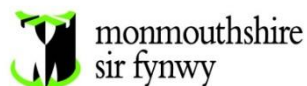


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County Hall  
Rhadyr  
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27<sup>th</sup> February 2017

## Notice of meeting

### Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence and Introductions.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Public Question Time.	
4.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 8
5.	Pine marten reintroduction feasibility study and a presentation by Andrew Stringer, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.	9 - 10
6.	AONB Unit 2017/18 Work programme.	11 - 20
7.	Joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.	21 - 22
8.	AONB Perceptions Survey.	23 - 26
9.	National Association for AONBs.	27 - 28
9.1.	Feedback from AGM and Chairman's Conference.	
9.2.	2016-2020 Strategic Plan.	
9.3.	2016 Annual Report.	
9.4.	Lead officers' meeting 7th - 8th February 2017 in Birmingham.	
9.5.	Landscapes for Life Conference 2017: 18th -20th July 2017 in Winchester.	

<b>10.</b>	<b>AONB Unit progress reports and updates.</b>	29 - 32
<b>10.1.</b>	<b>AONB staffing.</b>	
<b>10.2.</b>	<b>Undergrounding update.</b>	
<b>10.3.</b>	<b>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.</b>	
<b>10.4.</b>	<b>Wye Valley River Festival 2018 update.</b>	
<b>10.5.</b>	<b>Draft Garren and Gamber report.</b>	
<b>10.6.</b>	<b>Venison marketing feasibility study.</b>	
<b>10.7.</b>	<b>mindSCAPE.</b>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Dates of meetings for 2017:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017</li> <li>Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017</li> </ul> <p>Both meetings to be held at 2.00pm in the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber, Coleford.</p>	

**Paul Matthews**  
**Chief Executive**

# **WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Local Authority Members with Voting Powers**

#### **Gloucestershire:**

P. McMahon  
P. Molyneux

#### **Herefordshire:**

P. Cutter  
B. Durkin  
J. Hardwick  
E.J. Swinglehurst

#### **Monmouthshire:**

D. Blakebrough  
D. Dovey  
E.J. Hacket Pain  
A.E. Webb

#### **Forest of Dean:**

G. Davies  
B. Hogan

### **Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers**

Councillor B. Evans – Gloucestershire Association of Town / Parish Councils  
D. Berry – Herefordshire Association Local Councils  
Councillor Trevor Phillips – One Voice Wales

### **Co-opted Members with Voting Powers**

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire  
A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire  
Mr. B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire  
S. Dereham – Country Land and Business Association  
M. Price – National Farmers Union

### **Co-opted Members without Voting Powers**

B. Barron – Wye Valley Society  
S. Dereham – River Wye Preservation Trust  
A. Lee – Recreation Sector  
D. Broadbent – Local Tourism Sector  
H. Stace – Local Wildlife Trusts  
D. Price – National Farmers Union Wales

# Public Information

## **Access to paper copies of agendas and reports**

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

## **Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council**

### **Sustainable and Resilient Communities**

#### **Outcomes we are working towards**

##### **Nobody Is Left Behind**

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

##### **People Are Confident, Capable and Involved**

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

##### **Our County Thrives**

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

#### **Our priorities**

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

#### **Our Values**

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.

- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goals.

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## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on  
Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: P. Cutter (Chairman) (Herefordshire Council)

### **Elected Members (with voting powers)**

#### **Monmouthshire County Council**

County Councillors: D. Dovey and E. Hacket Pain

#### **Gloucestershire County Council**

Councillor P. Molyneux

#### **Herefordshire Council**

Councillor J. Hardwick

#### **Forest of Dean Council**

Councillor G. Davies

### **Co-opted Members (with voting powers)**

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire - Mr. A. Thomas  
Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire - Dr. G. Peterken  
Country Land and Business Association - Mr. S.W.B. Dereham  
One Voice Wales - Councillor T. Phillips

### **Co-opted Members (without voting powers)**

Recreation Sector - Mr. A. Lee  
Wye Valley Society - Mr. C. Barron  
Local Tourism Sector - Mr. D. Broadbent  
Wildlife Trusts - Mr. A. Nixon (Herefordshire Wildlife Trust)

### **Technical Advice Officers**

Wye Valley AONB Manager - Mr. A. Blake  
Gloucestershire County Council - Mr. R. Niblett  
Monmouthshire County Council - Mr. M. Lewis  
Monmouthshire County Council - Mrs W. Barnard  
Natural England - Ms. D. Griffiths

### **Also Present**

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire – Mrs. V. Morgan representing Mr. B. Nash  
Ramblers Association and Monmouthshire U3A – Mrs. J. Robbins

#### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors Mrs D. Blakebrough and Mrs A. Webb, Councillor Mrs H. Molyneux and Mr. M. Price

#### **1. Apologies for Absence and Introductions.**

The Chair received apologies for absence, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest.**

There were no declarations of interest from Committee Members.

#### **3. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **4. Public Question Time.**

No questions were raised by members of the public.

#### **5. Local Authority contributions.**

We received a report, the purpose of which was to request contributions from the four constituent local authorities to the budget for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership for 2017/18 as outlined in the AONB Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities.

The recommendation that the JAC request from the constituent local authorities the agreed financial contributions for the Wye Valley AONB was agreed.

#### **6. Wye Valley River Festival 2016 reports.**

We were presented with evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival in 2016, and detailed discussion and decision was made as follows.



## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

#### **6.1 WVRF 2016 Evaluation and Reflection Report.**

The Festival Manager's final report was received, following presentation of the main outcomes at the last meeting. The report will be published on the website and it was recognised that the event was a considerable success. The Committee were reminded that the original business plan was to hold three biennial festivals (2014, 2016 and 2018).

A query was raised regarding the concluding event at Chepstow Racecourse and it was confirmed that it is intended that the festivals will not necessarily follow the same format each time. Each event is intended to be creative and different, explaining why the 2014 firework display in Chepstow was not repeated. Linked to this point, it was explained that discussions were also held with Chepstow Town Council to ensure that there was clear separation between the River Festival and the celebrations to mark the Chepstow Bridge Bicentenary this year. One of the lessons learned was that concluding the Festival on Sunday evening not a good time to attract visitors and this will be done differently in 2018.

Further information was sought regarding the involvement of young people in the 2016 event and ongoing to the 2018 event. It was confirmed that engagement with young people this time was a great success, and the intention is to build upon this success for 2018.

It was suggested that there would be a trees and woodland theme for the 2018 event which is with festival management team for consideration. It was agreed that the proposed theme offered a lot of potential to utilise fresh sites and opportunity for artistic interpretation accordingly. The suggestion was supported and it was agreed that this was a good opportunity to change perceptions and increase appreciation of the contribution and impact of woodlands and trees in the environment. Dr. G. Peterken offered his expertise to the organisers. It was commented that the management of the trees in the Wye Valley has been neglected for many years affecting access to and enjoyment of the surroundings.

The Committee were advised of the Bicentenary of Bigsweir Bridge is coming up and it was suggested that plans for a celebration should be considered as the bridge is a significant example of an elegant engineering solution to cross the river.

It was commented that some Wye Valley views are inaccessible and that there was a need to reinstate access and refurbish some of the Picturesque walks to attract more visitors. It was suggested that this proposal could be added to the planning for the 2018 event. Reassurance was provided that the Overlooking the Wye project cleared several viewpoints and funding has been secured to conserve some of the of the views next year.

It was suggested that there is not enough attention given to the industrial heritage of the area (quarrying, timber, bark for tanning leather etc.) and the point was revisited

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

that the Wye Valley should be awarded World Heritage Site status in recognition of its industrial history. It was noted that a previous application in 2011 was rejected.

#### **6.2 WVRF CCRI final report.**

The Final Report of the Countryside and Community Research Institute was received. The purpose of the report was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 and it was reported that it was evident that it was a positive experience for those attending and also those participating.

#### **6.3 PR & media report.**

A detailed report of Press and Media coverage of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was received.

We resolved to accept the recommendations, that the JAC:

- A. Welcomes the evaluation reports for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 and the conclusions and lessons learned; and
- B. Endorses commencing the development process for a Wye Valley River Festival 2018.

#### **7. Local Authority changes and proposed alternative delivery.**

We received a report outlining changes in three of the four constituent local authorities and the proposed relationship to the alternative delivery models developing in Monmouthshire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council.

A summary of the changes in each area was provided. In doing so, it was advised that AONB line management in Herefordshire Council has moved to the Built and Natural Environment Service and the job title of the AONB Officer has been changed to AONB Manager (under the same terms and conditions). A Member expressed concern that a decision to change the job title of the AONB lead officer was taken without consultation with the Committee. Whilst it was commented that the new job title adequately reflected the role, the Chair agreed to investigate the circumstances of how the decision was reached, and to provide an answer to the Member.

The Committee was informed that it was unclear at present what the impact on the AONB would be with the formation of Teckal companies in Monmouthshire and the Forest of Dean to deliver improved value for money and services. However priorities and advice to the local authorities would continue to be set in this Committee.

It was explained that Herefordshire Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Monmouthshire County Council employ the AONB team members and the implications of changes in each council are awaited. It was explained that

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

discussions have taken place with other AONB lead officers that have experienced similar circumstances and a set of criteria to address changes has been produced to ensure that statutory obligations are met and appropriate services continue.

The proposal to repeat the 2011 survey of Partnership members to obtain up to date perceptions was discussed.

The Committee, with the exception of Mr. A. Thomas, resolved to accept the recommendations, that the JAC:

- A. Acknowledges the move in Herefordshire Council of the 'AONB Officer' to the Built & Natural Environment Service and change of job title to 'AONB Manager'.
- B. Notes the proposed changes and alternative delivery models developing in Monmouthshire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council.
- C. Endorses the Core Messages for AONBs and AONB partnerships and the 18 questions for services relating to the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- D. Supports repeating the 2011 survey of AONB Partnership members on their perceptions of the Wye Valley AONB, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) & the AONB Unit.

#### **8. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).**

The Committee received a report to consider and endorse the allocations of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2016/17.

It was noted that the funding is issued directly from Welsh Government, and of the £55,000 granted this year, £35,000 has been allocated. The next Assessment Panel will consider schemes within the available funding. Attention was drawn to alterations to the purpose and targets in line with the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We resolved to accept the recommendations that the JAC:

- A. Welcomes the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) being awarded direct from Welsh Government and notes the new Purposes and Targets;
- B. endorses the recent allocations of the SDF for 2016/17; and
- C. supports apportioning any unallocated funds to contribute towards Wye Valley AONB Partnership initiatives that support the SDF Purposes and Targets.

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

#### **9. Farming Awards updates & changes.**

We were presented with a report, the purpose of which is to seek approval for a broadening of the AONB Farming Awards eligibility criteria.

The Committee agreed that it was very important to engage the farming community. The Chair referred to coverage of the award on BBC Countryfile and the Hereford Times. The opportunity for the public to view the winning farm on Open Farm Sunday was recognised as a benefit. It was commented that levels of applications fluctuate year on year. The need to review the criteria with a proposal to include land management organisations to provide breadth to the awards was acknowledged. It was noted that the timing of the Monmouthshire Show has been changed to early July instead of late August, and that the launch date and timescales will have to be altered accordingly. It was commented that it will be necessary to judge using different criteria, and this point will require further consideration.

It was suggested that an update on grassland projects could be provided at the next meeting to enhance our understanding.

The Committee resolved to accept the recommendations as presented:

That the JAC agrees to the broadening of the AONB Farming Awards to include organisations and individuals managing land that also make an outstanding contribution to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.

#### **10. Forthcoming Landscape Enhancement Projects.**

The Committee received a report to seek its support for two forthcoming landscape enhancement projects. In receiving the report, the following points were made:

Concern was expressed that sufficient efforts are not being made to contain or restrict the wild Fallow Deer population. The suggestion of a wild venison feasibility study was welcomed. Additionally, it was requested that deer statistics are reinstated as an agenda item. Support was expressed for the feasibility study generally, and also to record the Muntjac and Roe Deer population. It was confirmed that population and cull figures continue to be collected and can be made available. It was acknowledged that the impact of more numerous deer on woodlands and their flora was detrimental and increasing.

The Committee discussed potential of marketing Wye Valley Venison and the supply and demand issues of venison. The need to encourage natural regeneration in the woodlands and to reduce deer to a sustainable level was debated, with the suggestion of utilising sustaining woodland as a marketing message for the sale of Wye Valley Venison. It was agreed that a strong business plan would be required. It

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

was identified that there are one or two commercial deer farms in the area, and that they may be good partners to assist development of a strategy.

It was commented that the deer population was attractive for tourism and also for shooting enthusiasts. It was agreed to add wild boar to our future discussions.

The Committee resolved to agree to the recommendations presented that the JAC:

- A. Supports the Coughton Enhancement Project application to National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI).
- B. Support the development of a wild Venison Feasibility Study in the lower Wye Valley.

#### **11. Lydbrook Bridge & other Wye Valley Walk considerations.**

The Committee received a report on the current situation with the former Lydbrook Railway Bridge and other aspects of the Wye Valley Walk long distance trail.

It was noted that the bridge has been closed for most of the year by Gloucestershire County Council on safety grounds. The bridge is a part of Wye Valley Walk and provides a strategic link. Following a full structural survey, a preferred solution and associated costings are awaited. It was noted that there is no desired intention to close the bridge permanently. It was commented that diversion signage needs to be improved around the bridge, decking has been removed and some fencing is broken.

Consideration of this matter drew attention to other infrastructure issues along the Wye Valley Walk. It was explained that work is being undertaken to define issues. The Committee was advised that funding from Welsh Government of £50,000 will enable several projects to improve rights of way along the route to retain viability.

We resolved to accept the recommendations as presented, that the JAC:

- A. Supports the continued promotion and development of the Wye Valley Walk as a long distance regional recreation trail co-ordinated through the Wye Valley Walk Partnership;
- B. Supports Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council in finding a viable solution to reopen the former Lydbrook railway bridge on the Wye Valley Walk; and
- C. Welcomes the investment of the Welsh Government in aspects of the Wye Valley Walk in Monmouthshire.

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on  
Monday, 7th November, 2016 at 2.00 pm**

### **12. NAAONB update.**

The report was received for information advising members of activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB). The NAAONB Chairman's Conference and AGM on 24th November 2016 and will be attended by the AONB Manager. On behalf of the NAAONB, the AONB Manager attended the Ministerial launch of the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) by Natural Resources Wales.

### **13. AONB updates.**

The AONB Manager provided a verbal update for information on a range of projects and initiatives including

- Future Landscapes Wales programme & the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales
- AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback, attended by 31 people
- Chalara, Ash dieback, update
- LEMUR+ trainee placement contract extensions
- Europarc visit by 9 Germans from 6 National Parks
- MindSCAPE Year 2 report and forthcoming presentation at the 'Delivering the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment' seminar in Bristol on 16th November 2016.

The Chair thanked Mr. M. Lewis and Mr. A. Blake and the AONB team for their outstanding work.

### **14. Proposed dates of meetings for 2017:**

We noted that the next meeting will be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 2.00pm, and subsequently on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**The meeting ended at 3.50 pm**

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## PINE MARTEN REINTRODUCTION FEASIBILITY STUDY

### *Purpose*

To receive a presentation on the two year feasibility study into whether pine martens should be reintroduced to the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

FOR INFORMATION

### *Key Issues*

- Pine martens are one of Britain's rarest mammals, and are predominantly restricted to Scotland with low numbers in Wales and South Shropshire.
- Once common across England, they were hunted to extinction in the country during the 1800s.
- In summer 2016 investigations began into the feasibility of reintroducing pine martens to the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley as part of a collaborative project between Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, The Vincent Wildlife Trust, and the Forestry Commission.
- No decision on the reintroduction of pine martens to the area will be made before Spring 2018.
- Andrew Stringer, Pine Marten Project Manager, will give a brief presentation on the project, what is planned for the feasibility study, and where it has got to so far.

### *Reasons*

Pine martens are housecat-sized members of the stoat and weasel family. They are generalist omnivores and living at low density (1 per 100ha is considered high density), being very mobile, easily travelling 20km in a day. Pine martens are dependent on woodland habitat offering plenty of food and denning potential. There is a population of at least 4,000 pine martens in Scotland and they are known to exist in Wales. In 2015 the first ever photograph of a wild pine marten in Shropshire was taken in the Clun Valley. Shropshire now has the only known breeding population of pine martens in England.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, in collaboration with the Forestry Commission and The Vincent Wildlife Trust are running a two year feasibility study into whether pine martens should be reintroduced to the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

### *Implications*

The feasibility study commenced in June 2016 and is looking into all aspects of pine marten biology, how they will affect local ecosystems, and the impacts and opportunities they may

provide for people living alongside them. The study will be fully assessing the issues, and the reintroduction will not go ahead if the costs clearly outweigh the benefits.

The project utilises key international guidelines on reintroductions, and aims to assess the costs and benefits of a reintroduction within three key areas:

**Biological feasibility:** This assesses the suitability of habitat, including the abundance of food, dens sites, and potential sources of mortality. This will be used to predict whether a stable population of pine martens can live in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley area.

**Ecological feasibility:** This will address the potential costs and benefits to the ecology of the area, should a native omnivore be reintroduced. There is the potential for the reintroduction to have a variety of benefits, such as a controlling effect on grey squirrel populations, but we also need to fully assess the risk to species that are rare and protected.

**Socio-economic feasibility:** This will assess the social costs and benefits of a reintroduction. Benefits may include an opportunity to increase ecotourism to the area. On the other hand, we know that pine martens pose a threat to domestic birds such as pheasants and chickens. Investigations into how this threat could be mitigated will be carried out.

As part of the feasibility study Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, The Vincent Wildlife Trust, and the Forestry Commission will consult with a wide range of individuals, and are particularly interested in hearing the opinions and concerns from all those who may be affected.

### ***Background***

For more information see [www.GloucestershireWildlifeTrust.co.uk/PineMarten](http://www.GloucestershireWildlifeTrust.co.uk/PineMarten) and / or contact [Andrew.Stringer@GloucestershireWildlifeTrust.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.Stringer@GloucestershireWildlifeTrust.co.uk)



TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## **AONB UNIT WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018**

### ***Purpose***

To seek members' approval for the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit during the forthcoming financial year.

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC endorses the AONB Unit Work Programme 2017/2018.

### ***Key Issues***

- The attached table sets out the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit in the form of the Work Programme 2017/2018.
- This is focused on progressing the AONB Management Plan, development of the Wye Valley River Festival 2018 and continuing existing activities while developing new initiatives and funding opportunities.
- Welsh Government have confirmed that the allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund will remain at £55,000 for 2017/18.
- The budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by Defra, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and AONB Steering Group.

### ***Reasons***

The main tasks in the year ahead are:

- Promoting the use of the adopted AONB Management Plan 2015 - 2020.
- maintaining a high profile for the AONB, developing the Wye Valley River Festival 2018, alongside continuing activities such as the AONB Farming Awards, Youth Rangers and the final year of mindSCAPE
- delivering ongoing partnership initiatives, such as the Wye Valley Walk Partnership and the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye scheme
- developing and submitting new projects, partnership initiatives and funding bids for the future delivery of the AONB Management Plan including landscape scale partnership projects, pursuing the restoration of Lydbrook Bridge and supporting the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory
- Securing a new Memorandum of Understanding and medium term resourcing commitments from the AONB core funding partners.

### ***Implications***

Defra provided a four year grant allocation (2016-2020) while 2017/18 will be the final year of both the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Authorities and the three year grant from NRW.

Overall the AONB Unit business plan, based on the Work Programme, maximises the benefit for the local communities, the local economy and the outstanding landscape, while making best use of resources available. This is achieved by collaboration and leveraging in additional funding and resources wherever possible.

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)  
Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<b>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan</li> <li>Monitor use of Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries etc</li> <li>Evaluate Plan review options for 2020+</li> </ul>	1,500	<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> <i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</i>	AONBM	Mar 2018
<b>AONB Strategy &amp; Development Advisor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew contract for year to support AONB Manager with planning advice.</li> <li>Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents</li> <li>Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB</li> <li>Engage in development and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB</li> <li>Deliver CPD &amp; training for LA Planning staff &amp; members</li> </ul>	6,000	<i>WV-D1 Ensure a consistent and coherent framework of planning policies relating to the AONB is fully reflected in the statutory land use planning documents and their effectiveness monitored</i> <i>WV-D2 Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and that they complement and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and minimise the impact on the natural environment</i> <i>WV-D3 Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important</i>	AONBM	March 2018
<b>AONB Farming Awards</b> Promote & publicise 10th Awards for farmers, landowners and land managers that make an outstanding contribution to conserving &/or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek sponsorship for the AONB Farming Awards from local businesses etc.</li> <li>Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing</li> <li>And judging</li> <li>Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show</li> <li>Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event.</li> </ul>	1,100	<i>WV-L5 Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB</i> <i>WV-F1 Encourage farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB</i> <i>WV-F5 Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB</i> <i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> <i>WV-E2 Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area</i>	DO	June /July 2017
<b>Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel</li> <li>Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating funds</li> </ul>	[55,000 Wales]	<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> <i>WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and</i>	AONBM/ CLO	May 2017  Nov 2017

# WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review SDF application processes and Assessment Panel</li> <li>Complete establishment of AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation</li> </ul>		<i>natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</i> <i>WV-C1 Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3</i>		March 2018
<b>Picturesque</b> Produce and distribute regular on-line editions of the AONB newsletter, 'Picturesque' to provide information and interpretation to increase subscribers' awareness and appreciation of the AONB	2000	<i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> <i>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</i>	IO/ ALL	March 2018
<b>AONB Partnership events</b> For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise AONB Partnership Seminar on key issue</li> <li>Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &amp;/or issues</li> <li>Complete evaluation of AONB Perceptions Questionnaire</li> </ul>	1500	<i>WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i> <i>WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB</i> <i>WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area</i>	AONBM/ FAO	Feb 2018
<b>Exhibitions &amp; Outreach</b> Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stands at the Monmouthshire Show, Herefordshire Country Fair and other relevant shows.</li> <li>Local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events.</li> </ul>	500	<i>WV-E4 Raise awareness of the value of the AONB and the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel</i> <i>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</i>	ALL	Mar 2018
<b>MindSCAPE</b> Final (4 <sup>th</sup> ) year of £165,000 Big Lottery funded initiative enabling people living with dementia to access and reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage final year of project and submit reports &amp; claims for Big Lottery</li> <li>Supervise contractor organising regular creative sessions, workshops and social</li> </ul>	2,800 [40,000]	<i>WV-W5 Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities</i> <i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> <i>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</i>	DO	Mar 2018

# WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities at appropriate sites for participants.</li> <li>Host final year seminar to promote findings and success of scheme.</li> <li>Develop legacy project &amp; exit strategy</li> </ul>				
<b>Wye Valley River Festival 2018</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit applications to Arts Councils and other funders of the Festival</li> <li>Continue Research &amp; Development phase for events and ideas</li> <li>Develop business sponsorship for 2018</li> <li>Commence outreach programme including with schools, young people and intergeneration opportunities</li> <li>Consolidate preparations for Festival 5<sup>th</sup> May – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018</li> </ul>	2,000 [20,000]	<p>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</p> <p>WV-W5 Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities</p> <p>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</p>	CLO/ALL	May 2017  Sept 2017  May 2018
<b>Youth Rangers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conclude structured programme of activity for 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management.</li> <li>Develop the next phase of the scheme, linking with the Foresters Forest LP and other funding sources to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage</li> </ul>	500 [4,000]	<p>WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB</p> <p>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</p> <p>WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB</p>	DO/CLO	Mar 2018
<b>Deer Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene &amp; service Deer Management Groups and Deer Monitoring Project</li> <li>Coordinate deer surveys in the Woolhope Dome and Lower Wye Valley</li> <li>Assist co-ordination of collaborative deer cull through the Deer Management Groups</li> <li>Review and implement as appropriate the recommendations of the venison marketing feasibility study</li> </ul>	500	<p>WV-B2 Encourage and support measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local/key wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition and within robust ecological networks</p> <p>WV-B4 Identify species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the biodiversity value of the AONB and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control</p> <p>WV-W4 Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss</p> <p>WV-W3 Support the development of employment and skills and markets for local timber and woodland produce</p>	AONBM	Mar 2017
<b>Habitat Conservation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys</li> <li>Liaise over national roadside verge initiatives</li> </ul>	1,100	<p>WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change</p> <p>WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data</p>	DO/CLO	Mar 2018

# WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with local authorities and Highways Agency</li> <li>Organise monthly volunteer task days</li> </ul>		<i>to monitor landscape condition and direction of change</i> <i>WV-F4 Support the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of AONB designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the AONB</i>		
<b>AONB Sub-total</b>	<b>£19,500</b>			
<b>Tasks below covered in AONB Unit costs</b>	<b>£217,682</b>			
<b>Website and social media</b> Upgrading and management of <a href="http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk">www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk</a> and social networking sites e.g. facebook and twitter. Maintenance of <a href="http://www.wyevalleywalk.org">www.wyevalleywalk.org</a> and hosting of <a href="http://www.overlookingthewye.org.uk">www.overlookingthewye.org.uk</a> & <a href="http://www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk">www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk</a> websites.		<i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> <i>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</i>	ALL	Mar 2018
<b>Work placements</b> Support the needs of student placements/group projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities</li> </ul>		<i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i> <i>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</i>	DO / CLO	Mar 2018
<b>Undergrounding</b> Continue working with Western Power to identify power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding.	[100,000]	<i>WV-U2 Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected</i> <i>WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB 3-year work programme</i>	DO	Mar 2018
<b>Landscape scale conservation</b> Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop scheme around Little Doward &amp; South Herefordshire with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust &amp; others</li> <li>Develop options for a possible Landscape Partnership scheme in the north of the AONB between Woolhope and Sellack</li> <li>Scope for appropriate projects and prepare applications for National Grid Visual</li> </ul>		<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> <i>WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change</i> <i>WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</i> <i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or</i>	DO	Mar 2017

# WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners in Monmouthshire on Long Forest and Usk to Wye initiatives</li> </ul>		other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRow Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB 3-year work programme		
<b>Wye Valley Walk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership</li> <li>Monitor counters along Walk</li> <li>Manage Passport scheme</li> <li>Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge</li> </ul>	[800]	WV-S1 Encourage and promote the AONB as a sustainable tourism destination with forms of tourism activity and development that are based on the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB WV-S2 Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs WV-R1 Encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities. Associated development and new access to land should be subject to WV-D2 & -D3 WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	IO	Mar 2018
<b>Public Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB</li> <li>Give talks/presentations to local groups</li> <li>Regular press releases and magazine articles / advertorial</li> </ul>		WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness	ALL	Mar 2018
<b>Partnership</b> Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wye Valley &amp; Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership</li> <li>Visit Herefordshire Leisure and Recreation Forum.</li> <li>Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire</li> <li>Wye Catchment Management Partnership</li> <li>Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC)</li> </ul>		WV-R2 Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and	AONBM/ DO	Mar 2017

# WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monmouthshire Environment Partnership,</li> <li>Herefordshire Wildlife Link</li> </ul>		<p><i>decisions affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area</i></p>		
<b>Collaboration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars &amp; events</li> <li>Work with Welsh Government and Wales Designated Landscapes in taking Future Landscapes Wales Programme forward</li> </ul>		<p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p> <p><i>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</i></p>	ALL	Mar 2017
<b>Monitoring</b> <p>Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data, including habitats and species, heritage, tourism and recreation etc.</p> <p>Support evaluation of Drystone walls</p> <p>Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan</p>		<p><i>WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change</i></p> <p><i>WV-B5 Support the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and priority species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres</i></p> <p><i>WV-H2 Promote establishment of baseline data to monitor change and improve the local databases of historic landscape assessments, conservation areas, locally important buildings, buildings at risk, ancient trees, heritage features and sites in the AONB in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities, local archaeological trusts and individuals</i></p> <p><i>WV-S3 Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the Special Qualities of the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P8 Develop and co-ordinate the acquisition and analysis of data across the AONB, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty, including developing a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and supporting mitigation and adaption actions</i></p>		Mar 2017
<b>Governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group</li> <li>Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required.</li> </ul>		<p><i>WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes</i></p>	AONBM/ FAO	Jun, Oct, Feb Jan, May 2017
<b>Funding and resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate a new Memorandum of Understanding between the core funding partners for 2018 - 2021</li> <li>Continue investigating funding and</li> </ul>		<p><i>WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the</i></p>	AONBM/ DO	Mar 2018



# WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2017/2018

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer /s (see footer)	By when
development opportunities. • Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects		AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan		
<b>Projects below not identified in bids to Natural Resources Wales and Defra 2017/18</b>				
<b>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory</b> Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological projects and investigation into landscape significance of the 8 <sup>th</sup> century monument		WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations WV-H3 Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	AONBM	Mar 2018
<b>Overlooking the Wye legacy</b> Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme	[5,000]	WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations WV-H3 Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas	AONBM/ DO	Mar 2018

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6th March 2017

## **JOINT EVENT WITH BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### ***Purpose***

To pursue joint activity at a members' level with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

### ***Recommendations***

That the JAC

- A. Agree to arrange a joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

### ***Key Issues***

- The Future Landscapes Wales programme has facilitated closer collaboration between the AONBs and National Parks in Wales.
- The AONB Manager gave a presentation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) in April 2016.
- The BBNPA were invited to join the AONB Partnership Tour in September 2016 but this clashed with a full NPA meeting.
- The a joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has been proposed during 2017. The date and exact format is to be decided.

### ***Reasons***

There is a growing recognition between the AONBs and National Parks in Wales that we have much to share and to learn from each other. The Future Landscapes Wales programme has demonstrated the benefits of closer collaboration.

### ***Implications***

Initial thoughts are that the following items might be of interest or value to joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority:

- Taking Future Landscapes Wales forward (following the anticipated Ministerial launch on 15th March)
- Planning and development control/management in (and around) our Designated Landscapes
- Ensuring application of the 'duty of regard' (CRoW Act 2000 Section 85 / Environment Act 1995 Section 62)
- Riverine issues – with the Wye and Usk being our most obvious common landscape feature.

The nature of the event has yet to be decided. Options include:-

- combining with the AONB Partnership Tour if dates are amenable,

- combining with some programmed members' training, or
- establishing a bespoke event.

Liaison with BBNPA is ongoing over timing, content and logistics.

### ***Background***

The JAC and BBNPA chairmen signed an Accord in 1998 and we have collaborated on numerous occasions with BBNPA, most recently with the Walking with Offa project and through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Board.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## INITIAL FEEDBACK FROM AONB PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

### ***Purpose***

To inform members of the initial findings from the AONB Perceptions Questionnaire.

FOR INFORMATION

### ***Key Issues***

- In 2011 a survey of AONB Partnership members was circulated about perceptions of the Wye Valley AONB, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) & the AONB Unit.
- A follow-up survey on AONB Perceptions has just been completed with a very positive response rate.
- The AONB Manager will give a brief presentation to the JAC on the interim results of the questionnaire.
- A full analysis of the data including a comparison with the 2011 survey will be presented to the next JAC in July.

### ***Reasons***

The questionnaire in 2011 of Perceptions about the AONB was part of the celebrations for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wye Valley being designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. At the previous JAC meeting members agreed that a repeat of the 2011 survey would seem timely. In repeating the questionnaire in 2017 as many of the original questions as possible were kept the same. However, the opportunity was taken to expand some questions and also to ask some new ones. The questionnaire was published and distributed electronically via Survey Monkey to 620 people involved in the AONB Partnership or connected with various AONB projects. The survey launched on 7<sup>th</sup> February and closes on 1<sup>st</sup> March.

### ***Implications***

By 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017, 221 responses had been received. The AONB Manager will give a brief presentation to the JAC on the initial results of the questionnaire. Full analysis of the results will be undertaken by the AONB Unit and these will be reported back to the JAC in July, including a comparison with the 2011 survey, and any recommendations arising from the findings. A selection of the interim results is appended below for information.

### ***Background***

The Questionnaire in 2011 went to 450 partners and interested parties in the Wye Valley AONB. A total of 48 were returned giving a response rate of 10.7%.

## Interim Results

### **Perceptions of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB), the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) & the AONB Unit**

#### **Q1. How long have you been associated with the Wye Valley AONB? *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Less than 1 year	2%	3%
1-5 years	33%	28%
6-10 years	29%	24%
11-15 years	15%	18%
16-20 years	4%	11%
21-25 years	6%	2%
More than 25 years	10%	14%

#### **Q2. Is your involvement with AONB predominantly through: *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Private sector	4%	11%
Voluntary sector	35%	18%
Local community	17%	11%
Public sector	23%	42%
Private individual	21%	28%

#### **AONB Unit:**

#### **Q4. How would you rate the achievements of the AONB Unit in the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB? *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Very good	53%	54%
good	41%	33%
satisfactory	0%	7%
poor	2%	1%
very poor	0%	0%
don't know	4%	5%

#### **Q6. Is there anything the AONB Unit could improve? *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Yes	40%	24%
No	19%	20%
Don't Know	42%	56%

#### **JAC:**

#### **Q11. Do you know what the Joint Advisory Committee is? *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Yes	78%	65%
No	22%	35%

#### **Q12. If yes do you know what function it has? *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Yes	84%	81%
No	16%	19%

**Q13a. The JAC has significantly influenced the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB. *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Agree strongly	20%	8%
Agree	39%	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	22%
Disagree	2%	1%
Disagree Strongly	2%	0%
Don't know	20%	29%

**Q13b. The JAC should be more strongly involved in Planning decisions. *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Agree strongly	21%	13%
Agree	42%	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	14%	22%
Disagree	5%	6%
Disagree Strongly	0%	1%
Don't know	19%	26%

**Q13c. The JAC does not have any political influence. *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Agree strongly	5%	1%
Agree	28%	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	26%	28%
Disagree	12%	24%
Disagree Strongly	2%	1%
Don't know	28%	31%

**AONB Designation:**

**Q15a. The designation of the Wye Valley AONB has significantly helped conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Agree strongly	42%	50%
agree	48%	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	2%	3%
Disagree	4%	0%
Disagree Strongly	2%	1%
Don't know	2%	0%

**Q15b. The statutory powers associated with the AONB are not sufficient to conserve the natural beauty of the Wye Valley. *Interim Results***

	2011	2017
Agree strongly	23%	10%
agree	32%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	26%
Disagree	17%	13%
Disagree Strongly	0%	2%
Don't know	15%	12%

**Q15c. The Statutory AONB Management Plan is a key tool in the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB. *Interim Results***

	2011	<b>2017</b>
Agree strongly	25%	<b>24%</b>
agree	58%	<b>50%</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	8%	<b>15%</b>
Disagree	2%	<b>1%</b>
Disagree Strongly	0%	<b>1%</b>
Don't know	6%	<b>10%</b>

General:

**Q18. Do you think more training &/or information on the different functions of the AONB, JAC and AONB Unit would be useful? *Interim Results***

	2011	<b>2017</b>
Yes	83%	<b>42%</b>
No	0%	<b>23%</b>
Don't Know	17%	<b>36%</b>

**Q19. Are you: *Interim Results***

	2011	<b>2017</b>
Male	71%	<b>55%</b>
Female	29%	<b>45%</b>

**Q20. Age Band: *Interim Results***

	2011	<b>2017</b>
16-35	0%	<b>2%</b>
36-45	4%	<b>11%</b>
46-55	15%	<b>32%</b>
56-65	46%	<b>32%</b>
66-75	27%	<b>18%</b>
75 & above	8%	<b>5%</b>

**Q21. Do you live in the AONB? *Interim Results***

	2011	<b>2017</b>
Yes	47%	34%
No	51%	66%
Don't know	2%	0%



TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs

### ***Purpose***

To update members on recent and proposed activity of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

FOR INFORMATION

### ***Key Issues***

- Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, represented the JAC in November 2016 at the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Annual General Meeting and the National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference, in London.
- The main topic for discussion at the Chairmen's Conference was the implication of Brexit for Protected Landscapes.
- The NAAONB Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is published
- The 2016 Annual Report for the AONB Family is published and includes 3 case studies from the Wye Valley AONB.
- The AONB Manager also attended the AONB Lead Officers' meeting in Birmingham in February.
- The dates for the next national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference are 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in Winchester.
- Outstanding Week 2017 is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> September.

### ***Reasons***

The NAAONB is the charity that champions the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as nationally protected landscapes cared for by locally accountable partnerships that promote and support effective long term management to keep these nationally designated landscapes special.

The NAAONB Trustees and core team work closely with Defra and Welsh Government to harness the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the AONB Family. They bring the AONB Family together as a cohesive entity providing leadership and strategic direction, celebrating the unique identity of the individual members and AONBs, and working with others to achieve shared objectives.

### ***Implications***

#### National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference

The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's meeting attracted over 60 Chairmen and Lead Officers from the UK's Designated Landscapes. Under discussion was Landscape post Brexit with three keynote speakers: Professor Dieter Helm, Dr Vince Holyoak & Dr Victoria Jenkins. They spoke respectively about the implications of Brexit; on British Agricultural Policy; legislation affecting the historic environment; on environmental law.

In the afternoon discussion opened to the floor and some of the key issues that have been highlighted as the UK proceeds towards Brexit were discussed. Participants then identified 11 key themes that could be progressed by the Designated Landscapes individually and collectively over the coming months to address these key issues. The NAAONB team undertook to distil these themes into short proposals. These were discussed further, along with other things, at the AONB Lead Officers' meeting in Birmingham in February.

#### Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The NAAONB Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is available to view at:-

<http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/images/Strategic-Plan-2016-2020.pdf>

#### Annual Report

The 2016 Annual Report for the AONB Family is available from the link below. The document includes 3 case studies from the Wye Valley AONB:

Landscapes for Nature - Wye Valley AONB LEMUR+ Phase 1 Habitat Survey (page 4)

Landscapes for People - Wye Valley AONB mindSCAPE (page 6)

Landscapes for Culture - Wye Valley AONB St James Church, Lancaut (page 9)

<http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/images/Annual-Report-2016-FINAL.pdf>

#### AGM

The agenda and papers are available from the link below

<http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/images/NAAONB-AGM-Papers-Nov2016.pdf>

#### Landscapes for Life Conference 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> July 2017

The annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference (L4L2017) will take place in Winchester. Delegates will learn about experiences and results of change through engagement with external organisations - public, third sector and corporate and share ideas on the most efficient and effective methods of change with the intention of inspiring and leading our Partnerships to make the changes necessary to provide a robust and sustainable future for our outstanding landscapes.

#### Outstanding Week

The AONB Family's inaugural 'Outstanding Week', coordinated by the NAAONB took place September 2015. This was repeated in 2016 and plans are already underway for Outstanding Week 2017. Outstanding Week is a programme of events to help people enjoy and be inspired by the UK's AONBs. Activities and events in virtually all the AONBs are highlighted through a national campaign that promotes the value and relevance of AONBs to both the UK's economy, and the nation's health and wellbeing. For more information see [www.landscapesforlifeevents.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlifeevents.org.uk)

#### ***Background***

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is the charity (Number 1158871) and trusted voice for the AONB Family. It works to ensure that the natural beauty of all the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is understood and supported at all levels.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'  
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## AONB REPORTS

### *Purpose*

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit.

FOR INFORMATION

The AONB Officer will give a brief verbal report on the following AONB initiatives, outlined below:-

- a. AONB staffing
- b. Undergrounding update
- c. Offa's Dyke Collaboratory
- d. Wye Valley River Festival 2018 update
- e. Draft Garren & Gamber report
- f. Venison marketing feasibility study

### **a. AONB staffing**

The AONB Information Officer post is currently vacant and recruitment will commence shortly to fill this core post on an 18 month contract.

The contracts for the two Trainee Ecological Surveyors have been extended to the end of March. Their work continues to augment the currently depleted core AONB team.

### **b. Undergrounding update**

In South Wales the two undergrounding schemes at Penterry Church and Reddings Farm near Tintern have recently been approved by the South Wales Undergrounding Steering Group, and passed to the local Western Power Distribution (WPD) team for action. The WPD officers will now make further investigations to make more detailed proposals for the undergrounding and secure wayleaves consents for the work to take place. Should these schemes be successfully completed, they will remove approximately 1.5km of overhead line from views for people visiting Penterry Church and walking the Wye Valley Walk. The cost of these undergrounding schemes is currently estimated at approximately £122,000.

The scheme proposed at Cleddon Shoots has been assessed and is unfortunately not viable due to the terrain.

The long running New Grove Meadows scheme is still feasible, but has been put on hold due to the increased cost per meter of placing the cables in the roadside verge, preventing disturbance to the high value unimproved grassland.

In the West Midland, there are three schemes priced up and on the list of proposals; Brampton Abbots, Coppett Hill and Bishopswood Village Hall. A scheme at Soller's Hope church is to be assessed for feasibility and cost in the near future. Proposed schemes in the West Midland currently exceed the available budget. Wye Valley schemes will be considered amongst schemes from the other five Protected Landscapes as the budget window progresses.

### **c. Offa's Dyke Collaboratory**

The publication of Keith Ray and Ian Bapty's book 'Offa's Dyke: Landscape and Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain' (Windgather 2016) provides a valuable impetus for fostering new collaborative projects on the linear earthworks of the modern Anglo-Welsh border. Following discussions over recent months, a convening group, including the AONB Manager, have established the 'Offa's Dyke Collaboratory'. This aims to be a network of individuals, groups and organisations aimed at promoting and supporting the management and investigation of Offa's Dyke, Wat's Dyke, and their landscape settings.

As the inaugural event for the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory a workshop is being hosted by the University of Chester at the University Centre Shrewsbury on Friday 28th April 2017. The event will comprise a series of short presentations on current and ongoing research on the dykes and their environs, seeking to identify and revise key themes and questions for future investigations. There will also be a round table session where proposals and ideas will be debated by participants. To stimulate discussion a draft article proposing areas for future research will be circulated to participants prior to the workshop. It is hoped plans for future meetings and potential projects will also be generated through the workshop. Currently 45 people are signed up to the workshop including representatives from the Universities of Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford and Wales, and from the Brecon Beacons National Park, Cadw, Historic England, the respective local authorities along the Dyke, the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust and Offa's Dyke Association.

The convening group consists of  
Paul Belford, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust  
Andrew Blake, Wye Valley AONB  
Christopher Catling, RCAHMW  
Keith Ray, Nexus Heritage  
Howard Williams, University of Chester

### **d. Wye Valley River Festival 2018 update**

Two events have been hosted at Wyastone Leys to progress the research and development of the Festival. Over the two days, 18<sup>th</sup> January and 21<sup>st</sup> February, nearly 60 people have contributed to creating the potential proposals for the Festival and the outreach work in building up to it. Artists, academics, environmentalists, musicians, foresters and logisticians pooled ideas and opportunities around the trees and woodland theme. Presentations were given by Dr George Peterken, Rob Guest – retired Deputy Surveyor for the Forest of Dean,

Archie Miles – renowned photographer of trees, and Owain Jones - Professor of Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University. The ideas are currently being written up and will be reviewed over the coming months. It is anticipated that a bid will be submitted to both Arts Council England and Wales for some of the more creative aspects in May 2017. Other funding bids and partnerships will be developed over the summer and if things come together an outreach programme will commence in the autumn. The Festival dates are 5<sup>th</sup> May – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

In addition, the Wye Valley AONB Unit is collaborating with a number of AONB Partnerships nationally and The Woodland Trust in preparing to launch a project to capture images of ash-defined landscapes before the landscapes have been changed out of all recognition because of Ash Dieback. The project will take the form of a monograph about the Ash in Britain which will be a complete overview of the botanical, environmental, historical and cultural significance of the ash. The images will be captured by the author and photographer Archie Miles. The book should be ready for the end of 2017. Dr George Peterken is also working on a book about Lady Park Wood and the national, if not international, significance of this non-intervention woodland National Nature Reserve in the heart of the Wye Valley AONB. It is intended that this will similarly be published towards the end of the year.

#### **e. Draft Garren & Gamber report**

Funding secured through Natural England has enabled ecological survey trainees contracted by the AONB Unit to undertake a study into potential project work on the Garren and Gamber Brook catchments, which flow into the Wye at Whitchurch. The study made use of site surveys and discussions with organisations working in the area to establish past, present and potential future project work which could benefit the condition of the brooks and species which do and could thrive on it, as well as benefitting the River Wye downstream. A meeting of partners in late 2016 established a desire to work together and take forward proposals. A draft report has now been produced; once finalised this will be shared with these partner organisations and landowners to identify potential projects. The study may provide some options and opportunities that could be eligible for National Grid funding for biodiversity improvements around the high voltage power cables at Marstow. Other projects are likely to require further work and other funding applications.

#### **f. Venison marketing feasibility study**

Funding has been secured through Monmouthshire LEADER, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Natural England to undertake a Venison Marketing and Supply Feasibility Study in the lower Wye Valley. Consultants will be working over the coming months to carry out survey work and reporting to the AONB Unit on findings. This project will produce a feasibility study to investigate the production, marketing and sale of locally produced wild venison in and around the Wye Valley AONB. The study area will include woodlands experiencing highest impact from deer between Symonds Yat, Chepstow and Wentwood. It will investigate where wild venison is processed and sold, and how it is marketed. Also whether there is an opportunity to develop local marketing for wild venison and what gaps need to be covered to ensure the venison can be sourced, processed and marketed locally, using as a marketing tool the benefit to woodland habitats.

Recommendations produced within the study will inform future work on the local wild venison supply chain. Further applications are likely to be necessary for funding to enable this work which will enhance the economic benefit locally to all those within the venison supply chain, including woodland managers, stalkers, butchers, distributors, retailers and consumers.

**g. mindSCAPE**

The mindSCAPE project continues to run at Bishopswood Village Hall and the Orchard Trust in Lydbrook. The group of Dementia sufferers and their carers, who undertake fortnightly activities, remains at capacity, and with a waiting list of new participants. The project is shortly to enter into its final year, and the AONB Unit are now beginning the process of seeking funding to allow the project to continue beyond its current end date. The AONB Unit are also considering expansion of the project, with a wider range of partners, across the AONB.

A conference is planned for Autumn 2017 to celebrate the project and share its success with interested organisations and individuals. It is proposed this will take place over a day and include a morning of speakers and afternoon of mindSCAPE workshops.

Interest in the project from around the country has remained high, with enquiries from as far afield as the North Pennines, Surry Hills and Somerset. The project was asked to be the focus of a workshop at the South Region Sustainability & Health Networks 'Delivering the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment' conference in Bristol in November; the workshop was presented by Hannah Elton-Wall of Artspace Cinderford, who deliver mindSCAPE activities on behalf of the AONB Partnership.