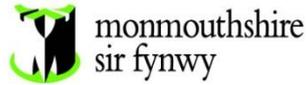


# Public Document Pack



**CANCELLED MEETING – AN UPDATE  
REPORT IS ATTACHED FOR  
INFORMATION PURPOSES**

County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

**Notice of meeting:**

## **Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee**

**Monday, 6th July, 2020 at 2.00 pm**

### **AGENDA**

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1.	Update report - For information.	1 - 24

**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  
H. Dale – 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**

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

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

### **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.

**WYE VALLEY AONB**  
**Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)**  
**‘For Information’ Updates**  
**in lieu of cancelled JAC Meeting, scheduled for**  
**2pm Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at Coleford**

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## 1. Welcome

We hope this finds you keeping safe and well. Welcome to this selection of updates in lieu of the cancelled Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meeting. Below are a number of articles in what is a cross between JAC ‘For Information’ reports and news updates. On behalf of the JAC Chairperson, Cllr Ann Webb; Wye Valley AONB Manager, Andrew Blake; Chairperson of the AONB Technical Officers’ Working Party (TOWP), Matthew Lewis; and the JAC Clerk, we hope you find this information below of use and of interest. As always, please do not hesitate to contact the AONB Manager if you have any queries or concerns on [aonb.officer@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](mailto:aonb.officer@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk) or 01600 713977.

## 2. Introduction

The decision to cancel the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was taken by the AONB Technical Officers’ Working Party (TOWP) along with the JAC Chairperson, Cllr Ann Webb and the JAC Clerk. In the context of the on-going coronavirus pandemic a number of options were considered of how to hold the JAC on 6<sup>th</sup> July. The options were:

- a) convene a normal JAC meeting in the Forest of Dean District Council chamber,
- b) postpone the JAC to November, including the AGM, with format to be confirmed
- c) host a formal meeting on-line (using MS Teams or WebEx or Zoom?)
- d) host an on-line ‘informal’ meeting with ‘For Information’ reports only (via one of the above)
- e) circulate ‘For Information’ papers only but not convene any meeting.

It was decided the most pragmatic option at this stage was to go with (b)&(e). Various organisations are making progress with on-line meetings using MS Teams, WebEx or Zoom. However each digital platform has its own challenges and while these may be ironed out within an organisation, the JAC is made up of 27 representatives & nominees from 17 different organisations, from the public, private & voluntary sectors. Each organisation and individual will have their own IT protocols and constraints. TOWP felt that it might be a challenge too far to ensure the smooth delivery of a JAC meeting at this

stage. It is hoped that by the Autumn, should an on-line JAC meeting be considered appropriate, that the experience and capacity of officers to resolve these compatibility and connectivity issues may be more easily overcome. The next JAC is scheduled for Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.

It is also possible that the AONB Partnership Study Tour, scheduled for Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020, will have to be cancelled. But the revised Wye Valley River Festival (see item 7 below) will now be taking place on and around that date, so there may be other opportunities.

### **3. JAC minutes 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 (see Appendix 1)**

The draft minutes of the March JAC are appended for information. These will be signed off at the next full JAC meeting.

Please see the next item below for clarification around one of the outstanding issues that the JAC had been anticipating an update on – Water Quality issues in the Wye.

### **4. Algal blooms in the Wye and river water quality**

There has been much local and national media coverage over the last few weeks about the extent and cause of algal blooms in the River Wye. In July 2019 the JAC had noted that the River Wye had turned brown for a period and we resolved to get someone from the Environment Agency (EA) to give a presentation on the issue. Unfortunately, the arranged speaker had to pull out for personal reasons just before the November JAC.

Rearrangements for the March JAC were scuppered by the record breaking flooding in February diverting EA staff to emergency response work.

The unseasonably prolonged dry weather in April & May led to the emergence of an extensive green algal bloom in the River Wye. The Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF) produced a statement in early June 2020 which noted:

“There is considerable and understandable dismay that the normally clear waters of the Wye have once again turned a putrid green due to another severe algal bloom. The Usk has also suffered a bloom, albeit less severe, as have other rivers across Wales.

Those with long associations with the Wye will know that the river has always suffered mild algal blooms. However, their severity has increased significantly in the past three or four years.

They are also starting earlier in the year and lasting longer. While they used to be one-off events with the algae dying off or being flushed out with a rise in water levels, we are now experiencing multiple blooms throughout spring and summer. The river has a sickly appearance with its water resembling pea and at other times, French onion soup....

Algal blooms are caused by a combination of factors, including levels of light and flow. However, a large increase in the amount of phosphate, which acts as a fertilizer, entering the Wye’s headwaters is thought to be the principal reason for the recent increase in the blooms’ severity.

According to the latest modelling, the proportion of the phosphate in the lower Wye coming from agriculture has doubled in the past six years. The river is now failing its permitted levels of phosphate under the EU Habitats Directive....

The upper river in Wales is now a significant source following a large expansion of the poultry industry over the last decade....

Before 2010, the Wye’s algal bloom used to start becoming noticeable around the confluence with the Lugg (although the first signs were usually a few miles further upstream at Bredwardine). This year’s bloom was noticeable at Llanbister on the Ithon, around 90 miles upstream of the Wye/Lugg confluence....

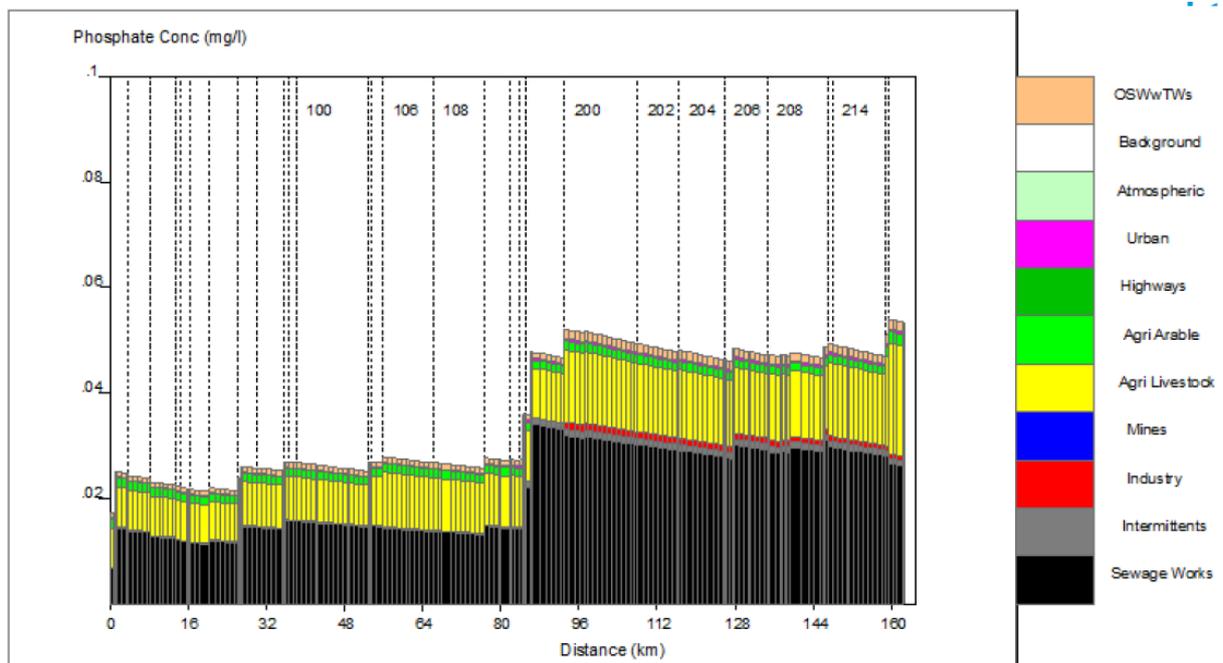
Three of the four factors generating algal blooms are to do with climate... The Foundation has been working with Herefordshire farmers with some success to reduce the amount of sediment and accompanying phosphate washing into the rivers there....”

For the full article see <https://www.wyeuskfoundation.org/news/nations-favourite-river-facing-ecological-disaster>

Unfortunately the national media picked up on the impact of the “expansion of the poultry industry” without addressing the wider or more nuanced impacts and issues.

The Wye Nutrient Management Plan, published by the Environment Agency & Natural England in 2014, stated “In the context of this study, it is thought that point source discharges, such as industrial and wastewater treatment works (WwTW) discharges are responsible for a large portion of the phosphate loading to the rivers. The main diffuse source of phosphate is thought to be from agricultural sources via land run off.” (page 27)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/361793/River\\_Wye\\_NMP\\_final\\_report\\_v3\\_14052014.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361793/River_Wye_NMP_final_report_v3_14052014.pdf)

There is a useful graph, presented below, from Wye Nutrient Management Plan (page 47: Figure 7-4 & page 50 Figure 7-6) which shows the River Wye and the total phosphate concentration (y-axis) along the length of the river (x-axis) by distance from its confluence with the River Irfon until its discharge into the Severn Estuary. The relative contributions of phosphate from individual sources is represented by the different colours, with the largest contributor being from sewage works (black) followed by agricultural livestock (yellow). The height of each coloured section indicates the concentration of phosphate arising from that source. The ‘step change’ in the middle of the graph, at about 85km, is Hereford city (Eign and Rotherwas sewage treatment works) more than doubling of the phosphates from the sewage. The next ‘step change’ is at about 92km with the confluence of the River Lugg



joining the Wye, significantly increasing the phosphates from agricultural livestock. This marks the northern extent of the Wye Valley AONB on the Wye. The final ‘step change’ at the right hand end of the graph (160km) of input from agricultural livestock is probably from the Angidy catchment.

The report states (page 49) “The source apportionment for the River Wye (Figure 7-6) suggests the inputs from sewage treatment works typically represent the most significant source of phosphate (>60%) although inputs from livestock are also significant (>20%).”

The report also notes (page 24) that “the phosphate levels overall are also gradually falling within both the upper River Wye sub-catchment and the Lugg sub-catchment..., it could in part be due to a combination of improvements in water company treatment processes as well as improvements in land management practices, for example relating to agriculture and action over the years with NVZs, catchment sensitive farming, and AONB advisory projects.”

Since 2014 the Wye Catchment Partnership, led by the Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF) and Natural Resources Wales, has been co-ordinating targeted and collaborative work to address and further reduce the phosphate loading in the Wye & Lugg (see <http://wyecatchment.org/>). As part of this work Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has made improvements to Waste water treatment works on the Wye at Rhayader, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells and Hereford as well as Presteigne & Leominster on the Lugg. Meanwhile Catchment Advisors have been giving advice to farmers & landowners throughout the area. There are also initiatives with the supermarkets and suppliers to improve agricultural production and processes.

In recent years the Wye has mostly stayed within the permitted levels of phosphate under the EU Habitats Directive. However the Lugg has been heavily and continuously over the permitted phosphate levels. Consequently Herefordshire Council has been advised that in the Lugg sub-catchment there is limited scope for the approval of planning applications that might give rise to additional damaging effects on the River Wye SAC, such as increased phosphate loading from sewage. This is potentially holding up the development of hundreds of dwellings and the viability of the Council’s Core Strategy. The Council released a Position Statement on ‘Development in the River Lugg Catchment’ in March 2020 [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/19059/current\\_development\\_in\\_the\\_river\\_lugg\\_catchment\\_area\\_position\\_statement.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/19059/current_development_in_the_river_lugg_catchment_area_position_statement.pdf)

The crux of the problem comes because of the following. The concentration of pollutants, including phosphates, in the Wye and Lugg is exacerbated by any reduction in the volume of water. So any prolonged dry periods will produce low flows in the river with potentially higher levels of pollutants – reducing water quantity leading to reduced water quality. Similarly prolonged periods of hot and sunny weather will increase the temperature of the water in the river, and less water will heat up more quickly. Algae thrive in the warmer water fed by the sunlight and the phosphates, which act as a fertilizer. A recognised impact of Climate Change in England and Wales is more prolonged summer heatwaves. Without reducing either the sunlight or the phosphates, there will be more algae blooms on the Wye. This is an example of the ‘perfect storm’ of the implications of both the Climate and an Ecological Emergency. The natural beauty of the area will suffer as a consequence.

The Wye Valley AONB covers the lower reaches of the Wye, downstream from the confluence with the Lugg. So most of the ingredients and contributing conditions for the algal blooms originate upstream of the AONB. Unfortunately we just receive the mess downstream.

Wye Valley AONB staff have been active members of the Wye Catchment Partnership and there are several AONB projects that attempt to address some of those contributing factors, such as reducing soil erosion and agricultural run-off into the river:

- The Natural Flood Management (NFM) & Green Infrastructure (GI) project in the Monmouthshire part of the AONB, focused predominantly on the Angidy catchment has had a dedicated Project Officer, supported by the WUF Catchment Advisors,

working with 11 farmers and giving advice and grants for land management NFM & GI improvements. The AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour visited some of the project's work last September. We are currently negotiating with the Environment Agency about the possibility of a similar project on the Gloucestershire side of the AONB.

- Two WUF Catchment Advisors are seconded to the Wye Valley AONB Unit as part of the Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) project with WUF, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Herefordshire Rural Hub, covering Herefordshire. They are focusing very much on advising farmers and preparing Farm Plans to help secure other grants to improve land management practices. Unfortunately both Advisors were furloughed but they are starting to get back to work.

We will continue to collaborate with those involved with the river and those that can influence the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area, for the benefit of the people and the wildlife of the Wye Valley.

## **5. Covid-19 impacts on the AONB**

The AONB Unit Work Plan was reviewed and updated in the light of the pandemic restrictions. All AONB staff were able to continue with a range of tasks identified to be safe and compliant with government guidance. Like everyone else, AONB staff have predominantly been working from home during lock-down. Apart from the seconded Catchment Advisors, no staff were furloughed and no staff were requisitioned or redeployed by the constituent local authorities.

A range of projects and initiatives have been postponed or cancelled due to Covid-19, including:

- AONB Farming Awards (cancelled for 2020)
- AONB Volunteers & AONB Youth Rangers conservation activities (postponed until further notice)
- Attendance at Shows and events (postponed until further notice)
- AONB Partnership events & annual Study Tour (postponed until further notice)
- Gilpin2020 events (postponed until 2021)
- Wye Valley River Festival (provisionally postponed until late September 2020 – see item 7 below)

However, many projects have continued to operate, including mindSCAPE which has successfully moved on-line (see item 9 below).

In terms of impacts on the landscape, these appear to have been much the same as the rest of the countryside. Many residents, where and when they could, were able to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the outstanding landscape. As lockdown eased and weather continued to hold fair, lots of people headed for the nearest water to paddle and have a picnic or barbeque. This often entailed people trespassing off riverside footpaths into pasture or to gain access to the river, and then leaving litter. The excess littering and haphazard regard for private property seemed to be national phenomena.

The AONB phone-lines have been receiving calls from people asking if our “Park” was “open” and where they could bring their family for a picnic. With the AONB straddling the England Wales border, and with different lock-down measures and timetables in each country, the answer has invariably been more complicated than the enquirer might have hoped. But it is interesting that obvious ‘newcomers’ to the area have been searching out the Wye Valley... or stumbling across the green blob on GoogleMaps.

Meanwhile the AONB is involved in a Birmingham University Business School research programme around supporting regenerative economies in AONBs and how AONB Management Plans can support the rebuilding of the rural economy. The research will focus on two main industry sectors in AONBs: rural tourism (ie. re-sustainability, farm-stays and ecological approaches towards tourism visits) and agriculture (ie. sourcing of local food, food-tourism, shorter supply chains, food-to-fork). This work will complement a wider study between Birmingham University and Liverpool John Moores University to learn about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses, which is aimed at informing policy and practice going forward.

### **Documenting Now**

As lock-down consolidated, and the unprecedented use of unprecedented became the norm, an opportunity arose to commission Monmouth-based photographer and film maker Emma Drabble to document the impact of Covid-19 on rural lives and local businesses. 'Documenting Now' captures people's feelings, fears and hopes as they live through the pandemic in the AONB. We are very grateful to all the participants who have allowed Emma to their lives and shared their stories. You can see most of the audio portraits on the AONB website <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/our-work/our-projects/documenting-now-life-in-the-aonb-during-the-pandemic/> and the full range is available on the AONB Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/wyevalley.aonb/> and on Wye Valley AONB YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnSKF3l8yvje2Cb1gyY1trQ>. We know how lucky we are to live and work in an area of outstanding natural beauty, with nature all around and green space on our doorstep. These show just how much this is valued and how it has helped boost people's mental and physical well-being during lockdown.

### **6. Annual Report 2019/20 (see Appendix 2)**

The Annual Work Programme Report for the AONB Unit for 2019/20 is in Appendix 2. It lists the achievements of the AONB Unit and has been presented to DEFRA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) as part of the annual grant claims to the two national government funding partners. The financial summary is at the end of the tabulated achievements. The overall turnover of the AONB Unit was £502,773. The leverage of the AONB Partnership in 2019/20 means that for every £1 of local authority contribution, the AONB Unit has brought in over £10.

### **7. Wye Valley River Festival 2020, 21<sup>st</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> September**

Plans for the postponed Festival are coming together. The unique creative partnership between the Wye Valley AONB Unit and the Festival Team, the Artistic Directors; Desperate Men and Festival Director; Phillippa Haynes and Production Manager; Claire Teasdale, have been developing a revised programme. The team are working to deliver the Festival in a format that is true to its ethos, while ensuring the safety of the audience and compliance with all government guidance. The Wye Valley River Festival will inspire audiences to engage positively with the landscape. The artistic programme will promote change, creating a compelling call to action for citizens to conserve and enhance the Wye Valley landscape for future generations. To that end the Wye Valley River Festival will deliver thought provoking, site specific, and high quality inspiring art in the outdoors, growing empathy, emotional engagement and better understanding of the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB. Through celebratory and insightful Festival experiences the Festival will foster a strong connection between the Festival audience and the Wye Valley landscape. How we do this will be revealed in due course.

## **8. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) & HCF AONB Fund**

Don't forget these funding streams are available for community projects. For more details see <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/grants/>. If you have or know of any project ideas, please contact Sarah Sawyer, AONB Community Links Officer, on [community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](mailto:community@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk).

## **9. mindSCAPE & CPRE Gloucestershire Award**

Led by ArtSpace Cinderford, the mindSCAPE project continues to provide people with dementia and their carers creative opportunities to reconnect to the landscape through art inspired by the natural environment. The project has successfully continued during lock-down and has moved on-line. ArtSpace ring all of the participants weekly for a catch up and there is a flourishing Facebook group. There are three groups who are all conversing with each other on-line which is brilliant, because they have never met. Participants are having a runner bean contest, having been sent the seeds, and are sending pictures of their gardens back to ArtSpace and sharing on Facebook. ArtSpace have also been putting up videos and creative challenges for participants who then post pictures of their creations, including, for example some origami butterflies (some better than others!).

ArtSpace were also able to commission one of the artists to make videos and run on-line workshops during lock-down which have been uploaded for all to use; see <https://www.forestersforest.uk/projects/6/mindscape> and [http://artspacecinderford.org/?page\\_id=2503](http://artspacecinderford.org/?page_id=2503).

Finally, we are pleased that the mindSCAPE project has won a CPRE Gloucestershire Award. CPRE Gloucestershire described the project as “splendid but rather different to anything they have considered for an award before”. The CPRE Gloucestershire Awards recognise and celebrate projects which are exemplars of good practice and are really outstanding in their contribution to the environment or to the local community. We are very proud that mindSCAPE should be so specially recognised.

## Appendix 1 Draft JAC Minutes 2<sup>nd</sup> March

### MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**DRAFT 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, 2nd March, 2020 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

##### **Herefordshire Council**

Councillor P. Symonds

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

Councillor S. Phelps

#### **Town / Parish Community Councils with voting powers**

GAPTC - Mr. C. Evers

One Voice Wales - Councillor G. Powell

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

Nation Farmers Union - Mr. M. Price

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

Wye Valley Society - Mr. C. Barron

Local Tourism Sector - Ms. K. Ballard

River Wye Preservation Trust - Mr. R. Hesketh

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

## **APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: L. Jones, B. Durkin, J. Hardwick, Y. Watson, D. Wheeler, C. McFarling.

Dr. G. Peterken, Mr. B. Nash, Ms. H. McDowell and Mr. R. Gething.

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **2. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 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 today's meeting. However, due to the recent unprecedented flooding events that had occurred across the Country, the representative had been unable to attend. It was hoped that a representative from the Environment Agency would be able to attend the next Joint Advisory Committee meeting in July 2020.
- A report regarding transport collaboration will be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee. It was noted that some local authorities within the Wye Valley AONB are currently updating their transport policies. The Wye Valley AONB Unit will be included as part of the consultation process.

### **3. Public Question Time**

There were no members of the public present.

### **4. AONB Unit 2020/21 Work Programme**

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

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- During the year it is anticipated that the AONB Unit will consolidate at just under eight Full time equivalent (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 three 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 is working on the new one year Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP) capital funding programme and is 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.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised regarding the control of deer and wild boar it was noted that the AONB Unit is not directly involved in this matter. This is managed and monitored by woodland owners Forestry England or Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and woodland managers, and culling takes place when appropriate determined by local priorities.
- The AONB Manager will be attending a meeting in the Forest of Dean in due course in which these issues will be discussed. He will report back to the Joint Advisory Committee regarding this matter.
- In response to a question raised requesting that the AONB Work Programme be refined to increase flood management resilience, it was noted that some of the new capital funding being received via Welsh Government will be targeted at improving recreational infrastructure and Natural Flood Management, which will address some of the damage that has occurred recently due to the unprecedented flooding events.
- A request was made for officer time to be identified when implementing the projects outlined in the report.

We resolved to endorse the AONB Unit Work Programme for 2020/2021.

## **5. Review of Designated Landscapes in England and Wales**

We received a report regarding progress following the respective Reviews of Designated Landscapes in Wales and England.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 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.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The AONB Unit has had a 1.4% increase in its settlement from Defra, a modest but welcome increase in the AONB budget for 2020/21.

We noted the report.

## **6. Sustainable Development Fund & HCF AONB Fund update**

We received a report regarding the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and the Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF).

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- The SDF Assessment Panel has fully allocated the £55,000 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in Wales in 2019/20.
- 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 has established the facility for people to donate £5 to the AONB Fund by texting 'WVAONB' to 70085.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Promotion of the endowment fund is still in its early stages but it is intended to address this matter, going forward.

We resolved:

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

## **7. AONB Management Plan Review**

We received a report regarding on-going progress with the AONB Management Plan review.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 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 Joint Advisory Committee meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

We noted the report.

## **8. Ash Die Back update**

We received a report regarding the most recent assessment of the Ash Die Back disease and effects on the Wye Valley.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 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 Die back; 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.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In the summer of 2019, there had been a rapid spread of Ash Die Back at the Old Station, Tintern. Significant felling works are being undertaken this week on safety grounds. The contract will take about three to four weeks to complete.
- Further inspections will be undertaken in the coming months and other infected sites are likely to be identified. Private landowners with infected trees along Highways and high risk areas may be served notice.
- There are estimated to be half a million Ash trees in Herefordshire that are affected by Ash Die Back.

We noted the report.

### **9. Wye Valley River Festival 2020 update**

We received a report regarding the provisional programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2020.

In doing so, the following information was noted:

- 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.
- The programme of events for the Wye Valley River Festival is being finalised for the main festival fortnight between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020 based on the theme of 'Time'.
- 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.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The progression of the Coronavirus is being closely monitored as to whether it might affect proceedings, going forward.

- The River Festival will host two significant conferences:
  - 'Art in Landscape' on Wednesday 12th -13th May 2020; with the NAAONB and fellow AONBs coming together for a day of knowledge transfer and networking to consider future national & local collaboration.
  - 'Creative Landscapes' on Thursday 14th May 2020; 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 River Festival and Gilpin2020 are separate events but complement each other. It is hoped to obtain national media coverage for the River Festival. National media coverage has already been established for Gilpin 2020.
- The AONB Unit is working closely with Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism and Visit Monmouthshire. A marketing strategy is being established to market the Festival regionally and nationally.

We noted the report.

#### **10. National Association for AONBs**

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 AONB Manager attended the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Chairman's Conference and AGM on 28<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- 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 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

We noted the report.

**11. Partner and AONB Unit progress reports and updates**

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

- Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management & Green Infrastructure Project.
- Gilpin2020.
- Water Environment Grant Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) & Catchment Advisors.
- Offa's Dyke Collaboratory.

We noted the report.

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

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

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (to be confirmed).

**The meeting ended at 3.10pm.**



**Annual report 2019 – 2020**  
including financial summary

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AONB Unit Work Programme AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives		Outcomes 2019-2020
<b>AONB Management Plan</b> WV-L1 WV-P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan</li> <li>• Monitor use of Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries etc</li> <li>• Undertake Plan Review process                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complete State of AONB Report</li> <li>○ Initial consultations, SEA &amp; HRA Scoping</li> <li>○ 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of 2020-2025 Plan</li> <li>○ Public consultation of Draft</li> <li>○ SEA Environment Report</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Finalise Plan for JAC &amp; LA adoption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 available on AONB website <a href="https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/management-plans/">https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/management-plans/</a></li> <li>• AONB Management Plan referred to in planning application responses and reports.</li> <li>• Pre-consultation draft Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-25 was presented to the AONB Joint Advisory Committee in July 2019.</li> <li>• The Public Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-25 was published and a 12 week consultation period closed in January 2020.</li> <li>• A total of 28 organisations and individuals submitted comments on the Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan, amounting to approximately 250 specific comments.</li> <li>• There were also two public ‘drop-in’ sessions to discuss the Plan with AONB staff on Monday 2nd December 2019 at The Mackenzie Hall, Brockweir, and Wednesday 11th December at the Larruperz Centre, Ross-on-Wye, with 15 members of the public attending both events.</li> <li>• The assimilation of the consultation responses into the final draft of the AONB Management Plan was commenced.</li> <li>• A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment for the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Plan was commenced</li> <li>• A Future Generations Evaluation was also conducted and presented</li> </ul>

<b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b> <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> <i>Strategic Objectives</i>		<b>Outcomes 2019-2020</b>
		to Monmouthshire County Council Scrutiny Committee.
<b>AONB Partnership events</b> WV-P1 WV-P6 WV-P7	For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run AONB Partnership Seminar on key issue</li> <li>Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &amp;/or issues</li> <li>Promote &amp; disseminate JAC contacts &amp; processes for other organisations &amp; individuals to feed into JAC &amp; AONB Partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AONB Unit Annual Report presented to JAC in July.</li> <li>28 attendees on the AONB Partnership Tour on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019, visited the southern part of the AONB and sites primarily associated with the Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management (NFM) &amp; Green Infrastructure (GI) Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning, Development Control and Strategic Policy</b> WV-D1 WV-D2 WV-D3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew annual contract for AONB Strategy &amp; Development Advisor to support AONB Unit with planning advice.</li> <li>Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents</li> <li>Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB</li> <li>Engage in debate and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB</li> <li>Deliver CPD &amp; training for LA Planning staff &amp; members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract renewed with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Planning Department, shared with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.</li> <li>AONBM provided comments on 6 significant planning applications in Monmouthshire part of the AONB, 1 application &amp; 1 Appeal in Herefordshire and 2 in Gloucestershire and has provided comments on 3 Neighbourhood Development Plans.</li> <li>AONBM responded to the Forest of Dean Local Plan 2021 – 2041 Issues and Options Consultation, with comments submitted jointly with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.</li> <li>AONBM &amp; FAO monitor and review development trends that affect the AONB.</li> <li>AONBM jointly with Malvern Hills AONBM gave CPD training to Herefordshire Council Planning officers on AONBs.</li> </ul>
<b>AONB Farming Awards</b> WV-L5 WV-F1 WV-F5 WV-C2 WV-E2	Promote & publicise 12th Awards for farmers, landowners and land managers that make an outstanding contribution to conserving &/or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Awards and handle entries</li> <li>Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing</li> <li>Judging</li> <li>Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019</li> <li>Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 farms were shortlisted for 2019 AONB Farming Awards.</li> <li>Award won by Monmouthshire Meadows Group.</li> <li>Award presented at the Monmouthshire Show.</li> <li>The judging panel consisted of Andrew Blake (AONB Manager), David Price (NFW Wales &amp; JAC), Mike Williams (Wye &amp; Usk Foundation) and Martin Rowberry (Coppett Hill Common Trust &amp; 2017 winners)</li> </ul>
<b>Habitat Conservation</b> WV-L2 WV-L4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise monthly volunteer task days, including on partner sites and Reserves</li> <li>Continue Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management &amp;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One outing per month of AONB volunteers, average attendance 8. Varied tasks, drystone walling, scything, work in Highbury Wood NNR, collaboration with Gwent Wildlife Trust volunteers and Monmouthshire</li> </ul>

<b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b> <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> <b>Strategic Objectives</b>		<b>Outcomes 2019-2020</b>
<i>WV-F4</i>	<p>Green Infrastructure Project working with farmers and local landowners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue opportunities to continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys to complete coverage of the AONB</li> <li>• Liaise over national roadside verge initiatives with local authorities and Highways Agency</li> <li>• Continue work with Ross Town Council in co-ordinating management of Ross Riverside.</li> <li>• Implementation of Water Environment Grant (WEG) programme – if successful.</li> </ul>	<p>Meadows volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 volunteer activities run through Lower Wye Catchments NFM &amp; GI project, including Himalayan Balsam and surface water management on footpaths. Including work in partnership with NRW on Public Forest Estate.</li> <li>• Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed control included in Lower Wye Valley NFM &amp; GI project.</li> <li>• NFM &amp; GI project grant aided farmers &amp; landowners to deliver 1km+ of riparian fencing, 100m new cross contour hedgerow, 125m fencing to reduce field size and encourage rotational grazing, 15ac maize undersowing, leaky dams in Angidy and Whitebrook rivers through which 9.9km of watercourses now flow.</li> <li>• Floodplain Meadow Restoration work undertaken in partnership with Ross-on-Wye Town Council, Herefordshire Meadows Group and Ashfield Park Primary School. 100 children from Ashfield Park Primary school helped spread locally sourced floodplain meadow seed on site.</li> <li>• 2 farm advisors employed by the Wye and Usk Foundation (WUF) and hosted by the AONB to work on WEG project, following success of WUF application for Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) WEG project funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape scale conservation</b>  <i>WV-L1</i>  <i>WV-L2</i>  <i>WV-B3</i>  <i>WV-P3</i>  <i>WV-P4</i></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"> <li>• Investigate possible HLF bid for northern part of AONB around Woolhope and Sellack area</li> <li>• National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross &amp; Goodrich with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust &amp; others</li> <li>• Work with partners in Monmouthshire on Long Forest and Usk to Wye initiatives</li> <li>• Continue work with Herefordshire Meadows.</li> <li>• Continue &amp;/or expand Lower Wye Catchments Natural Flood Management &amp; Green Infrastructure Project working with farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DO sits on newly created Gloucestershire LNP Naturally Healthy and Nature Recovery subgroups. 3 Naturally healthy group meeting attended.</li> <li>• Lower Wye Catchment NFM &amp; GI project: 11 Farm Plans prepared in collaboration with Wye &amp; Usk Foundation.</li> <li>• Farming Connect collaborative event.</li> <li>• Water Environment Grant (WEG) successful for English part of Wye Catchment with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Wye &amp; Usk Foundation. Recruitment of Catchment Advisors for AONB and adjacent Garron &amp; Gamber sub-catchment.</li> <li>• Collaborated on the Wentwood to Wyre Endangered Landscapes Programme application (ultimately unsuccessful).</li> <li>• Herefordshire Meadows Group membership continues to grow, now at</li> </ul>

<b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b> <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> <i>Strategic Objectives</i>		<b>Outcomes 2019-2020</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and local landowners</li> <li>Implementation of Water Environment Grant (WEG) programme – if successful. If not review projects with orchards, veteran &amp; riverine trees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>61 members,</li> <li>DO attended B-Lines Herefordshire project development meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Deer Management</b> <i>WV-B2</i> <i>WV-B4</i> <i>WV-W4</i> <i>WV-W3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement as appropriate the recommendations of the venison marketing feasibility study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event organised in partnership with the Deer Initiative to promote best practice stalking with 20+ attendees.</li> <li>Deer Initiative had stand at Monmouthshire Show.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring</b> <i>WV-L4</i> <i>WV-B5</i> <i>WV-H2</i> <i>WV-S3</i> <i>WV-P8</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data, including habitats and species, heritage, tourism and recreation etc.</li> <li>Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AONB Fixed Point photography monitoring of 41 sites, photographed annually</li> <li>NAAONB KPI Metrics collated and submitted.</li> <li>Data collation for AONB Management Plan &amp; State of the AONB Report ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</b> <i>WV-L1</i> <i>WV-B3</i> <i>WV-C1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel</li> <li>Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating funds</li> <li>Complete establishment of AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation</li> <li>Training for SDF Assessment Panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 projects supported with full allocation in Wales of £55,000</li> <li>Grants promoted via social media, website and at Monmouthshire Show</li> <li>Leverage of £114,432 cash &amp; £7,100 in-kind, meaning every £1 of SDF was matched by £2.20</li> <li>New members recruited to Assessment Panel &amp; introduction of updated WG guidance</li> <li>WG officers visited and toured projects</li> <li>Herefordshire Community Foundation Wye Valley AONB Fund agreement signed and AONB Fund established.</li> </ul>
<b>Wye Valley River Festival</b> <i>WV-A1</i> <i>WV-W5</i> <i>WV-C2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop 'Time' theme for Festival with campaign &amp; outreach throughout year.</li> <li>Pursue funding from SDF, England &amp; Wales Arts Council, Cadw, Foresters' Forest, Environment Agency, Monmouthshire County Council and other contributors &amp; sponsors.</li> <li>Complete all claims and evaluations</li> <li>Complete evaluation of future prospects &amp; governance for Festival. Prepare for subsequent Festival governance model (if appropriate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and development on Time theme progressed through Creative Labs and workshop events with artists and key local participants.</li> <li>Funding targets met</li> <li>Claims and evaluation completed to date</li> <li>Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions halted activity in March 2020 with</li> </ul>

AONB Unit Work Programme AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives		Outcomes 2019-2020
		decision to postpone 2020 Festival.
<b>MindSCAPE – Foresters’ Forest</b> HLF funding 2018 - 2022 WV-W5 WV-C2 WV-P9	Initiative enabling people living with dementia to reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities, both in Care homes & established activity group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage project and submit reports &amp; claims to Foresters’ Forest LPS for HLF</li> <li>• Supervise contractor, ArtSpace Cinderford, organising regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities for participants.</li> <li>• Develop opportunities to expand project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fortnightly activities continue to run through Arts Council England Funding with project now lead by ArtSpace Cinderford and AONB Unit a project partner.</li> <li>• 20 mindSCAPE sessions delivered in Care Homes through Foresters’ Forest Landscape Scheme.</li> <li>• Community and Care Home Resource Guide produced and distributed.</li> <li>• Annual mindSCAPE report published and project evaluation commissioned and produced.</li> <li>• On line video tutorials being developed by ArtSpace practitioners.</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Rangers – Foresters’ Forest</b> WV-F4 WV-C2 WV-P6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue structured programme of activity for 4<sup>th</sup> Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management.</li> <li>• Develop the next phase of the scheme and further opportunities to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 outings carried out including on navigation and outdoor skill, bushcraft, wild swimming, canoeing, caving, tree &amp; hedge planting, wildlife surveying skills and outdoor First Aid.</li> <li>• 2 promotional events in school</li> <li>• Social media promotion plus 1 radio interview and 1 press release</li> <li>• 4 volunteers support this activity plus CLO &amp; numerous partners</li> </ul>
<b>Website and social media</b> WV-C2 WV-A1	Upgrade and manage websites and social networking sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk">www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk</a> (including <a href="http://www.overlookingthewye.org.uk">www.overlookingthewye.org.uk</a>)</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.wyevalleywalk.org">www.wyevalleywalk.org</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk">www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Facebook and Twitter.</li> <li>• Investigate re-establishing ‘Picturesque’ as a regular on-line AONB newsletter, to provide information and interpretation to increase awareness and appreciation of the AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google rating of ‘Wye Valley AONB’ remains at 4.7 (out of 5) from over 5,000 reviews.</li> <li>• Website refurbishment completed and new version live.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Relations &amp; Outreach</b> WV-C2 WV-E4 WV-A1	Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stands at the Monmouthshire Show and other relevant shows.</li> <li>• Local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events.</li> <li>• Promote &amp; lead guided walks, events, children’s activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB</li> <li>• Give talks/presentations to local groups</li> <li>• Regular press releases and magazine articles / advertorial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AONBM gave talks to 3 community groups.</li> <li>• CLO led 3 guided walks &amp; gave 3 talks to variety of groups</li> <li>• AONB stand at Monmouthshire Show and Herefordshire Meadows Annual Forum</li> <li>• Wye Valley AONB Map &amp; Guide reprinted and distributed regionally through ‘Pear Communications’</li> <li>• Lower Wye Catchments GI &amp; NFM Project Officer gave talk to Gwent</li> </ul>

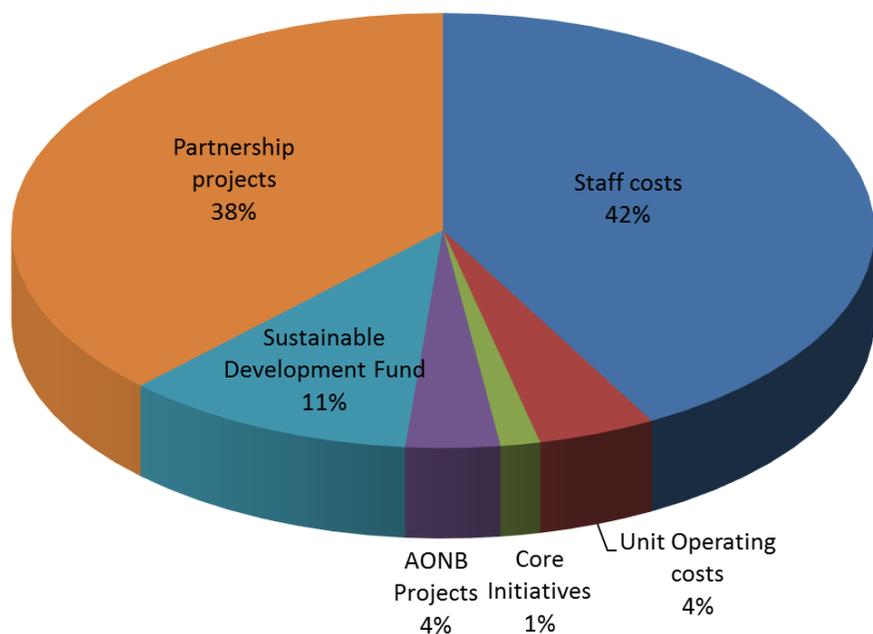
AONB Unit Work Programme AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives		Outcomes 2019-2020
		<p>Wildlife Trust Local Wildlife Sites events day about the project and Natural Flood Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DO and GI&amp;NFM PO ran guided walk as part of Chepstow Walking Festival, looking at and discussing NFM work.</li> <li>• NFM seminar held, attended by 40 people.</li> </ul>
<b>Undergrounding</b> WV-U2 WV-P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Officer has attended 3 Powerline undergrounding meetings (1 Wales, 2 England).</li> <li>• 3 schemes approved for undergrounding by steering groups. Further 3 schemes in development.</li> </ul>
<b>Wye Valley Walk</b> WV-S1 WV-S2 WV-R1 WV-P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership</li> <li>• Monitor counters along Walk</li> <li>• Manage route promotion, website and Passport scheme</li> <li>• Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge, Redbrook Bridge and Tintern Wireworks Bridge</li> <li>• Progress Monmouth riverbank erosion solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests for WVW information &amp; issuing of Passports continued.</li> <li>• Feedback showed concerns about physical infrastructure (waymarking etc, passport stamping locations vandalized/ broken/ nonexistent and route direction) but overall people love the walk. Concerns about path maintenance forwarded to respective local authority.</li> <li>• Work commenced on revising <a href="http://www.wyvalleywalk.org/">http://www.wyvalleywalk.org/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory</b> WV-H1 WV-H3 WV-P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological projects and investigation into landscape significance of the 8<sup>th</sup> century monument</li> <li>• Participate in autumn Collaboratory conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AONBM contributed to and provided technical assistance at 2 Offa's Dyke Collaboratory events (Knighton &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> symposium in Cardiff)</li> </ul>
<b>Overlooking the Wye legacy</b> WV-H1 WV-H3 WV-P5	<p>Continue to develop heritage &amp; Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tintern iBeacon project</b> <i>Interpretation of landscape influence of Tintern Abbey (with Cadw &amp; Monmouthshire LEADER)</i></li> <li>• <b>Reprint of Walks leaflets</b> <i>with sponsorship</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinated development of the Gilpin2020 programme with wide range of stakeholders.</li> <li>• HRH Prince of Wales officially launched Gilpin2020 on visit to Ross-on-Wye on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019.</li> <li>• Published Gilpin2020 events programme (rescheduled in March to 2020+1 due to Covid-19).</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships (local / regional)</b> WV-R2	<p>Influence &amp; attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wye Valley &amp; Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership</li> <li>• Visit Herefordshire Leisure and Recreation Forum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DO sits on Herefordshire Meadows Network steering group, helping to direct the work of this Facilitation Fund group. 2 meetings attended, 2 events also attended.</li> <li>• DO attended 2 Wye Catchment Partnership meetings</li> </ul>

<b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b> <i>AONB Management Plan 2015-2020</i> <b>Strategic Objectives</b>		<b>Outcomes 2019-2020</b>
<i>WV-P3</i> <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P6</i> <i>WV-P7</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire</li> <li>Wye Catchment Partnership</li> <li>Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC)</li> <li>Monmouthshire Environment Partnership</li> <li>Herefordshire Wildlife Link</li> <li>AONB Wye Valley Woodland Projects group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AONBM attended WyeNAC and contributed to task group</li> <li>AONBM attended 3 Lower Wye Internal Drainage District Advisory Group meetings</li> <li>AONBM &amp; IO liaison with Wye Valley &amp; Forest of Dean Tourism, including over Wye Valley River Festival and representation on JAC.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration (Designated Landscapes)</b> <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P9</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars &amp; events</li> <li>NAAONB Taking the Lead programme &amp; Action/Working Groups</li> <li>Work with Welsh Government and Wales Designated Landscapes in taking Future Landscapes Wales Programme forward</li> <li>Work with DEFRA and Glover Review of Designated Landscapes in England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AONBM contributed to NAAONB Senior Leaders Group on Future Landscapes - Taking the Lead and Sustainability &amp; Governance Review</li> <li>DO &amp; CLO both contributed to 4 Taking the Lead workshops</li> <li>AONBM &amp; CLO, and DO attended &amp; spoke at NAAONB Landscapes for Life Conference at Colchester.</li> <li>AONBM also contributed to AGM &amp; Chairpersons' Conference and attended AONB Lead Officers' meeting.</li> <li>DO attended West Midland Tree Health Ash Dieback workshop</li> <li>AONBM attended NAAONB meeting with Julian Glover</li> <li>The Designated Landscapes in Wales collectively published the Scenic Wales calendar 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b> <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group</li> <li>Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required.</li> <li>Continue implementation of recommendations from AONB Good Governance Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 full JAC meetings held, 1<sup>st</sup> July &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, preceded by TOWP meetings on 5<sup>th</sup> June &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019 &amp; 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020,</li> <li>Relevant JAC agenda items prepared by Technical Officers Working Party (TOWP) and AONB Manager and distributed by Monmouthshire County Council as JAC Clerk</li> <li>AONB Steering Group held on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2019 &amp; 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020, with AONB Unit budgets and spend profile presented and scrutinised.</li> <li>All bids and claims submitted on time.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding and resources</b> <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P2</i> <i>WV-P3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue investigating funding and development opportunities.</li> <li>Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects</li> <li>Commence fundraising campaign when Herefordshire Community Foundation Wye Valley AONB Fund established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AONBM &amp; DO prepared funding proposals for continuation of Lower Wye Valley NFM &amp; GI project, in both Monmouthshire &amp; Gloucestershire.</li> <li>Collaborated on the Wentwood to Wyre Endangered Landscapes Programme application (ultimately unsuccessful).</li> <li>Collaborated with Welsh Government, Welsh AONBs &amp; National</li> </ul>

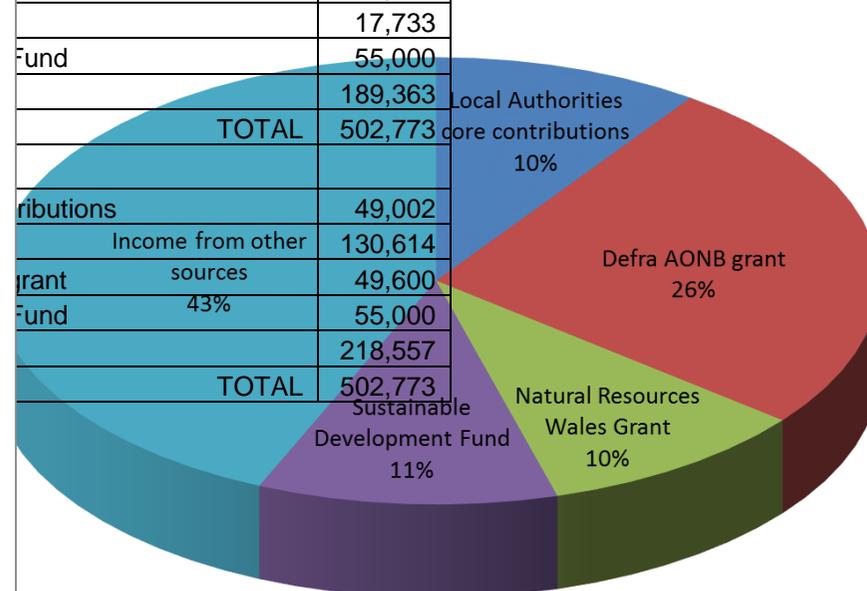
AONB Unit Work Programme AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives		Outcomes 2019-2020
		Parks on development of the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places capital funding programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully bid for Welsh Government additional capital for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</li> </ul>
<b>Work placements</b> WV-P5 WV-P9	Support the needs of student placements/group projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided information for a number of graduate requests.</li> <li>Further developed under-graduate proposals with University of South Wales Drama &amp; Performance Department, Faculty of Creative Industries about incorporating Wye Valley River Festival into course.</li> </ul>

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts 2019/2020		£
<b>Expenditure</b>		
	Staff costs	211,010
		22,202
		17,465
		17,733
	Fund	55,000
		189,363
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>502,773</b>
	Contributions	49,002
	Income from other sources	130,614
	Grant	49,600
	Fund	55,000
		218,557
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>502,773</b>

**Expenditure Chart**



**Income Chart**



The Wye Valley AONB Unit is the lead delivery agent for the Wye Valley AONB Partnership in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB Partnership is led by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) with the key funding partners, being DEFRA, Natural Resources Wales, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council, making up the AONB Steering Group. The Host Authority responsible for the AONB Unit's finances is Herefordshire Council. The AONB Steering Group annually review and agree the budgets for the AONB Unit, endorsed by the JAC. The audited accounts of the Host Authority are available from:  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/2076/council\\_accounts\\_201920](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/2076/council_accounts_201920)