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24th February 2020

Notice of meeting:

Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Monday, 2nd March, 2020 at 2.00 pm

**The Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices,
High Street, Coleford, GL16 8HG**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	1 - 10
4.	Public Question Time.	
5.	AONB Unit 2020/21 Work Programme.	11 - 20
6.	Review of Designated Landscapes in England and Wales.	21 - 22
7.	Sustainable Development Fund & HCF AONB Fund update.	23 - 24
8.	AONB Management Plan Review.	25 - 26
9.	Ash Die Back update.	27 - 30
10.	Wye Valley River Festival 2020 update.	31 - 36
11.	National Association for AONBs.	37 - 38
12.	Partner and AONB Unit progress reports and updates.	39 - 40

13. Dates of future meetings of the Joint Advisory Committee for 2020/21:

To be held at 2.00pm in the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber, Coleford:

Monday 6th July 2020.

Monday 2nd November 2020.

Monday 1st March 2021 (tbc).

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:

T. Hale
P. Molyneux

Herefordshire:

B. Durkin
J. Hardwick
P. Symonds
Y. Watson

Monmouthshire:

L. Jones
D. Dovey
M. Lane
A.E. Webb

Forest of Dean:

D. Wheeler
C. McFarling

Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers

C. Evers – Gloucestershire Association of Parish / Town Councils
R. Gething – Herefordshire Association Local Councils
Councillor G. Powell – 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
R. Goodwin – Country Land and Business Association
M. Price – National Farmers Union

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

L. Taylor – The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
C. Barron – Wye Valley Society
R. Hesketh – River Wye Preservation Trust
A. Lee – Recreation Sector
K. Ballard – 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, High Street, Coleford, GL16 8HG on Monday, 4th November, 2019 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor A. Webb (Chair)

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council

County Councillors: D. Dovey and M. Lane

Gloucestershire County Council

Councillor T. Hale

Herefordshire Council

Councillors: B. Durkin, J. Hardwick, P. Symonds and Y. Watson

Forest of Dean District Council

Councillors: D. Wheeler and M. Topping (substituting for C. McFarling)

Town / Parish Community Councils with voting powers

GAPTC - Mr. C. Evers

HALC - Mr. R. Gething

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire - Dr. G. Peterken

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire - Mr. B. Nash

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire Mr. A. Thomas

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society - Mr. C. Barron

National Farmers Union Wales - Mr. D. Price

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

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APOLOGIES:

Councillor C. McFarling and Mr. M. Price (NFU).

1. Election of Chair

We elected County Councillor A. Webb as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

We appointed Councillor D. Wheeler as Vice-Chair.

3. Introductions and New Members

The Chair welcomed Herefordshire Councillors B. Durkin, J. Hardwick, P. Symonds and Y. Watson to the meeting.

4. Declarations of Interest

None.

5. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee dated 1st July 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

In doing so, the AONB Manager informed the Joint Advisory Committee that a representative from the Environment Agency had been invited to attend today's meeting to discuss water extraction from the River Wye. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the representative had to withdraw from attending today's meeting but would be in attendance at the Joint Advisory Committee meeting in March 2020.

6. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

7. AONB Management Plan public consultation & revised timetable

We received a report regarding the public consultation period for the AONB Management Plan and the revised review programme.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The public consultation draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 is available on the Wye Valley AONB website.
- The 10 week public consultation period runs from 23rd October 2019 until 6th January 2020.

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- As part of the consultation process two public meetings will be held in early December 2019.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- Modifications are being made to the current Management Plan. However, from 2025 onwards, it is anticipated that there will be a need to undertake a thorough review.
- The finalised version of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 will be presented to the July 2020 Joint Advisory Committee meeting.

We resolved:

- (i) to encourage engagement by all partners and interested parties in the public consultation process that extends until 6th January 2020.
- (ii) to note the revised programme for completion of the AONB Management Plan.

8. Local Authority financial contributions & Memorandum of Understanding

We received a report requesting contributions from the four constituent local authorities to the budget for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership as outlined in the AONB Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities for 2018 - 2021.

In doing so the following information was noted:

- The AONB Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is intended to give medium term security and commitment to the AONB Partnership.
- The local authorities' financial contributions to the Wye Valley AONB Partnership are outlined in the MoU, which form the foundation of the budget managed by the AONB Unit.
- DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are not signatories to the MoU. However, their AONB grant funding offer letters are appended to the MoU.
- The current DEFRA grant offer extended from 2016/17 until 2019/20. A new DEFRA grant offer is anticipated following the publication of the 'Glover' Landscapes Review.
- The NRW grant currently runs from 2018/19 until 2020/21.
- The current MoU ends in March 2021 and a subsequent three year edition would run until March 2024.
- For every £1.00 of local authority contribution the AONB Unit has levered in over £8.00 on average in recent years.

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In response to a question raised regarding local authority contributions being index linked, it was noted that this matter would be discussed during the next period of the Memorandum of Understanding.

We resolved:

- (i) to request from the constituent local authorities the agreed financial contributions for the Wye Valley AONB for 2020/21.
- (ii) to encourage the constituent local authorities to commence a review of the AONB Memorandum of Understanding for 2021 – 2024.

9. Review of Designated Landscapes in England

We received a report regarding the publication of the Landscapes Review of AONBs & National Parks in England.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England was launched by Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP last year with a small advisory panel chaired by Julian Glover.
- The 'Landscapes Review' final report was published on 21st September 2019 with 27 'Proposals' for Government.
- The Review identifies that AONBs should be strengthened, with increased funding, governance reform, new shared purposes with National Parks, and a greater voice on development.
- The report references future designation of the Forest of Dean and also stakeholder proposals for the Herefordshire Marches.
- The publication coincided with the 'National moment' by AONBs, including the poem 'Fugitives' by Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, as part of the 70th Anniversary celebrations of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- The Wye Valley River Festival is used as a case study in the Report.
- It is believed that the Review has been favourably received by DEFRA and a formal Government response will be provided in due course next year.
- The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) has made an initial brief formal response.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

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- Encouraging access and enjoyment is not currently a statutory duty of AONBs, unlike National Parks. The Wye Valley AONB Unit is involved in tourism and recreation issues depending on priorities, capacity and resources. However, reaching out to more diverse communities and hard to reach groups can be expensive and time consuming.
- Publicity is key. The national press and television programmes such as Countryfile have made reference to the Wye Valley in a positive manner. More locally, the Wye Valley River Festival has been very successful in promoting the region.
- In response to a question raised regarding bicycle friendly public transport provision in the Wye Valley area, it was noted that 15 to 20 years ago the Wye Valley AONB Partnership subsidised a Sunday bus service which had some cycle carriage capacity. However, this was stopped when the service was taken over as a commercial service by a main bus provider.
- There is a need to pursue co-ordinated public transport further with strategic linkages being required across counties. Monmouthshire County Council's Strategic Transport Group is looking to pursue cross border working. The Chair of Monmouthshire County Council's Strategic Transport Group (also a member of the Joint Advisory Committee) extended an invitation for a member of the Joint Advisory Committee to join the Strategic Transport Group.
- In response to a question raised regarding responding to climate change, the AONB Manager informed the Joint Advisory Committee that when responding to planning applications as part of the consultation process he recommends that photo voltaic panels be included on properties where appropriate.
- It was noted that the Review is critical of the general lack of collaboration between the National Park and AONBs, although there are some notable exceptions.
- It was suggested that local authorities tend not to have their own aspirations for AONBs although they have a duty of regard to the AONB and provide support for their AONB Units.
- The Review argues that national landscapes have not always had the support within Whitehall. It was suggested that MPs should be lobbied to ensure appropriate support is provided.
- The Review references future designation of the Forest of Dean and also stakeholder proposals for the Herefordshire Marches.
- The Review expressed support for the strengthening of the Duty of Regard. DEFRA is working on how to replace this.

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- It was noted that the Welsh Government Civil Servant leading on AONBs is familiar with the challenges regarding cross border working as he formerly worked on the Arriva Rail franchise. He is establishing a Welsh Government cross departmental Working Group to ensure that the workings of AONBs and National Parks are understood, including the cross border issues being faced.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report;
- (ii) that an item regarding transport collaboration be added to the agenda for the next meeting and that appropriate officers be invited to attend.

10. AONB Partnership Study Tour feedback

We received a report regarding feedback on the success of the AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- A total of 28 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour on 20th September 2019.
- There was broad representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused predominantly on the Monmouthshire part of the AONB.
- The tour visited a range of sites primarily associated with the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project.
- The Tour also included a 'heart in the landscape' photo-opportunity in preparation for the 'national moment' on 21st September celebrating the 70th anniversary of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour has been extremely positive.

We noted the report.

11. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

We received a report regarding the status of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in 2019/20 and the establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is a delegated grant from Welsh Government administered by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and confirmed for 2019/20 at £55,000 per annum.

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- The agreement with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has been signed for the establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund.
- The current allocation of SDF grants has £8,875 remaining to be allocated in 2019/20.
- There remains a vacancy on the SDF Assessment Panel for a co-opted public sector representative. The AONB Manager asked for nominations to be forwarded to the AONB Unit.

We noted the report.

12. NAAONB update

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

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference, held in Colchester in July 2019, was attended by the AONB Manager, AONB Development Officer and AONB Community Links Officer.
- The Colchester Declaration – a 'declaration for nature' was agreed at the Landscapes for Life Conference.
- The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairperson's Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) is on 28th November 2019 and will focus on challenges of The Colchester Declaration and the Landscapes Review. The AONB Manager will attend.
- The AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer are participating in the professional training 'Taking the Lead' programme as part of the NAAONB Future Landscapes Programme supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Resilient Heritage grant.
- Landscapes for Life Week (formerly Outstanding Week) was 21st – 29th September 2019 with the National Moment of 'hearts in the landscape' and publication of 'Fugitives' by the poet laureate, Simon Armitage.
- The Glover Landscape Review Final Report was published to coincide with Landscapes for Life Week.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised about Nature Recovery networks it was noted that an AONB Unit team member sits on a Local Nature Partnership Working Group in Gloucestershire and there is representation on the equivalent group in Monmouthshire.

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- Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre are leading on this matter within Herefordshire.
- The Wye Valley AONB Unit supports Forestry England, its partners and landowners regarding the management and connectivity of forests within the region. However, it was acknowledged that Forestry England and its partners lead on this matter.

We noted the report.

13. Wye Valley AONB 50th Anniversary in 2021

We received a report regarding the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the designation of the Wye Valley AONB in 1971.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Wye Valley AONB.
- An outline programme of events for 2021 is being developed.
- The Offa's Dyke Path National Trail was also created in 1971.

Having received the report it was requested that consideration be given to creating a walled charter to represent the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Wye Valley AONB.

We noted the report.

14. AONB / Partner progress

We received a report of the activity of the AONB Unit and various partners relating to:

- AONB Farming Awards.
- Gilpin2020 & Launch by HRH Prince of Wales.
- Lower Wye Catchments Green Infrastructure & Natural Flood Management Project.
- Wye Valley River Festival 2020.
- Water Environment Grant Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) & Catchment Advisors.
- Priorities funding opportunity Welsh Government.
- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.

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- Ross Riverside.

It was noted that the Prince of Wales is visiting Ross-on-Wye on 5th November 2019 and will officially launch Gilpin2020, to celebrate the town's role as the birthplace of British tourism. His Royal Highness will tour a local producers' market and meet groups representing the strong philanthropic heritage of Ross, including the Wye Valley AONB stand and a range of local community organisations and their local business supporters, around the Old Market, Ross.

We noted the report.

15. Dates of meetings for 2020

Future meetings of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee will be held at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on the following dates:

Monday 2nd March 2020
Monday 6th July 2020
Monday 2nd November 2020

The meeting ended at 3.27pm.

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

AONB UNIT WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

Purpose

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

Recommendations

That the JAC endorses the AONB Unit Work Programme for 2020/2021

Key Issues

- The attached table sets out the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit in the form of the Work Programme 2020/2021.
- During the year it is anticipated that the AONB Unit will consolidate at just under 8 FTE staff which builds on the reduced capacity in the previous/current year.
- Priorities include the publishing of the revised AONB Management Plan 2020-2025, delivering the fourth Wye Valley River Festival; the Gilpin2020 celebrations; the Restoring Our Amazing River project (on the England side of the AONB); ongoing Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management projects (predominantly in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB); and the Welsh Government 'Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places' funding, while continuing a range of existing activities and projects and retaining enough flexibility to pursue new funding opportunities and develop new initiatives.
- The capacity of the AONB Unit is stretched but the budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by the AONB Steering Group and submitted to DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- The AONB Unit budget is £270,750 and additional funding programmes, grants and match funding is anticipated to exceed £1million levered into the AONB during the year.
- This is the final year of a 3 year funding agreement with NRW and will be the start of a new core funding settlement with DEFRA, the details of which are yet to be confirmed.
- Welsh Government are working on the new one year Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) capital funding programme and are proposing to increase the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for the year, the details of which are dependent on confirmation of the Welsh Government budget settlement.

Reasons

The main tasks in the year ahead are:

- finalising the adoption and publication of the statutory AONB Management Plan 2020-25
- delivering the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 and Gilpin2020 events to raise awareness and appreciation of the area
- working with farmers and landowners on conservation and enhancement of the landscape; with the 2 Catchment Advisors working through the Wye & Usk Foundation and the

Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) Water Environment Grant (WEG) funded project in the English part of the AONB, continuing the AONB Farming Awards, developing initiatives in the Woolhope Dome area and furthering the Green Infrastructure and Natural Flood Management work through a Project Officer in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB

- continuing working with diverse groups through the Youth Rangers and mindSCAPE programmes, both part funded through the Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership with ArtSpace Cinderford leading on mindSCAPE with Arts Council England funding
- delivering ongoing partnership initiatives, such as the recreation promotion work with the Wye Valley Walk Partnership and the cultural heritage legacy opportunities related to the Overlooking the Wye scheme
- developing and submitting new projects, partnership initiatives and funding bids for the future delivery of the new AONB Management Plan including landscape scale partnership projects and supporting the Offa's Dyke Collaboratory
- Commencing the Wye Valley AONB 50th anniversary celebrations for 2021.

Implications

The AONB Budget for 2020-21 has been approved at £270,750. It is anticipated that the various additional funding programmes, grants and match funding levered into the AONB will lead to investment and expenditure in excess of £1million through the year.

This will be the start of a new DEFRA funding allocation and the last year of a three year grant programme with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Welsh Government have advised of a new one year Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) capital funding programme and an increase of the delegated AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) up to about £100,000. These are all awaiting confirmation of the national budget and the respective settlements for DEFRA and Welsh Government.

The Work Programme 2020/21 is facilitated by grant funding from numerous sources which enables the retention of 3 short term posts, the two Catchment Advisors and the Lower Wye Project Officer, additional to the core AONB Unit team of 5 staff. Two members of the core team also revert to full-time hours to consolidate capacity for the duration of the Wye Valley River Festival. However, over the year the AONB budgets and grant match-funding commitments will be supplemented by drawing on AONB reserves. This may be relieved or exacerbated depending on the new DEFRA settlement.

The long term security of funding for the AONB Unit and future AONB Work Programmes will depend on the way both DEFRA and Welsh Government respond to the recommendations in the respective Reviews of Designated Landscapes in Wales and England about appropriate levels of funding and staffing for AONBs. Currently Welsh Government are offering short term Capital funding which, while welcome, actually aggravates capacity issues rather than resolves them.

Overall the AONB Unit business plan, based on the Work Programme, focuses on maximising the benefits for the local communities, the local economy and the outstanding landscape, while optimising the resources available. Best use is made of opportunities for collaboration and maintaining a level of flexibility and capacity to lever in funding and resources wherever possible.

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise adoption of Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Monitor use of Management Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries and by stakeholders 	1,000	<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> <i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</i>	AONBM	Mar 2021
AONB Strategy & Development Advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew contract for year to support AONB Manager with planning advice. 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 on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members 	6,000	<i>WV-D1 Ensure a consistent and coherent framework of planning policies relating to the AONB is fully reflected in the statutory land use planning documents and their effectiveness monitored</i> <i>WV-D2 Encourage and support high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and decarbonisation, and that they complement, conserve and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and benefit or enhance the natural environment</i> <i>WV-D3 Resist inappropriate development which will create a persistent and dominant feature out of keeping with the landscape of the AONB and/or if it damages Special Qualities in the AONB, including through high levels of noise and/or light pollution or any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site or other sites designated as environmentally important</i>	AONBM	March 2021
AONB Farming Awards Promote & publicise 13th Awards for farmers, landowners and land managers that make an outstanding contribution to conserving &/or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Awards and handle entries Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing Judging Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show 4th July 2020 Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	1,600	<i>WV-L5 Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB</i> <i>WV-F1 Encourage farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB</i> <i>WV-F5 Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB</i> <i>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> <i>WV-E2 Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area</i>	DO	May/June/July 2020
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of SDF to potential applicants Assist potential applicants with application process and project development Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel 	[c£100,000 Welsh Gov + c£100k match]	<i>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> <i>WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental</i>	AONBM / CLO	March 2021

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating SDF funds. Training for SDF Assessment Panel members 		<i>change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</i> WV-C1 <i>Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3</i>		
Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) to potential applicants Assist potential applicants with application process and project development Collate HCF AONB Fund project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel and liaise with HCF Service SDF Assessment Panel recommending allocations to HCF. Training for SDF Assessment Panel members 	[£10k HCF AONB Fund + c£10k match]	WV-L1 <i>Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</i> WV-B3 <i>Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</i> WV-C1 <i>Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3</i>	AONBM / CLO	March 2021
Website, Public Relations and social media Regular press & social media releases and magazine articles / advertorial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going updating and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social media sites e.g. Facebook, Instagram and twitter. Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk websites. Investigate re-establishing 'Picturesque' as a regular on-line AONB newsletter, to provide information and interpretation to increase awareness and appreciation of the AONB 	4,000	WV-C2 <i>Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</i> WV-A1 <i>Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</i>	IO / ALL	Mar 2021
AONB Partnership events For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils and stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run AONB Partnership Seminar/forum for 50th Anniversary of designation of Wye Valley AONB Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues in late September 2020 Promote & disseminate JAC contacts & 	1,600	WV-P1 <i>Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i> WV-P6 <i>Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB</i> WV-P7 <i>Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area</i>	AONBM / FAO	Feb 2021

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise over national roadside verge & B-Line initiatives with local authorities, Highways Agency & other stakeholders Continue collaboration with Ross Town Council over management of Ross Riverside. 		<p>WV-W4 Support the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss</p> <p>WV-W3 Support the development of employment and skills and markets for local timber and woodland produce</p>		
AONB Budget Sub-total	£24,000			
Tasks below covered in AONB Unit costs	£246,749			
<p>Wye Valley River Festival 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Festival with 'Time' theme including outreach pre-Festival & follow-on throughout year. Host 'Art in the Landscape' conference for National Association for AONBs Pursue additional funding from other contributors & sponsors. Complete all claims and evaluations Evaluate future prospects & governance for Festival. 	[250,000]	<p>WV-A1 Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness</p> <p>WV-L5 Support measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</p>	CLO/ALL	<p>May 2020</p> <p>Mar 2021</p>
<p>MindSCAPE</p> <p>Initiative enabling people living with dementia to reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities, both in Care homes & established activity group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage project and submit reports & claims to Foresters' Forest LPS for HLF Supervise contractor, Artspace Cinderford, organising regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities for participants. Develop opportunities to expand project Share good practice with other AONBs & stakeholders 	[39,000]	<p>WV-W5 Increase understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities</p> <p>WV-C2 Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape</p> <p>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</p>	DO	<p>Mar 2021</p>
<p>Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR)</p> <p>Support 2 Catchment Advisors working in AONB & adjacent Garren & Gamber catchment in partnership with Wye & Usk Foundation through Water Environment Grant (WEG) funded project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage farmers & land managers with tailored advice and produce c100 Farm Plans Promote land management practices to reduce 	[100,000]	<p>WV-F1 Encourage farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>WV-F2 Influence policy on, and encourage the maximum uptake of, agri-environment and other appropriate schemes, including support for small-holders, where they progress the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, biodiversity, historic environment and Special Qualities of the AONB, particularly through Catchment Sensitive Farming and mixed farming of resilient, sustainable and low-GHG emission</p>	DO / AONBM + 2 CAs	<p>Mar 2021</p>

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> impacts in the Wye catchment. Improve understanding and acceptance amongst Farmers, land managers & stakeholders Host demonstrations of effective working practices 		<p>systems</p> <p>WV-F5 Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB</p> <p>WV-B6 Promote awareness, sources of advice and involvement in biodiversity conservation by landowners, land managers, businesses, local communities, schools and the public including of impacts from outside the AONB</p>		
<p>Undergrounding</p> <p>Continue working with Western Power to identify power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding, via Western Power South Wales Protected Landscape Undergrounding group and the West Midlands Undergrounding group.</p>	[100,000]	<p>WV-U2 Encourage further under-grounding of existing and proposed power and telephone lines, where these do not conflict with any SAC, and resist new overhead lines where skylines or important views are affected</p> <p>WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme</p>	DO	Mar 2019
<p>Landscape scale conservation</p> <p>Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB. Potential target area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host Woolhope Dome workshop and collaborate over outputs and outcomes Support landscape connectivity initiatives including Wentwood to Wyre and collaborative projects with orchards, veteran & riverine trees. National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others Work with partners in Monmouthshire on Long Forest and Usk to Wye initiatives Continue work with Herefordshire Meadows Network, Monmouthshire Meadows and Parish Grassland Project. Pursue roll-out of Natural Flood Management initiatives throughout the AONB 	[2,500]	<p>WV-L1 Promote and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features</p> <p>WV-L2 Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change</p> <p>WV-B3 Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity</p> <p>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</p> <p>WV-P4 Encourage Section 85 organisations, under the CRoW Act, to have co-ordinated policies to progress the purposes of the AONB designation and to make commitments in their annual business plans to specific delivery contributions that enable the AONB work programme</p>	DO, AONBM	Mar 2021
<p>Wye Valley Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership, including refreshing way-marking Monitor counters along Walk Manage evolution of Passport scheme Review Cicerone Route Guide Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge, 	[8,000]	<p>WV-S1 Encourage and promote the AONB as a sustainable tourism destination with forms of tourism activity and development that are based on the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB</p> <p>WV-S2 Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs</p>	IO, AONBM	Mar 2021

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redbrook Bridge and Tintern Wireworks Bridge. Progress Monmouth riverbank erosion solutions 		<p><i>WV-R1 Encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities. Associated development and new access to land should be subject to WV-D2 & -D3</i></p> <p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p>		
<p>Partnership Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Wye Catchment Management Partnership Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, South East Wales Tourism Forum, Visit Monmouthshire, Visit Herefordshire and Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire Wye Valley AONB Woodland Projects group Creative Canopy 		<p><i>WV-R2 Assist the resolving of conflicts, real and perceived, between recreation, conservation and local interests, including other economic activities, and between different recreation interest groups in relation to the purposes of the AONB designation</i></p> <p><i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</i></p> <p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p> <p><i>WV-P6 Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P7 Encourage partners to be champions and ambassadors for the AONB in their contact with other interests, and ensure those interests recognise and consider the Management Plan and AONB work programme when relating to the area</i></p>	AONBM / DO	Mar 2021
<p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars & events Work with Welsh Government and Designated Landscapes in Wales taking forward the National Landscapes Partnership Work with DEFRA and others in progressing Proposals in Glover Review of Designated Landscapes in England 		<p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p> <p><i>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</i></p>	ALL	Mar 2021
<p>Work placements Support the needs of student placements/group projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities 		<p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p> <p><i>WV-P9 Share knowledge and skills in protected area management locally, regionally, nationally and globally as appropriate</i></p>	DO / CLO	Mar 2021
<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data, including habitats and species, 		<p><i>WV-L4 Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change</i></p> <p><i>WV-B5 Support the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and priority</i></p>		Mar 2021

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/s (see footer)	By when
<p>heritage, tourism and recreation etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan Undertake Fixed point photography across the AONB 		<p><i>species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres</i></p> <p><i>WV-H2 Promote establishment of baseline data to monitor change and improve the local databases of historic landscape assessments, conservation areas, locally important buildings, buildings at risk, ancient trees, heritage features and sites in the AONB in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities, local archaeological trusts and individuals</i></p> <p><i>WV-S3 Ensure adequate provision of co-ordinated tourism data and visitor engagement to inform strategic and practical decision making on conserving or enhancing the Special Qualities of the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P8 Develop and co-ordinate the acquisition and analysis of data across the AONB, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty, including developing a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and supporting mitigation and adaption actions</i></p>		
<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. Continue implementation of recommendations from AONB Good Governance Review 		<p><i>WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes</i></p>	AONBM / FAO	Jun/Jul Oct/Nov 2020 Feb/Mar 2021
<p>Funding and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue pursuing funding and develop opportunities for external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects Commence fundraising campaign for Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) Wye Valley AONB Fund 		<p><i>WV-P1 Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangements to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the AONB Partnership as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB</i></p> <p><i>WV-P2 Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB Unit to add value to delivery of the AONB purposes</i></p> <p><i>WV-P3 Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan</i></p>	AONBM / DO	Mar 2021
Projects below not identified in bids to Natural Resources Wales and Defra 2020/21				
<p>Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places Welsh Government capital investment scheme for Designated Landscapes focussed on decarbonisation, more resilient rural economies and more sustainable tourism.</p>	[300,000]	<p><i>WV-C1 Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3</i></p> <p><i>WV-S2 Promote the improvement of the visitor experience, particularly at the most heavily visited sites, and facilitate the opportunity for visitors to explore and discover</i></p>	AONBM / DO	Mar 2021

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) PARTNERSHIP
Business Plan for 2020/2021

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	DRAFT AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 Strategic Objectives	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
		<p><i>other appropriate but less used locations throughout the AONB, thus spreading demand and balancing pressures across sites where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs</i></p> <p><i>WV-S4 Encourage the mitigation and/or reduction of the adverse impacts of existing tourism activity and attractions, particularly where they are concentrated around certain locations or sites, and/or those that fall outside the aims of conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Special Qualities and features of the AONB and decarbonisation. Highest priority will be given to addressing the issues in the Symonds Yat and Tintern areas</i></p> <p><i>WV-R4 Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs</i></p>		
<p>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological research and investigation into the landscape significance of the 8th century monument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Collaboratory conferences, meetings and events 		<p><i>WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations</i></p>	AONBM	Mar 2021
<p>Overlooking the Wye legacy Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilpin2020 Support & promote the collaborative programme of events to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Gilpin and the Wye Tour, including walks; talks; exhibitions; and Big Draw event in October 2020. Reprint of Walks leaflets Ongoing repair & maintenance of Overlooking the Wye infrastructure 	<p>[6,500]</p> <p>[8,000]</p> <p>[5,000]</p>	<p><i>WV-H1 Initiate and encourage schemes, policy development, advice and sympathetic management through partnerships and positive action to conserve, enhance and promote the historic environment, in conjunction with landowners, national agencies and other relevant organisations</i></p> <p><i>WV-H3 Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment</i></p> <p><i>WV-P5 Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas</i></p>	AONBM/ DO & IO	Dec 2020
<p>AONB Unit costs</p>	<p>£246,749</p>			
<p>AONB Budget Sub-total</p>	<p>£24,000</p>			
<p>TOTAL AONB Budget</p>	<p>£270,749</p>			
<p>non-AONB funding augmenting AONB output</p>	<p>[c£1,049,000]</p>			

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS’
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Purpose

To advise members of the progress following the respective Reviews of Designated Landscapes in Wales and England.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The Welsh AONB lead officers continue to meet with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, the National Association for AONBs and the Welsh National Parks to progress the ‘Valued and Resilient’ statement.
- Welsh Government officials are currently finalising proposals for capital funding schemes for the Designated Landscapes, including a Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places scheme and augmented funding for the Sustainable Development Fund.
- The ‘Landscapes Review’ of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England, chaired by Julian Glover, was published in September 2019 with 27 ‘Proposals’ for Government.
- The Conservative manifesto stated “We welcome the Glover Review” and it is anticipated that a formal response to it will be made by the Government later in the year.

Reasons

The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales ‘Marsden Review’ *National Landscapes: Realising their Potential* (published in October 2015) highlighted among other things the inequalities between AONBs and National Parks. These disparities were reiterated in *Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales* (published in March 2017) led by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM. The subsequent *Valued & Resilient: Welsh Government’s Priorities for AONBs & National Parks* (published in July 2018) identified that although parity broadly exists between National Parks and AONBs in terms of planning policy, there is an inequality of status, profile and resourcing. Welsh Government and AONB lead officers have been working towards addressing the levels of current resourcing.

The Review of Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) in England was launched in May 2018 by the then Environment Secretary Michael Gove MP. The ‘Landscapes Review’ was led by the writer and journalist Julian Glover and the final report was published on 21st September 2019 with 27 ‘Proposals’ for Government.

Implications

Welsh Government officials have been working on proposals for capital funding schemes for the Designated Landscapes, including a one-year Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) scheme. It is understood that the focus of the funding programme will be to contribute to key Welsh Government objectives around decarbonisation, more resilient rural economies and more sustainable tourism. Additional strands will target biodiversity and broadening access to walking, cycling and green spaces with multiple benefits for tourism, health and

wellbeing. Augmented funding for the Sustainable Development Fund is also proposed. This is all subject to Welsh Government budget approval.

The Welsh National Park and AONB lead officers are meeting with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, and the National Association for AONBs to progress anticipated delivery of the SLSP programme. The capital funding is welcomed. However, there are concerns about the capacity of some of the Designated Landscapes teams to deliver a one-year capital funding programme at such relative short notice.

The Glover Review in England has been broadly welcomed since its publication. The 27 ‘Proposals’ in the Review are generally recognised as being good for nature, good for people and good for our most precious landscapes. The Conservative manifesto stated “We welcome the Glover Review and will create new National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as making our most loved landscapes greener, happier, healthier and open to all.” After the General Election on 12th December, it is understood that DEFRA officials are working on the implementation of the Review, among other things.

Aspects of the Glover Review were discussed at the NAAONB Chairpersons’ Conference in November and also at the AONB Lead Officers’ meeting in February. Similar to the Welsh Government’s response to the Review in Wales, Proposals will need to be split into short-term ‘quick win’ actionable items, medium-term items that require policy amendments and longer-term items that require legislative change. It is anticipated that a formal response to the Glover Review it will be made by the Government later in the year.

Background

For more information on the Review of Designated Landscapes in England visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>

Welsh Government’s statement on Priorities for AONBs & National Parks ‘Valued & Resilient’ (published in July 2018) is available here: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/areas-outstanding-natural-beauty-national-parks-2018-report%20.pdf>

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND AND HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION WYE VALLEY AONB FUND

Purpose

To update members on the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

Recommendation

That the JAC

- A. welcomes Welsh Government's proposed enhancement to the Sustainable Development Fund
- B. welcomes the establishment of the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

Key Issues

- The SDF Assessment Panel has fully allocated the £55,000 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in Wales in 2019/20 (see attached table).
- The Welsh Government has informally advised that the SDF allocation for 2020/21 will be increased to be in the region of £100,000, subject to confirmation of budget.
- The Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has been fully established with £10,000 for immediate funding alongside an Endowment Fund, currently of £50,000.
- Herefordshire Community Foundation have set up the facility for people to donate £5 to the AONB Fund by texting 'WVAONB' to 70085.

Reasons

Welsh Government officers have advised that it is proposed to increase the SDF in 2020/21 up to £100,000 subject to approval of Welsh Government budgets. The SDF will continue to provide an exceptional opportunity for organisations, individuals and community groups to apply for grant aid for innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which benefit the Welsh part of the AONB.

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has now been established. There is a £10,000 Immediate Impact fund and a £50,000 Endowment Fund from which the income generated each year will be used to award grants once the Immediate Impact fund is exhausted. The Endowment Fund will be able to receive donations and legacies and it is hoped that the AONB Fund will grow over time.

Implications

The SDF supports living and working more sustainably in association with enhancing natural beauty, wildlife, culture, landscape, land use and community within the context of the sustainable development goals and principles in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The SDF Assessment Panel had anticipated some further applications were this year but these have not materialised. As previously approved, towards the end of the financial year any remaining SDF is allocated to Wye Valley River Festival. The list of approved grants totalling £55,000 is in the table below.

The Wye Valley AONB Fund with the Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) has a £10,000 Immediate Impact fund for grants for environmental, community and cultural projects. There is also a £50,000 Endowment Fund from which the income generated each year can also be used to award grants. The SDF Assessment Panel will recommend applications to the HCF for funding. The Endowment Fund is able to receive donations and legacies so it is intended that the AONB Fund will grow over time. HCF have set up, through Donr., to enable donations via text messages by texting 'WVAONB' to 70085 to donate £5. This costs £5 plus a standard rate message. Donors can opt to give any whole amount up to £20. This facility will be launched and promoted during the Wye Valley River Festival.

Background

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has been available in the Wye Valley AONB for 19 years in Wales. It is administered by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and is a delegated fund from Welsh Government. The Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) host and manage the Wye Valley AONB Fund as a legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme and on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

2019/20 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) grants approved

2019/20 Code	Applicant	Project Title	years		Total Cost	SDF Grant	%
			This	Total			
WV00 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	10% Admin	1	1		£5,500	
WV01 YR19W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Trainees	1	2	£2,192	£900	41%
WV02 YR19W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	GWT Machinery & Habitat Management Project	1	1	£35,360	£7,500	21%
WV03 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2020	1	2	£106,300	£25,000	24%
WV04 YR19W	Mike Anstey	Porthcasseg Farm	1	1	£2,000	£1,000	50%
WV05 YR19W	Arborealists	Monmouth Museum Exhibition	1	1	£14,286	£3,000	21%
WV06 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Japanese Knotweed Control Tintern	2	2	£2,325	£1,725	74%
WV07 YR19W	Wye Valley AONB Partnership	Wye Valley River Festival 2020	1	2	£106,300	£10,375	10%
		TOTALS (to date)			£162,463	£55,000	Av34%
		<i>Remaining from £55,000</i>				<i>£0</i>	

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Purpose

To advise of on-going progress with the AONB Management Plan review.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- A total of 24 organisations and individuals submitted comments on the Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-25, amounting to approximately 200 specific comments.
- The assimilation of the consultation responses into the final draft of the AONB Management Plan is underway.
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment for the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Plan is now underway which needs to be completed before the Plan can be formally adopted by the local authorities and government agencies.
- It is intended that the finalised version of the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 will be presented for adoption at the next JAC meeting on 6th July 2020.

Reasons

The public consultation period for the AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 was due to close on 6th January 2020 but a 2 week extension was granted on the request of some key stakeholders. Submissions on the Draft Plan were received from 24 organisations and individuals with approximately 200 specific comments made. These are being considered and work is progressing with finalising the Post Consultation Management Plan.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) are also being progressed. The purpose of the SEA Directive is to ensure that plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment are subjected to a strategic level (high and overarching) assessment during their preparation, to inform decision-makers and stakeholders of their likely effects. The SEA covers options and alternative courses of action and is intended to help avoid or mitigate any adverse effects. Similarly the requirement for a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is outlined in Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and relates to the effects of the Plan on the internationally important habitats (Natura 2000 sites) and protected species for which the area is classified.

A Future Generations Evaluation was also concluded for Monmouthshire County Council. It is intended that a finalised version of the AONB Management Plan will be prepared for adoption in time for the July JAC.

Implications

The final draft of the AONB Management Plan is underway with the assimilation of the consultation responses from the 24 submissions and the Future Generations Evaluation. Two public drop-in sessions were held as part of the consultation process, at Brockweir and Ross-on-Wye, with 15 members of the public attending.

The SEA and HRA are underway but it is not anticipated that they will significantly alter the Management Plan as the Plan review and drafting has taken full account of the strategic and environmental impacts throughout. A report on the implications of the SEA and any subsequent modifications will be presented to the next JAC meeting along with the finalised version of the AONB Management Plan.

Background

The CRoW Act 2000 (Sections 89 and 90) require local authorities to act jointly and publish an AONB Management Plan for their AONB, at not more than five year intervals, which formulates their policy for the management of their AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

ASH DIE BACK

Purpose

To inform members of the most recent assessment of the Ash Die Back disease and effects on the Wye Valley.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Ash trees are the UK's third most common tree and an important tree in woodlands and hedgerows in the Wye Valley.
- The future of Ash is threatened by ash dieback; a disease caused by a fungus which is fatal in about 85% of Ash trees.
- 2019 was the first year when Ash Die Back was observed significantly widespread throughout the Wye Valley.
- It is the most significant tree disease to hit the UK since Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s.
- Ash Die Back will have a substantial impact on the landscape and wildlife, exacerbated by the current climate and ecological emergencies.
- Landowners need to evaluate the social, economic and environmental risks of dead or dying Ash trees, particularly along roadside and publicly accessible places.
- The impact of the disease is likely to become more obvious in 2020, both through the prevalence of dead or diseased trees in the landscape and the visibility of the removal of high risk trees in well-frequented places.

Reasons

Ash is the third most common native broadleaved tree species in Great Britain after oak and birch. Ash trees provide habitat for over 1000 species. The Wye Valley and Forest of Dean is one of the important areas for Ash trees in Britain. Approximately 30% of the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) is Ash dominated woodland.

Last year was the first year when symptoms of Ash Die Back could be observed across many sites in the Wye Valley. Although the disease had been observed in previous years, its impacts had appeared to be low level compared to other parts of the UK and Europe. As the 2019 summer progressed, dieback in the crown of Ash trees was observed in most Wye Valley woodlands, including all Forestry England sites, with the extent of Die Back varying from slight to 50% or more with a corresponding increase in the levels of dead wood in the crowns.

Experience from elsewhere has highlighted particular dangers from falling branches and trees, due to fragile crowns and hidden rot in the base of infected Ash trees. Thus, Health and Safety is a primary concern for landowners when considering management of the disease. However, pre-emptive, wide-scale felling of ash trees in woodland should be avoided wherever possible and could be detrimental to the long-term recovery of Ash. This is because there is potential for tolerant trees to exist and for some trees to recover from disease and/or to produce seed which could form the next generation of Ash with more tolerance to the disease. Therefore, as a core principle, infected Ash trees should be left standing except where there is a material safety risk.

Implications

The rate of progression of the disease has signalled the need for a more pro-active response from landowners and land managers where there is a heightened risk to public safety. The following zoning approach is being used as a guide by many woodland owners and managers to identify the areas of Ash that pose the greatest potential threat:

Major roads (based on both speed and usage)	High Risk
Car parks, minor roads, permanently occupied sites such as housing, high-use public /recreational facilities and major public rights of way such as national or promoted trails.	Medium Risk
Public rights of way that have medium or low usage and permissive paths.	Low Risk
Areas with no defined footpaths or bridleways but public access.	Very Low Risk

Forestry England, Natural Resources Wales, the local highway authorities and other owners of publicly accessible trees and woodland, such as The Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trusts, are drawing up Ash Die Back plans. Experience from elsewhere has also identified a risk to those manually felling dead or diseased Ash trees. Consequently, for example, Forestry England intend to initiate a programme of Ash tree removal using machine-based harvesting equipment so as to minimise the risks to felling operators. Their programme of felling work is likely to start later this summer. Where appropriate, trees that have been felled will either be replaced or natural regeneration of Ash & other species may be encouraged.

In recognition of the rate at which the disease can proceed, tree safety inspection frequencies of Ash in the higher risk areas should be increased and ideally be timed to allow an assessment of the rate of progress of crown die-back. For Forestry England, where the risks to public safety posed by affected Ash trees is judged to be lower, management will be undertaken as part of ongoing woodland management. In those areas where the risk to public safety is greatest Ash trees whose crowns have declined by 25-50% or more will be incorporated into the removal programme. Where significant costs related to highway management and road closures are anticipated, all Ash trees will be removed in a single operation to minimise ongoing management costs. This approach is also being considered by Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire County Councils at specific sites, such as at Old Station Tintern.

While the road closures and felling work may cause some local disruption, the subsequent loss of significant numbers of road-side trees will have a substantial impact on the character of the landscape and be detrimental to ecological connectivity.

The local response to the situation reflects the national guidance (see below) which continues to be reviewed in the light of ongoing experience.

The majority of woodlands in the Wye Valley retain a diverse mix of tree species and age structures and these factors enhance the area's resilience. Natural regeneration should lead to some emergence of natural tolerance and/or resistance. However other factors, such as the current high levels of deer browsing preventing regeneration and the damage to older trees by grey squirrels, have the potential to leave the landscape predominantly without ash trees for about 100 years. There are a number of other diseases of other tree species which are likely to compound the impact on woodland composition and structure which could also be significant over time. This is likely to be exacerbated by the impact of climate change on tree health and species selection.

It should also be noted that replanting as mitigation for Ash Die Back cannot be counted as tree-planting for climate change mitigation. However 'the right tree in the right place' is still the overriding principle for any mitigating planting in order to conserve and enhance local ecology and landscape character.

Background

The woods of the lower Wye Valley are one of the 'Special Qualities' of the AONB, recognised in the AONB Management Plan, and form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in the UK. Nearly 2000 acres (916 hectares) of Wye Valley Woodland are of international importance identified as a Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the European Habitats Directive. The Wye Valley Woodlands SAC comprises fourteen sites within the almost continuously wooded environment of the lower Wye Valley, straddling 18 miles of the River Wye. These woodlands are a complex mosaic of native woodland types including Ash dominated woodland and Oak, Lime, Yew and Beech.

For further information on Ash Die Back see:

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ash-tree-research-strategy-2019>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-ash-trees-affected-by-ash-dieback-operations-note-46a>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-ash-in-woodlands-in-light-of-ash-dieback-operations-note-46>

<https://www.treecouncil.org.uk/What-We-Do/Ash-Dieback>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/46523/managing-ash-dieback-on-woodland-trust-sites.pdf>

<https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/forum/nature-recovery/ash-dieback-position-statement>

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2020

Purpose

To inform members of the provisional programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Funding for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 has been secured from Arts Council England, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), Visit Wales, Arts Council of Wales, and many other sources (see attached appendix).
- The programme of events for the Wye Valley River Festival is being finalised for the main festival fortnight between 2nd & 17th May 2020 based on the theme of 'Time'. Programme highlights are attached below.
- A range of school and community workshops are planned for the run up to the Festival to create props and build engagement.
- AONB Volunteers and the AONB Youth Rangers have been working in the woods making walking staves for the Festival.
- The Wye Valley AONB Unit recently won a South East Wales Tourism Innovation Award for the Wye Valley River Festival.

Reasons

The Wye Valley River Festival is a Wye Valley AONB Partnership project, led by the Wye Valley AONB unit, Desperate Men and Phillipa Haynes in a unique and creative collaboration between arts and environment professionals, who develop, produce and deliver the Festival with stakeholders and the communities in and around the Wye Valley AONB.

The Festival is supported and funded by the Wye Valley AONB Partnership, Arts Council England, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) from Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales, Visit Wales, Forestry England, Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Environment Agency, Cadw and in-kind support from The Shire Hall Monmouth, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome and numerous volunteers & local communities.

During 2019 an extensive Research and Development (R&D) process brought environmentalists, artists and communities together to explore the theme of the Time. Subsequently grants and funding have been secured for the 4th Wye Valley River Festival, between 2nd & 17th May 2020.

On Thursday 13th February, the Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, presented a South East Wales Tourism Award for Innovation to the Wye Valley AONB Unit for its work with the Wye Valley River Festival. This is the third award that the Wye Valley River Festival has received, after the national AONB Bowland Award in 2018 and the 2016 Festival being Highly Commended at the Visit Herefordshire Awards for

Excellence in the Best Festivals & Events (Community) category, which was won by the Hereford River Carnival, also part of the Wye Valley River Festival.

Implications

Wye Valley AONB Unit, together with the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, have been developing the programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020 together with a wide range of environmental professionals and artists. The evolving programme of events between 2nd & 17th May is outlined below.

There is a vibrant partnership of actors, singers, musicians, dancers and community groups that will sweep downstream creating magic, mayhem and mischief, under the artistic directorship of the Desperate Men, bringing to life the Festival theme of 'Time'. Because, 'now is the time to act' in the climate and biodiversity emergency.

An element of the Festival will be to get audience members to sign up to an 'AONB Pledge' to *Discover - Explore - Act - Share - Pledge* and to commit to taking the time to:-

- Get outside and enjoy your natural health service
- Become an active ecological citizen
- Take pride in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Help nature to recover and flourish across the whole landscape
- Get involved and make your voice heard

The Festival also hosts two significant conferences;

- 'Art in Landscape' on Wednesday 12th -13th May; with the NAAONB and fellow AONBs coming together for a day of knowledge transfer and networking to consider future national & local collaboration. The NAAONB have Arts Council England funding to explore the relationship between arts and landscape and the engagement of artists and producers, in order to ensure our most precious landscapes are more accessible and more widely understood and appreciated by the nation.
- 'Creative Landscapes' on Thursday 14th May; with land stewards and creatives from across England and Wales sharing ideas and experiences in co-creating transformational and inclusive arts experiences, with a particular focus on diversity, access, sustainability and climate change.

The AONB Unit retain a core focus and supervisory overview of the programme and the Festival Team. The Festival will be the dominant focus for the work of the AONB Unit over the next 3 months.

Background

The River Festival provides a unique opportunity to engage new audiences with the AONB, broadening understanding through art and reaching a more diverse public. Outdoor art has been called 'the most egalitarian form of art'. It's often free to access and invites people to have their own experience of both the art and its setting. The creative exploration of place, through music, painting, poetry, and dance opens up the experience of landscape beyond the world of science and policy and helps us better understand our place in the world. With better understanding comes better stewardship; the basis of a more sustainable future.

Wye Valley River Festival 2020 - Outline Programme

Pre-Festival

April/ May: Outreach Workshops in schools and communities, a series of workshops for schools, communities and volunteers in the run up to the Festival. These include 5 artistic workshops, 4 community lantern workshops, 5 school visits with Museum of Flax and 5 with the Ensemble of actors.

There are opportunities to volunteer <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/volunteering/> as part of the Festival, including hosting the event at Tintern Abbey and other locations. There is a meeting in the Shire Hall Monmouth on the 5th March at 7pm.

Festival Fortnight

Saturday 2nd May & Sunday 3rd May: Symonds Yat Rock. A participatory, immersive and interactive site - spend time in the woods, and follow a wolf pack! Explore the Festival themes of Time in the trees, re-imagining the future of the woodlands and an exploration of the natural processes.

Festival Walks Clocking up the miles – slowly!

A series of walks with local guides from Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome, accompanied by local historian Heather Hurley and visiting artists Harriet & Rob Fraser <http://www.somewhere-nowhere.com> with the opportunity at the end of each day to meet artists and participants.

Monday 4th May: Hereford to Little Dewchurch

Tuesday 5th May: Little Dewchurch to Ross-on-Wye

Wednesday 6th May: Ross-on-Wye to Lydbrook

Thursday 7th May: Lydbrook to Monmouth

Monday 4th – Thursday 7th May: Paddling through time on the Wye

As the walks commence in Hereford with a flotilla of artists in vintage boats make the journey by river in a modern day Wye Tour. They include artist Helen Shackleton and ecological construction expert Lloyd Turner <https://www.wildmurals.co.uk/about>. Rowing the traditional Irish Curragh will be Simon and Anne Copper, flax experts. <http://www.flaxland.co.uk>. They will journey down the Wye from Hereford to Brockweir.

Tuesday 5th - 14th May: The Ensemble show - Cuckoo Time touring outdoor venues; pubs, schools, village greens, etc. throughout the festival – in places (TBC) such as Trellech, Devauden, Ross, Fownhope and Goodrich.

Thursday 7th May: 2.30pm Tintern Abbey – Fantastic Planet: VIP launch with Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

Friday 8th May – Sunday 17th May: Tintern Abbey – Fantastic Planet:

<https://www.parerstudio.com/fantastic-planet/> Ticketed event.

Saturday 9th May: Monmouth Shire Hall & streets – ‘No Time to Waste’ Free Events, including; *Congregation* - an interactive sound installation; Ensemble Show – Cuckoo Time out and about; Shire Hall indoor Time installation; street interventions and animations; ‘avant bard’ roving poet; magical happenings in Nelson Gardens; street band. **‘Timely Talks’ at the Shire Hall:** Invited speakers from quantum physics, geology, astronomy, archaeology, and cultural organisations will gather for lectures and exchanges about the nature of Time, our place in it and how much of it we waste or can use. Soapbox: Poetry for the Planet & good news stories around the environment to inspire community action around the pledge.

Festival torchlight procession (evening) along Monnow Street ending with outdoor performances with light and video projections on the Shire Hall

Sunday 10th May: Installation open in Shire Hall day time

Sunday 10th May: Lydbrook - Tump fete Ensemble show and guests

Wednesday 13th May: (Daytime) **Poetry and Pilgrimage in Tintern.** a morning Pilgrimage Walk following the old monks path from Tintern Abbey to their grange farm at Penterry, followed by an afternoon Poetry Workshop in Tintern.

Wednesday 12th -13th May: Art in Landscape Conference - Monmouth/ Wye Valley locations, Artists and National AONB arts collaborators, plus conservation sector & land managers come together for a day of knowledge transfer and networking to consider future national & local collaboration

Thursday 14th May: Creative Landscapes Seminar - Shire Hall, Monmouth, Articulture & the Wye Valley River Festival team host a day-long seminar for land stewards and creatives to explore co-creating transformational and inclusive arts experiences. The event is intended to nurture common ground, inspiration, new friendships and expanded knowledge around key challenges including diversity, access, sustainability and climate change. The programme includes interventions from artists [Rhys Trimble](#), [Rose Popay](#), [Desperate Men](#), Deasy Bamford, and [Tin Shed Theatre](#). There will also be active workshops and open space discussions with guests [Migrations](#), [Diverse City](#), [Wye Valley AONB](#), [Natural Resources Wales](#), [Marc Rees](#), [Citrus Arts](#) and [Cadw](#), as well as a walk through the beautiful Wye Valley, shared food, and culminating with a visit to the international renowned '[Fantastic Planet](#)' - giant illuminated humanoids by Amanda Parer - at dusk in Tintern Abbey.

Thursday 14th May: 'Pilgrimage walks in a day' Five pilgrimage walks converge on Tintern Abbey for community gathering and journey to experience the Humanoids in the Abbey.

Friday 15th May: Tintern Abbey Community Picnic & torchlight parade among the Fantastic Planet Humanoids with theatrical surprises and a gathering of lanterns.

Saturday 16th May: Llandogo - Festival Finale, the much loved riverside eclectic mix of festival artists, workshops, performances, music, dance, children's activities, Cloudscapes, locally sourced food and drink outlets, craft making and the denouement of the Ensemble narrative - ending with fire torch procession and fire sculpture.

Sunday 17th May: Tintern Abbey – the last chance to visit the Fantastic Planet & enjoy Cloudscapes.

Sunday 17th May: Monmouth Great Wye Swim

The Wye Valley River Festival has secured funding from the following sources:-

Arts Council England	£70,000
SDF	£50,000
Visit Wales	£50,000
AONB & WVRF	£26,135
<i>Ticket Sales*</i>	<i>£26,020</i>
Arts Council of Wales	£25,000
Welsh Government	£22,500
Cadw	£9,600
Environment Agency	£5,000
Forestry Commission	£5,000
Foresters' Forest	£5,000
<i>Sponsorship/Town Councils*</i>	<i>£3,000</i>
<i>Advertising*</i>	<i>£2,520</i>
<i>Food Concession*</i>	<i>£2,500</i>
TOTAL	£302,475
<i>* unsecured</i>	<i>£34,040</i>

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TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

NAAONB UPDATE

Purpose

To advise members of activity through the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The AONB Manager attended the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and AGM on 28th November 2019 which focused on taking the Glover Review forward.
- The 'Taking the Lead' programme of professional training for staff has concluded which both the AONB Development Officer and AONB Community Links Officer participated in.
- The AONB Manager attended the AONB Lead Officers' meeting in Birmingham on 10th & 11th February.
- A consortium of 11 AONBs are participating in DEFRA 'Tests & Trials' for the new post Brexit agri-environment Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).
- NAAONB staff facilitated a joint training day for the Wye Valley & Shropshire Hills AONB teams.
- The annual National AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference will take place in Exeter on 7th - 9th July.

NAAONB Chairman's Conference

The Landscapes for Life Chairmen's Conference took place on Thursday 28th November 2019 in London, during the pre-election purdah. Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, attended on behalf of the JAC Chairman and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership. The focus was on the Glover Review in the context of the forthcoming General Election. The keynote speaker was Maxwell Ayamba, Environmental Journalist and founder of the Sheffield Environment Movement. He challenged attendees with the observation that the majority of Black & Ethnic Minority (BME) people have not heard about AONBs, what they stand for and what they do, while those managing them have done little to promote these beautiful landscapes to BME communities. Howard Davies, NAAONB CEO stated that AONB Partnerships, "as stewards of the nation's outstanding landscapes, should do all we can to ensure we are actively removing barriers that both intentionally and unintentionally stop people benefiting from the full value that beautiful landscapes offer". Philip Hygate NAAONB Chairman explained that National Parks and AONBs have failed to live up to the post-war vision of what these special places were created for, adding "we want to ensure the Glover Review will serve as the beginning to start addressing this issue of social injustice of national landscapes as places accessible only for the privileged". There was good attendance from both AONBs and

National Parks and robust discussions ensued about the future of Designated Landscapes in England and Wales.

Taking the Lead

Forty staff from AONBs across the country, including the AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer, have benefited from the Taking the Lead programme. The objective was to strengthen the professional expertise within AONB teams and the AONB Network. Participants undertook self and group assessments, attended a series of workshops on collaborative working and established Topic Working Groups to address issues and provide tools to enhance the resilience of AONBs individually and collectively.

The AONB Manager sat on the NAAONB steering group for the Taking the Lead - Future Landscapes programme, which also included a Review of the Governance and Sustainability of the NAAONB. The Final report for the whole programme will be published shortly.

Farming for the Nation tests and trials

The NAAONB is coordinating 11 AONBs in running a collaborative test and trial for the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. DEFRA is running 44 tests and trials across the country in preparation for the post-CAP agri-environment scheme for supporting farmers and landowners once the UK leaves the EU. For further information see

<https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/2915/5586/2985/Farming-for-the-Nation-AONBs-as-test-beds-for-a-new-Environmental-Land-Management-Scheme.pdf>

Lead Officers' Meeting

The Wye Valley AONB Manager was one of 28 AONB Lead Officers who met in Birmingham on 10th & 11th February with the NAAONB team. Key topics discussed were; the Glover Review and what is happening and what next; the importance of delivering as a collaborative AONB network; and prioritising action and areas of work for the coming year. These were broken down into Support Collaborative Activity; Climate Change; Connecting people to Nature; Nature Recovery; and Planning Policy.

Landscapes for Life Conference 7th - 9th July in Exeter

Details for the 2020 Landscape for Life Conference are yet to be released. However, Devon has 4 AONBs and 2 National Parks is also hosting 10 of the DEFRA Test & Trials.

Joint training

On 29th January, the five core staff from the Wye Valley AONB Unit, along with the Wye Valley River Festival Director and Desperate Men, had a joint training day with the Shropshire Hills AONB team facilitated by NAAONB staff. All involved had undertaken Lumina Spark personal profiles. The training focused on how to make best use of the person information both within team-working and individually.

Background

The NAAONB is the charity that provides a collective voice for the UK's AONBs. Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs. It takes a collaborative approach to working with its membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see: www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2nd March 2020

AONB UNIT & PARTNER REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the Wye Valley AONB Unit and various partners.

FOR INFORMATION

Below are brief update reports on the following AONB Unit and partners' initiatives: -

- a) Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project
- b) Gilpin2020
- c) Water Environment Grant ROAR & Catchment Advisors
- d) Offa's Dyke Collaboratory

a) Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) Project

The NFM&GI Project with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) funding has finished. However, some modest resources have been secured from Welsh Government to continue with some elements of the project. The Project Officer, Chris Rees, left in January and a new Project Officer is being recruited on a 12 month contract.

The Natural Flood Management (NFM) seminar, which was postponed from November, was held at the Bridges Centre, Monmouth, on 31st January. The event was well attended and gave a chance for local agencies and interested individuals to hear about different NFM approaches, experiences and best practice through a series of presentations from national experts, including from Chris Uttley (Environment Agency), Bethany Lewis (Herefordshire Council), David Gasca-Tucker (Atkins Consultancy) and Huw Thomas (Forest Research).

A number of leaky dams have been installed on private land. These will be useful to demonstrate locally how NFM can help to slow the flow of water through a catchment. Interest in the application of such measures is likely to increase following the recent flooding.

b) Gilpin2020

The Wye Valley AONB Unit has been helping co-ordinate local organisations to celebrate the 250th anniversary of William Gilpin taking the Wye Tour in 1770. Although 'officially' launched by HRH Prince of Wales in November, the formal launch of Gilpin2020 is taking place in St Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye on Thursday 12th March, 7.30 pm. This will include the launch by Pallas Athene (Publishers) of the reprinting of Gilpin's 1770 book and a talk by Richard Humphreys, former curator of Tate Britain. The event is kindly sponsored by Harrison Clark Rickerbys Solicitors, The Kings Head Hotel, Ross, and The Old Court Hotel, Whitchurch.

A full programme of events and activities are planned under the Gilpin2020 celebrations, including artists and painters reinterpreting Gilpin's Picturesque views, exhibitions in Ross-on-Wye, Goodrich Castle and Chepstow, talks & guided walks following in the footsteps of Picturesque Wye tourists, such as William Wordsworth (it also being the 250th anniversary of his birth), pubs & hotels offering 18th Century meals, a video project on the Wye Tour by the Wye Valley Learning Network of Primary Schools around Ross, and various concerts and poetry readings connected to the period. Celebrations conclude with The Big Wye Draw Challenge on 8th October.

A leaflet of events will soon be printed, meanwhile for more details please see <https://gilpin2020.org/>

c) Water Environment Grant ROAR & Catchment Advisors

The Catchment Advisors operating through the Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) Project, Ben Nott and Rebecca Meredith, have continued to visit farms in the English part of the Wye Valley AONB and the adjacent Garren & Gamber catchment. To date Ben & Bex have visited about 20 farms in the area and are preparing Farm Plans for each. A successful demonstration event on Under-sowing Maize was also held in the Garren and Gamber catchment.

The ROAR project is led by the Wye & Usk Foundation, working with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, the Wye Valley AONB Unit and Herefordshire Rural Hub, with funding from the Water Environment Grant (WEG) under the Rural Development Programme for England. The total project is for £672,000 until March 2021 for the English part of the Wye Catchment.

d) Offa's Dyke Collaboratory (ODC)

The 2nd Research and Conservation Forum meeting was held in Cardiff University on 22nd January 2020 (1st meeting was in Chester University, Shrewsbury in April 2017). A range of speakers provided academic, archaeological and local community perspectives on research and conservation initiatives on the Early Medieval linear earthworks of Offa's Dyke & Wat's Dyke down the eastern Marches of Wales and the frontier between England and Wales that has endured since then to the present day.

On Saturday 4th April 2020 in Trefonen, Shropshire there will be a public event 'Communities & Offa's Dyke' where local community groups along Offa's Dyke can meet and share discoveries and experience, with walks and talks by researchers and community groups exploring Offa's Dyke and its environs from Prestatyn to Chepstow.

The AONB Manager continues to be a Convenor of ODC along with Professor Keith Ray (Cardiff University), Professor Howard Williams (Chester University), Christopher Catling (Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales), Dr Paul Belford (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust) & David McGlade (Offa's Dyke Association) that focuses on the promotion, interpretation and conservation of Offa's Dyke.

For more information see also <https://offaswatsdyke.wordpress.com/>