

Annual Review

2017-2018

www.southdevonaonb.org.uk



Chairman's Foreword

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

We welcomed two new members of staff to the team, Adam Davison our Project Officer and Vanessa Gray who is our Office Manager during Sarah Robinsons maternity leave.

We formally launched the South Devon AONB Planning Guidance Document in June. The document sets out the legal framework and national planning policy for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and how it should be properly understood, interpreted and applied.

Our Farm Facilitation programme works with more than 80 landowners in the Avon valley encouraging collaboration between farmers in the management of our outstanding countryside and we have delivered a range of events and workshops this year to support this and assisted a further 9 farmers into mid tier stewardship schemes. We remain committed to conserving and enhancing our landscape biodiversity and have retained a role in the delivery of the HLF funded Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project managed Devon Wildlife Trust.

We completed our successful Orchard Communities project and the Unit secured a new 'Sharing Heritage' Grant of £8000 from HLF to examine the 'Special Qualities of the protected landscape. The project focuses on the distinctive character of the natural heritage which makes up this nationally important landscape.

The review of designated landscapes will undoubtedly present challenges but also opportunities for AONBs. As a Partnership we aim to adapt and respond to these through our new Management Plan. Thank you to all members of the Partnership Committee for your enthusiastic engagement over the past 12 months and I look forward to working with you next year.

Andrew Pratt

Chairman, South Devon AONB Partnership Committee

Highlights in 2017-2018



£8K grant

Exploring the 'Special Qualities' of the AONB



£5K grant

for 'Holiday Footprints' –
Holidaying with a conscience
- encouraging sustainable
waste disposal.



£5K grant

Environment Agency Catchment
Awareness project. To manage non native
pacific oysters and invasive species.

£2K grant

National Trust Kingswear Peninsula project.
New promotion and interpretation for various
walking/riding routes and establishment of a
recreational hub at Lupton.



THE NATIONAL TRUST

Planning

We launched the Planning
Guidance and engaged with over
70 planning applications



75

attended our Annual
Forum on the theme of
natural capital 'Doing
business in South
Devon AONB'

660

attended AONB
led events.



people

1315

partners, supporters and
friends received our news
and events bulletins

1021

engaged through
community outreach led
by the AONB team.

Growing Orchard Communities



total equivalent value of
volunteer time
and noncash contributions
to the project was worth
£137,150 as specified
by hlf



21
workshops

staged for our 85 member
strong farmers group, helping
deliver landscape scale benefits
to the Avon valley

10 farmers

assisted with Mid-Tier Country-
side Stewardship applications

19,000
copies

of the Explorer
guide were
distributed across
the AONB and
beyond.



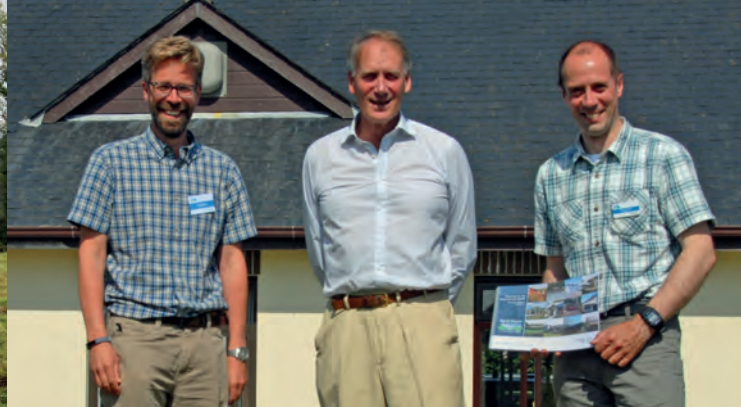
240,407
tweet
impressions

from twitter.
A £65% increase on
the previous year!





Robo-scrub clearance demonstration



Andy Pratt, Sir Geoffrey Newman and Roger English



Ash die-back workshop

Avon Valley Farmers group

We have been working with a group of 85 farmers in the Avon Valley as part of our Natural England funded project, to help bring landscape scale benefits to the area. This was the third year of a five year scheme which started in July 2015.

The programme is member led. As part of the year 3 activities we organised a wide range of workshops for members on a wide range of topics relevant to their businesses including:

- Demonstration of robo scrub clearance machine and tree shears
- Parasites - sheep & cattle
- Pollinators
- Homeopathy
- Improving soil structure
- Drone technology and demonstration
- Ash Dieback
- Mid tier record keeping
- Orchard restoration
- Farm walks

We also ran an overview event for both the Hedges and Boundaries grant scheme and the mid tier scheme.

After a series of mid tier mini workshops 10 members submitted mid tier applications.

These schemes are worth up to £291,961 annual options work and capital works to the applicants over a 5 yr period.

Management Plan Review

The five-yearly review of the AONB Management Plan has commenced and will continue throughout the year with the new Plan being published in April 2019. We welcome all views, please refer to the website to comment on the consultation and help us ensure it is fit for purpose for the designated area and its communities.

Launch of Planning Guidance

Sir Geoffrey Newman formally launched the South Devon AONB Planning Guidance Document in June. The 118 page document sets out the legal framework and national planning policy for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and how it should be properly understood, interpreted and applied. The guidance is aimed particularly at local authorities, AONB neighbourhood plan groups, planning committees, and developers. It's anticipated it will become a supplementary planning document. It will also be of interest and relevance to community groups, amenity groups and members of the public who wish to understand how and when the AONB unit should be considered in the planning process.



South Devon AONB Estuaries Partnership

As well as coordinating our usual suite of local estuary Forum groups and meetings, work during this time has been invested in the resurrection of the Dart Estuary Forum with a fresh membership enthusiastic to consider and lead the wider health and conservation of the wonderful Dart estuary.

Water quality, in all its guises continues to be a mainstay of our estuaries work and we continue to attend and lead a wide variety of local events, with further planning for summer regattas and a 'Life in the Yealm' BioBlitz. As part of a Holiday Footprints project, we have been promoting a sense of a 'team effort' responsibility for holiday makers to not take a holiday from their normal home-habits and to continue to reduce & recycle their waste during their stay. Excessive nutrients, fats, oils and greases are blocking pipes and unnecessarily entering the waste water treatment system with significant water quality impacts downstream.



As part of our continued work on marine biosecurity, we are inviting local community citizen scientist groups to help in 'heat map' surveys of feral Pacific oysters to gauge their local spread and impact.

Working with pupils at West Charleton Primary School



Harvest time

New Beeson orchard sign

Growing Orchard Communities

The Growing Orchard Communities project which finished at the end of October aimed to support local people to manage healthy orchards for the whole community to enjoy. It was run by South Devon AONB in partnership with Orchard Link, a local volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation. It was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as well as public and private sector grants through locality budgets and S106 funds, with a total project fund of £86,800.

Growing Orchard Communities was a 2-year project linking 23 Community Orchard groups to the wider Orchard Link network and developed new ways of working which benefit the physical and cultural heritage of the sites and the wellbeing of the communities.

The groups have been supported through training, advice, networking and skill sharing to help them and their orchards become resilient and long lasting assets to their local area.

The fruits of our labour!

- 3784 days (equivalent) were given by participants and volunteers
- 23 community orchard groups took part in the project
- Project social media platforms were set up – 5460 photo views on Flickr, plus Youtube, Soundcloud and Facebook
- 23 training workshops were held, with 317 participants
- 5 core groups were chosen to carry out extra community engagement work, working with schools, youth groups, local community groups, artists to form case studies. Altogether the five groups put in 228 volunteer days organising and planning 56 events. A further 403 volunteer days were put in to help run the events, which were attended by 1636 people from the local communities.
- The total equivalent value of volunteer time and non-cash contributions to the project was worth £137,150

The project was showcased at the Landscapes for Life conference as a nominee for The Bowland Award



Celebration Event July 2017

Events

We ran a series of events throughout the year although numbers were down at Big Night on the Beach due to wet and windy weather and Lambing Sunday was cancelled due to the Beast from the East.

We attended Totnes show as well as Celebrate Start Bay during the summer, which gave us a chance to engage with lots of locals and the visitors to the area, specifically on pollinator and farm to fork themes.



Social media

This continues to provide a key role in our communications. We regularly promote campaigns and events via twitter and facebook engaging with the AONB family in [#OutstandingHour](#) 1-2pm on Wednesdays, our tweet impressions have increased by over 100K since last year.



Roger English and Andy Pratt with the award



Blackpool Sands, stunning conference venue

Outstanding Contribution award

The protected landscapes of the South West were jointly recognised with an Outstanding contribution to tourism award at the South West Tourism Excellence Awards in February

The South West's Protected Landscapes consists of 13 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), two National Parks, The South West Coast Paths, the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site and the UNESCO Global Geopark and Biosphere Reserve.

None of these charge an entry fee, yet they remain one of the primary reasons why visitors choose the region as a destination, contributing significantly to the visitor economy.

The Award recognises the ever-present volunteers and key staff that manage the assets of some of the region's most beautiful countryside under the constant pressures of having to retain funding in order to give visitors the best possible experience.

The South Devon team feel very strongly that the award is also for all the farmers, landowners, businesses, organisations and individuals that help make these special places truly outstanding through generations of hard work and management.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has reported that parts of the country's natural capital, including Protected Landscapes such as those in the South West, contributed £16bn to the economy in 2015, with an estimated contribution of £761bn forecast over the next 100 years

'Natural Capital' conference



The 2017 South Devon AONB Annual Forum was held at Venus Café Blackpool Sands by kind permission of Mike Smith and considered the importance of the natural environment to tourism businesses. At this stunning location, the speakers presented case studies of businesses who had put the environment at the heart of their promotion and explained how we can gain a better understanding of the relationship between the economy and natural capital.

Kate Ryder, Partnership Business Rep, Andy Pratt and host Mike Smith

Esther Kieboom, facilitator of the Tin Coast Partnership in Cornwall talked about making tourism businesses more sustainable -financially, socially and environmentally.

Local tourism businesses shared their views and discussions took place on how businesses and the AONB Unit could collaborate to maximise their potential in the South Devon AONB.

Outstanding Week

Once a year the AONB Family gathers together in celebration of the UK's outstanding landscapes. They worked together to organise a nine day long programme of events to help people enjoy and be inspired by Britain's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. September has always been an outstanding month in our countryside, with harvests being brought safely home, trees and meadows taking on their autumnal colours, skies offering a full palette of hues, musky bonfires lingering in the evening air and a welcoming calmness for visitors.



Bat event at Ham Farm

The South Devon team led a guided walk for BBC Radio Devon from Torcross looking at the wartime coastal defences and biodiversity of the area, organised a bat walk jointly with the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project and led a beach clean at Scoble. Over 100 events were staged nationwide.



BBC Radio Devon Walk

AONB Partnership financial profile 2017-2018

Core costs & income

The **core costs** of the AONB Partnership were jointly funded.

AONB Partnership core income

Defra	£121,608	74.0%
Devon County Council	£17,919	10.9%
South Hams District Council	£20,749	12.6%
Torbay Council	£3,000	1.8%
Plymouth City Council	£1,000	0.6%
Total	£164,276	100%

AONB Partnership core expenditure

Direct staff costs incl. travel, training, etc.	£113,682	69.2%
Office costs and support services	£10,815	6.6%
Communication costs	£1,771	1.1%
Commissioned specialist work	£15,444	9.4%
Partnership Committee support costs	£4,412	2.7%
Other core expenditure	£18,152	11.0%
Total	£164,276	100%

Contribution to partnership programmes

In addition to the direct project expenditure run through the AONB Partnership, the AONB Unit also manages the budget for the **Slaptonline Partnership**.

Slaptonline Partnership

Total spend for 2017-18 was £60,762 mainly focused upon the production of a Beach Management Plan. This activity is funded by a variety of partners, with the budget held by South Hams District Council on behalf of the Slaptonline Partnership.

The total AONB Partnership expenditure on core, direct and indirect projects during 2017-18 was £461,749.

Direct project costs & income

The **project costs** directly incurred by the AONB Partnership in support of AONB Management Plan priorities were funded by a wider range of sources:

AONB Partnership direct project income

Defra	£32,601	13.8%
South Hams District Council	£19,900	8.4%
Other project grants	£1,130	0.5%
Westcountry Rivers Trust	£6,000	2.5%
Environment Agency	£10,000	4.2%
Natural England - Catchment Sensitive Farming	£5,000	2.1%
Rural Payments Agency	£33,860	14.3%
Devon County Council	£3,000	1.3%
Miscellaneous income	£161	0.1%
Salcombe Harbour Authority	£10,600	4.5%
Dart Harbour & Navigation Authority	£5,000	2.1%
Duchy of Cornwall	£7,150	3.0%
S106 Community Orchard project	£1,590	0.7%
Orchard Link / Heritage Lottery Fund	£10,718	4.5%
Langage Landscape Fund	£90,000	38.0%
Total	£236,711	100%

AONB Partnership direct project expenditure

Estuary project costs	£44,555	18.8%
"Explorer" publication, events programme and outreach work	£7,147	3.0%
Community projects staff costs and associated work	£32,182	13.6%
River catchment coordination and project delivery	£177	0.1%
Catchment Sensitive Farming advice	£1,280	0.5%
B-Lines development and research	£1,500	0.6%
AONB planning guidance	£1,187	0.5%
Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Programme	£13,021	5.5%
Brixham-Kingswear peninsula	£1,502	0.6%
Wembury corridors and connections development	£4,750	2.0%
Community orchard management	£5,412	2.3%
Growing Orchard Communities	£1,337	0.6%
Grants	£2,512	1.1%
Project funds - activity in future years	£120,149	50.8%
Total	£236,711	100%



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