

## NAAONB UPDATE

### ***Purpose***

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

FOR INFORMATION

### ***Key Issues***

- The national 'Landscapes for Life' Conference 2021 was held on-line in early July 'hosted' by the five Devon AONBs.
- John Watkins has taken over from Howard Davises as NAAONB Chief Executive. As a leaving event, the Wye Valley AONB Unit hosted a walk for Howard and the NAAONB team.
- AONB Lead Officers met on-line to debate the forthcoming Government response to the Glover Landscape Review due later this year.
- The NAAONB will be a signatory to a Global Statement on climate change in Protected Areas for COP26 (see attached draft)
- Recruitment is underway for a new NAAONB Wales Development Manager
- The national AONBs Chairpersons' Conference and AGM for the NAAONB will be held on-line on 18th November.

### **Landscapes for Life Conference July 2021**

The NAAONB held its first ever online annual conference in July, having postponed the 2020 conference due to the Pandemic. 'A Climate for Change - Climate Change and Nature Recovery in National Landscapes' was the conference theme, examining the essential role the landscape approach plays in tackling climate change and nature recovery, essentially two sides of the same coin. It was hosted 'in' Devon, as intended for 2020, by Blackdown Hills, East Devon, North Devon Coast, South Devon and Tamar Valley AONB Partnerships.

Keynote speakers included Dr Andrew Hartley, Manager of the Climate Impacts Modelling Team at The Met Office; Alan Law, Deputy Chief Executive of Natural England; Lord Benyon, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity at DEFRA; Dr Anjana Khatwa, NAAONB Trustee, on diversity, access and inclusion; Professor David Crouch; Siôn McGeever, Deputy Director for Access, Landscapes, Peatland and Soil at DEFRA; Dr Ruth Little, Lecturer in Human Geography, Sheffield University; Cathy Case, Farmer, Riverford Organic Farmers and a range of presenters from AONBs and National

Parks. The Conference Blog is available here:

<https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/events/landscapes-life-conference/L4L-Conference-Blog>

Andrew Blake, AONB Manager, Nick Critchley, AONB Development Officer and Nickie Moore, Lower Wye Projects Officer attended on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.

## **New CEO**

John Watkins has taken over from Howard Davies as the new NAAONB Chief Executive. John had been Head of Policy for Future Economy at Welsh Government and previously Head of Landscape and Outdoor Recreation, with responsibilities for AONBs & National Parks. Howard was Chief Executive for 10 years, leading the NAAONB and the AONB Family through the impacts of austerity; to closer relationships with Government in England and Wales, and direct DEFRA sponsorship; transforming leadership and collaborative skills across the AONB Family; raising ambition around climate change and nature recovery through the Colchester Declaration and generally building influence and respect for AONBs across a wide range of organisations.

The Wye Valley AONB Unit were honoured to be asked to arrange and host a leaving walk for Howard and the NAAONB team, which took place at Symonds Yat.

## **Lead Officers' Meeting & Glover Review**

AONB Lead Officers met on-line in early October to discuss the Minister's Statement in June and Government's full response to the Glover Landscape Review, due later this year. The key message from the Glover Review was that Protected Landscapes (AONBs & National Parks) need a renewed mission to fulfil their potential to deliver for people, place and nature and need the best possible purposes, powers, governance, ambition and resources to make that happen. Officers also debated the opportunities and implications of Glover's "Proposal 24: AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes". It was widely recognised that this should be seen as a package, with a new name being commensurate with new purposes, powers and resources.

## **Global Statement on climate change in Protected Areas for COP26**

The NAAONB is working with National Parks UK and international colleagues on a Global Joint Statement on climate change in Protected Areas for COP26. The intention is to bring together as many signatories as possible from Protected Areas around the world to set out the potential for Protected Landscapes to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly through nature-based solutions. Other countries/organisations involved include: the Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas, IUCN, WCPA, EUROPARC, US National Park Service, Parks Canada, South African National Parks, International Ranger Federation, Parks and Wildlife Finland, plus interest from Protected Landscapes in Columbia, Chile, RedParques (Central & South America), Israel and Australia.

Appended below is a draft version of the Joint Statement. Clearly this Statement on its own will not deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Rather it will be an important mechanism for Protected Landscapes across the globe to use COP26 to highlight the potential role we play in addressing the biodiversity and climate emergency. In the UK this will be another opportunity to reinforce the message that opportunities for expanded delivery on biodiversity and climate change will need increased resources.

### **Recruitment for new NAAONB Wales Development Manager.**

The AONB Manager is on the Interview Panel for the new NAAONB Wales Development Manager. Ian Rappel has left the role after 2 years to take up the post of Manager for the Real Farming Trust at the emerging College for Real Farming and Food Culture. We wish Ian well with this opportunity to promote and develop the philosophy and practice of agroecology.

The NAAONB have 12 months funding in place for the Wales Development Manager and are in discussions to support a further 2 year work programme. This post will develop the National Association's mission to support and develop the network and ambitions of the AONB partnerships in Wales, to ensure they have a strong collective voice and a positive impact on the places for which we care. They will help optimise opportunities for Welsh AONB partnerships to deliver on national priorities, including tackling the nature and climate emergency and post-Covid economic reconstruction; engage a more diverse and representative audience who actively participate in shaping priorities; voicing support for AONBs and to deliver greater parity between the AONBs and National Parks in Wales.

### **Chairperson's conference & AGM, on-line, 18th Nov.**

The NAAONB is organising a Chair-level conference for AONBs and National Parks on 18<sup>th</sup> November March. The title of this year's conference is 'Nature Positive and Carbon Negative: Protected Landscapes and the Climate Crisis'. Speakers include Lord Benyon - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DEFRA, Tony Juniper - Chair of Natural England and NAAONB Chief Executive, John Watkins. Small group discussions will consider the challenges raised by the speakers, particularly around creating a new statement of intent with regard to climate change actions. The NAAONB AGM will follow the conference.

### ***Background***

The NAAONB is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK's AONBs. It works on behalf of its membership, fostering collaboration and collective action between the 300 staff of the AONB Family, the 700 elected members that support the AONB partnerships and the many partners with whom the NAAONB does business at the local and national levels. For more information see: [www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk)