (57%)	701.60
Budget commitment 95%	Total committed	£18,886	
Total value of benefit to the AONB landscape and communities			£46,572
2019/20 SDF grant allocation		£19,800	



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS

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

In every part of our AONB there are amazing things happening that make a huge difference to local communities and positively impact our outstanding landscape. The Acland Award helps us celebrate these initiatives and give them the public recognition that they deserve.

Since 2013, the Acland Award has been presented annually by the East Devon AONB Partnership as a mark of excellence; recognising the best of environmental, economic and community-focused activity taking place within our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The 2019 Acland Award, which formed an important part of our Annual Meeting, focused on sustainable communities.

Once again, we had a range of excellent submissions from a wide range of organisations, demonstrating the breadth and depth of activity across the AONB.

This year's top award went to East Budleigh Village Green for their community project based around the village hall.

The Acland Award ceremony, sponsored by Humberts Estate Agents and Higher Wiscombe, was hosted at Seaton Tramway.

Highly commended on the night were Colyton & Colyford Memory Café and Beer Men's Shed groups.



Top: Lord Ewen Cameron speaking at our Annual Meeting Event. Bottom: East Budleigh Village Green, Acland Award winners



Ambassador scheme

Through our Ambassador scheme we maintain a relationship with a wide range of businesses and individuals, supporting the rural economy and communities in East Devon.

Our annual Ambassador networking event, held in February at our HQ in Sidmouth, works by delivering on areas that the network feedback provides.

This year the event sought to highlight the importance of climate change and our nature/species recovery programmes.

With support from Emily Reed, Devon County Council Climate Change officer, we explored climate change and how we could approach our species and nature recovery work. Our enthusiastic Ambassadors helped us explore what species we could focus on in East Devon AONB for our commitment to recover nature and species under the 2019 National Association for AONBs Colchester Declaration.



February Ambassador Event

July field event

Our field events are aimed at our Ambassador network and Partnership as well as other interested parties.

The 2019 July event focused on farming and was kindly hosted by Russell and Helen Hayman at Gittisham Farm on the Combe Estate.

Presentations were given by a range of partners engaged in farming and agriculture across the AONB, including Paul Cottington (National Farmers Union) and Zoe Wilson (Farm Assurance). These allowed us to explore the realities of modern farming and our local/national relationship with agriculture.

A tour of the Gittisham farm and dairy further demonstrated practices and issues of crop rotation, dairy production and farming technology.





The Story Boat. Photo: ©Simon Tutty

Connecting to nature

Our project funding this year supported a range of arts/cultural engagement initiatives with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG), building on our previous work based on the East Devon Way.

From Tree to Sea was an Arts Council supported environmental arts project that interpreted how nature can frame and retain memories.

Working with boatbuilder Gail McGarva, taking her enchanting Story Boat, Vera, to THG and 3 coastal sites, 7 schools and two woodland locations across East Devon - opening up the idea of art as a threshold - the shoreline as a liminal space - between trees and the sea.

Towards the latter part of the year a collaboration under a THG Climate and Culture programme sought to marry up renowned artists such as Richard Long, under an Arts Council and lottery funded programme.



This programme has been developed within the context of East Devon District Council's commitment to The Devon Climate Change Emergency declaration, and the University of Exeter's declaration of an environment and climate emergency.

COVID-19 has restricted full delivery of this project across the latter period of 2019/20 and adaptation measures and new opportunities for delivering the programme are now being developed.

Additionally, AONB project funding was used to support the NAAONB Arts Council proposal, 'Art in the Landscape'.

Aimed at connecting people to nature through art, the project launched through the commissioned *Fugitives* poem from poet Laureate Simon Armitage, and is investigating opportunities for a poet in residency with AONBs

Well-trodden wrong ways – a linked project within the Tree to Sea project created an exhibition exploring the well-trodden East Devon Jurassic coast captured in sculpture, photography, film and drawing.



Fugitives

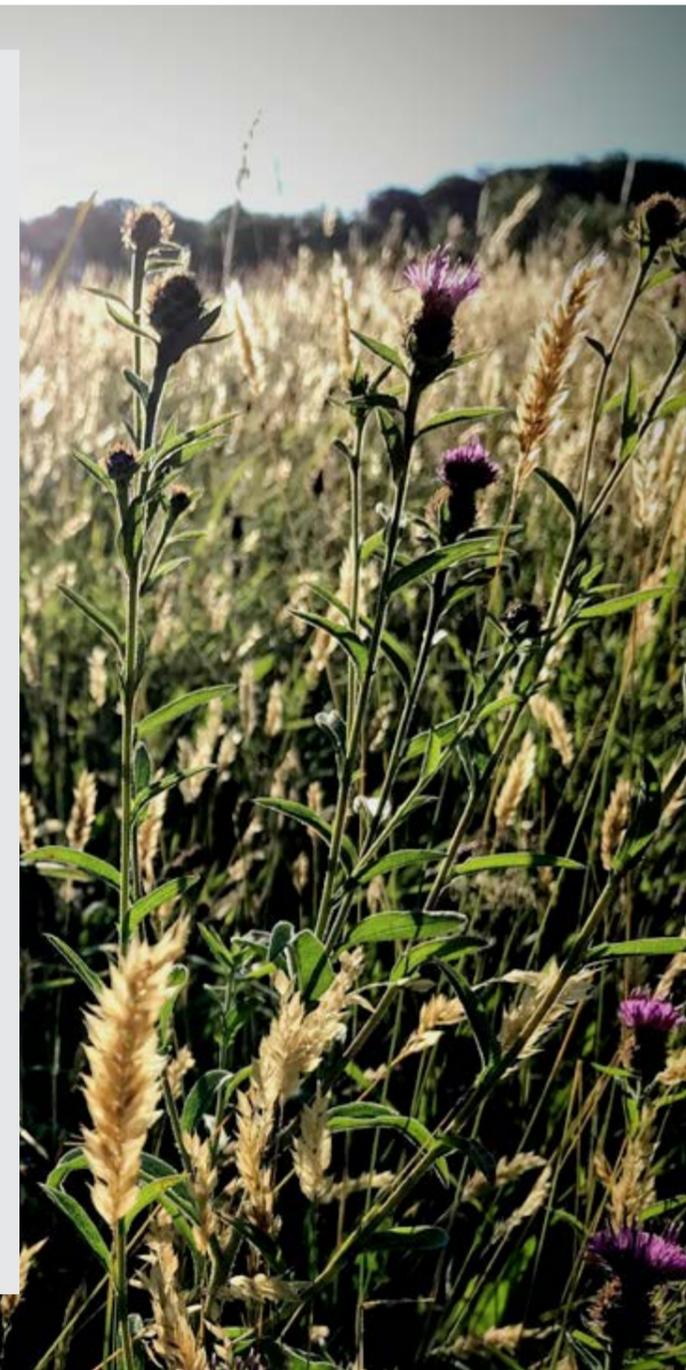
Then we woke and were hurtling headlong
for wealds and wolds,
blood coursing, the Dee and the Nidd in full spate
through the spinning waterwheels in the wrists
and over the heart's weir,
the nightingale hip-hopping ten to the dozen under the
morning's fringe.

It was no easy leap, to exit the engine house of the head
and vault the electric fence
of commonplace things,
to open the door of the century's driverless hearse,
roll from the long cortège
then dust down and follow
the twisting ribbon of polecats wriggling free from extinction
or slipstream the red kite's triumphant flypast out of oblivion
or trail the catnip of spraint and scat tingeing the morning
breeze.

On we journeyed at full tilt
through traffic-light orchards,
the brain's compass dialling for fell, moor,
escarpment and shore, the skull's sextant
plotting for free states coloured green on the map,
using hedgerows as handrails,
barrows and crags as trig points and cats' eyes.

We stuck to the switchbacks and scenic routes,
steered by the earth's contours and natural lines of desire,
feet firm on solid footings of bedrock and soil
fracked only by moles.
We skimmed across mudflat and saltmarsh,
clambered to stony pulpits on high hills
inhaling gallons of pure sky
into the moors of our lungs,
bartered bitcoins of glittering shingle and shale.

Excerpt from *Fugitives* by Simon Armitage.
[Read the full poem here](#)



OPERATIONS & FINANCE

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

Core budgets & operations

Our core and project budgets were pretty much in line with estimates 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.

This programme supported a range of collaboration activities across the AONB family, which has resulted in a series of actions and future plans that will hopefully strengthen AONB networking and effectiveness.

In addition to upgrading some key equipment, our projects budgets covered areas referenced above secured good match on partnership working with countywide partners and protected landscapes locally and nationally.

The end of year saw a significant change in programmes and action as a result of COVID19 which will be carried forward over the coming year.

Defra project funding

■ Estimated ■ Actual

Sustainable Development Fund		Projects	
Estimated	£20,000	Estimated	£28,412
Actual	£19,086	Actual	£31,247

Totals	
Estimated	£48,412
Actual	£50,333*

* overspend £1921 from AONB budgets

Core funding

Expenditure		Where the money was spent	
ESTIMATED	2018/19 total: £142,059	Operations: £10,040 Support services: £13,562 Staff: £112,095	Transport: £5,340
ACTUAL	2018/19 total: £141,619	Staff: £112,514 Support services: £13,847 Operations: £8,347	Transport: £6,911

Income		Where the money came from	
ESTIMATED	2018/19 total: £142,059	Devon County Council: £16,500 East Devon District Council: £17,687 Defra: £106,544	Other: £1,328
ACTUAL	2018/19 total: £141,619	Defra: £106,214 East Devon District Council: £17,687 Devon County Council: £16,500	Other: £1,218*

*From AONB budget and in kind from EDDC

Project Funding breakdown

Projects	Spend	Details
Arts and nature	£7000	Climate and Culture 2020 arts engagement programme THG
Trees outside Woods (Saving Devon's Treescapes)	£7500	Devon wide Ash dieback NLHF partnership project (DWT)
Legacy to Landscape/Wild Roots	£4288	Development of AONB led NLHF proposal
Mgt Plan/R&D	£2055	Support to Devon Farm Building Policy Guidance and geophysical survey at Bicton
Project Development	£8704	Various activity, inc. DWT/DCC Ancient Woodland Inventory project, NAAONB Arts Council project, and Devon Greater Horseshoe bat project
Ambassador Scheme	£781	Supporting networking with communities and businesses
Agri Env /Natural Capital	£919	Supporting wider events for East Devon Farmers Group

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 8000 square miles and involving 700 elected members
- AONBs are locally managed nationally important landscape areas



OVER 100 EAST DEVON AONB AMBASSADORS



58 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS



855 LISTED BUILDINGS



29 MILES OF COAST INC SOUTH WEST COST PATH



14 SITES OF SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC INTEREST



HOME TO APPROX. 30,000 RESIDENTS



40 MILE EAST DEVON WAY FOOTPATH



COVERS 32% OF EAST DEVON (268 KM²)



DESIGNATED IN 1963



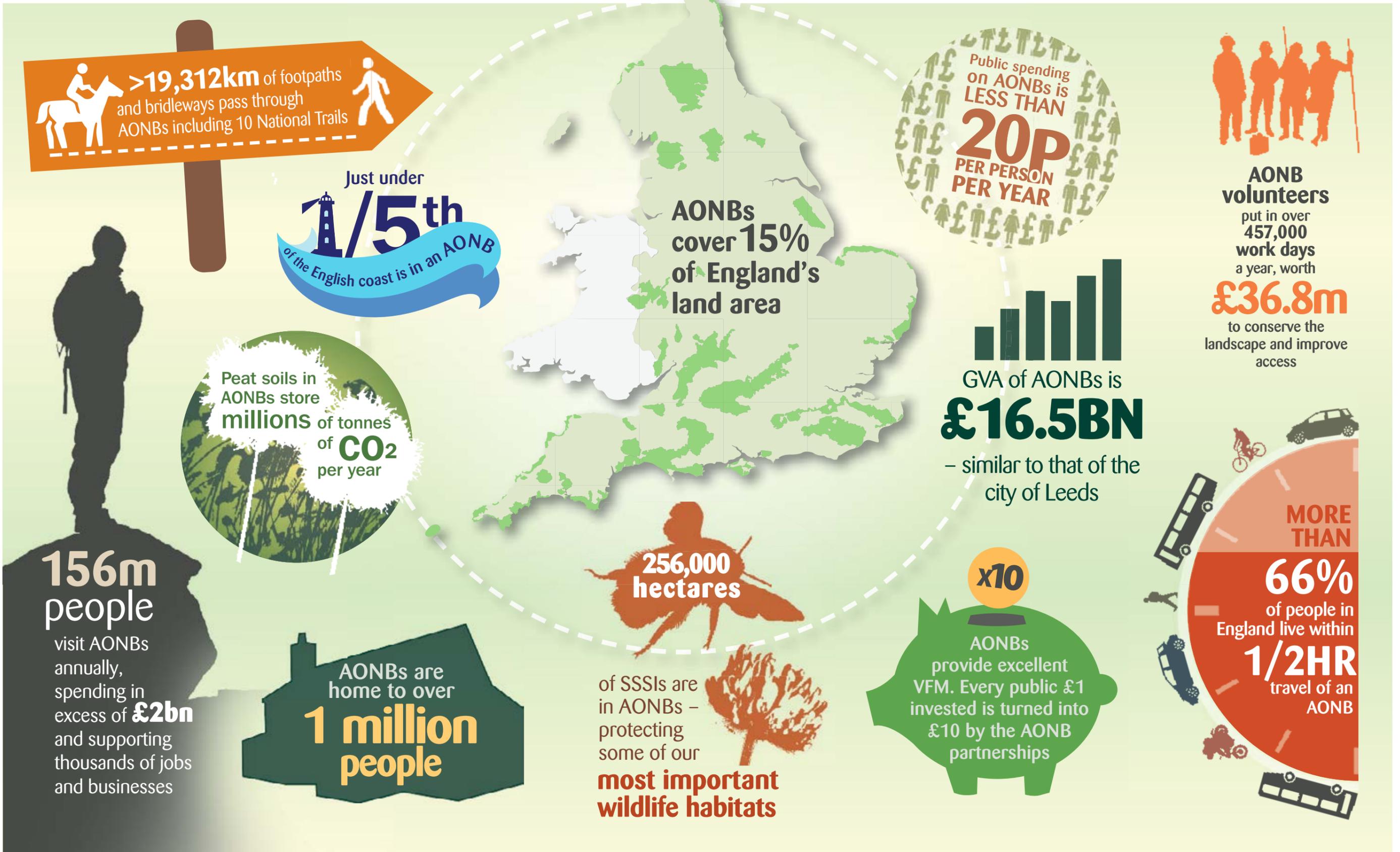
ALMOST 18% WOODLAND COVER

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
Areas of Outstanding
Natural Beauty





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 Partnership Plan and the work
 of the AONB team

FUNDED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:

