

NAAONB UPDATE

Purpose

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

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- A brief report on what the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) has achieved during 2018/19 is appended.
- The national AONB 'Landscapes for Life' Conference will take place in Colchester on 9th -11th July around the theme of 'Outstanding beauty, outstanding opportunity'.
- The AONB Manager, Development Officer and Community Links Officer will be attending the national conference, where the Bowland Award will be passed to new winners.
- The AONB Development Officer and the AONB Community Links Officer are both participating in the professional training 'Taking the Lead' programme, which is supported a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Resilient Heritage grant.
- The AONB Manager attended a meeting with Julian Glover, chair of the Review of Designated Landscapes in England, with the NAAONB.
- The NAAONB have appointed a Wales Development Manager and the AONB Manager was on the interview panel.

'Outstanding beauty, outstanding opportunity' Landscapes for Life Conference 2019

The 2019 conference will be held over the 9th -11th July in Colchester with the support of the Dedham Vale AONB and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. It will form part of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act that paved the way for designated landscapes. It has never been a more important time to demonstrate the value of designated landscapes, with the Designated Landscapes Review progressing in England along with the Environment and Agriculture Bills due soon and the Government's aspiration communicated through the 25 Year Environment Plan: to leave the environment in a better condition than they inherited it.

Speakers from government, biodiversity, environment and academic backgrounds will seek to challenge delegates on what they currently do and how the network might work to support environmental enhancements. During the conference delegates will have the opportunity to shape a 'Colchester Declaration'. This will act as a statement of intent on how the network of designated landscapes can act together to promote real change. There will be ample

opportunity to share knowledge, learn from each other, and inspire others over the contemporary value of the AONB designation and the wonderful landscapes they represent.

The AONB Manager, Development Officer and Community Links Officer will be attending the conference, along with returning the Bowland Award and presenting it to the new winners.

For the full conference programme see <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/events/l4l-conference-2019/programme>

Taking the Lead - Future Landscapes Programme.

Nick Critchley, Wye Valley AONB Development Officer and Sarah Sawyer, Wye Valley AONB Community Links Officer are both participating in the 'Taking the Lead' programme. This is a professional and personal development programme delivered through a cohort of AONB staff, from across the 38 AONBs in England and Wales, to help develop greater collaborative working across the AONB network. Through Topic Working Groups, the participants are concentrating on some of the key challenges facing AONBs, and will report to the Landscapes for Life Conference on progress and recommendations.

Nick Critchley is working in the Staff Development Topic Working Group. They are looking at a number of connecting themes related to the subject, including reviewing and rewriting an AONB Induction Pack which used to exist on CD, but is long outdated. The induction will be targeted towards both new AONB staff and members of AONB Partnerships, JACs etc. It will be a simple PowerPoint presentation or similar with links to allow deeper exploration of subjects if necessary. They are also exploring staff development opportunities including 1:1 support, mentoring and internships, collective skill sharing using the Northern Group of AONBs as an exemplar, and how to develop links with a broader audience more reflective of the population.

Sarah Sawyer is in the Technology, Data and Evidence Topic Working Group. Their research to date has revolved around harnessing the power of big data or crowd source data in potentially providing insight and evidence for AONB work. They invited an 'expert witness' from mobile operator O2 to explain the potential of harnessing big data to help understand more about visitors to protected landscapes. This will be the focus of a facilitated workshop at the AONB conference on 11th July. They will refine their work based on colleagues' feedback from the conference workshop.

The Taking the Lead programme has also provided the opportunity for CPD, in particular a refined self-awareness of working style has developed through the programme. The process has required personal reflection upon psychometric tests, using the Lumina Spark model. The profiles have revealed working styles, strengths and weaknesses. Coaching and conversations with colleagues help compare and contrast how these underpin values. This clear insight into motivations is helping staff, for example in planning the next Wye Valley River Festival. Taking the lead has offered the opportunity to raise awareness of may skill sets and behaviours and how these can help or hinder collaborative working, while providing strategies to overcome weaknesses.

The Taking the Lead programme is an enriching experience for participants and is having positive benefits in work practices locally and nationally. Much of the focus of the programme involves looking at ways to improve collaboration and partnership working in individual settings and across the AONB Family.

The support from the National Lottery will help the NAAONB Charity and the AONB Family to be well positioned to take full advantage of the opportunities that emerge from the Designated Landscapes Review in England.

Wales Development Manager

The purpose of the role is to:

- Maximise opportunities and support collaboration across the designated landscapes in Wales.
- Develop opportunities for AONB partnerships to support delivery and targeting of future land management post-Brexit
- Optimise landscape scale resilience and connectivity in AONBs to address biodiversity decline
- Lead on the co-ordination of input to, and the production of, responses to national consultations, harnessing diverse pools of knowledge and supporting the development of the Welsh AONB partnerships as a unified voice

The AONB Manager was on the interview panel, which met at the end of May and a suitable appointment has been made and is due to take up the role in September.

Background

The NAAONB is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK's AONBs. Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other Protected Areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued. It takes a collaborative and partnership-based approach to working with its membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see:

www.landscapesforlife.org.uk