

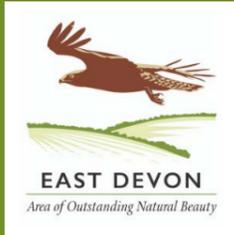


EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

East Devon Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty
Partnership

**ANNUAL
REVIEW
2020/21**



Front cover image:
View South from Musbury
Right: *Axe Estuary*
Back page: *Sidbury Village*

KEEP UP-TO-DATE

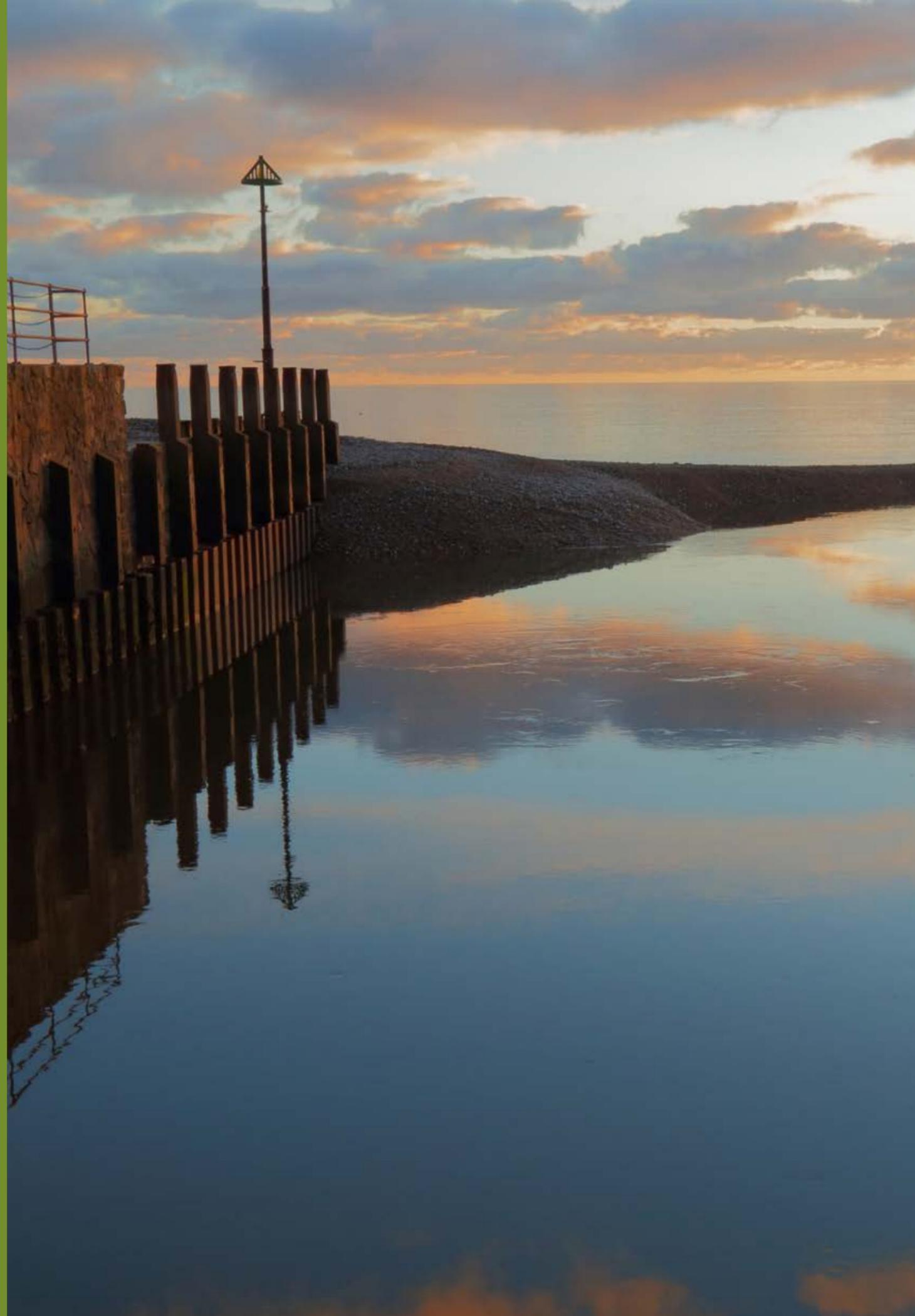
Sign up to our quarterly newsletter
on the homepage of our website
eastdevonaonb.org.uk

Follow East Devon AONB on Twitter
[@eastdevonAONB](https://twitter.com/eastdevonAONB)

Find us on Facebook
[@eastdevonaonb1963](https://www.facebook.com/eastdevonaonb1963)

CONTACT THE AONB

Phone 01404 46663
Email info@eastdevonaonb.org.uk
Write / East Devon AONB Partnership
visit Kennaway House, Coburg Road
Sidmouth, EX10 8NG



CONTENTS

4	Foreword
6	Landscape, heritage and biodiversity
12	Farming and land management
16	Environmental quality and climate
20	Planning, policy and advice
22	Support to the rural economy and communities
24	Community engagement and awareness
26	Operations and finance
28	About East Devon AONB
32	Partners



CONSERVE
AND ENHANCE
THIS SPECIAL
LANDSCAPE



CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Alistair Handyside MBE
Chairman, East Devon
AONB Partnership

COMMITMENT
TO NATURE
RECOVERY

2020 was a year that will be long remembered for the global impact of COVID19. It continues to have a significant impact on our daily lives, at home, at work, at leisure. Its presence has touched us all in some way and we share our sympathy and thoughts to those who have lost special ones.

Despite all the gloom however, there have been some positive aspects to the crisis. Lockdown has demonstrated we can reduce our impact on the environment through reduced travel and many have discovered the physical and mental benefits of walking and exploring their local countryside, getting closer and reconnecting with nature and communities on their doorsteps.

The AONB team has adapted to the enforced change, transitioning to a remote office operation and modifying their systems to enable 'cloud' networking. Despite not being able to deliver many of our work streams in the ways we originally planned, the team readjusted, reallocated and achieved much in partnership with others to help deliver our Partnership Plan.

Across 2020/21 we have been progressing our commitment under the Colchester Declaration, confirming our elusive 8 'special species' to focus our commitment to nature recovery and securing Green Recovery Challenge Funding in a joint project with the Bat Conservation Trust for one of these; the Grey Long Eared Bat under the catchy project title 'Return of the True Night Rider'.

Our reduced direct engagement work required project funding to be reallocated to more developmental work, with support going to a number of Devon wide initiatives including an Ancient Woodland Inventory review, development of guidance for tree planting and support to nature recovery network proposals amongst others.

Many of these will lead to future action and opportunity. Amazingly, our Sustainable Development Fund was fully delivered last year, showing that despite the challenges, community action and activity to conserve and enhance the AONB remains strong.

Through the National Association for AONBs our engagement in the Agricultural Transition Programme has

grown in a very positive way. In addition to delivering one of the Environmental Land Management 'Test and Trials', the AONB team also delivered an advocacy project aimed at raising awareness of the planned changes in farming and surveying farmers on their understanding and planning for this.

This has led Defra to plans for the National Parks and AONBs to deliver a £50m programme from 2021/22 for Farming in Protected Landscapes. This more direct engagement in farming and land management was a key proposal in the Glover Review and I look forward to government confirmation of their actions in response to this.

Much more was planned for 2020, notably the wonderful opportunity of hosting of the National AONB Conference in Exeter and across the Devon AONBs. Sadly, this and our Annual Meeting and Acland Award were all postponed but all are planned to return in 2021 in some way, shape, or form.

My thanks go to our local communities and our partners for their continued support. I look forward to the evolution of our operations, work, and status in a rapidly changing environment and to developing partnership opportunities that help to conserve and enhance this special landscape for us all.

LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

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

Right Place, Right Tree

Tree planting is a key 'climate change' tool and target for many public, private and voluntary/charity sector organisations, from Government to Friends of the Earth. Woodland cover in Devon is currently c9.9% of land area compared to 10% across England. France has c36% and Germany c32%.

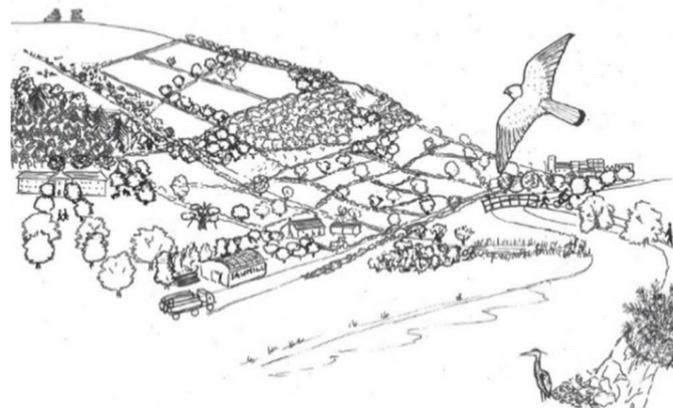
The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan has a target to increase this to 12%. The Committee on Climate Change, which advises Government, advises that we need at least 17%, or ideally 19%, woodland cover across the UK by 2050 to meet net zero ambitions. Interestingly, woodland cover in East Devon AONB is nearer 17.9% already.

In an effort to help guide this action, and ensure the special qualities of Devon are not erased by a drive to plant as many trees in the landscape as possible, we have supported the development of a guideline document that has at its core the conservation and enhancement of the character of the county.

The guidelines are expected to be available by Autumn 2021 and will be linked to the on-line Devon County Environment Viewer map system. This will enable people to find their location on the map and access guidance on what type of trees to consider and where to plant them.



Example Devon Landscape



Vision of a more wooded Devon landscape

The guidance includes a number of visual guides to portray a vision for a future landscape with more trees.

Action for Woodlands:

Rediscovering our ancient woodland and championing trees

We have continued to provide support to two key collaboration projects across Devon that are focussing on woodlands past, present and future;

These are important projects 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.

1. An Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) survey across Devon

We have supported this partnership project, which is coordinated through Devon Biodiversity Record Centre and is producing a substantially updated ancient woodland inventory using a consistent and quality-controlled methodology defined by Natural England.

The project has been working through Phase 2, comparing the original inventory to the Phase 1 data to highlight inconsistencies.

They have identified 995 hectares of woodland across Devon on the original AWI that do not tally with the findings of a Phase 1 search.

These queries will be investigated throughout Phase 3 of the project and resolved based on the evidence available.



Woodland on Sidbury Castle

POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANTLY MORE ANCIENT WOODLAND

All of the 20,000 woodland areas captured will be reviewed and cross-referenced with various evidence sources and included or excluded accordingly to arrive at a final verified database.

The survey for East Devon and East Devon AONB has revealed the potential for significantly more ancient woodland.

Woodland location	Designation Query	Mapping Error	Previously Designated AW	Potential New AW
East Devon	• 61.431	• 0.595	• 831.794	• 5258.18
East Devon AONB	• 46.629	• 0.553	• 500.804	• 2581.75



Ash tree – Roncombe valley

2. Saving Devon's Treescapes

Devon's stunning woodland habitats are rich in wildlife, but under threat from ash dieback, which is estimated to kill at least 90% of Devon's ash trees in the coming years.

This National Lottery Heritage Fund Partnership project, led by Devon Wildlife Trust, is addressing the threats to our landscape trees and working with local communities to care for and celebrate our treasured treescapes, supporting local action for wildlife and climate change.

Almost 700 trees have been planted in East Devon by the project this year and over 10,000 Devon wide, including fruit trees within a community orchard.

Trees were distributed through local hubs such as Sidmouth Arboretum, where people could take between 1-5 trees resulting in planting across a range of locations, rather than just one big planting.

COVID19 has impacted on the number of community activities in East Devon but the project did manage to work with Shute Primary school on a micro-nursery kit to help grow their own trees.

- Mobile phone brackets, developed through the AONB team, have been used to establish a series of landscape monitoring points at Buckley Wood, Sidbury, Offwell Wood and East Hill Strips.

LIDAR Survey

As a result of COVID19 restrictions, much of our funding across 2020/21 was targeted on development work.

One project area was working with Devon County Council on completing further assessment work on the LIDAR* data for the area.

The team in Devon have undertaken an assessment of bespoke Bluesky LIDAR data, captured in 2016, covering two transects (Transects 1 & 2) within the East Devon AONB.

The AONB covers 269 square kilometres of wooded combes, heathland, undulating hills and river valleys and is a landscape rich in archaeological remains, many of which are of national importance.

It is a largely understudied protected landscape with great research potential.

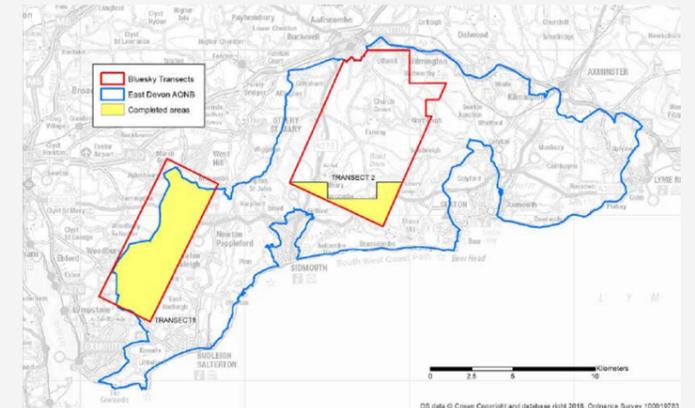
A PROTECTED
LANDSCAPE WITH
GREAT RESEARCH
POTENTIAL

The survey was carried out by AC archaeology on behalf of Devon County Council Historic Environment Team between October to November 2020.

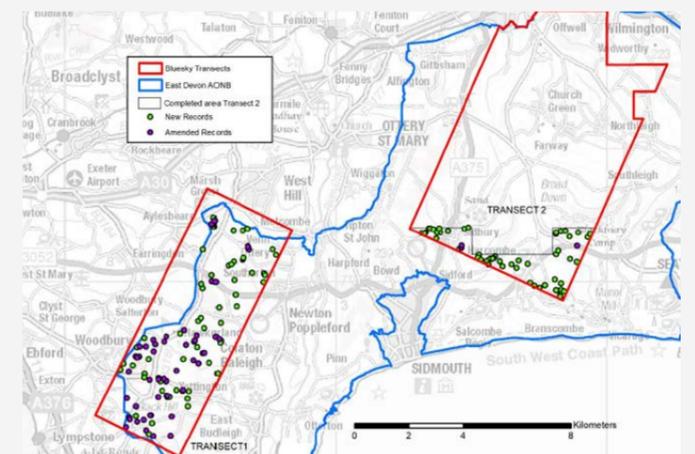
The aim of the survey has been to:

- Identify and improve the management of Historic Environment assets within the East Devon AONB, in particular those areas with archaeological potential for lidar based survey, e.g. wooded areas;
- Support AONB-led initiatives by providing lidar-based assessment of records for future community-archaeology investigation and other land-based projects.

In total, 108 monument records were created by the project and 62 amendments were made to existing records. 44% of the monuments found were Post Medieval and the most frequently observed type being an extractive pit.

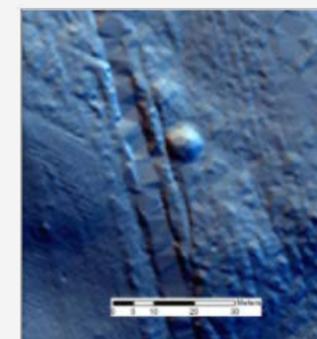


Area covered in survey

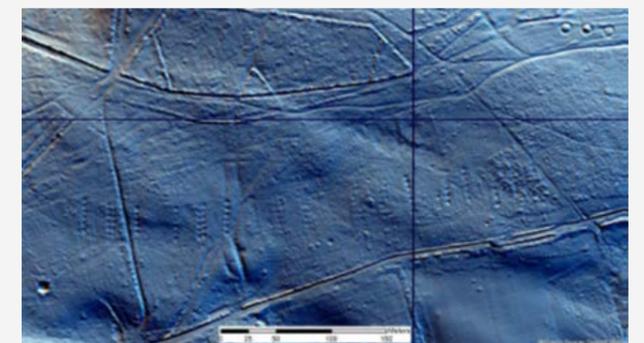


Site identified

*LIDAR is an airborne mapping technique which accurately measures the height of the terrain and surface objects on the ground, through the use of a scanning laser



Newly recorded earthworks of a possible barrow under tree cover on Harpford Common



Parallel rows of earthwork pits possibly attributed to activities of General Simcoe's troops, with 3 prehistoric barrows in the top right corner and a newly recorded Second World War bomb crater towards the bottom left corner.

BIODIVERSITY

#SavingSpecialSpecies

Our response to the Colchester Declaration species recovery pledge has seen us adopt our Elusive Eight rare species; species which we will use to connect people to nature and by which we can undertake some positive action.

These are all species that can be found in open countryside and are not confined to isolated sites or nature reserves.

Grey Long-eared Bat Project

We had success applying for Green Recovery Challenge Funds this year with the Bat Conservation Trust as our partners to support our **Grey long-eared bat project** – return of the true night rider.

We secured £68K to employ part time land advisor Craig Dunton with Bat Conservation Trust and part time Engagement Officer Ruth Worsley via the AONB.

Craig is working with land-owners to help them enhance the floral diversity of their grasslands, a key habitat for the Grey long-eared bats for foraging.

Alongside this role, Engagement Officer Ruth is working with local communities to raise awareness of bat conservation and the importance of flower rich meadows for wildlife, people and the landscape.

The AONB has supplemented this project budget to purchase wildflower seeds to help deliver more floral diversity on target sites.

Bechstein's bats

The Devon Bat Conservation and Research Group have been supported in their voluntary work in researching and how the very rare Bechstein's bat uses the AONB landscape.

We have provided 2 radio tags to the group to allow bats leaving Beer Quarry Caves to be tracked through our landscape.

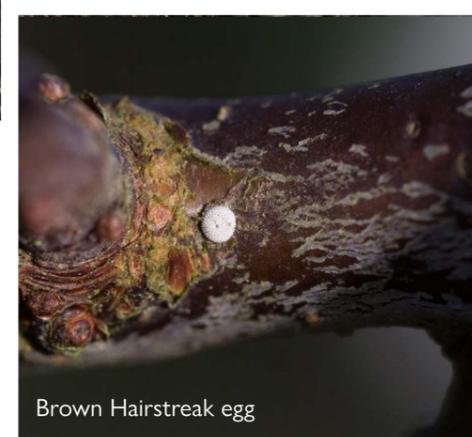
We have also provided them with 3 static bat recorders to monitor Bechstein's activity in woodland to identify potential sites for enhancement works.



Wildflower/butterfly survey with local Cubs



Brown Hairstreak Survey Volunteer



Brown Hairstreak egg

Brown Hairstreak Butterfly

As reported in the Saving Devon Tree project, we partnered Devon Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation to run a Brown Hairstreak butterfly egg hunt as a citizen science exercise.

The last survey in 2010 found just eleven 1km squares with the eggs and as a result of the latest survey, an additional eight 1km squares were confirmed as supporting this rare butterfly – great news indeed.

We have employed a local contractor to develop contacts and locations for our Elusive Eight events and activities programme for the 2020/21 season.

Strategic initiatives

Our Defra biodiversity funding this year has also helped support a range of strategic policy/guidance projects including:

- Development of guidance for tree planting in Devon (see page 2)
- Support to the Devon Local Nature Partnership
- Development of a Nature Recovery Network plan for Devon
- State of Nature report for the AONB and a Strategic Context paper for the development of an AONB wide Nature Recovery Plan

Lower Otter Restoration Project

After many years of consultation and development this ambitious climate adaptation and mitigation project secured the necessary funding and full planning permission to progress this year.

The AONB has been represented on the stakeholder group for this ambitious habitat mitigation initiative as it has developed over the last few years to restore the lower reaches of the river to a more natural river and estuary environment.

FARMING & LAND MANAGEMENT

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



Coly Valley

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 have been delivering the programme with FWAG-SW and the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project as joint advisors.

COVID19 restrictions have severely hampered our delivery in the past year however we have kept members updated with the forthcoming changes to agricultural support and the developing Environmental Land Management Scheme.

We endorsed 8 Mid-Tier Stewardship applications from our members this year and were successful in our request to extend the programme for a further year to 2022.

Farming for the nation

A National Association for AONBs collaboration

This year we joined a group of AONBs from across the country as part of a National programme of 'Tests and Trials' for a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

The scheme is currently 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', tested a range of approaches across 12 AONBs in England.

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

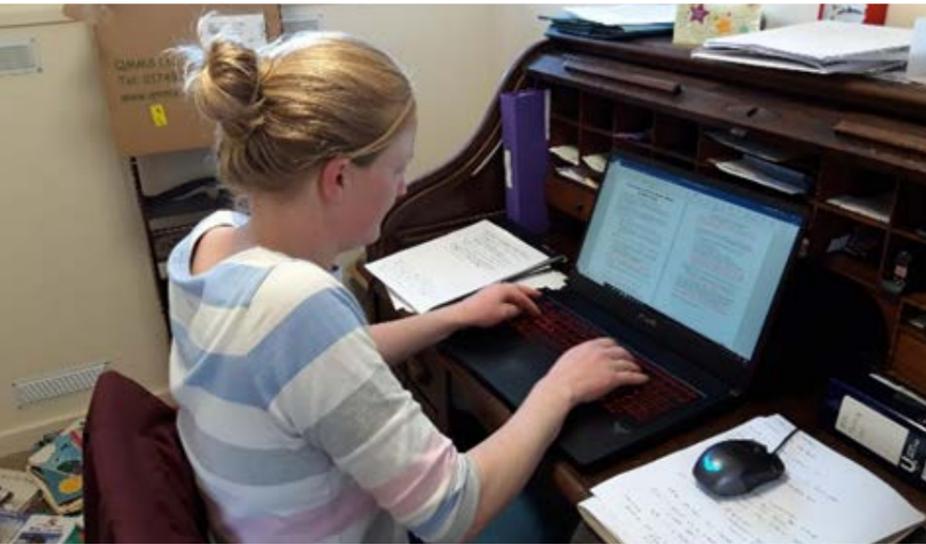
The East Devon proposal focused on farmers in the **Umborne Valley** who, based on scale, have individually struggled to qualify for funding under previous schemes. A key objective was to explore opportunities for habitat enhancements, collaboration and connecting areas of High Nature Value habitat, with a view to developing a wider nature recovery network.

COVID-19 restriction made group consultations very difficult this year, however we hope our approach and learning will help inform the final format of the new scheme and enable opportunities for improving farming for nature at all levels.

WORKING WITH FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS WITH SMALL, HIGH NATURE VALUE HABITAT



Farming in the Umborne Valley



Chasing up the farmer contacts

ELMS advocacy and Farming in Protected Landscapes

Brexit, agricultural and environmental policy have driven a change in environmental policy for farming, resulting in a new Agricultural Transition Plan (ATP).

Our work on the ELMs Test and Trials is part of this change and through the National Association, AONBs we have been working with National Parks and Defra in the development of a new programme 'Farming in Protected Landscapes'.

Between January and March 2021, we engaged FWAG (SW), local consultants Ecologic, and local farmer Emma Herrod, to undertake a series of awareness raising seminars and farmer surveys.

The seminars, which were also offered jointly with Blackdown Hills AONB and Dorset AONB, covered a range of subjects, from the ATP, Countryside Stewardship options and regulations for water, air, silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil.

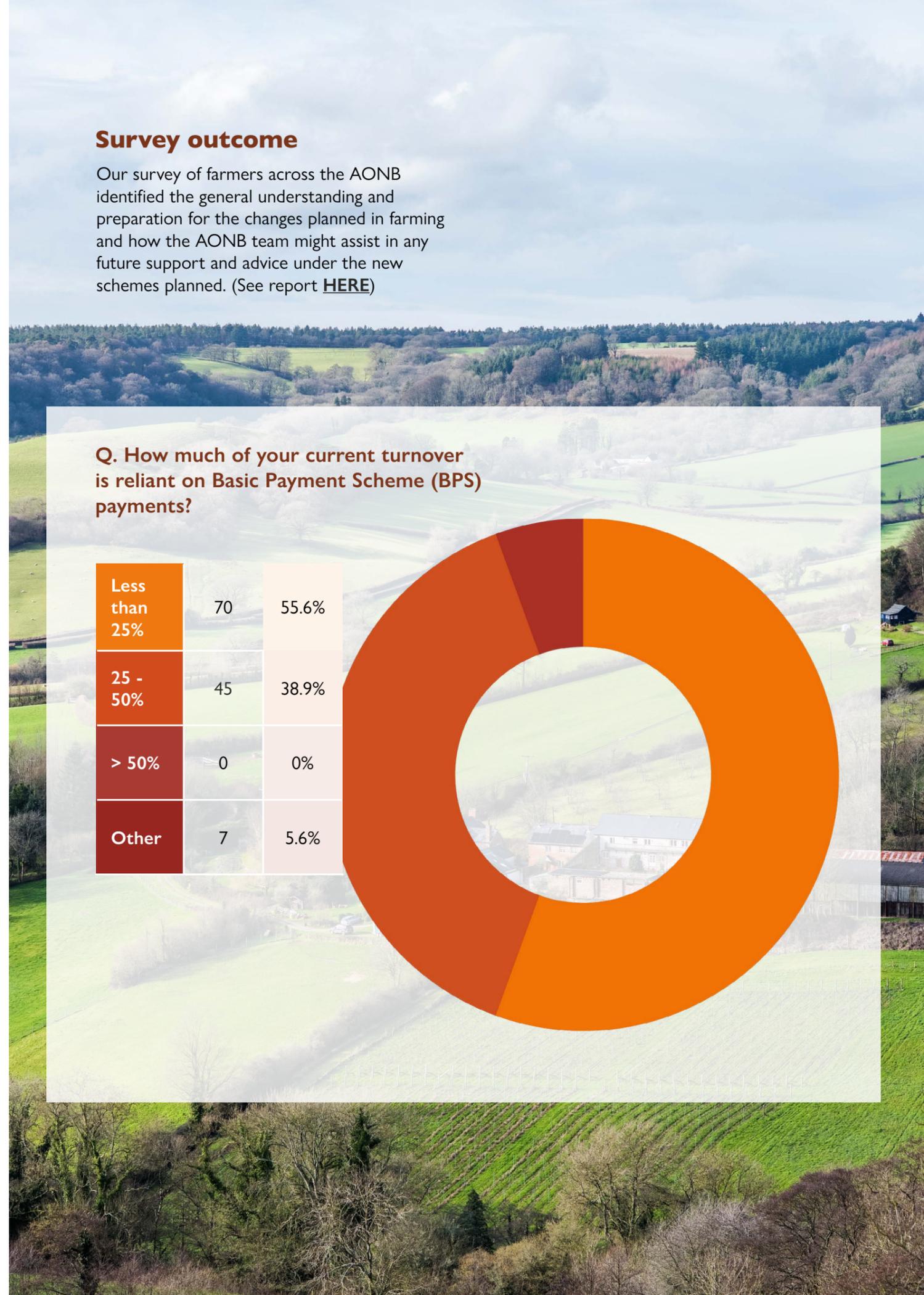
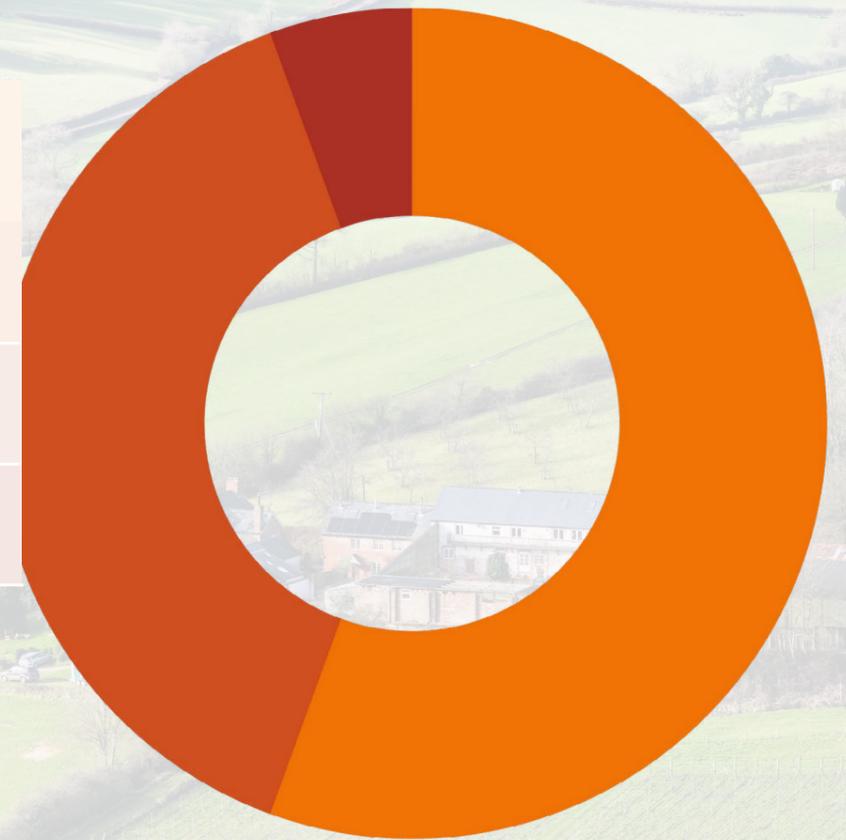
A CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FOR FARMING

Survey outcome

Our survey of farmers across the AONB identified the general understanding and preparation for the changes planned in farming and how the AONB team might assist in any future support and advice under the new schemes planned. (See report [HERE](#))

Q. How much of your current turnover is reliant on Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments?

Less than 25%	70	55.6%
25 - 50%	45	38.9%
> 50%	0	0%
Other	7	5.6%



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE

The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.

Natural Flood Management (NFM)

The AONB team has engaged with a range of initiatives this year seeking to address the control and management of water in our landscapes. The schemes have been focused on areas where there is need to alleviate flood risk and reduce the 'flashiness' of catchments.

Ottery St Mary Furze Brook NFM project

The AONB Partnership has been represented on a NFM project, delivered by Devon Wildlife Trust, on the eastern side of the East Hill Strips scarp and the farmland below to Ottery St. Mary; a town with a history of flooding.

The project focus was to build on the progress that had been made over the previous ten years in the Furze Brook catchment, which had included soil management, reduced compaction and highways drainage improvements.

The project aimed to build close collaborative relationship and approach between organisations involved that will provide a basis for future NFM work.



Devon Wildlife Trust managed the £90K project with Environment Agency and Devon CC Flood Risk funding and despite COVID19 restrictions secured significant outputs including:

- 90 NFM interventions implemented comprising 15 different types
- 12 landowners and 1 landowning Trust engaged (81% of total landowners)
- 1 Countryside Stewardship agreement facilitated (12ha – 10% of catchment)
- 1 local authority Flood Prevention Order issued



An example of a longitudinal leaky dam in the watercourse. Dam designed to retain water in channel. LEFT: on completion (Oct 19) RIGHT: during Storm Dennis (Feb 20)

The project installed a number of interventions in the small watercourses (goyles) to slow the flow of water through the catchment.

These interventions are also designed to trap sediment in order to raise the bed levels which have suffered significant erosion.

Anecdotal reports from landowners indicate the goyles are up to 2-3 metres deeper than 20 years ago.

Alongside the interventions in the goyles, the project also worked to slow the flow of water coming from the woodland at East Hill Strips, improve soil management on some of the grassland farms in order to increase soil permeability, planted trees, reinstated hedgerows, increased water storage retention volumes and monitored the changes.



Example of the woodland tracks where heavy erosion and 4x4 use was contributing to sediment run off and overland flow. Closure of path to vehicles under a DCC issued Flood Prevention Order and installation of horse-friendly barriers & natural 'grips' to send water into the woodland floor.

Flashy catchment: A catchment area that, because of geographic, topographic, and geological factors, shows an almost immediate response to intense rainfall, resulting in a flash flood.



Landowner installation

River Coly/Corry NFM Project

We reported on interventions in these two catchments last year, where our focus was on the upper reaches of the catchments which have at risk properties lower in the catchments at Colyton and Dalwood.

A contribution from Devon Flood Risk team has enabled us to return to the original installations in the latter part of the financial year and assess their status and options for further interventions.

In the Coly, this has involved returning to the Wiscombe area and in addition to assessing last year's installations, take in the catchment headwaters above these with a view to options further upstream for implementation across 2021.

In addition to the sites installed by last years project, it was interesting to note the landowner had initiated further NFM work themselves upstream in an effort to further reduce the flow down the steeper sections of the valley.

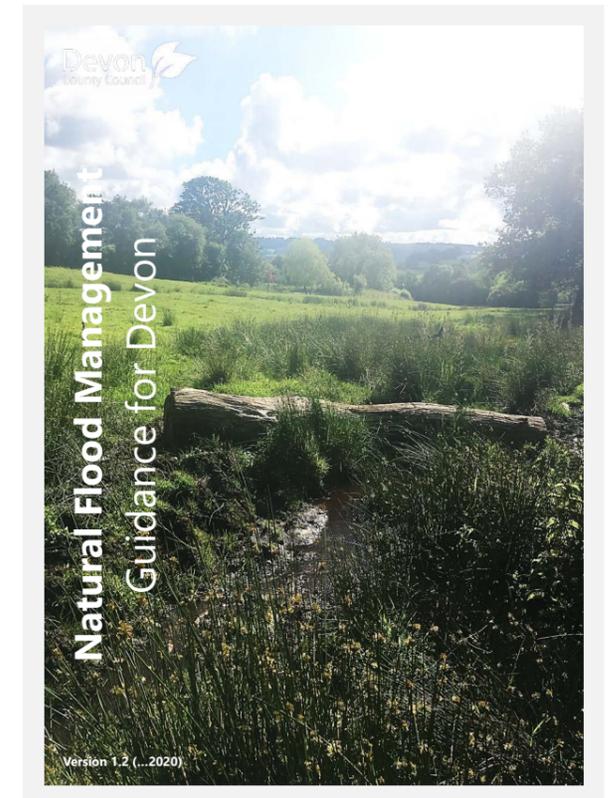


Natural beaver dam. Image: © Devon County Council

Devon NFM Guidelines and Group

With increasing activity in Natural Flood Management across the county, Devon County Flood Risk team has developed a guideline document and established a county group to network and share good practice.

One of the functions of the group will be to collate details on existing and developing initiatives across the county in order to share experiences and good practice.



Example of cross-channel dam. Image: © Devon Wildlife Trust

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 ongoing.

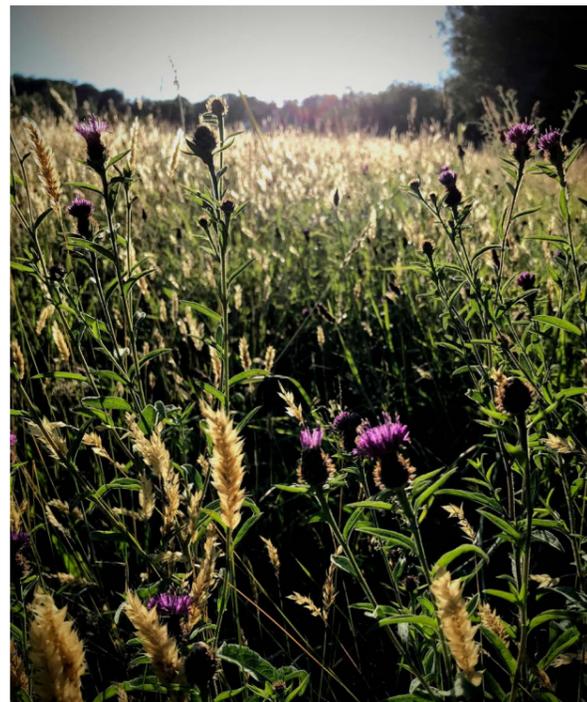
We have been drawing on the model developed for the South Hams SAC which was completed in October 2019.

We have a Steering Group of local experts from national and local organisations as technical advisors.

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

In collaboration with Devon Landscape Policy Group we have provided officer and funding support for the creation of a Devon-wide Farm Building Design Guide.

The intention being to produce a guidance document that will help address the impact of the changing scale and nature of farm development in our landscapes, whilst supporting a sustainable farmed landscape. COVID19 has delayed this work this year.



ADDRESS THE IMPACT
OF THE CHANGING
SCALE AND NATURE OF
FARMING



Lower Otter Estuary meets the sea at Budleigh Salterton

AONB planning guidance

Following a review of our planning process with the local planning authority we developed a Planning Guidance document for the AONB in 2020.

The document aims to assist proposals for development that may affect the special qualities or character of the East Devon AONB.

It details how the AONB team engage in the planning process and in particular how the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) applies in AONBs.

It concludes with a helpful checklist and decision-making flow diagram to help those considering proposals for development in the AONB.

Consultations and Advice

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.

We commented on a range of planning applications this year, the most notable being the application for the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

SUPPORT TO THE RURAL ECONOMY & COMMUNITIES

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



Seaton tramway at Seaton Marshes Local Nature Reserve

Sustainable Development Fund

Thanks to continued Defra funding and the desire of the AONB Partnership to support local action we are able to operate a Sustainable Development Fund to encourage small scale initiatives across the AONB.

Following an initial closure of the fund, the SDF was reopened in the summer and after lockdown was lifted, we found we were over-subscribed – something we had not expected.

As a result, our funds were fully allocated and some projects were deferred to 2021; although final claims meant a small underspend in the end.

The table below outlines the range of projects supported, with a gearing ratio of approx. 3:1

At the end of this year we reviewed the operation of the Fund; the SDF Panel have now approved changes that will allow applications from minority groups to score positively and will consider public benefits more widely in scoring an application.

As part of this review the Fund has been renamed the Communities Project Fund and a new logo has been devised.



SDF funded community projects

Applicant	Project	Grant £ (% grant)	Total £ Value
Little Orchard Alpacas	Provision of toilet/handwashing facilities in retail and community space (currently delivered within their home). Enabling more environmental work with Shute Primary & community apple days. 13% contribution requested.	2000 (6.5%)	30769
National Trust East Devon	To support provision of an all-terrain vehicle to aid habitat and access management on NT and neighbouring land holdings. The vehicle would improve volunteer ranger productivity and enhance the quality of their experience. 23% contribution requested.	Nil	Nil
Sidmouth Arboretum	To plant 10 Devon Whitebeam, a species from the Devon Special Species list, in publicly accessible spaces in the Sid Valley.	675 (60%)	1125
Axewoods	Provision of poly-tunnels & log handling facilities to allow donated logs to meet moisture levels in line with legislation and improve efficiency.	1498 (33%)	4540
Colcombe Abbey Farm	Install a Yurt and barn owl boxes on farm.	Nil	Nil
Axe Vale and District Conservation Society	Printing of leaflet listing/explaining all wildlife hot spots in the Axe Valley, combining in one document instead of individual promotion by managing organisations.	369 (59%)	625
Totally Local	Leaflet and poster to promote Axminster; heritage, wildlife & built environment. With aim to encourage locals/visitors to spend more time and so more money to support local businesses.	1746 (60%)	2910
RSPB Aylesbeare	Two chainsaws for volunteers to use clearing scrub from heathland	898 (60%)	1497
Seaton Tramway	Benches, interpretation and a telescope for the new tram stop at Seaton Marshes LNR	3,650 (51%)	7157
In My Back Yard	Tables, racking and improved lighting for Packing area, fridge, dedicated IT equipment for tracking Orders/ distribution. For a local food producers co-operative.	2,000 (23%)	8696
Tess Stone	Building of bunds to retain rainwater on land, tree planting, wildlife improvements.	1,000 (9%)	1111
Bulstone Spring Farm	Tree planting, water storage and track enhancements	Nil	Nil
Total		18,836	58,430
EDDC	GPS collars to allow fence less grazing on Fire beacon Hill and Trinity Hill Local Nature Reserves. Request £4,000		Deferred to 21/22 allocation
Devon Wildlife Trust	Path improvements to enhance accessibility of DWT reserve and interpretation board. Request £2,920		Deferred to 21/22 allocation

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

Ambassador scheme

Our Ambassador scheme connects us with businesses, organisations and individuals supporting the rural economy and communities in East Devon.

Each year we hold an annual Ambassador networking event in February at our HQ in Sidmouth and this year we ran a zoom session focusing on our Colchester Declaration pledges for wildlife, species and nature connectedness.

A key focus for the event was our successful Green Recovery Challenge Fund project for the grey long-eared bat, with project officer Craig Dunton taking our Ambassadors on a fascinating tour through the life and times of these elusive creatures.

We also provided a talking heads session with Ruth Worsley and Pete Youngman on our wider species recovery work, covering our 3 butterfly species, the Heath Lobelia and Devon Whitebeam.

In support of the event, a [video chat](#) between AONB Manager Chris Woodruff and AONB Ambassador representative Derek Carter entitled 'Not just scenery' was presented on-line.

Acland Award

The Acland Award 2020 was cancelled alongside our AONB Partnership Annual Meeting. Opportunities for future events will be monitored and assessed, subject to COVID19 restrictions.

East Devon Way



Our steadfast Ambassador Mike Green has been on a mission to support linkages to and promotion of the East Devon Way.

With assistance from East Devon Rambler colleagues Ted Swan and Bob Hewitt as route checkers, new links have been developed between the South West Coast Path from Branscombe and from Beer to the East Devon Way and more will follow.

Details of the routes are available on the AONB website [here](#). Mike has also produced a video of the link from Branscombe which is available on YouTube [here](#).

Connecting to nature - Cultural connections

We continued to link with Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) during 2020 to raise awareness of the AONBs and opportunities to connect to nature through art.

The THG [Creative Cabin](#) has been supported through this joint working; a mobile interactive unit which is able to tour East Devon and take art and nature to local communities.

We look forward to working with the THG through the Creative Cabin and other partners under our special species project activity over the coming year.

The National Association for AONBs '[Art in the Landscape](#)' strategy will be presented to all AONB Partnerships for adoption in 2021 and will help drive the collective AONB family activity to connect people to nature through art and meet a key pledge in the Colchester Declaration.

We used some of our Defra project money to prepare a successful bid to the Arts Council for a year-long project across 2021/22 to develop our approach to nature connectedness.



A talking head session between AONB managers Chris Woodruff (East Devon) and Tim Youngs (Blackdown Hills) last summer can be seen [here](#)

Landscape monitoring

Following research into models in Scotland and Wales, we have been looking to encourage citizen science landscape monitoring with projects across the AONB.

A number of local partners have expressed interest and we have provided modified mobile phone brackets for locations across the AONB and elsewhere, including rewilding projects.

We encouraged and supported the CoastSnap installation at Pennington Point in Sidmouth, which is now capturing coastal change at this key location.

We welcome partner opportunities to install monitoring sites elsewhere in the AONB as we progress this work.



Joseff Saunders, Plymouth Coastal Observatory at the Sidmouth [CoastSnap](#) fixed point photo location.

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

Operations

As a result of the changes in operation we have modified our IT operations and systems to suit a home working environment.

We have also rationalised our office space into a single office, reducing our rent for the coming financial year.

It is not clear what our return to office work pattern will be like in 202,1 but it's inevitably going to be a 'less occupied' space than it was before.

The isolated nature of remote operating has impacted on the team in varying ways and has been very challenging for all parties.

Finance

Core

Our core budget ended up being marginally over this year, with increased spending on staffing, IT services and equipment for remote working.

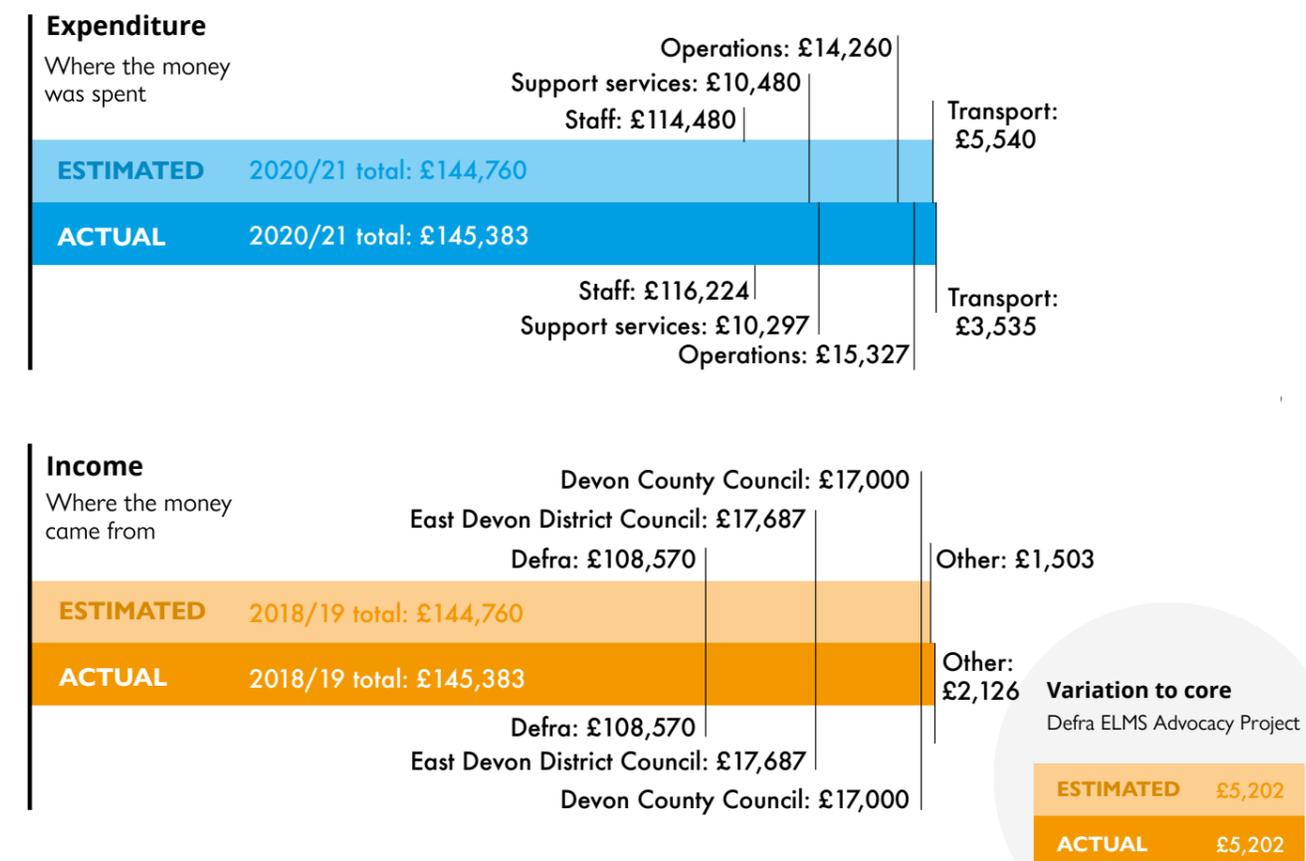
Projects

Our project budgets were largely in line with some variations and adjustments required as a result of COVID19; most notably our Farm Facilitation.

We achieved a lot with our biodiversity project investment this year, supporting developing work in nature recovery, policy work and support to our species actions.

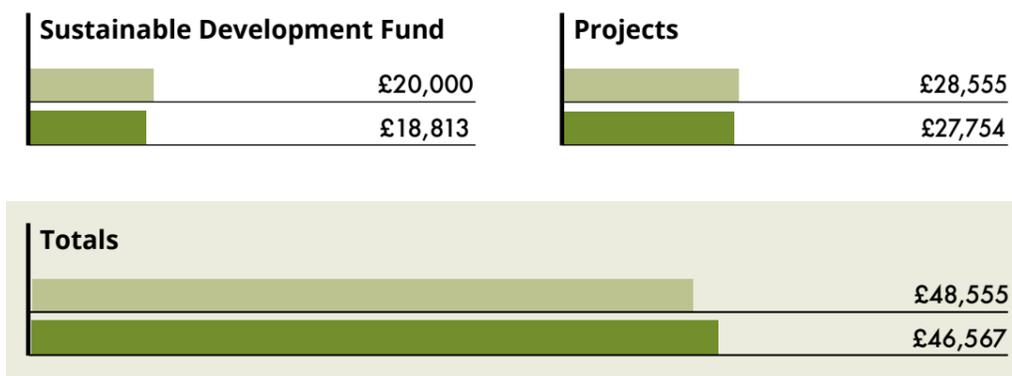
We adjusted funding into collaborations, nature recovery and assessment of landscape heritage (LIDAR) and preparing an Arts Council bid to develop our approach to nature connectedness, with a view to developing future action/project work from these work areas.

Core funding



Defra project funding

■ Estimated ■ Actual



Other project funding

NAAONB/Defra ELMS advocacy project	£2,000	£1,997
ELMS Test & Trial Project	£29,000	£18,428
East Devon Farmers Group	£20,000	£928

(Subject to final audit)

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

..... East Devon Way
..... South West Coast Path



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



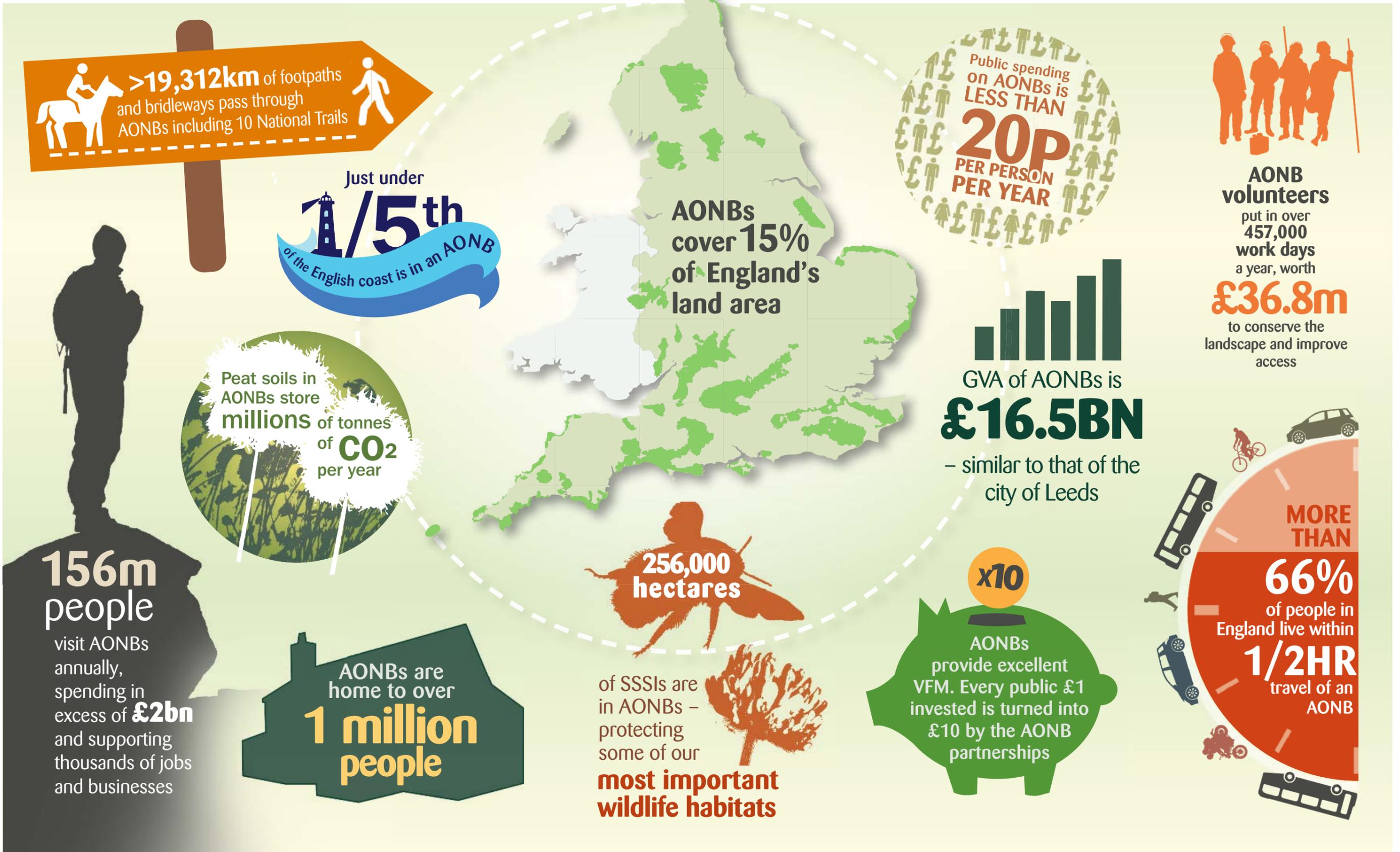
ALMOST 18% WOODLAND COVER

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A designation for the 21st century

Landscapes
for life
.org.uk

THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
Areas of Outstanding
Natural Beauty





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 Partnership Plan and the work of the AONB team

FUNDED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:



Historic England

