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29th February 2016

Notice of meeting / Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:

Wye Valley AONB

**Monday, 7th March, 2016 at 2.00 pm,
The Old Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Monmouth**

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence / Introductions.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Public Question Time.	
4.	To confirm and sign the previous minutes.	1 - 10
5.	Future Landscape Wales Programme - Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.	11 - 16
6.	AONB Unit 2016/17 Work Programme.	17 - 18
6.1.	Work Programme.	19 - 24
7.	Sustainable Development Fund Update.	25 - 26
8.	Wye Valley River Festival 2016.	27 - 32
9.	National Association for AONB's.	33 - 34
9.1.	Potential Wye Valley Field Trip as part of Landscapes for Life Conference 2016: 8th-30th June 2016 at Lilleshall National Sports and Conference Centre Newport Shropshire. Theme: Health and Wellbeing - the value of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.	
10.	Partner and AONB Unit progress reports and updates.	35 - 40
10.1.	AONB Management Plan.	

10.2.	Undergrounding Update.	
10.3.	Other Visits to Wye Valley AONB.	
10.4.	LEMUR+ (Learning Environments in Marine, Urban and Rural Areas) placements.	
11.	Dates of Meetings for 2016:	
11.1.	Monday 4th July and Monday 7th November 2016. Both meetings to be held at 2.00pm in the Forest of Dean District Council Chamber, Coleford.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION

Local Authority Members with Voting Powers

Gloucestershire:	P. McMahon P. Molyneux
Herefordshire:	P. Cutter B. Durkin J. Hardwick E.J. Swinglehurst
Monmouthshire:	D. Blakebrough D. Dovey E.J. Hackett Pain A.E. Webb
Forest of Dean:	G. Davies B. Hogan

Town / Parish Community Councils with Voting Powers

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

Co-opted Members with Voting Powers

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

Co-opted Members without Voting Powers

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

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Welsh Language

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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.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

Cymunedau Cynaliadwy a Chryf

Canlyniadau y gweithiwn i'w cyflawni

Neb yn cael ei adael ar ôl

- Gall pobl hŷn fyw bywyd da
- Pobl â mynediad i dai addas a fforddiadwy
- Pobl â mynediad a symudedd da

Pobl yn hyderus, galluog ac yn cymryd rhan

- Camddefnyddio alcohol a chyffuriau ddim yn effeithio ar fywydau pobl
- Teuluoedd yn cael eu cefnogi
- Pobl yn teimlo'n ddiogel

Ein sir yn ffynnu

- Busnes a menter
- Pobl â mynediad i ddysgu ymarferol a hyblyg
- Pobl yn diogelu ac yn cyfoethogi'r amgylchedd

Ein blaenoriaethau

- Ysgolion
- Diogelu pobl agored i niwed
- Cefnogi busnes a chreu swyddi
- Cynnal gwasanaethau sy'n hygyrch yn lleol

Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.

Agenda Item 4

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee
held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on
Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

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

Elected Members (with voting powers)

Monmouthshire County Council: Councillor D. Blakebrough
Councillor D.L.S. Dovey

Herefordshire Council: Councillor P. Cutter
Councillor E.J. Swinglehurst

Forest of Dean District Council: Councillor G. Davies

Co-opted Members (with voting powers)

Voluntary Conservation Sector in Monmouthshire: Mr. A. Thomas
Voluntary Conservation Sector in Herefordshire: Mr. B. Nash
Country Land and Business Association: Mr. S.W.B. Dereham
One Voice Wales Councillor T. Phillips

Co-opted Members (without voting powers)

Wye Valley Society: Mr. C. Barron
River Wye Preservation Trust Mr. S.W.B. Dereham
National Farmers Union Wales Mr. D Price
Local Tourism Representative Mr. J. Theophilus
Wildlife Trusts Representative Mrs. H Stace

Technical Advice Officers:

Wye Valley AONB Officer: Mr. A. Blake
Monmouthshire County Council Mr. M. Lewis
Gloucestershire County Council: Mr. R. Niblett

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

- County Councillor A.E. Webb, Monmouthshire County Council.
- County Councillor B. Durkin, Herefordshire County Council.
- County Councillor J. Hardwick, Herefordshire County Council.
- District Councillor P. McMahon, Forest of Dean District Council.
- Dr. G. Peterken, Voluntary Conservation Sector in Gloucestershire.
- Mr. M. Price, National Farmers Union.
- Mr. A. Lee, Herefordshire Local Access Forum.
- Ms. H. McDowell, Natural England.
- Mr. J. Fry, Forestry Commission.
- Mr. J. Bissett, Herefordshire Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared interests as Planning Committee Members of their respective Authorities in matters that may arise relating to development control issues:

Cllr P. Cutter
Cllr D. Dovey
Cllr G. Davies
Cllr D. Blakebrough
Cllr E.J. Swinglehurst

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting dated 6th July 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised by members of the public.

5. WYE VALLEY AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-20

We received the AONB Management Plan 2015-2020.

The JAC had previously recommended that the AONB Management Plan be adopted by the local authorities and government agencies, subject to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).

We were informed that:

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

- The SEA and HRA have been completed and the responses were appended. An Environment Report, summarising the outcomes of the SEA and HRA will be published shortly.
- It was also a requirement in Wales for a Future Generations Evaluation (including the Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments) to be carried out, the latter is also good practice in England. This has been completed and was appended.
- The necessary minor modifications from the SEA, HRA and Future Generations Evaluation, are being made to the final version of the AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 and which can then be formally adopted by the local authorities and government agencies.

We welcomed the positive results of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment.

We resolved to endorse the Future Generations (including the Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments) of the AONB Management Plan.

Mr Blake said the Management Plan would now be put to Local Authorities for adoption as soon as possible.

Cllr D. Blakeborough and Mrs H. Stace joined the meeting at 2.15pm.

6. **REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES**

We received a report on the review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

We were informed that:

- The Independent Panel's final Report on the Review was published on Friday 30th October and included 69 recommendations covering a raft of proposals and observations on purposes, principles, vision, governance models, planning and funding for Wales' AONBs and National Parks.
- The Minister wants to "ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally recognised status".
- The Minister has asked Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM to lead a Future Landscapes Working Group to explore the Report's recommendations and the case for reform, and to report findings next year.
- There will be significant implications for the Wye Valley AONB, particularly as a cross-border designated landscape if purposes and duties are modified in Wales.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

Mr Blake said he was pleased to see that the recommendations were reasonable and workable. They presented good opportunities for AONBs. He would be meeting with other AONBs and the Welsh Government next week for further discussions. He said there would be opportunities for the JAC to feed-back comments to the Future Landscapes Working Group.

In response to questions raised by JAC members, Mr Blake said that, contrary to reports in the Press, there were no recommendations to re-name the Wye Valley AONB.

Responding to a member's question about why the review had been confined to Wales and had not been part of a national UK review, Mr Thomas said the National Government had not carried out a review of the effectiveness of the system for running AONBs and National Parks. The Welsh Government had conducted a number of other reviews, some of which had raised questions about National Parks and the current local government structure in Wales. He said he felt the review was a positive step and was pleased to see that further discussions will take place before decisions are made.

Mr Thomas also noted the statement issued by Dr. Ruth Williams and asked if the statement had been supported by the other Review Panel members. Mr Blake said he was only aware that the statement represented Dr. Williams' views and had been issued after the Panel work had been completed. The Chairman said her views were welcomed and were very useful.

We welcomed the Independent Panel's final report and resolved to work with the Future Landscapes Working Group.

7. WYE NAVIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

We received a report on the membership of the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee and noted the following:

- The AONB Officer, Mr Blake, has represented the AONB Partnership on the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (NAC) since the establishment of Wye NAC in 2003 and his fourth term ended on 30th September.
- Several other members of the JAC sit on the Wye NAC in other capacities.
- The Environment Agency (EA) services Wye NAC and has membership guidance which recommends that appointments should not exceed 10 years unless there is good reason.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

- The JAC needs to consider who should represent it on Wye NAC for the next three years.

We noted the Environment Agency's advice and concluded that there were good reasons for Mr Blake to continue to act as the JAC representative. We also agreed that Mr Critchley, AONB Development Officer, should be appointed as Mr Blake's deputy in the event of his absence.

8. LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

We received a report on the finalisation of the AONB Memorandum of Understanding between the four local authorities supporting the AONB partnership.

We noted the following:

- The previous Memorandum of Agreement between the funding partners of the Wye Valley AONB expired on 31st March 2015.
- The funding partners have been negotiating a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is intended to give medium term security and commitment to the AONB Partnership. The MoU was appended to the report.
- The MoU complements the JAC Agreement, which constitutes the JAC, signed between the local authorities.
- Defra and Natural Resources Wales are not signatories to the MoU but were party to the negotiations and their funding offer letters are appended to the MoU.

Responding to a member's question, Mr Blake said the four Wye Valley AONB authorities stood shoulder to shoulder in support of the AONB. If any major changes emerged from the Welsh Government Review of Designated Landscapes, these would be assimilated in order to get the best value for the Wye Valley and the AONB. The Chairman added that one of the prime purposes of the JAC was to ensure that all authorities are involved and have an input.

Mr Lewis confirmed the current joint approach by the four authorities enabled the most effective delivery for the AONB. Part of the role of the Future Landscapes Working Group should be to take account of this.

We agreed to note and support the contents of the report.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

9. CHALARA / ASH DIEBACK – UPDATE

We received a report on Ash Dieback and noted the following:

- Chalara or 'Ash Dieback' is a serious disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*.
- The disease has now spread to every county in England and is found in 23% of all 10km grid squares in the UK, including those in the north, east and south of the Wye Valley AONB.
- Ash Dieback causes leaf loss, crown dieback and bark lesions and usually leads to tree death in Common ash, which is the third most common native broadleaved tree species in Great Britain after oak and birch.
- Approximately 30% of the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Areas of Conservation is Ash dominated woodland.
- There are several other tree diseases that also pose a direct threat to local woodlands, such as Acute Oak Decline, *Phytophthora* species and *Dothistroma* (Red Band) Needle Blight.
- The compound impact of all these diseases could be very significant on the woodlands of the Wye Valley.

Mr Blake said he had recently attended a Forestry Commission Ash Dieback seminar which had painted a very depressing picture. However the Wye Valley possesses very old and diverse woodland which should be robust to change. For the moment he advised proceeding with awareness and caution in the face of Ash Dieback and other threatening diseases. Mr Blake read out a statement from Dr. Peterkin which generally supported this standpoint.

Mr Dereham said Ash was a fast growing tree and it was to be hoped that resistant strains could be found and used to replenish the population lost to disease.

10. HEREFORDSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

We received a report updating on the Core Strategies and Local Development Plan and noted the following:

- Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy, the Herefordshire Local Plan, which sets the overall strategic planning framework for the county up to 2031, was adopted by the Council on 16 October 2015.
- Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP), to 2021, was adopted in March 2014.
- The Forest of Dean District Council adopted their Core Strategy, to 2026, in February 2012.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

Mr Blake said he was now assured that the AONB was adequately covered by the Core Strategy and said it would be used going forward when dealing with planning applications. Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans will become the next layer and will help to define where new houses will be built. He said he would be working with parishes where appropriate.

We agreed to note the report.

11. FRACKING IN THE AONB

We received a report on the protection afforded to the AONB against potential fracking and noted the following:

- In August and September the Government's Oil & Gas Authority consulted on the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of grid squares/blocks proposed for the next (14th) Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing Round.
- Part of the Wye Valley AONB is covered by two licencing blocks.
- Under new regulations fracking can only take place in AONBs below 1200 metres.
- The AONB Officer responded to the Oil & Gas Authority HRA consultation on behalf of the AONB Partnership.

In addition, Mr Blake said the AONB would be further protected by the provision of fracking buffer zones around European protected rivers and bat roosts. He said the Welsh Government had already decided that there would be no fracking in Wales. However this did not prevent the potential for lateral extraction and this would also apply to the AONB. Mr Blake said it was unclear what the impacts would be of lateral drilling at depths in excess of 1200 metres. Nevertheless, as far as surface features are concerned, they appear to be protected. In response to a member's question, Mr Blake said any development adjacent to the AONB boundary or in the setting of the AONB having a significant impact on the AONB would carry weight in planning and would be assessed on a case by case basis.

We agreed to note the report and to await the National Government's decisions.

12. AONB PARTNERSHIP STUDY TOUR FEEDBACK

We received a report following the recent AONB Partnership Study Tour and noted the following:

- A total of 30 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour, with a good turn out of Town, Parish and Community Council representatives.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

- There was a good spread of representation from throughout the AONB even though the Tour was focused predominantly on the Gloucestershire part of the AONB.
- Feedback from attendees of the Tour was extremely positive.
- The clash with the Herefordshire Council's Full Council needs to be avoided in future.

The Chairman said a great deal of work goes into preparing the tours and he expressed gratitude to Mr Blake and his staff for their efforts.

Mr Blake said he had been very pleased with the turn-out. It had been a good opportunity for people to visit some parts of the AONB with which they might have been less familiar. It was unfortunate that the tour clashed with Herefordshire's full Council meeting and he would seek to avoid this in the future.

Mr Thomas said it was noticeable how much tidier Stowfield Quarry had become since the last visit several years ago. He was pleased to see evidence that the quarry restoration plan was in operation.

13. AONB UPDATES

We received a report regarding the activity of the AONB Unit and other partners.

- **Wye Valley River Festival 2016:** The majority of funding has been secured and the dates of the Festival set as 29th April – 15th May 2016.
- **LEMUR+ Placements:** Phase 1 Habitat Surveys at Woolhope Dome have been completed. Sophie Marley has been offered a 12 week contract to continue her work with the Unit.
- **National Association for AONBs Chairmen's Conference:** Mr Blake will represent the AONB at the conference on 19th November 2015.
- **Youth Rangers:** The third cohort of Wye Valley AONB Youth Rangers is currently being recruited and will commence a range of activities on 10 days a year over the next 2 years commencing at the end of November.
- **AONB Farming Awards 2015:** The awards were presented at the Monmouthshire Show on 27th August 2015 by Cllr. Cutter. He thanked Mr Blake and the other judges for their work and said the awards were an excellent opportunity to showcase some of the outstanding work being carried out by the agricultural industry.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee held at The Forest of Dean District Council Offices, Coleford on Monday 2nd November 2015 at 2.00pm

Cllr Dovey said celebrations were planned to mark the 200th anniversary of the Wye Bridge in Chepstow in 2016 and he invited the AONB Unit to become involved. Mr Blake said it had been planned that the proposed River Festival for 2016 would not involve the Wye Bridge in Chepstow so as not to detract from bi-centenary celebrations. However he would discuss further with Chepstow Town Council to ensure that the AONB was involved with the celebrations in an appropriate way.

14. DATES FOR JAC MEETINGS IN 2016

It was noted that dates **and venues** for meetings in 2016 will be as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2.00pm Monday 7 th March | <u>Shire Hall Monmouth</u> |
| 2.00pm Monday 4 th July | Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council |
| 2.00pm Monday 7 th November | Council Chamber, Forest of Dean District Council |

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3.30pm

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Agenda Item

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY (TOWP) REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7th March 2016

FUTURE LANDSCAPES WALES PROGRAMME - REVIEW OF DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES IN WALES

Purpose

To inform members of the progress of the Future Landscapes Wales programme addressing the Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

Recommendations

That the JAC endorses the involvement of lead officers in the Future Landscapes Wales programme and the opportunities to shape the future of Designated Landscapes in Wales.

Key Issues

- The Marsden Report 'National Landscapes: Realising their Potential - The Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales' Final Report was published in October 2015 and outlined at the previous JAC meeting.
- The Minister for Natural Resources subsequently established the Future Landscapes Wales programme to take forward the Recommendations in the Marsden Report.
- The programme entails four Project Groups that are preparing evidence for a Working Group chaired by Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM that will initially report back to the Minister in April (see attached Terms of Reference below).
- Andrew Blake (AONB Officer) and Matthew Lewis (chair of TOWP and Monmouthshire's Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager) are both involved in the Project Groups, alongside other officers and members from across the Welsh AONBs, National Parks and other relevant organisations.
- There is wide political interest in the outcome of the Future Landscapes Wales programme but it is not known how the next government will want to take forward the programme following the Welsh Assembly elections in May.
- The process raises the expectations of what AONBs could and should deliver and whatever occurs post-election it is hoped that this raised profile will be maintained.

Reasons

In October 2015 the Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM, set out his commitment to the National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty stressing that these areas are highly valued and form an integral part of Wales' national identity.

Future Landscapes Wales was commissioned by the Minister in response to the publication of the independent Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales (the Marsden Report) on 30th October 2015. The Review's purpose was to consider how the devolved area of designated landscapes fit with and deliver emerging Welsh priorities including green growth and natural resource management within the context of the Well Being and Future Generations Act. Important in this is aligning any reform of the approach to landscape in Wales with that of reform of devolved public services.

The Future Landscapes Wales programme is based on the AONB Future Landscapes collaboration programme run in 2013 by the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) that achieved much closer and more effective working between the AONBs nationally. Future Landscapes Wales involves the Welsh AONBs, National Parks and other relevant organisations, with the aims;

- to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the Designated Landscapes in Wales through shared mind-sets, values and behaviours.
- to support and stimulate the transition of key aspects of the Marsden Report into working reality.

Implications

In November the JAC Chairman and AONB Officer attended a Stakeholders Workshop with Lord Dafydd Ellis-Thomas AM where the Future Landscapes Wales programme was outlined.

Lord Ellis-Thomas chairs the Future Landscapes Wales Working Group of 18 people including academics, entrepreneurs, health and well-being specialists, senior figures in non-governmental organisations and senior representatives from designated landscapes (see attached Terms of Reference below). The Working Group aims to explore the Marsden Report recommendations and the case for reform, and report back to the Minister on initial findings before the election. It will provide support and challenge to four Project Groups that are made up of twenty four representatives of the National Parks, AONBs, interest groups and government in joint endeavour.

The Project Groups are focusing on the following four topics:-

- **Vision & aspiration:** The Well-being Goals and what they mean for refreshing the vision and ambition for designated landscapes.
- **Catalysts of rural development:** The true potential for designated landscapes to be catalysts for economic development, and what this looks like.
- **Governance:** Modernising governance and a blueprint for the future that reconciles national and local accountability.
- **Innovation in resourcing:** Looking for innovation in resourcing of activities.

Matthew Lewis (chair of TOWP and Monmouthshire's Green Infrastructure and Countryside Manager) is in the 'Catalysts of rural development' Project Group and Andrew Blake (AONB Officer) is in the 'Innovation in resourcing' Project Group. They are both actively involved in

the tight schedule of meetings and development workshops to progress the Project Group areas and the collaborative working across and between the Designated Landscapes.

The time commitment is considerable but this is potentially a generational opportunity to shape the future of designated landscapes in Wales. The timetabling of the work and the support and challenge role of the Working Group helps ensure that connections across the thinking of each part of the development programme are maintained. Some Working Group members act as a Mentors/Link Person for respective Project Groups, depending in professional interest/expertise, which helps deepen associations between the Groups.

The Working Group and Project Groups have a full day's meeting on 23rd March. Lord Ellis-Thomas intends to subsequently prepare an initial response to the Minister on the direction of travel and progress of the Future Landscapes Wales programme.

These are many variables and interdependencies including the up and coming National Assembly elections; local government re-organisation and the implementation of recent legislative changes. The Future Landscapes Wales programme is likely to address and repackage the Marsden recommendations in light of considerations of the further information and practicalities raised by the Project Groups, suggesting longer-term ambitious / aspirational recommendations, medium term practical ones for delivery within the next administration and any 'quick-wins' deliverable on a far shorter timescale.

Background

The Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, wants to “ensure that our designated landscapes are best equipped to meet current and future challenges while building upon their internationally recognised status”.

The Marsden Report was prepared by an independent panel of three, chaired by Professor Terry Marsden, Director of Cardiff University's Sustainable Places Research Institute, with John Lloyd Jones, former chairman of the Countryside Council for Wales and Dr Ruth Williams, Wye Valley AONB Officer from 1992-1998. The panel were commissioned by Carl Sargeant, Minister for Natural Resources, in September 2014, to conduct a review of designated landscapes in Wales.

The final Report on the Review was published on Friday 30th October and includes 69 recommendations covering a raft of proposals and observations on purposes, principles, vision, governance models, planning, and funding for Wales' AONBs and National Parks. The report is available as 3 PDFs on the Welsh Government website at <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/review-designated-landscapes-wales/?lang=en>.

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Future Landscapes Wales Working Group - Terms of Reference

Background

1. Future Landscapes Wales was commissioned by the Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM, in a Cabinet Written Statement dated the 29th October 2015. It was established in response to the publication of the independent Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales (the Marsden Report) also on the 29th October 2015. The Review's purpose was to consider how the devolved area of designated landscapes fit and deliver with emerging Welsh priorities including green growth and natural resource management within the context of the Well Being and Future Generations Act. Important in this is aligning any reform of the approach to landscape in Wales with that of reform of devolved public services.
2. The Future Landscapes Wales Working Group (the working group) will work alongside a Future Landscapes Development Programme, which comprises people who are very closely aligned to the operational delivery of the designated landscapes.

Purpose

The purpose of the working group is to provide rigour and challenge to current thinking on the future of landscapes in Wales. In this context it will consider the recommendations of the Marsden Report including any new and innovative thinking, and alongside the Future Landscapes Wales Development Programme project groups, advise on the way forward with the Report's key themes:

- The Well-being Goals and what they mean for refreshing the vision and ambition for designated landscapes;
- The true potential for designated landscapes to be catalysts for economic development, and what this looks like;
- Modernising governance, and the blueprint for the future that reconciles national and local accountability;
- Looking for innovation in resourcing of activities.

Functions

3. In order to achieve the above aims the working group will:
 - Identify, commission, receive, and debate evidence that supports the purpose;
 - Collectively support and challenge the project groups of the Future Landscapes Wales Development Programme who will be exploring in detail the opportunities in the short and long term of the four key themes;
 - Provide an ongoing support and challenge function through the opportunity to mentor the four project groups;
 - Collaborate to produce a report in summer 2016 which sets out a way forward For Designated landscapes in Wales

Membership

4. The Chair and membership of the working group was decided by the Minister for Natural Resources.

5. In order to function effectively the working group needed to include academics, entrepreneurs, specialists, senior figures in non governmental organisations in the sector, and senior representative from designated landscape boards. The way of working should not be set on defending the status quo, and members are expected to demonstrate inclusive and collaborative behaviour, be willing to take risks to move things forward, be innovative, and focussed on making recommendations for positive change to the delivery of landscape work in Wales.

6. The membership of the working group is:

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, Chair

Howard Davies	National Association of AONB
Melanie Doel	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Bridget Emmett	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Sue Essex	Independent
Iolo ap Gwyn	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Mark Lang	Federation of Small Businesses
Rachel Lewis-Davies	National Farmers Union
Katie-jo Luxton	RSPB Cymru
Mike James	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
Victoria Jenkins	Environmental Law Association
Rachel Sharp	Wildlife Trust Wales
Jeremy Smith	Renewables UK Cymru
Sean Taylor	Zip World
Rebecca Williams	Country Land and Business Association
Laura White	National Trust
Einir Young	University of Wales Bangor

7. Meetings will be attended by Welsh Government officials from the Land, Nature and Forestry Division who will provide the secretariat function. Policy officials from relevant Welsh Government departments will be invited to meetings of the working group where relevant.

Working Arrangements

8. The working group will be accountable and report to the Minister for Natural Resources. The proposed schedule of meetings is:

1st Meeting: ToR, Ways of Working, Project Questions	January
2nd Meeting: Evidence Session Wellbeing Goals & Economy	February
Challenge Chamber 1 with Project Groups	March
3rd Meeting: Evidence Session Governance and Resourcing	April
Challenge Chamber 2 with Project Groups	May
4th Meeting Reporting	June

9. It is expected that all members will attend all meetings. If a member is unable to attend, a deputy may attend in their place providing that reasonable notice has been given to the Chair and the Group's secretariat. Video Conferencing will be used when possible to minimise the need for travel. All meetings and papers will be bilingual Welsh and English.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7th March 2016

AONB UNIT WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017

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 2016/2017.

Key Issues

- The attached table sets out the proposed business plan for the AONB Unit in the form of the Work Programme 2016/2017.
- This is focused on progressing the new AONB Management Plan, successful delivery of the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 and continuing existing activities while developing new initiatives and funding opportunities.
- In the Government's Autumn Statement, George Osborne announced that "Funding for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will [also] be protected". Defra subsequently made a four year grant offer to all AONBs in England.
- The budgets in the Work Programme have been approved by Defra, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and AONB Steering Group.

Reasons

The main tasks in the year ahead are:

- Promoting and distributing the adopted AONB Management Plan and the accompanying Action Plan.
- maintaining a high profile for the AONB, delivering the Wye Valley River Festival 2016, alongside continuing activities such as the AONB Farming Awards, Youth Rangers and mindSCAPES
- delivering ongoing partnership initiatives, such as the Wye Valley Walk Partnership and the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye scheme
- developing and submitting new projects, partnership initiatives and funding bids for the future delivery of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan including landscape scale partnership projects and the next phase of 'Irresistible Offa / Walking with Offa'

Implications

Defra have provided a new four year grant allocation (2016-2020) while 2016/17 will be the second year of a three year grant from NRW. Overall the AONB Unit business plan, based on the Work Programme, maximises the benefit for the local communities, the local economy and the outstanding landscape, while making best use of resources available. This is achieved by collaboration and leveraging in additional funding and resources wherever possible.

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WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2016/2017

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 draft Action Plan	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
AONB Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2015-2020 Average 100 downloads of Plan from website and 10 requests for printed copies of Plan 	1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the work and role of the JAC and AONB Unit locally as an example of the value of an integrated approach to landscape management Improve the quality of AONB management by closer cooperation within the AONB partners 	AONBO	Mar 2017
AONB Strategy & Development Advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew contract for year to support AONB Officer. Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB Engage in development and consultation stages of national strategy in liaison with NAAONB Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members 	5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide comments on significant planning applications located within the AONB or that may directly affect the AONB Monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB, including the cumulative impact of small scale development and translate into action/policy to reduce impact Engage in development and consultation stages of national strategies in liaison with NAAONB to ensure policy results in landscape and biodiversity gain 	AONBO	March 2017
AONB Farming Awards Promote & publicise 10th Awards. For farmers and landowners to promote best practice in land management that makes an outstanding contribution to conserving or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek sponsorship for the AONB Farming Awards from local businesses, supermarkets etc. Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing Site visits by the judges to the short-listed farms for the AONB Farming Awards 2016 Present the AONB Farming Awards 2016 prizes at the Monmouthshire Show Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	1,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run annual AONB Farming Awards for farmers and landowners to promote best practice in land management and to encourage and develop sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. Seek joint ventures and business sponsorship for AONB projects to conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB Promote a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy of the AONB Use existing and new opportunities to help improve understanding about food and farming such as walks based on AONB Farming Awards, Educational Access Farms, Farm Sundays, LEAF etc. 	DO	Aug 2016
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating 	55,000 ? Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source and promote small grants to target landscape features and habitat management not covered by mainstream grants Help to establish major project funding opportunities for community initiatives Provide resources and technical assistance for volunteer projects that contribute to the 	AONBO/ CLO	May 2016

Page 19

Agenda Item 6a

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2016/2017

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 draft Action Plan	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SDF application processes and Assessment Panel 		<i>conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support surveying and restoration of traditional drystone walls in AONB Support the growth and co-ordination of volunteer groups in the AONB, particularly those focused on the conservation or enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB 		Nov 2016
Picturesque Produce and distribute regular on-line editions of the AONB newsletter, 'Picturesque' to provide information and interpretation to increase subscribers' awareness and appreciation of the AONB	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase public awareness and involvement in biodiversity issues and wildlife conservation Increase public awareness and involvement in geodiversity conservation by local communities and wider public; including the link between geodiversity, landscape, ecology, the built environment, and industry Continue to produce and increase distribution of the AONB newsletter, 'Picturesque' within local communities 	IO/CLO/ ALL	March 2017
AONB Partnership events For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise AONB Partnership Seminar on key issue Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues (not to clash with HC Full Council meeting) Repeat 2011 'Questionnaire on your perceptions of the Wye Valley AONB, the JAC & the AONB Unit' Undertake the TBG 'Ecosystem Approach Self-Assessment Criteria and Method' 	1500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the work and role of the JAC and AONB Unit locally as an example of the value of an integrated approach to landscape management Improve the quality of AONB management by closer cooperation within the AONB partnerships Maintain and develop effective partnerships and administrative arrangement to lead and co-ordinate the management of the AONB and develop the JAC as an effective forum for initiating and promoting discussion on important issues affecting the AONB. 	AONBO/ FAO	Feb 2017
Exhibitions & Outreach Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands at the Wye Valley River Festival, Monmouthshire Show, Herefordshire Country Fair and other relevant shows. Local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events. 	700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop high quality methods of improving the awareness of visitors and residents about the AONB designation Continue to provide information through guided walks, talks and events Provide information and interpretation to increase visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB Increase public awareness and involvement in biodiversity issues and wildlife conservation Increase public awareness and involvement in geodiversity conservation by local communities and wider public; including the link between geodiversity, landscape, ecology, the built environment, and industry 	ALL	Mar 2017
MindSCAPE Year 3 of £165,000 Big Lottery funded 4 year initiative enabling people living with dementia to access and reconnect with the landscape, through	2,500 [40,000]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop opportunities and promote suitable woodlands as a 'Quality of Life' experience for health and well-being Develop social inclusion programmes Work in partnership to identify and promote the more robust sites for appropriate 	DO/IO	Mar 2017

Key Officers' abbreviations: AONBO = AONB Officer; DO = Development Officer; CLO = Community Links Officer; IO = Information Officer; FAO = Finance & Admin. Officer

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2016/2017

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 draft Action Plan	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
arts and creative environmental activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage project and submit reports & claims for Big Lottery • Supervise contractor to organise regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities at appropriate sites for participants who are living with dementia and their carers and families. • Develop legacy project & exit strategy 		<i>recreation activity and usage</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work with local health services and others to provide greater opportunities for making the AONB accessible for everyday exercise needs and programmes of organised activity aimed at contributing to particular health requirements</i> • <i>Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for underrepresented groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote least restrictive access, where this does not conflict with the special qualities of the AONB and the SAC's</i> 		
Wye Valley River Festival 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Festival from 29th April - 15th May • Submit claims to Arts Councils and other funders of the Festival • Undertake monitoring and evaluation of Festival & publish report. • Commence developing event ideas for Research & Development phase for 2018 Festival • Develop business sponsorship for 2018 	1,500 [140,000]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase public awareness and involvement in biodiversity issues and wildlife conservation</i> • <i>Increase public awareness and involvement in geodiversity conservation by local communities and wider public; including the link between geodiversity, landscape, ecology, the built environment, and industry</i> • <i>Help to establish funding opportunities for community initiatives</i> • <i>Provide information and interpretation to increase visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB</i> • <i>Develop high quality methods of improving the awareness of visitors and residents about the AONB designation</i> • <i>Continue to provide information through events</i> 	CLO/ALL	May 2016 Sept 2016 May 2017
Youth Rangers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a structured programme of activity for 3rd Cohort of young people (14-16 year olds) that will increase their skill set in landscape and heritage conservation and management. • Develop the next phase of the scheme, linking with the Foresters Forest LP and other funding sources to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage 	600 [10,000]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promote initiatives – particularly among young people – which will foster a sense of pride in what the area as a whole has to offer through educational programmes, sports and other recreational activities</i> 	DO/CLO	Mar 2017
Deer Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene & service Deer Management Groups and Deer Monitoring Project • Coordinate deer surveys in the Woolhope Dome and Lower Wye Valley • Assist co-ordination of collaborative deer cull through the Deer Management Groups 	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Control invasive and non-native plant and animal species which threaten the special qualities of the AONB; including Himalayan Balsam and grey squirrel</i> • <i>Manage the impact of deer through Deer Management Groups</i> • <i>Progress Deer Management Strategies for Lower Wye Valley and Woolhope Dome areas with respective Deer Management Groups</i> 	AONBO	Mar 2017
Habitat Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys 	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change.</i> • <i>Provide resources and technical assistance for volunteer projects that contribute to the</i> 	DO/CLO	Mar 2017

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2016/2017

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 draft Action Plan	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of projects with the help of LEMUR+ students. Organise monthly volunteer task days 		<p><i>conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Progress the conservation and enhancement of key landscape features including boundary features, such as characteristic drystone walls and hedgerows</i> <i>Continue to support surveying and restoration of traditional drystone walls in AONB</i> 		
Sub-total	23,781			
Tasks below covered in AONB Unit costs	£217,314			
<p>Website and social media Upgrading and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social networking sites e.g. facebook and twitter. Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk websites.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Provide information and interpretation to increase visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB</i> <i>Develop high quality methods of improving the awareness of visitors and residents about the AONB designation</i> 	ALL	Mar 2017
<p>Work placements Support the needs of student placements/group projects. LEMUR+ trainees on 9 month & 4 month placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host PhD research post on 'Corporeal Connections in the Contemporary Landscape' and provide technical assistance with PhD dissertation and evaluation of data regarding the cultural significance of the AONB Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Provide opportunities for work placements and leaning environment for students and new entrants into workplace.</i> 	DO / CLO	Mar 2017
<p>Undergrounding Continue working with Western Power to promote schemes within the AONB.</p>	[100,000]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Promote the under-grounding of overhead electricity cables through liaison with the Distribution Network Operators and local communities</i> 	DO	Mar 2016
<p>Landscape scale conservation Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop scheme around Little Doward & South Herefordshire with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others Scope for appropriate projects and prepare applications for National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Continue partnership support.</i> <i>Improve the quality of AONB management by closer cooperation within the AONB partnerships</i> <i>Help to establish major project funding opportunities for community initiatives</i> 	DO	Mar 2017

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2016/2017

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 draft Action Plan	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for Woolhope Dome with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust 				
Wye Valley Walk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership Monitor counters along Walk Manage Passport scheme Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge 	[500]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage walking tourism, and other non-consumptive sustainable tourism activities that are compatible with the objectives of the AONB and do not harm the special qualities of the AONB Promote, manage and maintain the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and Wye Valley Walk to a high standard 	IO	Mar 2017
Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses Give talks/presentations to local groups Regular press releases and magazine articles / advertorial 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase public awareness and involvement in biodiversity issues and wildlife conservation Provide information and interpretation to increase visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB including through guided walks, talks and events Promote the work and role of the JAC and AONB Unit locally as an example of the value of an integrated approach to landscape management 	ALL	Mar 2017
Partnership Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Partner in Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Destination Management Partnership. Attend or receive minutes of Local Nature Partnerships Participate in Wye Catchment Management Partnership As member of Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) Monmouthshire Environment Partnership, Herefordshire Wildlife Link 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the Wye Valley AONB in the forefront of national AONB policy and best practice Ensure the Wye Valley is represented at appropriate levels when national and regional forestry and woodland policy is formulated Actively participate in the Local Access Fora and Wye Navigation Advisory Committee and Wye Management Advisory Group to integrate AONB priorities Improve the quality of AONB management by closer cooperation within the AONB partnerships Seek joint ventures and business sponsorship for AONB projects to conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB Continue to work together to bid for and access resources to implement agreed strategies and initiatives through the Action Plan 	AONBO/ DO	Mar 2017
Collaboration <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 Wales Designated Landscapes in taking Future Landscapes Wales Programme forward 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the Wye Valley AONB in the forefront of national AONB policy and best practice Work in partnership to identify and promote the more robust sites for appropriate recreation activity and usage Provide wider understanding by transferring information and interpretation to increase visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB 	ALL	Mar 2017
Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the Geographical Information System (GIS) for the AONB Improve the quality of AONB management by closer co-operation in AONB partnerships Ensure the establishment and collection of sufficiently comprehensive baseline data to monitor landscape condition and direction of change. 	DO / LEMUR+	Mar 2017
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality of AONB management by closer co-operation within the AONB 	AONBO/ FAO	Jun, Oct,

WYE VALLEY AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Work Programme for AONB Unit staff 2016/2017

AONB Unit Initiatives	Budget £ [non AONB]	AONB Management Plan 2015/2020 draft Action Plan	Key Officer/ s (see footer)	By when
Steering Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required. 		<i>partners</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work together to bid for and access resources to implement agreed strategies and initiative through this Action Plan 		Feb Jan, May 2017
Funding and resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue investigating funding and development opportunities. Investigation into external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain and enhance local and national government funding and support for the AONB unit. Continue to work together to bid for and access resources to implement agreed strategies and initiative through this Action Plan Source and promote small grants to target landscape features and habitat management not covered by mainstream grants Help to establish major project funding opportunities for community initiatives. Provide resources and technical assistance for volunteer projects that contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty. 	AONBO/ DO	Mar 2017
Projects below not identified in bids to Natural Resources Wales and Defra 2016/17				
Irresistible Offa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting walking and sustainable tourism, building on the Walking with Offa project, with potential bids to INTERREG Atlantic Area &/or HLF investigative archaeological and interpretation project of Offa's Dyke monument for possible HLF bid 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help to establish major project funding opportunities for community initiatives. Provide resources and technical assistance for volunteer projects that contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty. Provide wider understanding by transferring information and interpretation to increase visitors' awareness and appreciation of the AONB Encourage walking tourism, and other non-consumptive sustainable tourism activities that are compatible with the objectives of the AONB and do not harm the special qualities of the AONB Promote, manage and maintain the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and Wye Valley Walk to a high standard 	AONBO	Mar 2017
Overlooking the Wye legacy Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme	[5,000]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the legacy of the "Overlooking the Wye" scheme including partnership projects and initiatives to raise the profile and funding of the historic environment in the AONB Provide resources and technical assistance for volunteer projects that contribute to the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty Encourage landowners to utilise available grant schemes to further the management, restoration and conservation of historic landscapes, parks and gardens 	AONBO/ DO	Mar 2017

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7th March 2016

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

Purpose

To endorse the allocations of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) for 2015/16.

Recommendation

That the JAC endorse the allocations of the SDF for 2015/16, including allocation of the remaining funds to the Wye Valley River Festival.

Key Issues

- The allocation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) of £60,000 in Wales in 2015/16 has been fully identified (see attached table).
- The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of allocating remaining SDF at end of year to specific projects such as the Wye Valley River Festival.
- The Welsh Government has not yet advised what the SDF allocation for 2016/17 will be but a reduction is expected, probably between 5 - 10%, amounting to an SDF allocation in the region of £55,000
- The SDF Assessment Panel has provisionally approved £26,445 of SDF grants towards projects in 2016/17.

Reasons

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

The JAC had previously endorsed the principle of directing unallocated SDF towards significant AONB projects with major community benefits such as Overlooking the Wye and the Wye Valley River Festival.

Implications

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

Background

The SDF has been running successfully in Wales for sixteen years and ran for ten years in England. However budgets are no longer sufficient to run an SDF on the English side.

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

SDF Wales Summary 2015/2016

Ref.No	Applicant	Project Name	Project total	SDF Amount	Status	Date of Decision	SDF % of total
WV00 YR15W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Scheme Administration		£6,000.00	~	~	~
WV01 YR15W	Wye and Usk foundation	River Clean up	£1,000.00	£500.00	Approved - delegated	13/4/15	50%
WV02 YR15W	Savoy Youth Theatre	Promenade Sensory Theatre	£4,700.00	£2,500.00	Approved	27/5/15	53%
WV03 YR15W	Monmouthshire Environment Board Partnership	Monmouth Bioblitz - We count for Wildlife	£3,682.80	£1,082.80	Approved - delegated	27/5/15	29%
WV04 YR15W	Dixton Church PCC	Dixton Interpretation boards	£4,513.60	£2,263.60	Approved	16/7/15	50%
WV05 YR15W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Youth Rangers (Year 1 of 2)	£37,050.00	£3,000.00	Approved	16/7/15	8%
WV06 YR15W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Wye Valley River Festival (Year 1 of 2)	£190,000.00	£30,000.00	Approved	16/7/15	16%
WV07 YR15W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	WVRF education strand (Year 1 of 2)	£9,900.00	£2,600.00	Approved	16/7/15	26%
WV08 YR15W	Deer Initiative	Deer Monitoring & Impacts Project (Year 1 of 2)	11,090.00	£3,045.00	Approved	16/7/15	27%
WV09 YR15W	Gwent Wildlife Trust	Cattle Project (Year 1 of 2)	£29,772.54	£2,971.92	Approved	25/11/15	10%
WV10 YR15W	Wye Valley AONB Unit	Wye Valley River Festival (+)	£12,000.00	£6,036.68			50%
		Sub total	£303,708.94	£60,000.00			average 32%

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7th March 2016

WYE VALLEY RIVER FESTIVAL 2016

Purpose

To inform members of the programme for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Sufficient funding for the Wye Valley River Festival to proceed has been secured from Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council England, the AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and many other sources (see attached appendix).
- A programme of events between 29th April & 15th May 2016 is being finalised and is outlined below.
- After the Festival fortnight a full evaluation of the Festival will be undertaken to appraise whether to hold a third Wye Valley River Festival in 2018.

Reasons

The 2014 Wye Valley River Festival was a recognised success. During 2015 grants and support were secured to undertake an extensive Research and Development (R&D) process, which brought environmentalists, artists and communities together to explore the theme of the River as a Global Artery. Further grants and funding have been secured sufficient to lay on the Wye Valley River Festival 2016.

The general aims and objectives of the Wye Valley River Festival remain:

To celebrate nature, culture, landscape and life along the River Wye.

- To bring together communities up and down the river through a high quality arts programme that reflects the unique qualities of the area and its people
- Building new audiences and increasing participation in the arts and the AONB Partnership's work
- Work with local partners, organisations and businesses to provide a platform for local artists, groups and voluntary sector organisations
- Invest in professional development for artists and communities, enabling them to create work beyond their normal range, cultivating positive working partnerships
- Creatively engage schools and colleges and encourage volunteer involvement in the event organization
- Encourage sponsorship, promotion and engagement of the event by local business
- Promote the profile of the Wye Valley as a premier destination, encouraging visitors to visit more frequently and stay longer, helping to support and develop cultural tourism in and for relatively isolated rural communities.

- Develop a sustainable, nationally recognised biennial Wye Valley River Festival that complements the areas and the AONB's existing programme, initially looking at a 5 years strategy (three festivals; 2014, 2016 & 2018).

Implications

Wye Valley AONB Unit, together with the Festival Director Phillippa Haynes and Artistic Directors Desperate Men, have been developing the marketing and programming for the Wye Valley River Festival 2016 together with a wide range of environmental professionals and artists. The evolving programme of events between 29th April & 15th May is outlined below.

The central theme is 'Global Arteries' which connects to our complex and universal relationship with water. The programme of events will create spaces for celebration, wonder and entertainment and to provoke thought regarding our precious River Wye and its connections to other rivers and people around the world. The Festival aims to inspire and challenge, to change the way we look at ourselves, how we see things and how we relate to our environment, locally and globally.

There is a vibrant partnership of actors, singers, musicians and dancers that sweep downstream creating magic, mayhem and laughter, under the artistic directorship of the Desperate Men, bringing to life the central narrative of the Wye Valley River Festival. The main artists and performers appointed to deliver the core Arts Council funded programme are listed below, as well as the many of the funders, sponsors and supportive organisations. Many of the latter are assisting with the schools engagement strand overseen by Sue Parkinson.

The AONB Unit retain a core focus and supervisory overview of the programme and the Festival Team. This will be the dominant focus for the work of the 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. There has been nothing of this kind in the area and the 2014 River Festival showed that there is an appetite for quality arts and community led events that link communities throughout the valley, which also attracts visitors. The enthusiasm and energy which the Wye Valley River Festival receives from all quarters continues to impress and motivate all involved. However a considerable amount of monitoring is being planned for the Festival and a full evaluation and will be undertaken to appraise whether there are sufficient benefits to establish a third River Festival in 2018.

The Wye Valley River Festival can be seen as a legacy of AONB Partnership's success in delivering the £3.1m Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership scheme 'Overlooking the Wye'. During the scheme's final year in 2012, also the AONB's 40th anniversary, 10,000 attended four separate celebratory events held down the Wye Valley. Subsequently the idea for a festival spanning the length of the river emerged.

Wye Valley River Festival 2016 - Outline Programme

<u>Date & Place</u>	Activities
<u>February - April various</u>	Walking and storytelling workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local walkers start exploring, sharing and planning walks that will become part of the River Festival in April and May 2016 The sessions are led by Roger Drury who has been a community arts worker in and around the Forest of Dean for the last 30 years.
<u>February - April Ross, Monmouth, Llandogo</u>	Sing Out Loud Choir workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> choir leaders help build a glorious choral tide of singers with songs about water, rain, rivers, seas, tears and tea to perform during the Festival.
<u>March - April various</u>	Schools Banner making workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local environmental professionals & volunteers working alongside community artists Becky Prior and Faye Joines in 10 schools to create 4m double-sided flags that references river life around the Wye Valley.
	<p>Serai [a place or palace for the coming together of travelling caravans]</p> <p>Wye Serai - the main performance and activity space created around three intriguing caravans of Curiosities and Hydrosities, a 'River Ambulance' and a mysterious Samovar, and the Water Ones wrangling in a comic chaos of pouring and spilling, singing and dancing, as the river characters share their watery dreams.</p>
<u>29th April Hereford</u>	Festival Launch, Evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual spectacle of water, fire, music and performance which announces the first 'Wye Serai'. A procession of illuminated water monsters herald the arrival of the magical Samovar.
<u>30th April Hereford</u>	Hereford River Carnival and Wye Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full day of family fun with music, dance, food and drink, with processions, a fantastic flotilla and thousands of origami fish. Water rituals and aqua play erupts with the Water Ones as the Samovar fire is finally lit and the first Wye Teas are served!
<u>1st May Ross-on-Wye</u>	daytime Wye Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Water Ones continue their stories - celebrating water, life, rivers, seas, washing up, teas and tears – with evocative dances, spillages, songs and silliness. Ross-beer-fest (30th April-2nd May): Beer and Cider Festival, Ross Rowing Club
<u>2nd May Bishopswood Lydbrook</u>	Bishopswood Breakfast, leading to Lydbrook Fair and daytime Wye Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The River A&E Ambulance tests the river's health and the Caravan of Fact and Wonder explores the mysteries and subtleties of H2O, streams, ponds and drains... The Water Ones take their troubles and their dreams downstream with the Samovar Stokers brewing up potions to keep them going.
<u>2nd - 8th May - Redbrook</u>	Sound Installation by Dan Fox <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shimmering cymbals bathed in light echo with the murmured resonances of recorded sounds, local stories, voices, and surprising noises in live interaction with people as they cross Redbrook Bridge.
<u>4th May various (tbc)</u>	Mini Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the intriguing caravans with performances during the day at various village locations.
<u>5th May various (tbc)</u>	Mini Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the intriguing caravans with performances during the day at various village locations.

<u>6th May</u> <u>various (tbc)</u>	Mini Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the intriguing caravans with performances during the day at various village locations.
<u>6th May</u> <u>Old Station</u> <u>Tintern</u>	Luminous Birds & evening Wye Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A water celebration with Samovar tea , performance and nonsense to welcome the opening of Luminous Birds by Kathy Hinde
<u>6th - 15th May</u> <u>Old Station</u> <u>Tintern</u>	Luminous Birds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a magical installation of floating paper birds, swaying in the trees.
<u>6th May</u> <u>Monmouth</u>	Arts and Landscape Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulture’s national conference on Arts and Landscape, Shire Hall Monmouth • Street Performances with River Characters - daytime in town centre
<u>7th May</u> <u>Monmouth</u>	daytime Wye Serai leading to evening show <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulture’s Outdoor Arts commissions on the streets of Monmouth; exciting new work for the outdoors from emerging artists • river characters froth up a bath of delights around the Samovar; musical mischief and wild water spectacle of cooking, cleaning, washing, bathing and splashing lead into night time fire wizardry.
<u>8th May</u> The Slaughters, Symonds Yat East	daytime special Mini Wye Serai and magical woodland walk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the Sap Rising and hear the Earth Move.
<u>11th May</u> <u>various (tbc)</u>	Mini Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the intriguing caravans with performances during the day at various village locations.
<u>12th May</u> <u>various (tbc)</u>	Mini Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the intriguing caravans with performances during the day at various village locations.
<u>13th May</u> <u>various (tbc)</u>	Mini Serai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the intriguing caravans with performances during the day at various village locations.
<u>13th May</u> <u>Tintern</u>	evening Talk: The Art of Sustainability - Rivers, Local meets Global <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live link to Brazil with Professor Henrique Chaves (University of Brasilia, Brazil) in conversation with Simon Evans, Wye and Usk Foundation (booking essential through Eventbrite)
<u>14th May</u> <u>Llandogo</u>	daytime Wye Serai leading to evening performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire torches and musicians converge to meet at the river’s edge. Fantastic illuminations will light the riverside as choirs join with the Water Ones to bless the waters of the Wye.
<u>15th May</u> <u>Chepstow</u>	The Grand Finale: Evening performance of the Wye Serai - Chepstow Racecourse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a river shaped fire sculpture, lanterns in the woods - the resolution of all the water stories and the final servings from the Samovar.



Wye Valley River Festival: Who's Who

Festival Development Team (*covered similar roles in 2014 River Festival).

Festival Director: Phillipa Haynes*.

Artistic Directors: Richard Headon & Jon Beedell (Desperate Men)*

Production Manager: Netty Miles*

Artists & Performers

Desperate men*: "Comedy is just a funny way of being serious" One of the UK's most versatile and inventive outdoor arts companies, Desperate Men's mischievous, warm-hearted work invites audiences to ask serious questions about the world. They have been welcoming people to play and collaborate with them for over 35 years, creating, performing and producing ground-breaking outdoor theatre in the UK and internationally.

www.desperatemen.com

And Now*: working with people, fire structures, fireworks, sound and light, And Now conceive and create visual performance, images and happenings. Their work is unexpected, accessible, entertaining and explores and merges the boundaries of visual and performance art, landscape, installation and spectacle. www.andnow.co.uk

Dan Fox: a musician, composer and audio-visual artist Dan's company, Sound Intervention, specialises in outdoor work: Sound design for illuminated trails, interactive installations, aeolian sound sculptures, sound-walks, street-bands, and mobile Boom Bike sound systems. @soundinterventn www.danfox.net

Kathy Hinde: combining sound, sculpture, image and light, Kathy's work is expressed through audio-visual installations and performances that grow from a partnership between nature and technology. She creates light and sound installations in public spaces, including High Streets and nature reserves, across 4 continents. www.kathyhinde.co.uk

Mr & Mrs Clark*: are Gareth Clark and Marega Palser. Playful and interactive, they relish bringing art forms and people together. A DIY approach to exploring and developing ideas ensures the production of original dance, theatre and site-specific events. Creative, interactive performance pieces for festivals and touring dance and theatre productions have led them all over the world www.mrandmrsclark.co.uk

Tim Hill: a musician, performer and creator of outdoor shows drawing on histories of outdoor ritual, celebration and traditions of circus, village and street bands. Tim's band Tongues of Fire are a riot of reeds and brass, making a rich, wild and unique noise for processing, dancing and festivity. His company, Rag and Bone, creates elemental worlds to wander and dream in. www.tongues-of-fire.co.uk www.rag-bone.org

Roger Drury: a community arts worker in and around the Forest of Dean for the last 30 years.

Becky Prior: a design and fabrication artist based in Bristol, upcycles unusual materials to create beautiful jewellery and also makes puppets and props for theatre, designing decor and site specific artwork for events.

Faye Joines: Combining over 10 years experience in youth work and passion for the arts, she facilitates creative workshops all over Bristol. Her particular areas of interest are Photography and Visual Arts.

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

Main funders

- Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)
- Arts Council England
- Arts Council of Wales
- Big Lottery
- Shire Hall Monmouth
- Environment Agency
- Ernest Cook Trust
- Hereford River Carnival
- Forestry Commission England
- New Grove Trust
- Ross Town Council

Business Sponsors:

- Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire
- Sunshine Radio
- Live 24-Seven
- Monnow Voice
- Forest of Dean & Wye Valley Tourism Association,
- Puzzlewood
- Tintern Old Station
- Wye Forest Retreats
- Visit Herefordshire

Other supportive organisations:

Artspace Cinderford
Foresters' Forest HLF Landscape Partnership
Freshwater Habitats Trust
Gwent Wildlife Trust
Herefordshire Wildlife Trust
Hydrocitizenship / Bath Spa University
Monmouthshire Countryside Service
OPAL (Open Air Laboratories)
Parish Grasslands Project
St Briavels Parish Council
Savoy Youth Theatre
Water City Bristol
Welsh Water
Wye and Usk Foundation

along with contributions from numerous volunteers and various schools and communities along the Wye Valley.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7th March 2016

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs

Purpose

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

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- Andrew Blake, AONB Officer, represented the JAC in November 2015 at the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) Annual General Meeting and the National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference.
- Rory Stewart, Defra Under Secretary of State, told the National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference that "Protected Landscapes are at the heart of what Defra try to do". The Government subsequently protected funding for England's National Parks and AONBs.
- The theme and dates for the next national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference is 'natural beauty in relationship to the health and wellbeing of society' on 28th - 30th June 2016 at Lilleshall National Sports & Conferencing Centre, Newport, Shropshire.
- One of the Conference Field Trips on Wednesday 29th June may possibly be to the Wye Valley (subject to timings and logistics).
- Outstanding Week 2016 is scheduled for 17th -25th September 2016.
- The National Trust have published a report 'AONBs and Development' appraising the planning system in relation to AONBs, in liaison with the NAAONB.

Reasons

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

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

Implications

National Parks & AONB Chairmen's Conference

The NAAONB hosted Rory Stewart, Defra Under Secretary of State, at the AONB and National Park Chairmen's conference on 19th November 2015. Rory Stewart stated that "Protected Landscapes are at the heart of what Defra try to do" and that AONBs are "astonishingly, movingly and staggeringly beautiful areas...and we must not forget the genius of the words Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty". The Minister also witnessed the signing of

an Accord between the NAAONB and National Parks England. The Accord builds on past informal work and more recent closer collaboration, which resulted in the publication of ‘So much more than the View’ earlier in the year. The theme of the Chairmen’s conference was “Protected Landscapes: we mean business” with speakers, including AONB Chairmen, National Park and AONB chief officers and Produced in Kent, talking about the value and relevance of the National Park and AONB designations to local businesses. Attendees also heard about National Grid’s £24million Landscape Enhancement Initiative and Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) which will be launched shortly.

National Trust - AONBs and Development

The National Trust has been commissioning regular research reports since 2013 on particular aspects of the how the planning system is working. The latest of these reports looks at what is happening in AONBs.

The report recognises the Government’s commitment to protecting AONBs, but new research has identified some problems with how safeguards to prevent inappropriate development are being implemented in some places. The report suggests that policy may be fine but it’s the practice where the problem lies. It notes that

the planning system is supposed to steer development towards where it’s most appropriate and can provide most value while protecting other areas for their landscape or wildlife. But with local planning authorities losing staff and expertise and being pressured to make decisions in favour of development, that practice is sometimes falling below what it should be.

The report suggests a number of ways that practice could be improved, including a simple checklist flow-chart to assist local authorities in applying law and policy in AONBs:

[download the report on AONBs and Development \(PDF / 1.5MB\)](#)

Landscapes for Life Conference (L4L2016) – 28th -30th June 2016

The annual National AONB ‘Landscapes for Life’ Conference (L4L2016) will take place at Lilleshall National Sports & Conferencing Centre, Newport, Shropshire and will make the case for natural beauty in relationship to the health and wellbeing of society.

The programme is being finalised but the Wye Valley AONB may feature in several ways:-

- one of the Field Trips, on Wednesday 29th June, may possibly be to the Wye Valley. However this is subject to timings and logistics as the journey from Newport, Shropshire to the Wye Valley AONB will take in the region of 2 hours.
- The work of Greg Dunn’s PhD may form part of a workshop or plenary presentation
- mindSCAPE may form part of a workshop session or plenary presentation, and will certainly be included in the field trip, if that goes ahead.

Outstanding Week

The AONB Family’s inaugural ‘Outstanding Week’, coordinated by the NAAONB took place 19th - 27th September 2015. During the nine days, over 100 events took place in 34 AONBs highlighting the value and relevance of AONBs to both the UK’s economy, and the nation’s health and wellbeing. Plans are already underway for Outstanding Week 2016 on 17th - 25th September 2016. For more information see www.landscapesforlifeevents.org.uk

Background

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is the charity (Number 1,158,871) and trusted voice for the AONB Family. It works to ensure that the natural beauty of all the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is understood and supported at all levels.

TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7th March 2016

AONB REPORTS

Purpose

To advise members of activity of the AONB Unit and other partners.

FOR INFORMATION

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

- a. AONB Management Plan
- b. visits to Wye Valley AONB
- c. LEMUR+ placements
- d. mindSCAPE
- e. Wales Year of Adventure promotions
- f. Undergrounding electricity cables

a. AONB Management Plan 2015-2020

The consultation on the Environment Report for the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan has concluded that there are no further changes necessary. Therefore the Plan is complete and is being prepared for adoption and publication shortly.

b. visits to Wye Valley AONB

The Wye Valley AONB Unit has been approached to host two forthcoming visits:

i) Diane McCrea, recently appointed chair of Natural Resources Wales (NRW), will visit the AONB in March along with NRW Principal Landscape Adviser and the NAAONB Chief Executive Officer, Howard Davies, who is also a NRW Board Member.

ii) a delegation of six or seven people from the Europarc Germany will spend 2dsays in AONB. Europarc is the European Federation of Protected Parks. This German project “Akteure aus Nationalen Naturlandschaften im internationalen Kompetenzaustausch” aims to exchange knowledge, best-practice examples and experience. The group will be on a one-week “competences exchange trip” in mid-October focusing primarily on ‘Regional development and sustainable tourism’. They will stay in the Wye Valley AONB for two days and will also be visiting the Cotswold AONB and Brecon Beacons National Park.

Key objectives of the project are:

- Strengthening the co-operation between the participating European parks
- Enhancing the competency and the motivation of park staff regarding international cooperation
- Increasing the expertise of German and European park staff in fields of park management and nature conservation through the exchange of expert knowledge, experiences and insights into best-practice examples
- Distributing international expertise to a broad audience in Germany and the participating countries
- Strengthening volunteer management in European parks

Other study trips will be visiting other areas and looking at a range of topics including:

- Education for sustainable development (e.g. Junior Ranger)
- Inclusion of people with disabilities (e.g. accessibility, volunteers with disabilities)
- Park Management (e.g. quality standards, evaluations)

At the end of the project the outcomes, experiences and lessons learned will be summarized by the participants and Europarc Germany in a publication and discussed in a conference.

c. LEMUR+ (Learning Environments in Marine, Urban & Rural areas) placements

Shortlisting and Interviews have been undertaken for both the 9 month and 4 month LEMUR+ placements. The 9 month placement commences in April and the 4 month placement will start in May.

All LEMUR+ trainee placements start with Hub Core Training led by the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust where trainees are introduced to the skills they will need for their placements, including species and habitat identification, public engagement and technology skills. The LEMUR+ trainees will be carrying out Phase 1 Habitat Surveys of The Doward and south Herefordshire part of the AONB, along with other tasks supporting the work of the Wye Valley AONB Unit.

d. mindSCAPE

The Big Lottery funded project is nearly half way through the four year programme. Artspace Cinderford continue to deliver the on-going activities with Dementia sufferers and their carers.

There will be presentation on the mindSCAPE project at the national AONB Landscapes for Life Conference 2016.

Nick Critchley, AONB Development Officer, will also be presenting evidence on the success of the mindSCAPE project to the National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs on Tuesday 8th March 2016. Chaired by Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM and serviced by the Campaign for the Protection for Rural Wales, the theme of the meeting is “Health care in rural Wales - The challenges and opportunities”. Other presentations are by Dr Ruth Hussey - Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Richard Lewis - National Professional Lead for Primary Care in Wales, NHS Wales/Welsh Government and James Radcliffe - Researcher.

Nationally there is mounting evidence demonstrating the contribution green spaces can make to mental and physical health and wellbeing. The Faculty of Public Health in association with Natural England recently published a statement giving examples of good practice and advice on how to work in partnership to develop and make best use of green spaces for health and wellbeing. See http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/bs_great_outdoors.pdf.

e. Wales Year of Adventure promotions

The Welsh Protected Landscapes, the 5 AONBs (Anglesey, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, Gower, Llŷn and Wye Valley) and 3 National Parks (Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia) are collaborating on a joint project to promote the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of Wales' protected landscapes, as part of Visit Wales' Year of Adventure.

The main aim of this project is to raise awareness, to a national and international, audience of the Protected Landscapes as year-round visitor destinations, highlighting their overall tourism offering. The project outputs include:

- Opportunities for businesses across all Protected Landscapes to engage with travel writers and photographers to promote the special landscapes of Wales as part of their tourism offer
- Encourage businesses to work together to produce a series of itineraries linking activities, special places, high quality produce and places to stay.
- Produce an online guide for potential visitors to all Protected Landscapes in Wales
- Produce nine Mini Adventure films (one for each Protected Landscape and a collective one) linking the four themes of stay, eat, attractions and activity to fit with Visit Wales promotion of 2015 as the Year of Adventure.

The on-line guides and films are due to be launched in April.

f. Undergrounding update

Since 2006 the Wye Valley AONB Unit has been working with the electricity Distribution Network Organisations (DNOs) to propose overhead powerlines for undergrounding within the AONB. Initially the AONB Unit worked with Central Networks and later with Western Power Distribution, who then took over Central Networks, so now covers South Wales, the Midlands and the South West of England and consequently is the sole DNO for the Wye Valley AONB. Each DNO has a limited budget to spend on undergrounding schemes in Protected Landscapes.

In the current 5 year period for undergrounding powerlines Western Power Distribution have £1.3 million for South Wales and £2.4 million for the West Midlands. The cost of placing 33Kv and larger power cables underground is generally too expensive, so most schemes proposed and considered are 11Kv (3 wires on wooden poles feeding villages, hamlets and individual properties), and lower voltage powerlines. Proposed schemes are considered by Western Power and the area steering groups, which include Protected Landscape staff. Evaluation criteria is based on the visual impact of the power cables, the practicality of undertaking the undergrounding work and the cost, with some rationing of schemes to ensure all Protected Landscapes have the opportunity to benefit.

In the Wye Valley AONB, since 2006, 35 schemes have so far been put forward, varying in length from 100 meters to 3.3 km. The average length of proposed schemes is just under 1.1 km. 10 schemes have been proposed in Monmouthshire, 7 in Gloucestershire and 18 in Herefordshire. Of these 9 schemes have been successfully completed to date with an estimated of just over £600,000. A total length of 7.6km of cable has been moved underground. The average length of a successful scheme is just under 850m.

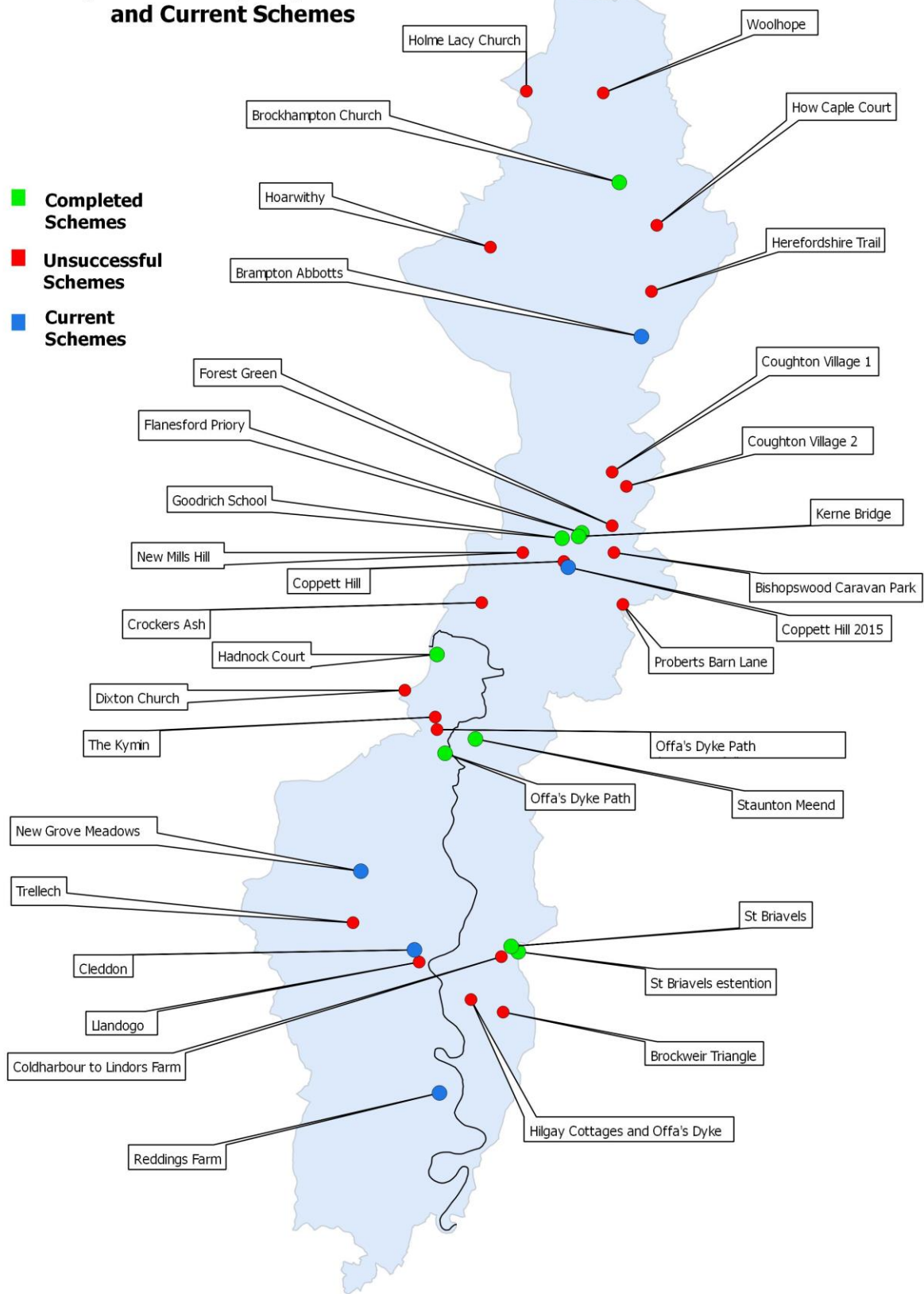
Undergrounding schemes	total length	estimated cost
Monmouthshire 2	2,665m	£185,000
Gloucestershire 3	2,255m	£150,000
Herefordshire 4	2,680m	£265,000
total 9	7,600m	£600,000

Of the 35 schemes proposed, 21 have either been rejected or failed. Schemes have failed for a number of reasons including failure to agree routes or wayleaves with landowners, the lack of a suitable route for the underground cables and/or the close proximity of other intrusive features which lessen the landscape benefit of undergrounding the cables (eg. phone wires using the same poles). The length of schemes rejected or failed is 24.8km, averaging 1.18km per proposal. 5 schemes have failed in Monmouthshire, 4 in Gloucestershire and 12 in Herefordshire.

A further 5 schemes are currently being considered by Western Power, with a length totalling 5.9km. 3 of these are in Monmouthshire (2,045m) and 2 in Herefordshire (3,810m). Another 13 locations, 4 in Monmouthshire, 1 in Gloucestershire and 8 in Herefordshire, have so far been identified for more detailed future investigation.

See attached maps.

Western Power Powerline Undergrounding January 2016 - Complete, Unsuccessful and Current Schemes



**Western Power Powerline Undergrounding
January 2016 - Current and
Potential Schemes**

- **Current Schemes**
- **Potential Schemes**

