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26th June 2017

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 3rd July, 2017 at 2.00 pm

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

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Election of Chair.	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chair.	
3.	Apologies, Introductions and new Members.	
4.	Declarations of Interest.	
5.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 8
6.	Public Question Time.	
6.1.	Solar Panels on roofs (Mr. A. Thomas).	
7.	Annual Report 2016/17.	9 - 10
7.1.	AONB Unit report.	11 - 16
7.2.	Annual Report of Strategy & Development Advisor.	17 - 32
8.	Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, Future Landscapes Wales:	33 - 38
8.1.	Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales.	
8.2.	National Principles for Public Engagement.	
9.	AONB Partnership Study Tour - 22nd September 2017.	39 - 40

10.	Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.	41 - 44
11.	Sustainable Development Fund (SDF).	45 - 48
12.	NAAONB update: Landscapes for Life Conference & Awards.	49 - 50
13.	AONB & Partner progress:	51 - 56
13.1.	Welsh Government Access Grant.	
13.2.	Wye Valley River Festival 2018.	
13.3.	AONB Farming Awards.	
13.4.	Roadside Verges.	
13.5.	mindSCAPE.	
13.6.	Youth Rangers.	
13.7.	Wye-Being.	
13.8.	The Ash Project http://www.theashproject.org.uk/	
14.	Date of next meeting: 2.00pm Monday 6th November 2017 at Coleford.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

Local Authority Members with Voting Powers

Gloucestershire:

P. McMahon
P. Molyneux

Herefordshire:

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

Monmouthshire:

L. Jones
D. Dovey
M. Lane
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
R. Gething – Herefordshire Association Local Councils
Councillor Trevor Phillips – One Voice Wales

Co-opted Members with Voting Powers

Dr. G. Peterken – Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire
B. Nash - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire
A. Thomas - Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire
S. Dereham – Country Land and Business Association
M. Price – National Farmers Union
L. Taylor – The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

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

Public Information

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Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst (Acting Chairman) (Herefordshire Council)

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough and D. Dovey

Gloucestershire County Council

Councillors: P. McMahon and P. Molyneux

Herefordshire Council

Councillor J. Hardwick

Forest of Dean Council

Councillor G. Davies

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire - Mr. B. Nash

National Farmers Union - Mr. M. Price

Herefordshire Association Local Councils - Mr. R. Gething

One Voice Wales - Councillor T. Phillips

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society - Mr. C. Barron

Local Wildlife Trusts - Mr. A. Nixon

Technical Advice Officers

Wye Valley AONB Manager - Mr. A. Blake

Monmouthshire County Council - Mr. M. Lewis

Gloucestershire County Council - Mr. R. Niblett

Monmouthshire County Council - Mr. R. Williams

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor: E. Hackett Pain, County Councillor A. Webb, Councillor P. Cutter, Councillor B. Hogan, Mr. D. Berry, Dr. G. Peterken, Mr. A. Thomas, Mr. D. Price, Mr. A. Lee, Mr. D. Broadbent, Ms. D. Griffiths and Ms. C. Grimstead.

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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

1. Election of Chair for the meeting

As the Chair and Vice-Chair were unable to attend the meeting, we elected Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst as Chair for today's meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest raised by Members.

3. Public Question Time

The AONB Manager informed the Committee that Simon Dereham had retired as the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) representative serving on the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee and would also be retiring as the River Wye Preservation Trust representative. The Committee was informed that Simon Dereham had been a long standing member of the Joint Advisory Committee and had served as a member since 1983.

We resolved that the AONB Manager should write to Simon Dereham, on behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee, thanking him for his commitment and contribution to the Committee during his time as a member of the Committee.

4. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee dated 7th November 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

5. Pine marten reintroduction feasibility study

We received a presentation regarding the two year feasibility study into whether pine martens should be reintroduced to the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 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 the summer of 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 the spring of 2018. The ultimate decision as to whether to reintroduce pine martens to the area will be taken by Natural England.

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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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

- Andrew Stringer, Pine Marten Project Manager, gave a brief presentation on the project, what is planned for the feasibility study and the latest position.
- The project utilises international guidelines on reintroductions, and aims to assess the costs and benefits of a reintroduction within three key areas, namely: Biological feasibility, Ecological feasibility and Socio-economic feasibility.

Having received the presentation, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised regarding the potential threat to domestic birds such as chickens, it was noted that there will be consultation with poultry owners and a need to build in mitigation strategies similar to addressing other predators such as foxes and mink.
- There could be a positive impact to the local environment as pine martens are known to predate on grey squirrel as an alien exotic species, whereas red squirrels are indigenous but no longer existing in the area.
- The range expansion is likely to be a slow process but could lead to the repopulation of pine martens to the area over a period of time.

We resolved to receive the presentation and noted its content.

6. AONB Unit 2017/18 Work programme

We received a report regarding the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit during the forthcoming financial year.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The table attached to the report 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 has 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.

We resolved to endorse the AONB Work programme 2017/2018.

7. Joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

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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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

We received a report requesting Committee support to pursue joint activity at a members' level with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Future Landscapes Wales programme had facilitated closer collaboration between the AONBs and National Parks in Wales.
- The AONB Manager had given a presentation to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) in April 2016.
- The BBNPA was invited to join the AONB Partnership Tour in September 2016 but this had clashed with a full National Park Association meeting.
- The joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority had been proposed during 2017. The date and exact format is to be decided. However, Monday 11th September 2017 is a potential date for the event. Further details will be reported back to the Committee when finalised.

We resolved that a joint members' event with Brecon Beacons National Park be arranged.

8. AONB Perceptions Survey

We received a report regarding the initial findings from the AONB Perceptions Questionnaire.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- In 2011 a survey of AONB Partnership members was circulated about perceptions of the Wye Valley AONB, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and the AONB Unit.
- A follow-up survey on AONB Perceptions has just been completed with a very positive response rate.
- The questionnaire was published and distributed electronically to 620 people involved in the AONB Partnership or connected with various projects. At closure of the survey 235 responses have been received.
- A full analysis of the data including a comparison with the 2011 survey will be presented to the next Joint Advisory Committee in July 2017.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

9. National Association for AONBs

We received a report regarding proposed activity of the National Association for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

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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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The AONB Manager represented the Joint Advisory Committee in November 2016 at the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Annual General Meeting and the National Parks and 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 was published and included three case studies from the Wye Valley AONB.
- The AONB Manager also attended the AONB Lead Officers' meeting in Birmingham in February 2017.
- The dates for the next national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference are 18th - 20th July 2017 to be held in Winchester.
- Outstanding Week 2017 is scheduled for 16th - 24th September 2017.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- National Parks and AONBs are recognised as Category V Protected Landscapes under the global protected area framework of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- At the NAAONB meeting, debate had ensued around the implications to farming and land management support and the loss of potential funding when the United Kingdom leaves the European Union. It had been noted that it was too early to know the implications at this stage.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

10. AONB Unit progress reports and updates

We received a report outlining the activity of the AONB Unit and were provided with an update regarding the following AONB initiatives:

- AONB staffing.
- Undergrounding update.
- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.
- Wye Valley River Festival 2018 update.

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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

- Draft Garren & Gamber report.
- Venison marketing feasibility study.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 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 2017. They are currently on short term contracts producing good work for the AONB Unit.
- Undergrounding - The New Grove Meadows Scheme has been put on hold due to the increased cost per metre of placing the cables in the roadside verge, preventing disturbance to the high value unimproved grassland. County Councillor D. Dovey stated that he could provide his support and assistance in pursuing this matter with Western Power Distribution.
- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory – Further information will be available at the next meeting regarding an event that is likely to be held in the autumn 2017.
- The draft Garren & Gamber report is being finalised. It was noted that Natural England funding allowed the AONB Unit to review what has occurred in this area and what the opportunities were with a view to conducting habitat restoration work. It was noted that there was no identified funding to take this forward at present. The local member would be kept abreast of developments with regard to this matter.
- The Committee was informed that this year was Chepstow's 950th anniversary of being a town. The AONB Manager will liaise with the Chepstow 950 group.
- A further report regarding the venison marketing feasibility study will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee. In response to a question raised regarding wild boar, it was noted that this matter will be included as part of the study.
- The mindSCAPE project is in the fourth and final year of Big Lottery funding - A conference is planned for Autumn 2017.
- LEMUR+ scheme ended in 2016. The AONB Unit were partners in a bid by Ambios Ltd in Devon for Lottery funding for the next iteration of this scheme but the bid had been unsuccessful.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

11. Dates of meetings for 2017:

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, 6th March, 2017 at 2.00 pm

The remaining Joint Advisory Committee meetings for 2017 will be held on:

- Monday 3rd July 2017 at 2.00pm.
- Monday 6th November 2017 at 2.00pm.

Both meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council, Coleford.

The meeting ended at 3.55 pm

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose

To present the annual reports for 2016/17 on the achievements of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the contracted Planning consultants for the AONB Unit.

Recommendations

That the JAC welcome the Annual Reports of AONB achievements for 2016/17

Key Issues

- The 2016/17 Annual Report on the Work Programme for the AONB Unit is appended, along with a summary financial report below.
- High standards of achievement were maintained despite staffing issues and illness continuing to hamper AONB Unit activity throughout the year, however these issues have now been resolved.
- Worcestershire County Council Planning department were contracted to provide advice to the AONB Unit on strategic planning documents and development issues, and where necessary prepare appropriate responses for the AONB Unit. The annual report for the contracted work is appended.
- The expectation that the AONB Unit, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, comments on Planning Applications and pre-application enquiries has continued during the year.

Reasons

The Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit 2016/17 lists the achievements of the AONB Unit and is the basis of the AONB Partnership Annual Report. The Work Programme Report has been presented to Defra and Natural Resources Wales as part of the annual grant claims to the two central government funding partners.

The continuing partnership with the Malvern Hills AONB over the use of Worcestershire County Council Planning Department has enabled a co-ordinated approach to be taken to strategic consultations in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire relating to the two AONBs.

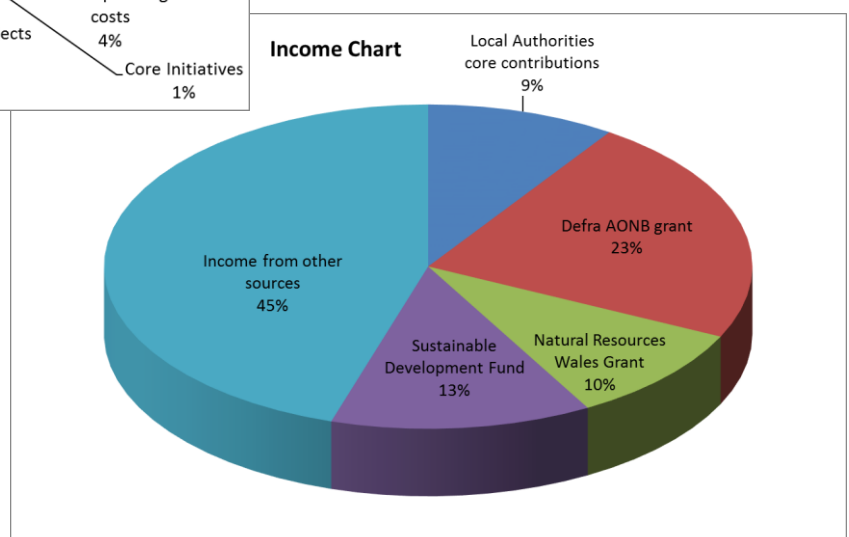
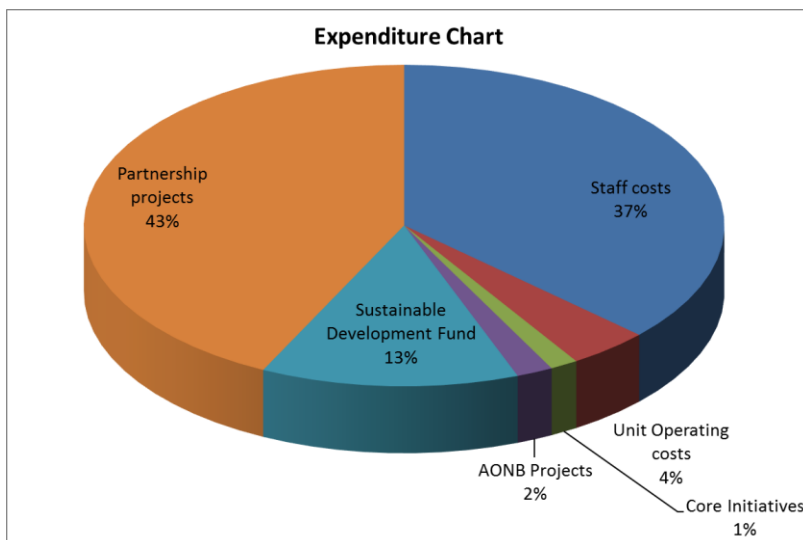
Implications

The number of planning application in 2016/17 has increased compared to the previous year. Similarly the expectation and number of requests for the AONB Unit to respond to either current planning applications, on behalf of the AONB Partnership, or to give pre-application advice has continued. The shared contract with Worcestershire County Council Planning Department and collaboration with the Malvern Hills AONB continues to work well.

There are a number of highlights outlined in the 2016/17 Annual Report of achievements for the AONB Unit Work Programme. The AONB Management Plan was finally adopted by all the local authorities and is available on www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk. The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 engaged an increasing number of people in the local communities and levered substantial resources into the area to increase people's appreciation and understanding of the

area. The Research and Development phase also commenced for the 2018 River Festival. The third cohort of Youth Rangers continued their programme and the mindSCAPE project achieved national recognition and completed its third year (of 4). The AONB Unit has maintained appropriate levels of activity and output despite various staff being affected by ill health and necessitating prolonged absences from work. Recruitment for a replacement AONB Information Officer commenced at the end of the report period.

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2016/2017		<i>2015/16</i>	2016/17
Expenditure		<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
	Staff costs	<i>179,713</i>	198,603
	Unit Operating costs	<i>24,042</i>	21,942
	Core Initiatives	<i>3,388</i>	7,601
	AONB Projects	<i>26,400</i>	9,921
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>61,000</i>	70,000
	Partnership projects	<i>107,462</i>	230,095
	TOTAL	402,004	538,163
Income			
	Local Authorities core contributions	<i>50,848</i>	50,848
	Defra AONB grant	<i>122,001</i>	122,001
	Natural Resources Wales Grant	<i>52,211</i>	52,210
	Sustainable Development Fund	<i>61,000</i>	70,000
	Income from other sources	<i>115,944</i>	243,104
	TOTAL	402,004	538,163



WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)
Annual Report 2016/2017 on Work Programme for AONB Unit

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>AONB Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Average 100 downloads of Plan from website and 10 requests for printed copies of Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 signed off by all Local Authority partners AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 available on AONB website http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/about-us/management-and-guidance/management-plan-2015-2020/ Management Plan publication designed in draft
<p>AONB Strategy & Development Advisor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew contract for year to support AONB Officer. Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB Engage in development and consultation stages of national strategy in liaison with NAAONB Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract renewed with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Planning Department, shared with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. 500 planning applications were registered in the AONB. 35 planning applications assessed by the contracted Planning consultants 26 responses submitted by the AONB Manager on behalf of the AONB Partnership. A protocol has been established with Monmouthshire County Council whereby the AONB Manager is consulted on draft Planning Committee Reports. During 2016 in total 9 applications were commented on through this protocol.
<p>AONB Farming Awards Promote & publicise 10th Awards. For farmers and landowners to promote best practice in land management that makes an outstanding contribution to conserving or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek sponsorship for the AONB Farming Awards from local businesses, supermarkets etc. Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing Site visits by the judges to the short-listed farms for the AONB Farming Awards 2016 Present the AONB Farming Awards 2016 prizes at the Monmouthshire Show Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 nominated farms for 2016 AONB Farming Awards: Square Farm, Mitchel Troy, Monmouthshire and Broome Farm, Peterstow. Herefordshire. Judging panel consisted of AONB Manager, NFU Wales and Farming4Wildlife representatives. Broome Farm was the winner. The Award was presented in the Countryside Matters Ring at the Monmouthshire Show on 25th August. AONB Development Officer and LEMUR+ placements spent 2 days with Farming Award 2015 winner, Lewstone Farm, Herefordshire, undertaking water quality sampling on a stream running through the farm with Year 4 pupils from Ashfield Park Primary School, Ross-on-Wye.
<p>Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating funds Review SDF application processes and Assessment Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 projects supported - 7 led / managed by AONB Unit & 5 led by voluntary/3rd sector with AONB staff assisting / supporting - including: Savoy Youth Theatre Promenade Sensory Theatre, Deer Initiative project & Venison Processing and Marketing Feasibility Study, Bee Friendly Monmouthshire Hedgerow Manifesto, St. Dennis PCC Churchyard Restoration Project, Gwent Wildlife Trust Pentwyn Reserve Cattle Project, Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement grants, Friends of Llandogo School pond project, Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers, Wye Valley River Festival 2016, education strand and WVRF 2018 R&D <i>Final SDF report due shortly with leverage figures; our expectation is that figures will be similar to 15/16 approximate totals of £180,000, with £140,000 cash and £40,00 In kind</i>
<p>Picturesque 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision made to turn Picturesque into an electronic / browser based publication. However due to staff long term sickness absence this has yet to be implemented. A new member of staff has been appointed to action this publication and implement website. They commence in June 2017.
<p>AONB Partnership events For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 attendees for AONB Partnership tour on 23rd September. The tour included Lower Wire Works Tintern, Old Station Tintern, Kingston Brewery, Tintern Abbey, Abbey Mill, Upper Wyndcliff and Penterry

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Annual Report 2016/2017 on Work Programme for AONB Unit

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise AONB Partnership Seminar on key issue Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues (not to clash with HC Full Council meeting) Repeat 2011 'Questionnaire on your perceptions of the Wye Valley AONB, the JAC & the AONB Unit' Undertake the TBG 'Ecosystem Approach Self-Assessment Criteria and Method' 	<p>Church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Valley AONB Perceptions survey sent to 620 key partners and interested parties. 234 responses received (Private Sector 11%, Voluntary Sector 18%, Local Community 13%, Public Sector 42%, &/or as a private individual 28%). 87% rated achievements of AONB Unit as 'Good or Very Good', 96% 'Agree or Strongly Agree' that "The designation of the Wye Valley as an AONB has significantly helped conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area" and 73% 'Agree or Strongly Agree' that "The statutory AONB Management Plan is a key tool in the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB." Further evaluation of the survey results is on-going.
<p>Exhibitions & Outreach Promote the AONB through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands at the Wye Valley River Festival, Monmouthshire Show, Herefordshire Country Fair and other relevant shows. Local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB stand only at Monmouthshire Show, Forest Showcase and Wye Valley River Festival events, but due to staffing issues and illness not at other local shows. mindSCAPE & Wye Valley River Festival display boards exhibited at various local venues
<p>MindSCAPE Year 3 of £165,000 Big Lottery funded 4 year initiative enabling people living with dementia to access and reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage project and submit reports & claims for Big Lottery Supervise contractor to organise regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities at appropriate sites for participants who are living with dementia and their carers and families. Develop legacy project & exit strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artspace Cinderford continue to deliver the activities fortnightly with 22 people (dementia sufferers and carers) engaged Summary of feedback & questionnaire statistics: 100% Have made friends; 81% less isolated; 90% less stressed; 90% More positive/happy 45% more fit/active; 81% More able to do 'mindscape activities' at home; 90% more creative 100% feel more part of their community 3 Carer Training Events delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHS Together Trust Forest of Dean Dementia Forum (for dementia professionals, care workers and activity co-ordinators as well as community dementia link workers) 11 attendees. NHS Together Trust County Professional Development Event for professional carers who work with people with dementia. 32 attendees. Gloucestershire Activities Co-Ordinator Network, 2 sessions, sharing activities with people who work in residential carehomes for older people. 23 attendees. Artspace Manager delivered plenary presentation on mindSCAPE at NAAONB Landscapes for Life conference and at the 'Delivering the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment' seminar in Bristol (jointly hosted by the South Region Sustainability and Health Network and the South West Local Nature Partnerships). Annual report produced and circulated amongst Councillors, key partners and other AONBs.
<p>Wye Valley River Festival 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Festival from 29th April - 15th May Submit claims to Arts Councils and other funders of the Festival Undertake monitoring and evaluation of Festival & publish report. Commence developing event ideas for Research & Development phase for 2018 Festival Develop business sponsorship for 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29,000 people engaged through 28 events at different venues 8 local communities engaged: Hereford, Ross, Bishopwood, Lydbrook, Redbrook, Monmouth, Llandogo, Coleford, Chepstow 2 local Partnership sites: The Slaughters (FC), Tintern Old Station (MCC) 10 schools & 1200 pupils engaged with the Festival 220+ local singers, musicians and performers were involved in the performances Total raised from other sources £129,664, Total raised in kind £20,700 Reached 80% satisfaction level with audience feedback Report has been published and shared widely with partners, available here: http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/index.php/wye%20valley%20river%20festival%202016

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Annual Report 2016/2017 on Work Programme for AONB Unit

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wye Valley River Festival 2016 was Highly Commended at the Visit Herefordshire Awards for Excellence 2016 in the Best Festivals & Events (Community) category Research & Development phase of 2018 Festival commenced with 2 Creative Camps and 70 attending. 8 WVRF 2018 meetings held with Festival Development Team.
<p>Youth Rangers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a structured programme of activity for 3rd Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management. 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The third cohort of Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers attended monthly events; including river ecology & monitoring, farming & land management, coppicing & woodland work, filming, Wye Valley River Festival day, monitoring & tracking deer, drystone walling, kayaking, scything, climbing & abseiling and visiting the National Museum of Wales Youth Ranger programme included in the successful Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme with Heritage Lottery Fund. Report on project to date available on request.
<p>Deer Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene & service Deer Management Groups and Deer Monitoring Project Coordinate deer surveys in the Woolhope Dome and Lower Wye Valley Assist co-ordination of collaborative deer cull through the Deer Management Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower Wye Valley Deer Management Group met 25th May & 5th Oct. Lower Wye Valley Wild Venison Marketing Feasibility Study commissioned Deer Initiative co-ordinated collaborative culls in Woolhope Dome
<p>Habitat Conservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys Development of projects with the help of LEMUR+ students. Organise monthly volunteer task days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 conservation activities with approximately 70 volunteers took place in a variety of locations across the AONB. The work ranged from hedge planting, vegetation management, drystone walling, coppicing and permissive path management. A diverse range of partners were involved from the Deer Initiative, NRW, Community Councils, Wildlife Trusts, Plantlife and private landowners. LEMUR+ Trainees were commissioned to undertake ecological survey work for Ross Town Council and along the Garren & Gamber Brooks, funded by Natural England. Project funding secured from Natural England enabling collaborative work with Ross Town Council to manage bankside vegetation and erosion along the riverfront park recently taken over by the Town Council from Herefordshire Council.
<p>Website and social media Upgrading and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social networking sites e.g. facebook and twitter. Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to staff long term sickness absence little progress was made with website upgrades. Facebook 'Likes' for Wye Valley AONB https://www.facebook.com/wyevalley.aonb/ increased from 650 before the Wye Valley River Festival to 890 after the event, ending the year with 920 'Likes'. The highest reach was 13,710 people.
<p>Work placements Support the needs of student placements/group projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEMUR+ trainees on 9 month & 4 month placements. Host PhD research post on 'Corporeal Connections in the Contemporary Landscape' and provide technical assistance with PhD dissertation and evaluation of data regarding the cultural significance of the AONB Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 LEMUR+ Ecological Survey trainees hosted by the AONB Unit, on 9 month and 4 month placements. Both offered short term extended contracts to remain at the AONB to undertake additional project work. Presentation by PhD Researcher given to a workshop during the NAAONB Landscapes for Life conference. PhD Thesis currently being finalised Liaison with NAAONB over post-graduate research opportunities through University of Winchester.
<p>Undergrounding Continue working with Western Power to promote schemes within</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Development Officer attended Wales undergrounding group meetings on June 20th, Sept 19th and Jan 16th; also West Midlands Undergrounding Group meetings on Apr 15th, June 17th and Jan 12th.

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Annual Report 2016/2017 on Work Programme for AONB Unit

AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
the AONB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently 1 active undergrounding scheme in Goodrich which is close to completion, and 2 schemes in Tintern which have been approved by the Protected Landscapes group. Western Power are currently undertaking detailed assessments of the proposals.
<p>Landscape scale conservation Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop scheme around Little Doward & South Herefordshire with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others Scope for appropriate projects and prepare applications for National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich Investigate options for Woolhope Dome with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in Wye Valley Woodlands Project, led by Gwent Wildlife Trust. Includes management of Piercefield Viewpoints, maintaining Overlooking the Wye project work. Preliminary research on landscape-scale partnership proposal for Woolhope and Wye floodplain developed. Under development is a drystone walling project of further survey and awareness raising. Project funding secured through Natural England for study work on the Garren and Gamber brooks, convening conservation organisations, conducting river corridor surveys and identifying potential project work for future funding applications on these tributaries of the Wye. National Grid VIP Landscape Enhancement Initiative bid submitted for Walford and Coughton March with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, but unsuccessful.
<p>Wye Valley Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership Monitor counters along Walk Manage Passport scheme Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 counters along Wye Valley Walk in AONB were checked and recorded 90,193 movements in 2016. Feedback from walkers remained largely positive despite monitoring of website and Passport scheme being hindered by staff long term sickness absence. AONB Volunteers regularly working on Wye Valley Walk through Piercefield Monmouthshire County Council delivered £48,000 of access improvement work along Wye Valley Walk with additional Welsh Government funding. Meetings held with Gloucestershire County Council and engineers to progress solutions for Lydbrook Bridge.
<p>Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses Give talks/presentations to local groups Regular press releases and magazine articles / advertorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Talks and presentation were given including to Gwent Wildlife Trust Monmouth branch, Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, North Dean Ramblers, Wye Valley National Nature Reserve Summit and German Europarc study trip Community Links Officer has given 4 talks to schools. PR on Farming Awards and Wye Valley River Festival, but due to staff long term sickness absence most other PR has focused on remaining AONB staff working with Twitter @wyebeauty and Facebook pages: Wye Valley AONB & Wye Valley River Festival.
<p>Partnership Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Partner in Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership. Attend or receive minutes of Local Nature Partnerships Participate in Wye Catchment Management Partnership As member of Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Monmouthshire Environmental Partnership, Herefordshire Wildlife Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to staff long term sickness absence the Wye Valley AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 was not fully delivered. The AONB Unit is directing tourism liaison through the Strategic Partnership of the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association and the Visit Herefordshire Tourism and Leisure Forum. AONB Manager attended meetings of Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC), Wye Catchment Partnership, Lower Wye Internal Drainage District Advisory Group, Severn Basin Catchment and Monmouthshire Environmental Partnership Board. Also represented NAAONB at launch of Welsh Government's State of Natural Resources Report. Hosted visit by NRW and NAAONB chairpersons AONB Manager gave presentation to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. AONB Development Officer attended Herefordshire Wildlife Link and Local Nature Partnership meetings in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.
<p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Manager, Development Officer and JAC Chairman attended NAAONB Landscapes for Life conference, which included presentations on mindSCAPE and Corporeal Connections in the

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

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AONB Partnership Initiatives	AONB Unit Work Progressed / Achieved
<p>Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars & events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Welsh Government and Wales Designated Landscapes in taking Future Landscapes Wales Programme forward 	<p>Contemporary Landscape PhD work and a hosted field trip in the AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Protected Landscapes in Wales collaborated over the “Find Your Epic” Year of Adventure campaign with Visit Wales Year of Adventure. • The Protected Landscapes in Wales collectively published the Scenic Wales calendar 2017. • AONB Manager contributed to Future Landscapes Wales programme, participating in ‘Innovation in resourcing’ Project Group, attending and presenting to the Working Group and contributing to Drafting sub-group. • AONB Manager attended AONB Lead Officers’ meeting and NAAONB AGM & Chairman’s Conference
<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS • Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEMUR+ Ecological Survey Trainees completed approximately 36 sq km of Phase 1 Habitat survey work in the Doward and south Herefordshire, including digitisation on QGIS. • LEMUR+ Trainees undertook a comparison of 1990s & 2015/16 Phase 1 Habitat surveys in Monmouthshire and are finalising the report of their findings. • Development Officer, Community Links Officer and LEMUR+ trainees undertook QGIS training with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. • Data collation for AONB Management Plan ongoing
<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group • Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 full JAC meetings held, 4th July & 7th November 2016 & 6th March 2017, preceded by TOWP meetings on 8th June & 5th Oct 2016 & 1st Feb 2017, • AONB Annual report presented to JAC in July 2016 • AONB Steering Group held on 5th Oct 2016 & 1st Feb 2017, with AONB Unit budgets and spend profile presented and scrutinised. • All bids and claims submitted on time.
<p>Funding and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue investigating funding and development opportunities. • Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going, including discussions with Foresters’ Forest Landscape Partnership scheme, Arts Council, Herefordshire Community Foundation, National Grid, Highways Agency etc. • Staffing issues due to ill health resulted in AONB Information Officer post becoming vacant in January 2017. • Agency cover for AONB Finance & Admin Officer was extended until their return to work in September 2016.
<p>Irresistible Offa <i>Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa’s Dyke,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>promoting walking and sustainable tourism, building on the Walking with Offa project, with potential bids to INTERREG Atlantic Area &/or HLF</i> • <i>investigative archaeological and interpretation project of Offa’s Dyke monument for possible HLF bid</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irresistible Offa Partnership investigated HLF and INTERREG funding opportunities but struggled to find appropriate partners and have put proposals on hold. • AONB Manager is on steering group for Offa’s Dyke Collaboratory, focused on fostering new collaborative projects along the Dyke and its landscape setting. Following publication of ‘Offa’s Dyke: Landscape and Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain’ (Windgather, 2016) • Discussions with various organisations, including Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust, about potential archaeological project focused on Offa’s Dyke.
<p>Overlooking the Wye legacy <i>Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wye Valley Woodlands Project, led by Gwent Wildlife Trust. Includes tree management of Piercefield Viewpoints. • AONB Volunteers also regularly working on Wye Valley Walk through Piercefield

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**A summary of
strategy and planning advisory work
by Worcestershire County Council
in the Wye Valley AONB**

April 2016 to March 2017

**A summary of strategy and planning advisory work undertaken by
Worcestershire County Council in the Wye Valley AONB – April 2016
to March 2017**

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1. Introduction

Between April 2016 and March 2017, the Strategic Planning and Development Management teams at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) provided a consultancy role to the AONB Unit, advising on strategic planning issues and development management. This report provides a summary of the main aspects of the work undertaken over that period.

2. Strategic policy consultations

In the last year, WCC supported the AONB Unit in providing a response to the Gloucestershire Draft Minerals Local Plan consultation. The comments suggested improvements to two preferred areas for minerals extraction sites located within the AONB boundary. Further amendments were suggested to the Development Management and Ancillary Developments and Restoration policies in the draft Plan.

WCC has also reviewed Herefordshire County Council's Travellers' Sites Development Plan Document, however no adverse impact on the AONB was identified.

A brief summary of the Unit's policy responses is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

3. Planning casework

Planning applications in the AONB

Planning applications requiring consideration by the AONB were identified through lists of relevant applications sent to WCC by the Wye Valley AONB on a weekly basis. Table 1 is a summary of the planning applications within the AONB for 2016-2017.

Table 1 - Summary statistics for planning applications April 2016 to March 2017

(2015-16 figures in brackets)

Local Authority	No. of applications registered	No. of applications considered to be relevant to the Wye Valley AONB	No. of applications consulted with the Unit	No. of responses submitted to the Planning Authority	No. of objections	No. of planning appeals
Herefordshire Council	235 (226)	115 (149)	20	7 (10)	4	1
Forest of Dean District Council	79 (76)	48 (39)	4	4 (2)	3	1
Monmouthshire County Council	186 (144)	127 (86)	11	0 (5)	0	0
Gloucestershire County Council	(0)	0 (0)	0	0 (0)	0	0
Totals	500 (446)	290 (274)	35	11 (17)	7	2

There were 500 planning applications registered, based on the lists of applications provided by the Wye Valley AONB Unit between April 2016 and March 2017. This is a significant increase since last year.

At 290, the number of applications identified as relevant for consideration because of potential adverse impacts on the Wye Valley AONB increased compared to the previous year, when 274 applications were considered.

On 35 occasions, WCC consulted the AONB Partnership Unit on important planning applications, however only 11 applications resulted in written responses, a 30% drop since last year. This decrease may be due to a more targeted approach to our responses and initial consultation with the AONB Unit.

The AONB Unit submitted seven objections to inappropriate proposals within the AONB in the last year. These representations had a good record of success with the majority of applications (5) refused by case officers, who cited the negative impact on the character and appearance of the Wye Valley AONB as among the reasons for refusal.

On one occasion, an application was refused by the Planning Authority but later allowed on appeal. The planning application (P0575/16/FUL), in the Forest of Dean, was for the erection of an agricultural barn at land at Wall Weir, Tidenham Chase in Chepstow. The proposal was considered by both the case officer and the AONB Unit to be a persistent and dominant feature, out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and detracting from the special qualities of the AONB, including through the generation of noise and light pollution. However, the inspector's appeal decision concluded that "*the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the AONB*".

The AONB Unit responded to two planning appeals. In addition to the appeal described above, a decision is currently pending on an enforcement appeal for the collection of scrap vehicles at the Doward Farm, Whitchurch (APP/W1850/C/16/3160188).

A summary of the AONB Unit's representations, alongside the planning decision and extracts from the case officer's reports, can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Conclusions

This report covers the second year of the Worcestershire County Council consultancy work provided for the Wye Valley AONB Unit. This year saw a more targeted approach to the WCC advice, as a result of improved systems such as consulting on our proposed approach to the application with the AONB Unit at an early stage, and increased familiarity among WCC officers of the AONB's policies and guidance, and of relevant AONB issues.

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses to strategic consultations in the period April 2016 – March 2017

Consulting authority	Consultation document	Summary of Unit response
National consultations		
None		
County or Unitary level consultations		
Gloucestershire County Council	Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan	<p>Preferred Area at Stowe Hill / Clearwell – We could suggest expanding this requirement to include other special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB and ask for any developments to be compliant with the AONB Management Plan – during the operational period and in the restoration plans.</p> <p>Preferred Area at Stowfield – a proposed extension to the existing Stowfield Quarry located in the AONB. This area is surrounded by mature woodland which masks the site at ground level – however the area may be seen from higher ground within the AONB. Another issue associated with this allocation will be the loss of habitats as a result of tree removal to accommodate the site extension.</p> <p>Again I would suggest expanding this requirement to include other special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB and ask for the developments to be compliant with the AONB Management Plan. This could help to reduce issues such as impact on tranquillity of the AONB through the increased scale of operations, car movements, etc.</p> <p>Policy DM09</p> <p>The Unit welcomes the Plan's recognition of the importance of protecting the AONB through Policy DM09 Landscape. The Unit agrees with the criteria set out to protect these landscapes and other special qualities; however we would like clarification over whether these criteria are mutually exclusive. It is not clear whether the potential development would need to meet all of the criteria or only some, depending on circumstances. The Unit would strongly advise that this policy states that each criterion must be satisfied for mineral developments within the AONB. It is unclear why "major development" is distinguished within this policy. As per The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the winning and working of</p>

		<p>minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits is classed as major development. Therefore any minerals development should only be permitted under exceptional circumstances. The Unit would suggest the deletion of the wording "proposals classified as 'major development'" from the last paragraph of this policy. This would strengthen this policy and help to protect the special qualities of the Wye Valle AONB.</p> <p>Policy MW07 Ancillary Developments</p> <p>Part 17 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 states that some types of development associated with mineral developments can be allowed under permitted development rights. The Unit notes that the reasoned justification of Policy MW07 recognises that the removal of permitted development rights may be justified in some locations such as AONBs, meaning that all forms of ancillary minerals development will require planning permission. The Unit supports this approach, which would allow much more control over any future development associated with mineral developments with the AONB. We are therefore disappointed that Policy MW07 itself does not remove permitted rights for all ancillary developments within AONBs.</p> <p>The Unit notes the temporary nature of ancillary developments within minerals sites. Nerveless they can still generate significant negative impacts on the special qualities of the Wye Valley AONB. The Unit feels that Policy MW07 could be strengthened by including a criterion which protects the AONB from adverse impacts on its landscape character and other special qualities.</p> <p>Policy MR01 Restoration, aftercare and facilitating beneficial after-uses</p> <p>The restoration of mineral sites can offer opportunities to enhance the landscape character, improve recreational opportunities and contribute to the general attractiveness of the AONB. To achieve this, any restoration proposals should be prepared with the AONB Management Plan and associated guidance in mind. The Unit questions whether Policy MR01 in its current form is detailed enough to ensure that these objectives are met.</p>
Herefordshire County Council	Herefordshire Local Plan Traveler's Sites	No impact identified

	Consultation	
District Level consultations		
None		
Neighbourhood Plans		
None		

Appendix 2 Summary of Planning Applications - April 2016 to March 2017

Herefordshire

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
<p>P163707/F</p> <p>Proposed residential development of 10 open market family homes and 5 affordable homes.</p> <p>Land opposite Mill House Farm Fownhope Herefordshire</p>	<p>The AONB Unit is not able to form a response at this stage as we do not believe that adequate information is provided by the applicant. We recommend that the Council request a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), a comprehensive landscaping and green infrastructure plan and a justification of the policy context before a decision can be made on this proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - does not adequately address how the development would comply with national or local planning policy. The key policy considerations are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031, the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 and the Fownhope Neighbourhood Development Plan. - Section 115 of the NPPF states that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have the 'highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty'. The applicant states that the adjacent development "is highly visible and makes a detrimental impact on the setting of the village". However there is a lack of any assessment of the landscape visualisation or possible impacts on views and landscape features. There is no justification as to how or why this proposal will not also be highly visible and make a detrimental impact on the setting of the village. - Section 116 of the NPPF relates to major development in AONBs, which the previous application for this site was determined to be. The Design and Access Statement refers back to the LVIA and other supporting documents of the previous application without modification. We can only assume therefore that the applicant believes this application is also major development. Where a development is considered to be major then the applicant is required to 	<p>Pending but recommended for approval.</p>	<p>It is accepted that the scheme layout proposes mitigation, compensation and enhancement, which could potentially reduce localised adverse effects in the longer-term. It follows from the above, that having regard to the provisions of the NDP, CS and NPPF, the scheme is not held to represent major development. It is, however, held to represent an approach to development that has regard to the sensitivity of the local landscape within the AONB context. The scheme is considered to respond positively overall to the requirement to conserve landscape and scenic beauty in accordance with NPPF 115.</p>

	demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist and that the development is in the public interest.		
<p>P160665/F</p> <p>Portal frame agricultural type building for the purpose of rearing goats</p> <p>Baysham Farm Baysham Ross-On-Wye Herefordshire HR9 6QR</p>	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual Impact: The proposal is likely to create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB. - Location: there is insufficient evidence as to why this new agricultural building is proposed to be located away from other farm buildings in the middle of an agricultural field in the open countryside. The exposed location will make the building visible from many locations within the AONB. - Materials: There is nothing to suggest that this development in any way conserves or enhances the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. - Scale: the proposed barn appears very large for the location in the middle of an agricultural field and isolated from other buildings. - Access: The AONB Unit would like the new access to be shown on the application plans to allow for the full assessment. The new roads and openings can create some unnecessary hardstanding and impact on the landscape character of the area. - Light Pollution: In respect of this application, there are approximately 16 roof lights proposed with this development. This together with any potential enteral lighting can be a cause of significant light pollution to the AONB. We would like the applicant to provide further information regarding their plans for security and night time lighting and consideration of its potential impact on the AONB. - Section 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires "great weight" to be given to AONB status. The AONB Unit does not consider these considerations to offset the potential damage to the landscape character and special qualities of the AONB. In conclusion, we do not believe that this open countryside site is the most appropriate location for such a development. 	Refused	<p>The erection of a large, isolated agricultural building in this vicinity is not considered to conserve or enhance the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the absence of any evidence to justify the proposed location, I give significant weight to preserving the AONB in the planning balance. The proposed building is considered to be sited in a way that would be detrimental to the wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p>

<p>P163251/O</p> <p>Erection of 19 no. one, two, three and four bedroom dwellings, parking, landscaping, drainage and other associated engineering works. Vehicular access to be provided from Springfield Road</p> <p>Land at Bivia Court Goodrich Herefordshire HR9 6JB</p>	<p>Objection</p> <p>The AONB Unit objects to this proposal as it has potential to cause noticeable harm to the local landscape and the AONB. The application does not apply relevant AONB policies, underplays the sensitivity of the landscape and fails to adequately address the context of the landscape features screening the site. We are of the view that the Council should consider this application as major development under NPPF 116. I continue to be unclear as to how this development would 'conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty of the area', which is the purpose of AONB designation.</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>P170784/F</p> <p>Proposed Stables</p> <p>Land adjacent to Seigewood Cottage Woolhope Hereford Herefordshire HR1 4Q</p>	<p>We recognise that the site is visible from the road to the west. However, the scale and clustering of this development is unlikely to have significant detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the AONB. However there are opportunities to enhance the landscape with planting of a hedgerow and/or some native trees along the 'existing' post & rail fence. The trees would complement the scattered mature trees in the adjoining fields and hedgerows. Adequate protection from grazing by the horses will be necessary.</p>	<p>Pending</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>APP/W1850/C/16/3160 188</p> <p>Doward Farm, The Doward From Horse Pool Lane To Doward Farm, The Doward Whitchurch</p>	<p>The private collection of random scrap and curious cars is visible in the open countryside and negatively affects the landscape character of undulating pasture, woodland, occasional dwellings and dramatic hills. The use of the site for the storage of scrap/old cars does not contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty of the Wye Valley AONB, nor to the historic environment.</p> <p>We believe this development is in contravention of the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 115 of the NPPF: requires "great weight" to be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. • Policy LD1 of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-31: • Wye Valley AONB Management Plan policies WV-D2 and WV-D3 	<p>Enforcement Appeal Pending Decision</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>P160612/O</p> <p>Outline application for 31 no. new dwellings.</p> <p>Land at Bivia Meadow Goodrich Herefordshire HR9 6JB</p>	<p>Objection</p> <p>The AONB Unit objects to this proposal as it has potential to cause significant harm to the local landscape and the wider AONB. The application fails to apply relevant AONB policies, fails to acknowledge the sensitivity of the area to a great enough extent, and does not demonstrate that the development would be sustainable. The Design and Access Statement recognises that the proposed development is in open countryside but does not adequately address how the development would comply with national and local planning policy. The key policy considerations are the National Planning Policy Framework, the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 and the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020. The proposed development does not constitute an exceptional circumstance for development in the AONB in accordance with section 116 of the NPPF, as well as conflicting with the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Withdrawn</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>P162474/O</p> <p>Outline planning application for the erection of 4 x 2 bed 3 x 3 bed and 2 x 4 bed dwellings. Access, landscaping, layout and scale</p> <p>Land adjacent to The Claytons Bridstow Herefordshire</p>	<p>Objection</p> <p>We note that this application is in effect two separate developments that both separately and together extend the built-up area into open countryside albeit opposite two existing modern developments of part of the scattered village of Bridstow. The capacity of the single track road is not our expertise, but we question the logic for directing a further 12 or more cars down this narrow country lane. We note that beside the proposed site(s) are large 'species poor intact' hedgerows which beyond visibility splays are to be retained. The AONB Unit believes that this proposal would benefit from a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment based on the proposed management regime for the remaining hedgerows. This will help to assess the scale of the visual impact and help in presenting some mitigating alternatives for the proposal.</p> <p>We would also like to stress that any development within the AONB should conserve and/or enhance the character of the area, rather than copy the layout, design and materials of urban developments. With this in mind we have some concerns regarding the density of the proposed development. The reduction of density and</p>	<p>Refused</p>	<p>The Claytons development has a significant adverse landscape impact and is detrimental to the character and appearance of the AONB. The NPPF is clear that the mistakes of the past should not justify further or new unacceptable development. As such to further increase residential development hereabouts would compound and exacerbate the landscape harm and detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the AONB.</p> <p>It is considered the proposals resultant harm to the character and appearance of the Wye</p>

	diversifying the form, roofline and siting of these dwellings could make development have less impact on the AONB, and the local road network.		Valley AONB would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.
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Forest of Dean

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
P0692/16/OUT Outline application for erection of a new dwelling. 3 Wye Villas Redbrook Monmouth NP25 4LT	We do not object in principle to the proposal to develop this plot. However we would like to be consulted at the detailed design stage and reserve the right to object to the application if the style and materials of this new dwelling are not sympathetic to the location.	Refused	The proposed scheme for a single dwelling could be accommodated on the site without harming the overall character of the site, subject to further details of landscaping and design of the dwelling submitted.
P0575/16/FUL & APP/P1615/W/16/3158 656 Erection of an agricultural barn. Land At Wall Weir Tidenham Chase Chepstow	Objection. We still have serious concerns about this development. While some the design features of the barn have been clarified we still do not think that the Landscape Assessment has adequately assessed the impact of the barn on the landscape or mitigation of views such as from the A466. In our submission to the previous application PO1287 we stated the follow, which we still uphold: 'The AONB Partnership notes that the Photographs and Landscape Assessment submitted by the applicant underplays the sensitive location of the site and the potential negative impact that the new agricultural structure may have on the wider landscape of the AONB. The assessment mentions that there might be "possible distant glimpses of the site in winter months from the A466" but fails to mention how this impact is going to be mitigated. The Partnership would like to see consideration of the impact of this proposal from various viewpoints (short and long-distance) from which the new	Refused but Appeal allowed	Refusal: It is considered that the proposed development would create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and detract from the special qualities in the AONB, including noise and light pollution. Appeal: The proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character

	<p>structure may be visible.’</p> <p>We continue to have concerns about the scale and setting of is development, the potential for inappropriate lighting and light pollution, and the overall impact on the sense of tranquillity in this very sensitive location.</p>		and appearance of the AONB
<p>P1102/16/FUL</p> <p>Erection of 9 houses and 2 flats on land formerley used as an oil distribution depot and a horse and pony sanctuary.</p> <p>Gregory Farm Brockweir Chepstow NP16 7NG</p>	<p>Objection on the grounds off:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - significant concerns regarding the scale and design of this development. While it is debatable whether the development would constitute ‘major development’, it is not clear whether the applicant has considered the impact of this proposal on the AONB. There is a lack of any reference to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan or the Special Qualities outlined in the Management Plan. - Height and density - The AONB Unit feels that this new proposal will dominate the houses in Brockweir and therefore change the character of this small historic settlement. The AONB Unit suggests that the number and height of the proposed dwellings is reduced to integrate the new development within its setting. <p>Design: The design of houses seems quite uniform – an element of diversity in design would enhance the quality of this development Whilst some use of roughcast render is acceptable it should be interweaved with local stone to integrate the site within the village. The introduction of canopies over a number of glass patio doors are not traditional within the village. The use of stone walls or indigenous hedging, as opposed to timber rail and boarding, to mark the boundaries of the development is preferable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscaping – the proposals for landscaping are very limited. - Views – "Picturesque, extensive & dramatic views" are one of the Special Qualities set out in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan (SQ 11). The development should minimise the introduction of dominant or incongruous features into the landscape of the AONB. The major concern regarding views to Brockweir is the height of the proposed development, which will be visible above the existing dwellings particularly from the bridge over the River Wye and from the meadows of the Old Station Tintern, a popular visitor destination and country park. This development would change the character of these picturesque views of this historic village. 	Refused	Adverse impact on the Brockweir Conservation Area and the significant harm to the character, appearance, heritage asset, flood risk and biodiversity.

<p>P1417/16/FUL Construction of two detached dwellings. Hillside Road Redbrook Monmouth</p>	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the site is outside the settlement boundary, the proposed dwellings are quite large and modern in nature and the site is on steep slopes overlooking the Wye and share access with Redbrook Primary School and the village hall. - Designing capacity for 8 cars does not seem to be in the spirit of sustainable development. - The Landscape and Visual Amenity Assessment has significant omissions and fails to recognise the impact of this development on the AONB. - We do not consider that 'great weight' has been given to the AONB designation as required under para 115 of the NPPF. The proposed development impacts on a number of the AONB Special Qualities including SQ4. Species-rich grassland, including small field pattern of un/semi-improved grassland, often bounded by drystone walls or old hedges. - Consequently we recommend refusal of the application which fails to conserve or enhance the Wye Valley AONB and the setting of Redbrook and is in conflict with NPPF section 115, Policy CSP.1 of the Core Strategy and the AONB Management Plan. 	<p>Refused</p>	<p>It is clear that the application has an adverse impact on the landscape character of the area and would be visible from a wide area, resulting in the loss of an area of open space, which separates elements of built development. The proposal fails to demonstrate how it accords with the Wye Valle AONB Management Plan and respect the local landscape character contrary to guidance with Section 11 of the NPPF and Policy CSP.1 of the Core Strategy.</p>
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Monmouthshire

Application details	AONB comments	Planning decision	Justification
None			

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Agenda Item

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

FUTURE LANDSCAPES: DELIVERING FOR WALES

Purpose

To seek members' endorsement of the Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales report and commitment to addressing the 'first steps to realising the Proposition'.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Welcomes the motion supported by the National Assembly for Wales on the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales*
- B. Endorses the relevant actions in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* and addresses the 'first steps to realising the Proposition' under 'Delivering for Wales' and 'Fit for Purpose' including adopting the Vision, the 'Principles of good Governance for Designated Landscapes' and the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales'.

Key Issues

- The Review of Designated Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) in Wales continues to build momentum.
- On 9th May Lesley Griffiths, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and Lord Elis-Thomas published *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, The Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales* (appended).
- On 6th June the National Assembly for Wales voted unanimously in support of the vital role that AONBs & National Parks provide to Wales and endorsed the publication of the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report.
- The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas, will meet again on 20th July to take forward the priorities identified in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*.
- On 20th June Welsh Government launched a consultation document *Taking Forward Wales' Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*, which includes a chapter on Designated Landscapes. The consultation closes on 13th September 2017.
- Actions that the JAC and AONB Unit can take to help implement *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales*, are tabulated below and include adopting 'Our Vision', the 'Principles of Good Governance for Designated Landscapes' and the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales' (appended below).
- Further assessment of what local actions are needed to realise the Proposition in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* will be reported back to the JAC.

Reasons

The Independent Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales, commissioned by the Welsh Government and chaired by Professor Terry Marsden, reported in autumn 2015. The ‘Marsden Report’ made 69 recommendations covering proposals and observations on purposes, principles, vision, governance models, planning and funding.

Following this report, the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, was established. The purpose was to explore the Marsden recommendations and report their findings and the case for change. The Working Group involved representatives of the National Parks, AONBs, business, conservation and other interest groups.

On 9th May 2017 the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* report (attached) was published jointly by Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and Lord Elis-Thomas AM. The Proposition (page 5), Vision (page 7) and proposals (pages 20-23) set the designated landscapes on a path to drive the sustainable management of natural resources in their areas and to work beyond their current boundaries. It draws on the strengths and opportunities of genuine partnership and collaboration. In doing so, it advocates greater flexibility in structures in order to meet the needs of places and communities. The Vision “*Our Vision*” is

Wales as a nation values its landscapes for what they provide for the people of Wales and elsewhere. The designated landscapes of Wales deliver both within and beyond their boundaries to enhance their social, economic, environmental and cultural resources; delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished.

The Welsh Assembly on 6th June held a Plenary Debate on ‘The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales’ attended by 50 Assembly Members. The resulting amended motion was passed unanimously.

The National Assembly for Wales:

- 1. Notes the publication of the report *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales****
- 2. Agrees Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks play a vital role:***
 - a) as valued places for nature and providing public and private benefit through a wide range of services; and***
 - b) in the sustainable management of natural resources and supporting vibrant rural communities.***
- 3. Agrees that all landscapes have a special value, as expressed in the sense of 'bro', which is at the heart of community identity and the way many people in Wales express their distinct sense of belonging to a particular place.***
- 4. Believes that any change in the legislation governing National Parks should be taken through the Assembly as primary legislation.***

The Welsh Government has launched a consultation document *Taking Forward Wales' Sustainable Management of Natural Resources*. The document includes chapters on Forestry (2), Designated Landscapes (3), Access to Outdoors (4), Water (6), Agriculture (9) and Wildlife (10). The consultation closes on 13th September 2017 and provides an early opportunity to gauge views on The Proposition set out in the Future Landscapes report and to consider input which may inform the next stages, particularly on the aspects relating to any legislative changes.

Implications

The AONB Manager will continue positive collaborative engagement in the Future Landscapes programme and will work with the National Association for AONBs on a shared response to the *Sustainable Management of Natural Resources* Consultation. The Welsh Government are consulting on a number of proposals, which seek to further deliver the commitment to manage Wales’ natural resources more sustainably to deliver lasting economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits, as well as to ensure the continued prosperity of Wales. The consultation seeks views on proposals on whether potential regulatory reform is required to:

- improve alignment of forestry and designated landscapes with the sustainable management of natural resources
- improve access to outdoors
- improve governance structures
- streamline legislation
- improve the legislative framework through introduction of modern regulatory mechanisms.

A preliminary assessment of the *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales, The Review of AONBs & National Parks in Wales* has identified a number of actions in the ‘first steps to realising the Proposition’ (pages 20-23) that have implications for the Wye Valley AONB and AONB Partnership. These are tabulated below.

<i>“first steps to realising the Proposition”</i>	Wye Valley AONB Partnership action
<i>Delivering for Wales - Collaboration and Partnership</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants in the FLW Programme to adopt the way of working developed, which emphasises building relationships for effective collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Endorsed, adopted and on-going implementation
<i>Delivering for Wales - Vision and Direction</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members or Boards of all partners to adopt the vision and engage with staff, Members and partners, incorporating it into relevant publications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt ‘Our Vision’ (page 7) and incorporate into relevant publications
<i>Fit for Purpose - Refreshing Governance: Improving Performance and Accountability</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the Governance Principles as a model for any future designation. Undertake a more detailed review of current governance against the Principles and make recommendations for change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Undertake a detailed review of current governance against the Principles (page 11) and report back to JAC with any recommendations for change.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes management bodies to adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement and work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopt the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales (appended below) ➤ through the Future Landscapes programme work together to provide guidance on how to improve engagement in designated landscapes.
<i>Fit for Purpose - Innovations in Resourcing</i>	

<i>“first steps to realising the Proposition”</i>	Wye Valley AONB Partnership action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the development of a long term resourcing strategy which maps out short, medium and long terms opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3–5 year AONB Unit Budget projections updated half-yearly and reported to AONB Steering Group. ➤ 5 yearly AONB Management Plan Review provides medium to long term strategic perspective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Government in partnership with the AONBs to produce proposals for a more secure resourcing model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Endorse and support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate charitable and legacy funding opportunities with organisations such as the Community Foundation in Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finalise agreement with Herefordshire Community Foundation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a consensus to inform the direction and measures emerging from EU Transition to secure appropriate measures and delivery mechanism for sustainable land management in designated landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage in debate in collaboration with National Association for AONBs, including on a shared response to the Agriculture chapter in Welsh Government ‘Sustainable Management of Natural Resources’ consultation.
<i>Fit for Purpose - Driving Well-being and Resilience</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated landscape management organisations and partnerships to further develop and refine their own understanding of local economic resilience and economic opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evidence gathering primarily through 5 yearly review of AONB Management Plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, Designated Landscapes to adopt the concept of place planning as a mechanism to connect communities with places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Primarily through 5 yearly review of AONB Management Plan, also maintaining close liaison with Town/Parish/Community Councils, local groups and volunteer networks engagement with Neighbourhood Development Plans in England.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen collaboration and support between the designated landscapes and areas with UNESCO Global Geopark, UNESCO World Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status and International Dark Sky Reserves to maximise economic and education benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consolidate links as appropriate with Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark, Brecon Beacons Fforest Fawr Geopark, Blaenavon and Ironbridge World Heritage Sites and the Brecon Beacons Dark-Sky Reserve. Support Herefordshire’s mapping and designation of Environmental Lighting Zones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify mechanisms by which the designated landscapes can build ecosystem resilience based on the results of the SoNaRR and the priorities in the Natural Resources Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the development of the local Area Statement(s) with Natural Resources Wales and collaborate on evaluating the SoNaRR (State of Natural Resources Report) results and the Natural Resources Policy priorities to

<i>“first steps to realising the Proposition”</i>	Wye Valley AONB Partnership action
	help identify mechanisms that will build ecosystem resilience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review funding priorities for Sustainable Development Fund and other investments by the designated landscapes and partners in order to ensure their effectiveness in supporting local economic initiatives based on local priorities and need, linking to place planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support Welsh Government with any review of SDF ➤ Review funding priorities and investments by the AONB Partnership to ensure effectiveness in supporting local economic initiatives based on local priorities and need, linking to place planning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in dialogue about the urgent needs for broadband connectivity whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue liaison with local planning authorities, Town/Parish/Community Councils, local community groups and developers, as appropriate.

The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group, chaired by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM will meet on 20th July to consider the responses to publication of *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* as part of taking forward the delivery of the identified priorities. It will also be an opportunity to review actions the partners are already taking and to plan further collaborations and implementations.

The Cross Party Group for Rural Affairs at the National Assembly for Wales will also discuss the *Future Landscape: delivering for Wales* report. Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas and Prof Terry Marsden have been invited to attend and speak.

Background

The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group includes academics, entrepreneurs, health and well-being specialists, senior figures in non-governmental organisations and senior representatives from designated landscapes, chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM.

Andrew Blake (AONB Manager) and Matthew Lewis (chair of TOWP and Monmouthshire’s Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager) have both been involved in the Future Landscapes Wales programme, alongside other officers and members from across the Welsh AONBs, National Parks and other relevant organisations.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

AONB PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL STUDY TOUR

Purpose

To endorse the date and outline programme for the Annual AONB Partnership Study Tour.

Recommendations

That the JAC

- A. Note the date of Friday 22nd September 2017 for the Study Tour.
- B. Encourage a good attendance on the Tour.

Key Issues

- This year the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour will be held on Friday 22nd September.
- The programme is still being finalised but will focus predominantly on projects and management issues in the Herefordshire part of the AONB.
- Initial invitations for expressions of interest to attend will be sent out shortly.
- The Tour falls within 'Outstanding Week' 16th – 24th September, which is the third year of this week promoting and celebrating AONBs.
- Perseverance over a joint initiative with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) has yet to bear fruit. However representation from the Wye Valley AONB Partnership has been requested at the Welsh National Parks' Seminar in Brecon on 3rd & 4th October 2017.

Reasons

The Annual Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour is hosted by the JAC and has gained a good reputation over recent years and is achieving good attendance from the wider AONB Partnership. The invitation to attend the Tour is extended to all members of the Joint Advisory Committee, to Senior Officers and County and District Councillors whose wards fall within the Wye Valley AONB and all Town/Parish/Community Councils that lie within the AONB. It is thus a key tool in the transfer of information to the wider partners and interested parties in the AONB.

Implications

The date of 22nd September was chosen for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership Tour because there appear to be no conflicting Council meetings of the four constituent local authorities. The programme for the Tour is still being finalised, however the Tour will focus on projects

and management issues mainly in the Herefordshire part of the AONB. The event reaches a wide audience of AONB partners and interested parties and always proves to be very popular and informative for those who attend. As always an adequate lunch and transport will be included in the total cost of £15 per person.

It had been hoped that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) could join the Tour, but unfortunately the date clashes with a full NPA meeting. However discussions are on-going over a joint event. Meanwhile the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority have invited representation from the Wye Valley AONB Partnership at the Welsh National Parks' Members Seminar on 3-4 October 2017.

Background

Each year the JAC hosts the Annual Study Tour. A total of 31 people participated in the 2016 AONB Partnership Tour. There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused on the Monmouthshire part of the AONB. The Tour visited Tintern Abbey, Old Station Tintern, Kingston Brewery, lunched at Abbey Mill, then visited Upper Wyndcliff and Penterry Church. Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.

The 2015 Study Tour visited Symonds Yat Rock, Lancaut Church, St Briavel's Castle Youth Hostel, Stowfield Quarry, the mindSCAPE project log circle at Braceland and the river bank by Biblins Bridge.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

OFFA'S DYKE COLLABORATORY

Purpose

To inform members of progress and forthcoming events generated through the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The Gloucestershire part of the Wye Valley AONB contain some of the best preserved and most dramatic sections of Offa's Dyke, the eighth century earthwork believed to be commissioned by the Offa, King of the Mercians, to delineate the boundary between the 'Anglo-Saxon' kingdom of Mercia and the 'British' kingdoms of eastern Wales.
- The inaugural Offa's Dyke Collaboratory workshop, on Friday 28th April 2017, was a great success with 45 attendees from across the country, academia and heritage management.
- Several further workshops and conferences are planned.
- Project proposals are also developing, including on and around the Lancaut peninsular with the landowner and the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust.

Reasons

The Offa's Dyke Collaboratory seeks to encourage a new era of research in the landscape of the Mercian-British frontier, between the Severn and the Dee estuaries in the borderlands of England with Wales, through a wider process of collaboration between researchers and communities. The publication of *Offa's Dyke: Landscape and Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain* (Ray and Bapty, Windgather, 2016) promotes several new approaches and interpretations to Offa's Dyke and the western frontier of Mercia. It suggests how Offa's Dyke may have reflected, and helped create, a new 'political landscape' in late-eighth and early-ninth century Britain, extending well beyond the line of settlement and contact along what became the eastern Marches of Wales.

The inaugural event for the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory was a workshop hosted by the University of Chester at the University Centre Shrewsbury on Friday 28th April 2017. The event, attended by 45 delegates, comprised a rapid series of short presentations on current and ongoing research on Offa's and Wat's Dykes and their environs, seeking to identify and revise key themes and questions for future investigations. There was also a session in the round where proposals and ideas were debated by participants. Representatives came from the Universities of Birmingham, Cardiff, 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 the Offa's Dyke Association.

Implications

There are many questions that remain to be resolved about Offa's Dyke and the British-Mercian frontier. Very many of these questions, and previous attempts to address them, were identified at within *Offa's Dyke: Landscape and Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain*. Based on this, lists of '100 Questions' and '100 Projects' were presented at the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory workshop in Shrewsbury. Eight of the 'projects', listed below, relate directly to the parts of Offa's Dyke in the Wye Valley AONB. The AONB Unit are working Dr Keith Ray, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire County Archaeologists and local interest groups to see how these local 'projects' can be implemented.

As part of the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust's funded work on the conservation of Lancaut Church, a public seminar is being planned to highlight the context of the early church and settlement at Lancaut. This will build on current project proposals being developed to further investigate the significance of the Lancaut peninsular from the early Middle-Ages.

Three other events are currently planned under the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory:

Frontiers & Archaeology – Past & Present

On Wednesday 13th December 2017, at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, a free day conference will be hosted by University of Chester archaeology students. This is event will explore the archaeology of frontiers and their interpretation in the human past and their significance and challenges for community and public perception and engagement in the present.

From Brexit and IndyRef to the Refugee Crisis and Trump's Wall, frontiers dominate our news. Archaeological research can provide perspectives and insights into how frontiers are created, perpetuated, defined, fragmented, moved, removed and reinvented. Archaeological research shows us that frontiers needn't divide 'civilization' from 'barbarians', nor are they always simply lines on a map. Instead, frontiers can be zones and regions that might possess topographic, economic, social, political, religious and ideological dimensions. Moreover, frontiers can be arenas of interaction and creativity as much as barriers and blockades, in which new identities and perceptions of the environment can be fostered and reproduced.

From Offa's Dyke to Hadrian's Wall, from the Great Wall of China to the Berlin Wall, the conference will explore the archaeology of frontiers past and present. Archaeology sheds light on how frontiers interact with natural features, including seas and straits, river and valleys, hills and mountains, forests and fens. Also, archaeological research reveals how frontiers are created and transformed in relation to routes and settlements, fields and farms, fortifications and watchtowers, beacons and bridges, linear earthworks and walls, sacred sites and burial grounds. Finally, the conference will tackle how archaeology can explore today's frontiers afresh: both the material culture of present-day frontiers and how ancient frontiers are conserved, managed and interpreted in the present.

Dykes Through Time: Rethinking Early Medieval Linear Earthworks

At the 39th Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) annual conference at Cardiff University, 18-20 December 2017, there will be a session on Dykes Through Time: Rethinking Early Medieval Linear Earthworks on behalf of the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory. This session aims to foster new approaches and investigations of early medieval linear earthworks, theorising their significance in the past and the present.

Background

The Offa's Dyke Collaboratory is 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. The publication of Dr 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. The AONB Manager is part of the convening group of the Collaboratory. For more information visit <https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/>.

Eight Projects relating to the parts of Offa's Dyke in the Wye Valley AONB

Extracts from "Notes towards the development of a Research Programme 'in 100 Projects'" <https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/about/offas-dyke-some-notes-towards-the-development-of-a-research-programme-in-100-projects/>

Projects 32-39: Localised projects – Gloucestershire & Herefordshire

32. *A project designed to enlist the support of (for example) rock-climbers to establish whether Offa's Dyke did once survive along cliff-top locations such as Ban-y-gor Rocks opposite Wynd Cliff north of Chepstow, and/or the extent to which subsequent quarrying may have removed all traces. (NB this project could usefully compare this Gloucestershire situation with that at Blodwell Rock, Llanymynech).*
33. *The East Vaga to Madgett's Hill lengths. This is envisaged as a close study, survey and investigation project. Experience (including field reconnaissance studies in 2017) has shown that while LiDAR is an essential tool for the full study of Offa's Dyke in the woodlands of the Forest of Dean, ground observation is essential to the purpose of mapping the subtleties (and anomalies) of structure and siting. This is especially true of this 4km length of Offa's Dyke which is probably the best surviving stretch anywhere.*
34. *Passage Grove promontory complex. In study-visits I undertook in April 2015 and March 2017 (latterly with Jon Hoyle), the complexities of particular locations within the stretch noted in 'project 33' were fully appreciated, perhaps for the first time. This project, focusing upon a particular location with especially striking configurations of the Dyke and other possibly related features, is an example of the kind of place where detailed and in-depth study, including specialised mapped characterisation, multi-spectral geophysical survey, and excavation (especially in response to past forestry interventions), could elucidate both structure and purpose in respect to the observable remains.*
35. *Staunton to Ross-on-Wye: locating the Dyke. From Common Grove to Lower Lydbrook in the parish of English Bicknor there is a stretch of Offa's Dyke that is reasonably well-preserved and characteristic of several other lengths further south in the Wye Valley. And yet to its west between Redbrook and Redinhorne (Symond's Yat) there is no trace of the linear earthwork across a 5km distance. Northwards from Lydbrook the early charter bounds of Goodrich appear to make reference to the Dyke, and there are hints of its presence at Bishopswood and Walford south of Ross. This project would be aimed at determining whether there are traces of the earthwork that have been 'missed' in these locations, or whether it was not completed, or why it was deemed not necessary, here.*

36. Gateways – investigating the ‘yats’. *The important conservation/research study conducted in the 1990s by Jon Hoyle and Jo Vallender looking at Offa’s Dyke in the lower Wye Valley noted that there are as many as 10 ‘yat’ or ‘yeat’ place-names here, often surviving as ‘gate’ or ‘yat’ names today. This project would aim, through a range of studies, to establish whether these names do indeed refer to gateways in, or points of transit across, Offa’s Dyke in the locations concerned; and if so, whether they were of similar, or contrasting, character.*
37. Quarries and stone-cappings. *The focus of this project would be upon the relationship between the form and location of quarries to the east of the Dyke and the use of quarried stone to create both facades and cappings to the bank; and the digging of the ditch to the west of the bank to create a counterscarp bank. In the places where the latter survives intact, it is often also capped with stone. While mostly a survey project, insights from non-intrusive work could be tested through excavation, especially in reference to the quarries. The existence of such east-side quarries is more obvious in Gloucestershire than elsewhere, but its ubiquity is becoming evident all along the course of the Dyke. So some comparative work could usefully be done elsewhere.*
38. The Mork Stream valley and its complexities. *While there are various anomalies and curiosities among the groups of earthworks occupying the landscape in the lower Wye valley that Offa’s Dyke traverses (in part due to excellent preservation conditions, in part due to an ‘underlay’ of prehistoric settlement and its field systems), nowhere exhibits greater complexity in the Mork tributary valley where the dyke-builders had to negotiate a highly topographically-convoluted landscape. This project would embrace this complexity, using the apparent disadvantage of complex inter-relationships of earthworks (including several ‘linears’), to attempt to establish a sequence and pattern associated with the Dyke and the river to its west.*
39. A River Wye frontier – Ergyng and ‘the south Herefordshire zone’. *A project investigating the conundrum of the apparent absence of a linear earthwork in an area that was clearly in contest between incoming Anglo-Saxon settlers and indigenous British communities; but that also betrays hints of compromise and even collaboration. The project would seek to expand upon recent discoveries indicative of early English settlement south of Hereford, and the evidence for a spread of thriving early Christian communities with allegiances southwards towards Gwent.*

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Purpose

To inform members of the achievements of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2016/17 and forthcoming applications during 2017/18.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) of £55,000 in Wales was fully allocated in 2015/16 (see attached Table 1) leveraging in £166,222.
- The Welsh Government has confirmed that the SDF for 2017/18 will remain at £55,000.
- The SDF Assessment Panel meets on Thursday 6th July to assess the attached applications (see attached Table 2).

Reasons

The SDF provides a good opportunity for local communities, businesses and organisations within or adjacent to the AONB in Monmouthshire to establish innovative initiatives that benefit the Wye Valley AONB.

Implications

The value of projects receiving SDF in 2015/16 totalled £221,222. Eleven projects shared £55,000 of SDF (see Table 1 below), leveraging in match funding totalling £166,222:-

2015/16 SDF Match Funding (Cash)	Public sector	£15,056.32
	Private sector	£9,574.84
	Voluntary sector	£10,672.08
	Lottery	£86,300.00
	European - LEADER	£4,500.00
2015/16 SDF Match Funding (Volunteer/In Kind)	time@£50/day	£16,050.00
	time@£100/day	£3,600.00
	In Kind Value	£20,469.60
	Total	£166,222.84

The AONB Unit and other partners promote the availability of the SDF to as many sectors as possible in Monmouthshire. Members are similarly encouraged to do so, and Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, is available to discuss and advise on potential applications (contact community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk).

Background

The SDF has been running successfully in Wales for 17 years and ran for 10 years in England. However the SDF no longer exists on the English side.

The delegated process allows the AONB Manager to determine an SDF application of up to £1,000 with the endorsement of the SDF Assessment Panel chairman.

Table 1	SDF Wales Summary 2016/2017						
Ref.No	Applicant	Project Name	Project total	SDF Amount	Status	Date of Decision	SDF % of total
WV00 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB unit	Administration		£5,500.00			10%
WV01 YR16W	Savoy Youth Theatre	Promenade Sensory Theatre	£4,700.00	£1,250.00	Approved - delegated	21/06/2016	8%
WV02 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers	£37,050.00	£0.00	unclaimed	16/07/2015	~
WV03 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Wye Valley River Festival	£190,000.00	£21,500.00	Approved	16/07/2015	12%
WV04 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Wye Valley River Festival education strand	£9,900.00	£1,700.00	Approved	16/07/2015	11%
WV05 YR16W	Deer Initiative	Deer Initiative project	£11,090.00	£245.00	Approved	16/07/2015	21%
WV06 YR16W	Gwent Wild life Trust	Cattle Project	£29,772.54	£1,028.08	Approved	16/07/2015	1%
WV07 YR16W	Bee Friendly Monmouthshire	Bee Friendly Monmouthshire Hedgerow Manifesto	£1,400.00	£700.00	Approved - delegated	28/09/2016	50%
WV08 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Venison Processing and Marketing Feasibility Study	£10,059.00	£3,450.00	Approved	23/11/2016	34%
WV09 YR16 W	St. Denis Church	St. Denis Churchyard Restoration Project	£3,900.00	£1,000.00	Approved	23/11/2016	25%
WV10 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018 Research & Development	£13,493.00	£6,511.18	Approved	23/11/2016	48%
WV11 YR16W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancements	£16,118.34	£10,768.74	Approved	23/11/2016	66%
WV12 YR16W	Friends of Llandogo School	Llandogo school pond project	£2,510.00	£1,347.00	Approved	23/11/2016	53%
		Sub total		£55,000.00		average	27%

Table 2	SDF Wales Summary 2017/18 & 2018/19					
Ref.No	Applicant	Project Name		SDF Amount	Status	Date of Decision
2017/18						
WV00 YR17W	Wye Valley AONB	Admin		£5,000.00		
WV01 YR17W	Monmouthshire Meadows	Enhancement Wet Meadow Trellech		£2,227.46	Approved	26/04/2017
WV02 YR17W	Sylvia Rimat	Tree		£1,000.00	Approved	26/04/2017
WV05 YR17W	Drew Moore	Drystone wall		£1,000.00	Approved - Delegated	01/06/2017
WV03 YR17W	Jon Dunkelman	Fungi booklet		£1,000.00	application	6/7/17
WV04 YR17W	AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018		£25,000.00	application	6/7/17
WV06 YR17W	Nelson Garden Preservation Trust	Nelson Heritage Triangle Leaflet		£500.00	application	6/7/17
WV07 YR17W	Wye Woods Partnership	Wye Woodland Interpretation		£3,000.00	application	6/7/17
WV08 YR17W	Cadw & AONB partnership	Tintern Abbey Beacon Technology		£3,000.00	application	6/7/17
WV09 YR17 W	John Sterry, Old Station Tintern	Community Performance Space- Interpretative sculptures		£6,450.00	application	6/7/17
WV10 YR17W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Livestock Trailer		£1,000.00	application	6/7/17
WV11 YR17W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Volunteer Project		£4,000.00	application	6/7/17
		Sub total		£53,177.46		
2018/19						
WV00 YR18W	Wye Valley AONB	Admin		£5,000.00		
WV01 YR18W	Sylvia Rimat	Tree		£1,000.00	Approved	26/04/2017
WV02 YR18W	AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2018		£25,000.00	application	6/7/17
		Sub total		£31,000.00		

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs

Purpose

To update members on recent work of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) including the forthcoming Landscapes for Life Conference and Landscapes for Life Award.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) met with DEFRA Under Secretary of State, Lord Gardiner, after the General Election to discuss the role AONBs play in delivering the DEFRA agenda.
- The theme and dates for the national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference is "Do Different – Leading, Sharing, Learning, Inspiring" on 18th - 19th July in Winchester.
- Three representatives from the AONB Partnership are attending the national AONB Landscapes for Life Conference including Simon Dereham who is nominated for a Landscapes for Life Award.
- Outstanding Week 2017 is scheduled for 16th -24th September 2017.

Reasons

The NAAONB 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 has changed significantly since its formation in 1998. It is now a Charity with its interest focused on AONBs, but flexible enough to extend that interest to active engagement with National Parks and other areas not yet designated. Its clear vision and mission, dedicated staff and trustees, and its active and engaged membership, are a recipe for real delivery.

The NAAONB Board 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

The NAAONB Chairman, Philip Hygate, has written to Michael Gove to congratulate him on his new appointment as Secretary of State for the Environment, enclosing a copy of the joint AONBs & National Parks publication "So much more than the view"

<http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/images/So-much-more-than-the-view-1.pdf> to highlight

the work of the AONB Family. The mindSCAPE project is outlined on page 15 of the publication. On 16th June in Dedham Vale AONB, NAAONB Chief Executive, Howard Davies, met with Lord Gardiner, DEFRA Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs, who retains the remit for AONBs.

Landscapes for Life Conference 18th -19th July 2017

The annual National AONB ‘Landscapes for Life’ Conference (L4L2017) will take place in at Winchester Business School, West Downs Centre, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 4NR. With the theme “Do Different – Leading, Sharing, Learning, Inspiring”, delegates will engage with people from the corporate, academic and public sectors, and learn about doing things differently, share ideas on exciting and innovative projects and be inspired to think even further “outside the box”. The goal is to help us lead the changes necessary to provide a robust and sustainable future for our outstanding landscapes.

Landscapes for Life Award

Simon Dereham is nominated for a Landscapes for Life Award, having being a JAC member since 1983. The Wye Valley AONB has benefited hugely from Simon’s measured and influential contributions over his many years of service. The Landscapes for Life Awards are presented on the first day of the Landscapes for Life Conference and bestow national recognition and gratitude for the service given. The Award recognises the dedication of anyone with outstanding service to AONBs and who has provided considerable support and assistance to the development of individual AONBs, the AONB Family and/or the designation itself.

Outstanding Week

The AONB Family’s 2nd ‘Outstanding Week’, coordinated by the NAAONB took place 17th - 25th September 2016. During the nine days, over 100 events took place in 34 AONBs highlighting the value and relevance of AONBs to both the UK’s economy, and the nation’s health and wellbeing. Plans are underway for Outstanding Week 2017 on 16th - 26th September 2017. For more information see www.landscapesforlifeevents.org.uk

Background

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is the charity (Number 1,158,871) 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.

The NAAONB Core Messages are:-

- People are passionate about Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and care deeply about their future.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the most outstanding, beautiful and cherished landscapes in Britain. They need to be cared for, now and in the future.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are dynamic, living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are vibrant landscapes, which offer a wealth of opportunities for everyone to enjoy them and help look after them.
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated as special landscapes which provide a range of benefits for people and wildlife.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
3rd July 2017

AONB & PARTNER REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and Partners, relating to:-

- a. Welsh Government Access Grant
- b. Wye Valley River Festival 2018
- c. AONB Farming Awards
- d. Roadside Verges
- e. mindSCAPE
- f. Youth Rangers
- g. Wye-Being
- h. The Ash Project

FOR INFORMATION

a. Wye Valley AONB Access Grant 2016/17

Welsh Government provided the opportunity in autumn 2016 to bid for capital funding for 'access improvements in National Parks and AONBs'. A bid was submitted on behalf of the AONB Partnership by Monmouthshire County Council's Countryside Access team. A grant of £48,500 was approved against total costs of £50,500.

Inevitably the choice of projects had to reflect the need to complete the works over the winter period but nevertheless the grant has enabled some valuable improvements to Rights of Way in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB, addressing some priority issues. The improvements undertaken were as follows:

- Fingerpost Replacement – 118 roadside way marker / finger posts at various locations across the Monmouthshire part of the AONB
- Resurfacing the Wye Valley Walk at Chepstow School - part of the route 355/P2 leading to Piercefield Woods which has suffered from repeated wash out due to drainage issues and 376m has been tarmacked to provide a long term solution.
- Resurfacing of Bridleway 382/119 at Whitelye – 146m of bridleway resurfaced to a 3m width. This bridleway link between unclassified roads was previously in a poor and boggy condition.
- Bridge replacement at Trellech – replacement of a 3m footbridge on footpath 382/161

Total costs incurred were £50,530 including project management costs. The grant of £48,500 received from Welsh Government was match funded by Monmouthshire County Council's Rights of Way budget.

Whilst some longer term access improvements were also identified to Welsh Government as part of the original bid it is not yet clear if this grant funding will be repeated in 17/18. In anticipation that further funding may become available work is currently underway to assess options for some longer term projects, including improving the condition of the Wye Valley Walk between the Monmouthshire Show Ground and the “Duke of Beaufort” bridge in Monmouth.

The AONB Unit and MCC’s Countryside Access team will continue to liaise with Welsh Government in anticipation that a longer term programme can be developed.

b. Wye Valley River Festival 2018 update

Following the research and development phase earlier in the year, ideas, proposals and sites have been reviewed by the Festival Development Team - Phill Haynes, Desperate Men and the AONB Unit. Letters of Support and offers of funding have already been received from various organisation, including Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Shire Hall Monmouth and the Woodland Trust of both in-kind and cash match funding. Applications for funding are currently being prepared for Arts Council England and Wales. Discussions continue with various partners, artists and local communities. However, until the funding base is built up it is difficult to be more specific about detailed engagement, projects and outcomes.

c. AONB Farming Awards

Now in its tenth year, the Wye Valley AONB Farming Awards celebrate farmers and land managers who are doing outstanding work to conserve and enhance the landscape. The deadline for entries was early May and the shortlisted finalists were visited by judges in late May. The judging panel consisted of Andrew Blake (AONB Manager), Caroline Hanks (Farming4Wildlife), David Price (NFU Wales) and Jim Herbert (Lewstone Farm – 2015 Winner). The 2017 competition winner will have been announced at the Monmouthshire Show on Saturday 1st July. The four finalists are:-

- Cheery Orchard Farm; 120 acre farm in Penallt running a successful and steadily growing suckler cow unit and box scheme, selling their beef to the public and wholesale to local pubs. They are also planning to enter Glastir in 2018, delivering more biodiversity enhancements on the farm.
- Coppett Hill Common Trust; 250 acres of common, one of Herefordshire’s largest Local Nature Reserves (established in 1985) and forms part of the iconic view from Yat Rock. Owned and managed by the community, the hill is managed for conservation and access and is in both Higher Level Stewardship and Woodland Grant Scheme agreements. It is partially grazed by a commoner and is home to a variety of important species.
- Gadr Farm; 160 acres of mainly sheep pasture and woodland. A previous winner of the Award, with a large amount of environmental work on the farm under agri-environment schemes, managing woodland, grassland, ponds and boundaries for conservation.
- Square Farm; 190 acres, last year’s Runner-up, a traditional mixed organic farm incorporating cattle, sheep, pigs, chicken, ducks and geese, cereal and root crops and market garden vegetables. A farm shop on site stocks their organic meat and

vegetables alongside a widening choice of products. Environmental work takes place through an agri-environment scheme.

The winner takes home £400 and the prestigious Wye Valley AONB Farming Award Trophy, designed by Forest of Dean ironwork sculptor and blacksmith Steve Bluett

The Monmouthshire Show have been keen to promote the AONB Farming Awards more widely at the Show. Information boards detailing previous winners have been produced for display around the Countryside Ring, along with banners promoting the Awards.

d. Roadside Verges

The AONB Unit are engaged in the development of two roadside verge enhancement projects with Plantlife. A number of AONBs across the country are working with Plantlife to develop a partnership project to enhance biodiversity on Trunk Road verges. Targeted verges on the A40 and A49 through Herefordshire have been surveyed by the AONB Unit to establish current condition and existing species. The AONB Unit are currently considering initial ideas around species rich grassland enhancement and hedgerow establishment and management based on the survey results.

The second project is an AONB wide initiative. Plantlife are applying for funding for a national partnership project with AONBs to raise awareness of the importance of roadside verges for biodiversity and carry out improvement work. The AONB Unit have developed a two year programme for inclusion in this application around the promotion of important verges and best practice management.

e. mindSCAPE

The mindSCAPE project is now in its fourth and final year of Big Lottery funding. It continues to be well received and runs at capacity, delivered by Artspace Cinderford and now predominantly based at the Orchard Trust in Lydbrook.

To celebrate and promote the successful 4 year project, a conference is being organised on Thursday 5th October at Lindors Country House Hotel, near St Briavels. Sharing best practice and experience from the project, the conference will be aimed at other organisations planning similar projects, health professionals and the local community.

The mindSCAPE project has secured funding through the Forester's Forest HLF Landscape Partnership to continue in a modified format.

f. AONB Youth Rangers



The end of 3rd cohort of Youth Rangers will be marked with a Camp on 1st and 2nd July 2017. In total 45 young people will have taken part in the programme over the 3 cohorts to date. From May 2017 Youth Rangers is part funded by the Foresters' Forest HLF Landscape Partnership.

Activity this year included: Charcoal making with GWT; film making with Foresters' Forest Literary Group; Coppicing with Plantlife; Symonds Yat Crag clean up with Forestry Commission & Local climbing groups; climbing; dystone walling at Staunton Meend; navigation & orienteering with AONB staff; veteran tree survey with AONB staff. AONB Youth Rangers are working towards completing the John Muir Award. Other awards include; basic first aid, 1*kayak and Rural Media film making.

The next (4th) cohort will be recruited in autumn 2017. The AONB Community Links Officer continues to promote the scheme to schools and young people in and around the Wye Valley AONB.

Meanwhile the Volunteer Leaders have recently undertaken navigation training with Mountain Training (<http://www.mountain-training.org/>) a British Mountaineering Association supported network. They are working towards their Lowland Leader certification, due in the autumn after completing and logging 20 long walks and completing an assessment of group leadership and navigation skills, plus expedition leader. This is a recognised and transferable qualification.



g. Wye-Being

Since October 2016 the Wye Valley AONB Unit have been developing a new initiative 'Wye-Being'. This is responding to the need to provide opportunities for greater access to nature, alongside experiential activities in the landscape and to address the thrust of Wales' Well-Being and Future Generations Act. The AONB Community Links Officer is working on two Wye-Being projects which have emerged from the establishment of new partnerships:

1) 'Dads Can' in Monmouthshire, with Monmouthshire Housing Association. 'Dads Can' work with young men, usually fathers, who are tenants who need a range of support, emotional, practical, life skills and accredited training that can improve career prospects of the participants in the scheme. The AONB Unit has developed a selection of activities which offer these young men opportunities to learn rural skills in the landscape; including drystone walling, green woodworking and vegetation management for conservation aims. It is early days however the indications are that this work has a beneficial influence on participants. For example, one young man after his experience of drystone walling has been inspired to sign up to a brick laying course having previously had little motivation for a career. As the scheme develops we will institute a structured evaluation of the benefits of the work and time spent in the landscape. At this stage we are still developing relationships and adapting activities to suit participant's needs. A full programme of activity is planned going forward, with roughly 8 sessions between now and September.

2) In Gloucestershire, the Community Links Officer has been working with Artspace, the Forestry Commission and Forest of Dean District Council to deliver 'Active for Life – Health & Wellbeing Week in June' http://artspacecinderford.org/files/Active_For_Life.pdf. The AONB aspect of this initiative is a collaboration between the mindSCAPE group and the Walking for Health Groups from the Forest of Dean & Chepstow. On Monday 19th June 50 participants enjoyed a healthy walk together followed a subsidised healthy lunch created by students at the Forest of Dean College. The students developed an affordable menu based on the Blue Zone principals of healthy living and landscape (see National Geographic article <https://bluezones.com/#section-1>). The Blue Zone philosophy makes the clear link between longevity, environment, activity, diet, social groups and personal 'value', creating a rounded picture of what is required for human health and wellbeing. These goals are achievable with structures that ease and support human access to the countryside, in supportive group settings and with good nutrition. That was the focus of the 19th June activity. Following evaluation, measuring participant's enjoyment and personal benefits alongside gauging participant's future needs and interests, the activity may be developed in a number of ways.

h. The Ash Project www.theashproject.org.uk

Ash dieback is widely accepted to be untreatable and could see the demise of up to 95% of these trees over the next decade. The Ash Project is an urgent cultural response to the devastating effects of ash dieback, led by the Kent Downs AONB Partnership.

As part of the project a book on Ash Trees and Ash Landscapes will be published in partnership with the Woodland Trust. Several AONBs, including the Wye Valley AONB, have contributed to the cost of the book and will be properly recognised in the publication. Work on the book has started and the author and photographer, Archie Miles, is out and about in the landscapes of Britain taking pictures of amazing Ash Trees and Ash Landscapes.

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