



Annual report 2020 – 2021 including financial summary

Upon Covid-19 Lockdown in March 2020, a comprehensive review was undertaken of the AONB Unit Work Programme Plan for 2020/21. AONB Unit Initiatives were risk assessed and categorised as Green=ok; Yellow=possible disruption; Red=severe disruption, in relation to Covid-19 guidance. This was reviewed by the AONB Technical Officers' Working Party (TOWP). The majority of works could continue with AONB staff 'Working from Home' with extensive use of Microsoft Teams and occasional outdoor site visits as appropriate/ necessary.

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-2025</i> <i>Strategic Objectives</i>		Outcomes 2020-2021
AONB Management Plan <i>WV-L1</i> <i>WV-P3</i>	AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise adoption of Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Publicise and distribute Wye Valley AONB Management Plan Monitor use of Management Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries and by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public consultation comments assimilated on Public Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-25 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment for the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report was consulted on and Screening completed Post Consultation Draft Management Plan endorsed by JAC JAC endorsed change of Plan period to 2021-2026 Management Plan 2021-2026 finalised for adoption by Local Authorities State of the AONB Report produced. All stages of the AONB Management Plan process were available on https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/management-plans/ AONB Management Plan referred to in planning application responses and reports.
AONB Partnership events <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P6</i> <i>WV-P7</i>	AONB Partnership events For JAC members, AONB Ward members, representatives from partner organisations and local Town/Parish/Community Councils and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour cancelled but usual invitees encouraged to explore Wye Valley River Festival Re-Imagined digital programme, as postponed Festival coincided with cancelled Tour date. AONB Unit Annual Report 2019/20 presented to JAC in July.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run AONB Partnership Seminar/forum for 50th Anniversary of designation of Wye Valley AONB Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues in late September 2020 Promote & disseminate JAC contacts & processes for other organisations & individuals to feed into JAC & AONB Partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONBM gave public on-line presentation to launch 50th Anniversary. 65 people attended, available on the AONB's Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve5iuGRZmsA .
Planning, Development Control and Strategic Policy <i>WV-D1</i> <i>WV-D2</i> <i>WV-D3</i>	AONB Planning, Development Control and Strategic Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renew contract for year to support AONB Manager with planning advice. Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents Annually monitor & review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB Engage in development and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB Deliver CPD & training for LA Planning staff & members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 602 planning applications received across the Wye Valley AONB. AONBM & FAO monitored and reviewed development trends that affect the AONB. Contract renewed with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Planning Department, shared with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. AONBM provided comments on 3 significant planning applications; 2 in Herefordshire and 1 in Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire and also provided advice on the 'setting of the AONB' to Herefordshire Council and local residents. AONBM liaised with NAAONB over Planning White Paper response and status of AONB as Planning consultee.
AONB Farming Awards <i>WV-L5</i> <i>WV-F1</i> <i>WV-F5</i> <i>WV-C2</i> <i>WV-E2</i>	AONB Farming Awards Promote & publicise 13th Awards for farmers, landowners and land managers that make an outstanding contribution to conserving &/or enhancing the features, special qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley AONB. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Awards and handle entries Site visits of all farm entries for short-listing Judging Present the prizes at the Monmouthshire Show 4th July 2020 Involve winner in Open Farm Sunday event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These were cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic, as was the Monmouthshire Show 2020, where the Awards are presented. AONBDO liaised with NFU, CLA, Herefordshire Meadows Group & Herefordshire Rural Hub to promote the NAAONB's Environmental Land Management (ELM) Advocacy programme and a national workshop on Countryside Stewardship, the new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and update on the ELM scheme. 1200 farmer & landowner contacted in & around Wye Valley AONB. 22 attended workshop.
Habitat Conservation <i>WV-L2</i> <i>WV-L4</i> <i>WV-B2</i> <i>WV-B4</i> <i>WV-F4</i>	Landscape & Habitat Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise monthly volunteer task days, including on partner sites and Reserves Implement as appropriate the recommendations of the venison marketing feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONB Volunteers were unable to work on site in large groups due the pandemic. Only small amount of conservation work undertaken by local individuals or small family groups. Control of Japanese Knotweed & American Skunk Cabbage co-ordinated

<p style="text-align: center;">AONB Unit Work Programme <i>Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-2025</i> Strategic Objectives</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes 2020-2021</p>
<p>WV-W3 WV-W4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Lower Wye Green Infrastructure (GI) and Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project working with local land owners, managers & stakeholders • Manage control of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) particularly identified stands of Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Skunk Cabbage • Pursue opportunities to continue Phase 1 and priority BAP habitat surveys to complete coverage of the AONB • Liaise over national roadside verge & B-Line initiatives with local authorities, Highways Agency & other stakeholders • Continue collaboration with Ross Town Council over management of Ross Riverside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Natural Flood Management, Riparian Tree management & Farm Advice project with EA & Herefordshire Wildlife Trust enabled 6 farms to receive targeted advice on riparian tree and riparian habitat management. • NFM project in Valley Brook, Gloucestershire, with EA funding enabled 6 farms to receive targeted advice on NFM and sensitive land management practices. 1 pond restored and livestock restricted to prevent poaching. Other NFM interventions agreed. • NFM & Riparian tree work was able to progress where farmers & land managers undertook work themselves. Commissioning contractors was usually curtailed by Covid restrictions. • INNS control programme expanded and community engagement undertaken via social media & local press, increasing knowledge and understanding. 126 stands of Japanese Knotweed were treated and 19 stands of American Skunk Cabbage, working with 63 landowners across 4 sub-catchments in the Lower Wye Valley. • In line with the Colchester Declaration, AONB staff worked with local wildlife and conservation experts to choose a list of 5 species, or assemblage of species, around which conservation effort can be galvanized over the coming years. The species are representative of the AONB Special Qualities [SQ], as identified in the AONB Management Plan, and will benefit from positive landscape scale management. The following have been selected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Woodland [SQ2] - Woodland Butterfly assemblage (particularly Wood White / Pearl Bordered Fritillary) ○ River [SQ3, SQ10] - Water Crowfoot ○ Grassland [SQ4] - Bumblebee assemblage (particularly Shril Carder Bee, Brown Banded Carder Bee, Redshank Carder Bee, long horned bee) ○ Orchards & Veteran Trees [SQ27, SQ18] - Noble Chafer beetle ○ General [SQ1, SQ4, SQ5, SQ26] - Hedgehog • DO continued to provide advice on Floodplain Meadow Restoration work undertaken in partnership with Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Herefordshire Meadows Group.

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Landscape scale conservation <i>WV-L1</i> <i>WV-L2</i> <i>WV-B3</i> <i>WV-P3</i> <i>WV-P4</i>	Landscape scale conservation Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB. Potential target area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Woolhope Dome workshop and collaborate over outputs and outcomes • Support landscape connectivity initiatives including Wentwood to Wyre and collaborative projects with orchards, veteran & riverine trees. • National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross & Goodrich with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust & others • Work with partners in Monmouthshire on Long Forest and Usk to Wye initiatives • Continue work with Herefordshire Meadows Network, Monmouthshire Meadows and Parish Grassland Project. • Pursue roll-out of Natural Flood Management initiatives throughout the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with partners over Wentwood to Wyre - Forests without Frontiers project proposals • Nature Recovery mapping work initiated with Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and Malvern Hills AONB Partnership. • Downard landscape management meetings with Woodland Trust, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England • Woolhope Dome Workshop postponed due to Covid restrictions.
Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) <i>WV-F1</i> <i>WV-F2</i> <i>WV-F5</i> <i>WV-B6</i>	Restoring Our Amazing River (ROAR) Support 2 Catchment Advisors working in AONB & adjacent Garren & Gamber catchment in partnership with Wye & Usk Foundation through Water Environment Grant (WEG) funded project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage farmers & land managers with tailored advice and produce c100 Farm Plans • Promote land management practices to reduce impacts in the Wye catchment. • Improve understanding and acceptance amongst Farmers, land managers & stakeholders • Host demonstrations of effective working practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2 farm advisors employed by the Wye and Usk Foundation (WUF) and hosted by the AONB were furloughed for 4 months. • Reviewed outputs with Wye & Usk Foundation and Catchment Advisors resumed farm advice work either socially distanced or on phone & on-line.
Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) <i>WV-L1</i> <i>WV-B3</i> <i>WV-C1</i>	Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of SDF to potential applicants • Assist potential applicants with application process and project development • Collate SDF project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLO liaised with project proposers and advised applicants. • SDF Panel met in December 2020 & March 2021, both via Zoom. • 11 project applications submitted and all approved with full allocation of 2020/21 SDF delivering £366,600 of spend in AONB with average SDF rate of 25%.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating SDF funds. • Training for SDF Assessment Panel members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR on social media and website, plus promoted through JAC, Community Councils and local interest groups. • New member recruited to Assessment Panel & introduction of updated WG guidance & HCF AONB Fund. • WG officers monitored projects & outputs remotely/on-line.
Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) <i>WV-L1</i> <i>WV-B3</i> <i>WV-C1</i>	Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) to potential applicants • Assist potential applicants with application process and project development • Collate HCF AONB Fund project applications for the SDF Assessment Panel and liaise with HCF • Service SDF Assessment Panel recommending allocations to HCF. • Training for SDF Assessment Panel members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First 4 applications assessed by SDF Panel and grants awarded by HCF • CLO liaised with applicants and HCF over refining processes and procedures. • SDF Panel induction during on-line meeting.
Wye Valley River Festival <i>WV-A1</i> <i>WV-L5</i> <i>WV-C2</i>	Wye Valley River Festival 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Festival with 'Time' theme including outreach pre-Festival & follow-on throughout year. • Host 'Art in the Landscape' conference for National Association for AONBs • Pursue additional funding from other contributors & sponsors. • Complete all claims and evaluations • Evaluate future prospects & governance for Festival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fourth Wye Valley River Festival on theme of 'Time' had to be completely re-imagined because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, and postponed from an outdoor art & environment festival on 2nd - 17th May to an on-line festival on 21st - 27th September 2020. • Nearly all site based events were cancelled/abandoned. But Wye Valley River Festival Re-Imagined provided fresh opportunities for outreach and community engagement activities, including filmmaking workshops and some schools' engagement. • New website successfully launched www.wyevalleyriverfestival.co.uk was the main platform for the Festival, hosting a broad range of shows, performances, talks, podcasts, music and workshops for all ages. In total 141 new pieces of work were commissioned during the Festival plus 19 short films in early May. Over 90hours of content was created, commissioned, produced or coordinated and uploaded, including by 222 paid artists and contributors, as well as a range of local community volunteers. A diversity of artists and environmental &

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		<p>scientific experts prepared and presented material inspiring us to change the way we think about the Wye Valley and Time in all its many facets. It is estimated there were nearly 90,000 downloads or views of content from an approximate audience of 11,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As much of the programme as possible was made accessible with British Sign Language, captions and audio descriptions. • Post- Wye Valley River Festival review all carried out on-line. • Evaluation report and funding claims progressed along with potential future new CIC governance options, endorsed by the JAC, taking account of the five tests previously endorsed in the Wye Valley River Festival Business Plan 2019-2024. • Postponed Festival meant National Association for AONBs' (NAAONB) 'Art in the Landscape' conference no longer aligned or incorporated, but Art in the Landscape strategy endorsed by JAC.
MindSCAPE – Foresters' Forest HLF funding 2018 - 2022 WV-W5 WV-C2 WV-P9	MindSCAPE Initiative enabling people living with dementia to reconnect with the landscape, through arts and creative environmental activities, both in Care homes & established activity group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage project and submit reports & claims to Foresters' Forest LPS for HLF • Supervise contractor, Artspace Cinderford, organising regular creative sessions, workshops and social activities for participants. • Develop opportunities to expand project • Share good practice with other AONBs & stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite Covid lockdown, ArtSpace continued project on-line, maintaining virtual contact with participants. ArtSpace rang all participants weekly during lockdown and established flourishing Facebook groups. • 4 creative activities videos made available for all on Facebook, website and YouTube, with over 1,100 views/plays. • 2 Care home continued engagement with activity through online sessions. • Project received CPRE Gloucestershire Award
Youth Rangers – Foresters' Forest WV-F4 WV-C2 WV-P6	Youth Rangers – Foresters' Forest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue structured programme of activity for 5th 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 and further opportunities to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one face to face/on-site activity held for Youth Rangers due to Covid restrictions, but events and activities arranged remotely for individual participation within Youth Ranger's own locality: • Equipment packs supplied including wildlife ID cards, magnifying glass, pooter, hammock, fire-stick & OS map along with on-line guidance and self-guided challenges, eg. Geocaching, camp-making, film making & wildlife ID & participation in Big Garden Bird Watch • 4 new volunteers recruited to run Youth Rangers going forward.

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Website and social media WV-C2 WV-A1	Website, Public Relations and social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular press & social media releases and magazine articles / advertorial • On-going updating and management of www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and social media sites e.g. Facebook, Instagram and twitter. • Maintenance of www.wyevalleywalk.org and hosting of www.overlookingthewye.org.uk & www.wyevalleyriverfestival.org.uk websites. • Investigate re-establishing 'Picturesque' as a regular on-line AONB newsletter, to provide information and interpretation to increase awareness and appreciation of the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website refinement & updating on going • IO co-ordinated regular social media posts on Facebook & Twitter and social media take-overs • 'Documenting Now' captured 13 local people's feelings, fears and hopes as they lived through the pandemic in the AONB. Monmouth-based photographer and film maker Emma Drabble documented the impact of Covid-19 on these rural lives and local businesses. 8 of the audio portraits are on the AONB website https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/caring-for-wye-valley-aonb/our-work/our-projects/documenting-now-life-in-the-aonb-during-the-pandemic/ and the full 13 on the Wye Valley AONB YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnSKF3l8yvje2Cb1gyY1trQ/videoS.
Public Relations & Outreach WV-C2 WV-E4 WV-A1	Exhibitions, Activities & Outreach Promote the AONB through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks/presentations to local groups • Stands at the Wye Valley River Festival, Monmouthshire Show and other relevant shows. • Gilpin2020 events, local exhibitions and other local appropriate / prestigious events. • 50th Anniversary of designation of Wye Valley AONB programme of events • Promote & lead guided walks, events, children's activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB Office handled significant increase in enquiries following lockdowns as people searched for "nice places to go for a walk or picnic by the river", as most local tourism staff were furloughed and AONB Office phone number comes top in Google searches. • Gilpin2020 events cancelled due to Covid restrictions, but 2 online talks/ lectures delivered: on Gilpin and the Wye Tour in partnership with the Gloucestershire Historical Association • Wye Valley AONB 50th Anniversary events programme revised due to pandemic and Anniversary Talk given on Zoom by AONBM with all 100 (free) tickets taken (see above) • IO co-ordinated regular social media take-overs and led planning & promotion of 50walks@50 https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/50-walks50/
Undergrounding WV-U2 WV-P4	Undergrounding Continue working with Western Power to identify power-lines within the AONB suitable for undergrounding, via Western Power South Wales Protected Landscape Undergrounding group and the West Midlands Undergrounding group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO contacted all Parish Councils and asked to put forward schemes. Interest shown by 8 Councils and numerous private residents. • Negotiations with Western Power DNO on-going • The JAC endorsed the proposed undergrounding of overhead power lines across Offa's Dyke Path National Trail on The Kymin.
Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places	Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government (WG) and Wales Designated Landscapes Partnership (WDLP) approved 4 projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decarbonisation of AONB Office

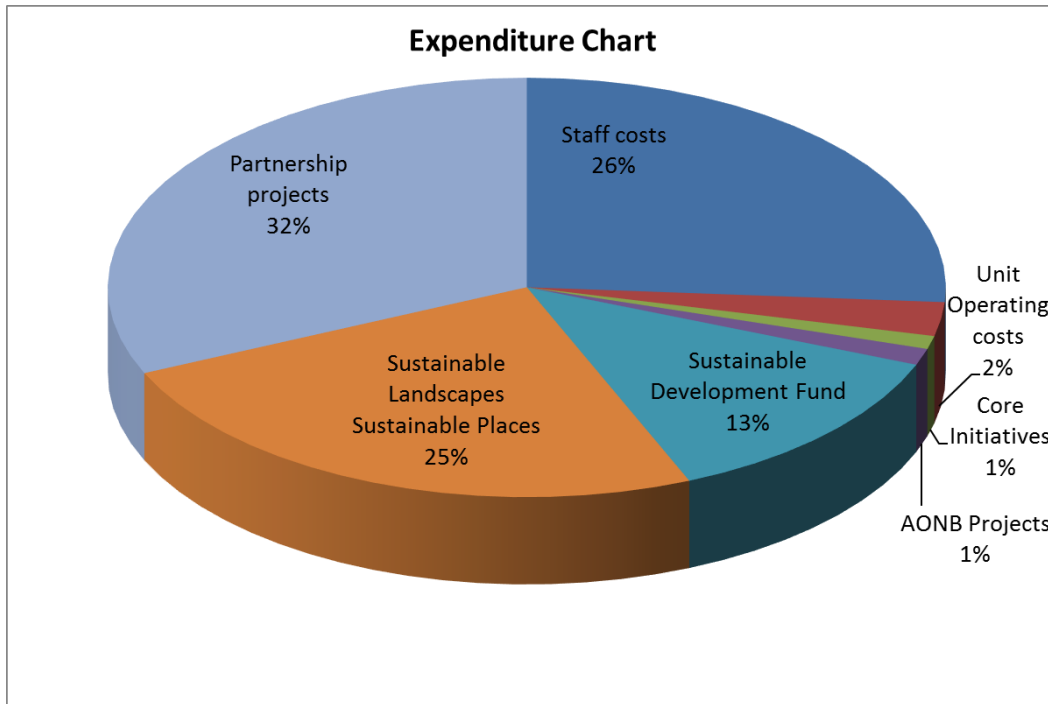
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<p>WV-C1 WV-S2 WV-S4 WV-R4</p>	<p>Welsh Government capital investment scheme for Designated Landscapes focussed on decarbonisation, more resilient rural economies and more sustainable tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decarbonisation of Old Station Tintern (Yr 1 of 2) ○ Wye Valley AONB Travel & Transport (Year 1 of 2) ○ Wye Valley Access improvements (Yr 1 of 2) ● <i>Decarbonisation of AONB Office:</i> AONB diesel van replaced with EV van. Old port-a-cabin meeting room removed and building work commenced on new extension for meeting room, new insulated roof & walls, full double glazing of windows and more efficient heating & lighting. ● <i>Decarbonisation of Old Station Tintern (Yr 1 of 2):</i> Asbestos & Ecology surveys completed also Café refit and Planning & Listed Building pre-application advice sought for Yr2 work. ● <i>Wye Valley AONB Travel & Transport (Year 1 of 2):</i> Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) tendered and commissioned ARUP to undertake Wye Valley (AONB) Villages Travel & Transport study. Meetings (mostly on-line) held with stakeholders MCC, AONB & 4 Community Councils. ARUP on-line workshops & presentation of Stage 1 Report with SWOT analysis, baseline data/evidence & stakeholder mapping. Draft Stage 2 proposals, Vision and principles on-line workshops with stakeholders. ● <i>Wye Valley Access improvements (Yr 1 of 2):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapel Hill Lane, Tintern: 20 NFM cross-drains and log water-bars embedded into the road's surface. ○ Cleddon Shoots: Preliminaries (consents, designs, tendering, identification of ecological risks etc.) & contractor appointed & site supervision meeting held. ○ Piercefield: repairs made to Grotto viewpoint & monument and 4 interpretative ceramic plaques replaced. ● AONBM liaison with WG and WDLP over monitoring and Yr2 projects and proposals.
<p>Wye Valley Walk WV-S1 WV-S2 WV-R1 WV-P5</p>	<p>Wye Valley Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership, including refreshing way-marking ● Monitor counters along Walk ● Manage evolution of Passport scheme ● Review Cicerone Route Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IO & FAO dispatched Passports & information as requested. ● 2 riverbank landslips following floods necessitated closure and diversion of route at Biblins and Ganarew. LWVPO assessed landslips and signposted diversions with MCC, Balfour Beatty Living Places/Herefordshire Council and Forestry England

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge, Redbrook Bridge and Tintern Wireworks Bridge. Progress Monmouth riverbank erosion solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lockdowns prevented timely collection of counter data along the route. Walking & reviewing whole route for revised Cicerone Route Guide postponed due to Covid restrictions. Work commenced on revising http://www.wyevalleywalk.org/ AONBM in liaison with Gloucestershire County Council over repair & maintenance of Tintern Wireworks Bridge. LWVPO coordinated preliminary assessment of 600m of path at Wyesham, Monmouth, in liaison with NRW & MCC, & commissioned contractors for topographical survey & cross-section designs.
Offa's Dyke Collaboratory <i>WV-H1</i>	<p>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological research and investigation into the landscape significance of the 8th century monument Participate in Collaboratory conferences, meetings and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All archaeological activity suspended due to Covid restrictions AONBM & fellow Convenors met on-line. Edition 2 of Journal published.
Overlooking the Wye legacy <i>WV-H1</i> <i>WV-H3</i> <i>WV-P5</i>	<p>Overlooking the Wye legacy</p> <p>Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye Landscape Partnership Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilpin2020 Support & promote the collaborative programme of events to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Gilpin and the Wye Tour, including walks; talks; exhibitions; and Big Draw event in October 2020. Reprint of Walks leaflets Ongoing repair & maintenance of Overlooking the Wye infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary review of interpretation & infrastructure, some repairs & maintenance initiated where Covid guidance allowed. Gilpin2020 events and exhibitions cancelled due to Covid-19, with possible review as to whether to resurrect programme in 2021.
Partnerships (local / regional) <i>WV-R2</i> <i>WV-P3</i> <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P6</i> <i>WV-P7</i>	<p>Partnership</p> <p>Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Wye Catchment Management Partnership Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and support with NAAONB work including on 'Art in the Landscape' (CLO on Steering Group, & Strategy adopted by JAC), Green Recovery and Glover Review (AONBM providing evidence on proposed National Landscapes Service). Active participation in Wye Catchment Partnership (DO & AONBM), Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (AONBM), Herefordshire

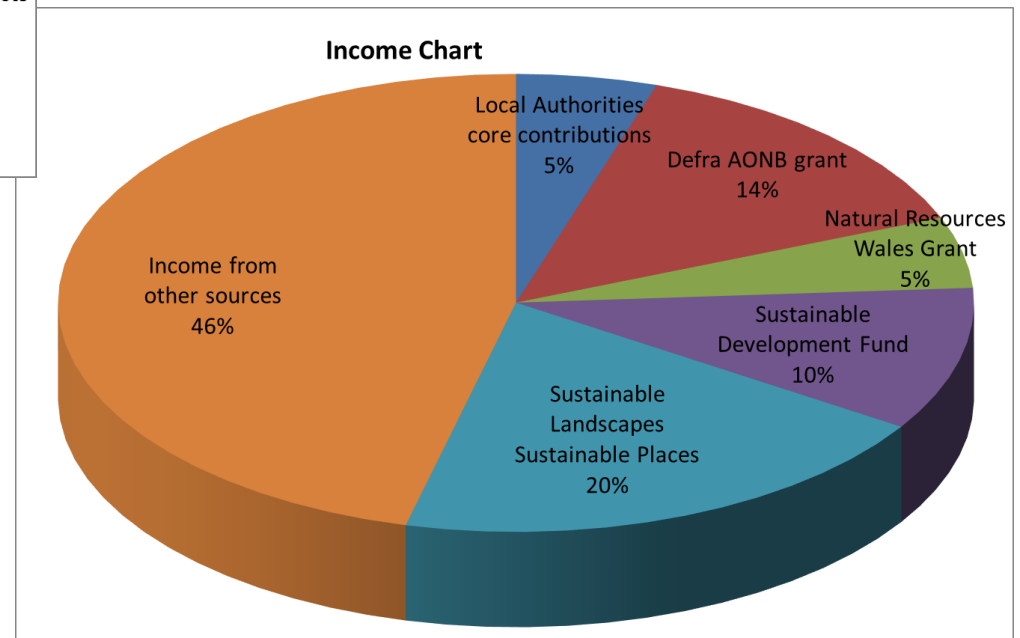
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, South East Wales Tourism Forum, Visit Monmouthshire, Visit Herefordshire and Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire Wye Valley AONB Woodland Projects group Creative Canopy 	<p>Meadows Network (DO), Offa's Dyke Collaboratory (AONBM), Dark Skies Wales (AONBM), South East Wales Tourism Forum (IO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONBM involvement in discussion and feedback with local authorities, DEFRA & Welsh Government on lockdown & opening-up impacts and implications for Designated Landscapes & wider countryside
Collaboration (Designated Landscapes) <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P9</i>	<p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and Europarc seminars & events Work with Welsh Government and Designated Landscapes in Wales taking forward the National Landscapes Partnership Work with DEFRA and others in progressing Proposals in Glover Review of Designated Landscapes in England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AONBM contributed to NAAONB Lead Officers meeting, AGM, training, CEO recruitment sounding board, agri-environment workshops (with DO) and collaborative discussions and sharing of good practice. CLO on Art in the Landscape Steering Group, The Designated Landscapes in Wales collectively published the Scenic Wales calendar 2021. NAAONB Wales Development Manager co-ordinated regular on-line meetings of Welsh AONB lead officers and occasional AONB Staff meetings.
Governance <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P2</i>	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group Prepare grant bids and claims for Natural Resources Wales and Defra, and other funding bodies as required. Continue implementation of recommendations from AONB Good Governance Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Officers' Working Party (TOWP) meeting held in June on-line, also in October & February. Relevant JAC agenda items prepared by TOWP and AONBM and distributed by Monmouthshire County Council as JAC Clerk Steering Group met in October to progress AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2021-2024 and scrutinise 2020-21 spend profile. Met in February to finalise AONB Memorandum of Understanding 2021-2024 and endorse provisional budgets for 2021-22 & onward projections. July Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meeting cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. Information Paper circulated in lieu of meeting. JAC AGM held in November on-line (MSTeams) likewise March JAC.
Monitoring <i>WV-L4</i> <i>WV-B5</i> <i>WV-H2</i> <i>WV-S3</i> <i>WV-P8</i>	<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data, including habitats and species, heritage, tourism and recreation etc. Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan Action Plan Undertake Fixed point photography across the AONB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 Habitat mapping continued where Covid guidance allowed AONB Fixed Point Photography of 41 sites completed under Covid guidance NAAONB KPI Metrics collated and submitted. Data collation for State of the AONB Report

AONB Unit Work Programme <i>Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-2025</i> <i>Strategic Objectives</i>		Outcomes 2020-2021
Funding and resources <i>WV-P1</i> <i>WV-P2</i> <i>WV-P3</i>	Funding and resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue pursuing funding and develop opportunities for external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects Commence fundraising campaign for Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF) Wye Valley AONB Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding bids submitted for aspects of Wye Valley River Festival; NFM & Riparian Tree projects in England; NLHF #15 Minute Heritage project in Wales. AONBM collaborated with Welsh Government, Welsh AONBs & National Parks on development of the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places capital funding programme. Welsh Government offer accepted of additional revenue funding for 'Resilient National Parks and AONBs – Financial Support for Biodiversity, Decarbonisation and Sustainable Tourism' All bids and claims submitted on time, where HC sign off processes permitted.
Work placements <i>WV-P5</i> <i>WV-P9</i>	Work placements Support the needs of student placements/group projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unable to host or support due to Covid restrictions.

Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts						
	Expenditure	2019/20	2020/21	Income	2019/20	2020/21
	Staff costs	211,010	206,732	Local Authorities core contributions	49,002	49,002
	Unit Operating costs	22,202	20,623	Defra AONB grant	130,614	137,645
	Core Initiatives	7,465	8,005	Natural Resources Wales Grant	49,600	49,600
	AONB Projects	17,733	10,050	Sustainable Development Fund	55,000	100,000
	Sustainable Development Fund	55,000	100,000	Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places	-	194,700
	Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places	-	194,700	Income from other sources	218,557	260,024
	Partnership projects	189,363	250,862	TOTAL	502,773	790,971
	TOTAL	502,773	790,972			



The Wye Valley AONB Unit is the lead delivery agent for the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership dedicated to conserving & enhancing the nationally designated Wye Valley AONB, guided by the statutory Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and staffed by employees of the representative local authorities; Forest of Dean District Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council. The AONB Partnership is led by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) with the key funding partners, being DEFRA, Natural Resources Wales, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire County Council, making up the AONB Steering Group. The Host Authority responsible for the AONB Unit's finances is Herefordshire Council. The AONB Steering Group annually review and agree the budgets for the AONB Unit, endorsed by the JAC. The audited accounts of the Host Authority are available from: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/2155/council-accounts-202021>



Key Officers' abbreviations: AONBM = AONB Manager; DO = Development Officer; CLO = Community Links Officer; IO = Information Officer; FAO = Finance & Admin. Officer; LWVPO = Lower Wye Valley Projects Officer