



## Annual report 2022 – 2023 including financial summary

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives |   | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| WV-L1<br>WV-P3   | <b>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026</b><br>1) Publicise and promote Wye Valley AONB Management Plan<br>2) Monitor use of Management Plan in Planning Applications, Public Inquiries and by stakeholders   | 1) Reference to the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan is made in almost all planning application representations, reiterated by the appointment in January of the sPO, helping uphold the vision for the designation and the priorities for its management, particularly in relation to development management.<br>2) Since the sPO was appointed more consistent monitoring was achieved.<br>a) From reading planning officer reports after the sPO has made representation and when decisions are issued by LPAs, the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, which is a material planning consideration in decision-making, is often either ignored or misinterpreted by LPAs.<br>b) The sPO has identified that, frustratingly, genuine constructive comments and request for conditions such as 'no additional external lighting being implemented unless otherwise agreed with the LPA prior to installation', which itself would help the promotion of dark skies and conserve biodiversity, is often being ignored - bearing in mind that this condition would appear to meet the Welsh Government Circular (WGC) 016/2014 "The Use of Planning Conditions for Development Management" and/or the 'six tests' within Planning Practice Guidance and would help avoid unacceptable light pollution in the AONB. |
| WV-D1<br>WV-D2<br>WV-D3<br>WV-P4   | <b>AONB Planning &amp; Development Control</b><br>1) Review contract for Planning Advice support jointly with Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.<br>2) Comment on relevant Planning Applications and strategic planning documents<br>3) Annually monitor and review development trends and the approach taken by planning authorities to issues that affect the AONB | 1) In late 2022, the Wye Valley AONB and Malvern Hills AONB appointed a (shared) AONB Planning Officer, to work jointly between the two AONBs.<br>2) The sPO now sees all planning applications within the Wye Valley AONB and its setting and filters those applications which require a formal review / site visit / representation. This often leads to filtering out applications relating to tree/hedgerow works & Listed Building Consents as it is felt that the LPAs have technical consultees who are suitably qualified to make formal input. Some applications are also filtered out where it is clear that the development will not have an adverse impact on the AONB or its Special Qualities.  |

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives  |  | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>4) Engage in development and consultation on national strategy in liaison with NAAONB</p> <p>5) Deliver CPD &amp; training for LA Planning staff &amp; members</p> |  | <p>3)a) Since commencing in February 2023, the sPO has made representation on 60 planning applications, including 10 formal objections to planning applications. A particular success has been at Beaulieu Barn, 25 Kymin Road, The Kymin, Monmouthshire (MCC reference: DM/2022/01819) where an application was made, albeit retrospectively, to remove a condition relating to no external lighting being added to the barn, largely in the interests of biodiversity, where light pollution has been a particular concern with lighting added to the barn in breach of condition. A detailed objection by the sPO was supported by MCC planning officers and reflected in the reasons for refusal of planning permission.</p> <p>3)b) However, it is noted that when a representation is made by the sPO to a planning application, particularly on smaller scale &amp;/or full householder, these are often ignored, whereas applications for minor dwellings/commercial/major applications, the comments will be considered and often lead to positive dialogue between the LPA / applicant / AONB Planning Officer, leading to amended plans to benefiting the AONB.</p> <p>4)a) The sPO also made representations to strategic planning consultations including the National Planning Policy Framework draft consultation and Herefordshire Council's Agricultural Planning SPD.</p> <p>4)b) The sPO engaged with NAAONB consultations and contributed as appropriate.</p> <p>5) With the sPO in post, preparations commenced for a future training programme for LPA staff which is definitely needed as many are young, inexperienced and would benefit from greater awareness and understanding of what the AONB designation is about and why the AONB Management Plan is important, particularly in relation to plan-making and decision-making. This is also important as many LPAs are experiencing high turnover of staff.</p> |
| <p>WV-L1<br/>WV-L2<br/>WV-L4<br/>WV-B2<br/>WV-B3<br/>WV-B4<br/>WV-F4<br/>WV-W3<br/>WV-W4<br/>WV-P3<br/>WV-P4</p>  | <p><b>Nature Recovery &amp; Landscape connectivity</b></p> <p>1) Develop AONB Nature Recovery and Species Action plans to focus priority areas for habitat creation and connectivity particularly between woodland, species rich grassland, riparian habitats, orchards and veteran trees.</p> <p>2) Complete Species Action Plans for Orchards (Noble Chafer), River (Water Crowfoot), Woodland (Woodland Butterfly assemblage), Grassland (Bumblebee assemblage), and Hedgehogs.</p> <p>3) Manage the Lower Wye Nature Networks Project with National Lottery Heritage Fund and Gwent Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust.</p> | <p>1) AONB Nature Recovery Plan (NRP) is under development, led by DO, and a draft is to be produced and circulated. AONB NRP is and will be feeding into Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire LNRS</p> <p>1)&amp;2)a) The Species Action Plan for the Noble chafer beetle (orchard species) has been prepared by the NRO and approved by the JAC and partner organisations. A partnership with People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL) resulted in the NRO conducting a pheromone lure trapping survey for the beetle in June/July 2022, surveying 27 orchard sites across the 3 counties of the AONB, revealing a small meta-population of the beetle in the Woolhope Dome, Herefordshire.</p> <p>1)&amp;2)b) A successful FIPL application resulted in a small grant to run a traditional orchards project in Herefordshire, planting 20 fruit trees at priority orchard sites, installing 12 Noble chafer beetle boxes, running 2 orchard management training</p>  |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br/>                     AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives<br/>                     AONB Unit Initiatives</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b></p>   |
|--|---|
| <p>4) Continue Lower Wye Green Infrastructure (GI) initiatives working with local land owners, managers &amp; stakeholders</p> <p>5) Manage control of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) particularly Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and American Skunk Cabbage through Wye Invasive Species Programme (WISP)</p> <p>6) Promotion of Natural Flood Management (NFM) &amp; Riparian Trees initiatives</p> <p>7) Organise regular volunteer task days, including on partner sites and Reserves</p> <p>8) Host Woolhope Dome workshop and collaborate over outputs and outcomes</p> <p>9) Collaborate and support landscape connectivity initiatives including 'Wye to Wyre'.</p> <p>10) Investigate opportunities for the National Grid Visual Improvement Programme (VIP) for area between Ross &amp; Goodrich with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust &amp; landowners</p> <p>11) Continue liaison with Herefordshire Meadows Network, Monmouthshire Meadows and Parish Grassland Project.</p> <p>12) Develop and support partnership projects that deliver landscape scale conservation activity and initiatives within and adjoining the AONB particularly those linked to improving water quality in the Wye.</p> | <p>events, producing leaflets, and securing a pheromone supply to run the survey again in June 23.</p> <p>1)&amp;2)c) 48 landowners across the AONB have been engaged through the Noble chafer project so far, either by taking part in the pheromone survey or by attending orchard training events. This includes partner organisations such as Plantlife and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. In September 22, as part of the annual AONB Study Tour, 25 JAC members heard a talk on the noble chafer project from the NRO.</p> <p>2)d)i) Species Action Plan for the Hedgehog (engagement species) is in the final development stage. Action for this species has largely been focussed on engagement with local communities, in partnership with hedgehog champion Dylan Allman and his Hedgehog Aware campaign, including events such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- June 22: AONB programme of activity for Ashfield Park Primary School - 290 children engaged on the topic of species recovery for hedgehogs.</li> <li>- November 22: Joint talk between AONB and Dylan Allman for Herefordshire Wildlife Trust branch group – 7 people engaged on the topic of hedgehogs, their current plight, and conservation measures.</li> <li>- March 22: Joint event between AONB and Dylan Allman for local community in Monmouth, with talks, stands and children's activities – 60 people engaged on the topic of hedgehogs, including 5 new Hedgehog Champions signed up.</li> </ul> <p>2)d)ii) The AONB has also been able to support Dylan's hedgehog conservation efforts further through an SDF grant and by acting as a supporting organisation for a grant from GAVO.</p> <p>1)&amp;2)e)The Species Action Plans for Bumblebee Assemblage and Woodland Butterfly Assemblage commenced evidence gathering phases with further development in summer 23.</p> <p>3) Lower Wye Valley Nature Networks project continued throughout 22/23, oversee by DO. Positive management of 7 SSSIs undertaken by partnership of AONB, Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust. Extension received from NLHF to allow programme delivery to September 2023. 10 farms engaged and received habitat connectivity advice from The Environment Partnership (TEP). NRO led on subsequent farm liaison and project work, including hedgerow restoration, protection of riparian habitats and wetland creation/NFM intervention, also control of invasive Cherry laurel in Cleddon Shoots and woodland SSSI.</p> <p>4) Green Infrastructure: Development of an Integrated Recreation Access Strategy (IRAS) was progressed with discussions between the AONB Unit and MCC (Highways and PRoW) leading to agreement that a strategic and consultative</p> |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br/>                     AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives<br/>                     AONB Unit Initiatives</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b></p>  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>approach is required to address the complex issues around the Unclassified County Roads and linked PRow network. Welsh Government SLSP funding has been secured up to 2025 to support the consultancy-led development of an integrated strategy and action plan. The invitation to tender was produced and the procurement process supported by Herefordshire Council.</p> <p>5) Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) - the AONB Unit's INNS work falls under the umbrella of WISP – Wye Invasive Species Project. WISP unites a number of funding pots (Severn Trent's B4B, NRW's BERF, Welsh Govt. SLSP) to tackle Himalayan balsam, American skunk cabbage and Japanese knotweed within the lower Wye Valley. WISP is managed by the PO and delivered together with the NRO and the team were invited to present at the 2022 national conference run by the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat.</p> <p><u>Himalayan balsam</u> – activities include: raising awareness through a communications campaign during national INNS Week; evening presentations; 9 community balsam bashes in the Brockweir-Hewelsfield area and providing support to another 5 balsam bashes run by groups in Hereford and Tintern; 2 'Balsam Training Days' with partner organisations for people to learn about the plant's lifecycle, balsam control and biosecurity; launched our new Balsam Action Toolkit (B.A.T) (English version) during national INNS Week in May. See Outreach Activities for more info.</p> <p><u>Japanese knotweed</u> – activities include: continuing GIS mapping and monitoring the spread of Japanese knotweed; liaising with +200 landowners to gain written consent to access their land and treat their knotweed; carrying out treatment of +120 sites in early September; upskilling local contractors with stem injection training enabling more targeted treatment; exploring alternatives to glyphosate such as RootWave; continuing promotion of our online Report it! form.</p> <p><u>American skunk cabbage</u> – activities include: liaising with 15 landowners in 3 sub-catchments – Brockweir, Whitebrook and Cleddon; continuing GIS mapping the spread of skunk cabbage; a spring appeal to landowners to live-head their skunk cabbage flowers to halt the seedbank accumulation; working with one local contractor to treat cabbage plants in the three areas.</p> <p>6) NFM opportunities developed in conjunction for landowner, Monmouthshire CC and Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales.</p> <p>7) Volunteer Task Days: 9 volunteer task days, with monthly (sometimes twice a month) sessions, with around 8-10 volunteers per session, clocking up a fantastic 341 hours. CLO &amp; Volunteers worked with a number of local landowners, community groups and organisations and completed a range of tasks including: - Tree planting (200 trees in one day at Townsend Farm); - New hedgerows at Checkley and at</p> |

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives |   | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <p>Jamie’s Farm (2 days) where 2000m (8000 plants) were funded though SDF; - Monmouthshire Meadow were supported on 2 occasions, making bee hotels &amp; invertebrates’ homes around a newly dug pond &amp; restored weir (also through SDF); - joint litter pick with Gwent Wildlife Trust &amp; SARA at Piercefield; - Scything around the Angidy pools with the Tintern Angling Club.</p> <p>8) Woolhope Dome workshop delivered Sept 22, funded by Woolhope Environmental Trust, with 70 attendees. Event report produced by Herefordshire Meadows signposting attendees to sources of advice &amp; funding.</p> <p>11) Members of both Herefordshire Meadows and Monmouthshire Meadows groups have been engaged through the Noble chafer project, highlighting the biodiversity value of both ancient trees and wildflower meadows to support our priority species.</p> <p>12) £40k secured through Environment Agency to run a programme of education and understanding in relation to Water Resource Management. In partnership with Farm Herefordshire, NFU &amp; Herefordshire Meadows, events run included: Herbal Leys for water management; Floodplain meadow restoration and management for farmers and farm advisors; AONB Winter Seminar with water focus. Better event feedback analysis was developed through purchase of iPads for Farm Herefordshire.</p>  |
| WV-L1<br>WV-L2<br>WV-L4<br>WV-B2<br>WV-B3<br>WV-P3<br>WV-P5  | <p><b>Climate Emergency Action</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prepare &amp; implement action plan from Carbon Neutral Designated Landscapes Organisation assessment</li> <li>2) Develop action plan from Wales Designated Landscapes Carbon Footprint Programme</li> <li>3) Continue Peatland Restoration initiatives particularly at Cleddon Bog SSSI</li> <li>4) Support grassland sequestration investigations with Herefordshire Meadows and Floodplain Meadows Partnership</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two staff members, PO and NRO, received Carbon Literacy training via Monmouthshire County Council and are now Certified Carbon Literate.</li> </ul> <p>1)&amp;2) Three reports relating to Climate Change were completed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions assessment and target scenario for the Wye Valley AONB landscape/area, by Small Work Consulting (Nov 22)</li> <li>• National Landscapes Carbon Audit &amp; Metric, by School of Water, Energy and Environment, Cranfield University (July 22)</li> <li>• Carbon Neutral Designated Landscapes Organisation Pathway to Net Zero Report for Wye Valley AONB Unit, by Aquatera (Aug 22)</li> </ul> <p>Analysis commenced of these reports to inform the development of Wye Valley AONB action plans.</p> <p>3) Cleddon Bog SSSI / Precious Peatlands Project – £16K from NRW’s SAF to start to restore the 15ha peatland, we’ve received. The grant covers vegetation management split into 2 tasks led by the PO: a) manual sapling clearance and b) conservation grazing, plus monitoring and stakeholder management:</p> <p><u>Sapling clearance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• following unsuccessful tendering an innovative approach was adopted where we teamed up with a local contractor and invited local residents to apply for two-day’s work with on-the-job-training, tools, health and safety and welfare provision.</li> </ul> |

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives |   | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +20 local residents applied, received training, had their PPE assessed and were allotted tasks. The workparty cleared ¼ acre of birch/willow carr, treated and brash stacked on the perimeter of the Bog.</li> <li>• We intend to repeat the approach over the next couple of years, subject to funding and contractor agreement.</li> </ul> <p><u>Conservation grazing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In March 2023 a short conservation grazing pilot commenced with Grazing Management Ltd. and 4 Belted Galloway cattle wearing no-fence collars. The pilot lasted 2.5 weeks and, although their impact on the Molinia and scrub was limited, it was clear to see their impact within their preferential areas. Valuable lessons learned will be applied for the next round of grazing (subject to funding).</li> <li>• Jointly funded by AONB and NRW Forestry, 10 local residents were trained as Livestock Checkers and became LANTRA certified prior to the pilot. Registered as AONB Volunteer Group members, they did daily checks of the cattle, reporting their locations and health, in conjunction with the checks carried out by the grazier team and no-fence data. This system has worked well and helped to smooth public relations on site and on social media.</li> </ul> <p><u>Project &amp; stakeholder management:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continuing liaison with landowners, commoners and interested parties to gain their advice and support for the work</li> <li>• reporting to NRW: SSSI team, Grants team and National Peatland Action team.</li> </ul> |
| WV-U2<br>WV-P4   | <p><b>Undergrounding</b><br/>                     Continue working with Western Power &amp; local communities 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.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 480m of 11kv powerline have been undergrounded just south of the Kymin, removing powerlines from the view of walkers on the Offa's Dyke National Trail. This an extension to previously undergrounded line towards Redbrook. Final scheme cost £63,843</li> <li>• 150m of 11kv powerline have been undergrounded alongside the A4136 Monmouth to Coleford road, directly opposite the Kymin junction. At a lower level set in fields, the lines were at low level in driver (and passengers) eyelines when looking into the valley. Final scheme cost £23,946</li> <li>• Work begun on 2 further schemes near Tintern Quarry &amp; Bishopswood Village Hall.</li> <li>• A further scheme at Sollers Hope Church is costed and planned.</li> </ul>  |
| WV-S1<br>WV-S2<br>WV-R1<br>WV-P5   | <p><b>Wye Valley Walk</b><br/>                     1) Support Wye Valley Walk Partnership<br/>                     2) Launch new website <a href="http://www.wyevalleywalk.org">www.wyevalleywalk.org</a> including replacement of Passport scheme</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Partnership meeting held on Teams in December 2022</li> <li>2) Website development and finalisation led to soft-launch and testing.</li> <li>3) Tree safety work completed and path diversion investigations carried out.</li> <li>4) Pathcare and route maintenance options investigated with Monmouthshire County Council and WYW Partnership.</li> </ol>   |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br/> AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives<br/> AONB Unit Initiatives</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b></p>   |
|--|---|
| <p>3) Continuing Piercefield Walk enhancements with Gwent Wildlife Trust and landowner</p> <p>4) Pursue creation of Friends of Wye Valley Walk</p> <p>5) Audit &amp; co-ordinate refresh of way-marking</p> <p>6) Collate route counter data &amp; review options</p> <p>7) Review Cicerone Route Guide</p> <p>8) Facilitate future options for Lydbrook Bridge and Redbrook Bridge.</p> <p>9) Progress Wyesham riverbank improvements</p> <p>10) Review &amp; republish 'Easy Access' walks.</p> <p>11) DEFRA Access for All Funding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop project to improve access</li> <li>2. Support local communities and groups to improve access.</li> <li>3. Improve access along the WVV and create loop walks</li> <li>4. Raise awareness of improvements needed to develop access for all projects.</li> </ol> | <p>5) &amp; 7) Preparations made for walking whole route and revising Route Guide to follow from Source to Sea, rather than going upstream.</p> <p>6) Counter options in Piercefield reviewed and new counters commissioned.</p> <p>8) Engaged in Wireworks Bridge refurbishment as precursor to other bridge works.</p> <p>9) Wyesham riverbank improvements – progress continued with SLSP funding supporting the production of a topographic survey, footpath infrastructure designs and protected species surveys.</p> <p>10) Liaison and scoping with Disabled Ramblers and other accessibility consultants.</p> <p>11) DEFRA- Access For All funding lead by the CLO has enabled the AONB unit to support the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To purchase 41 gates &amp; material for Ross Walkers are Welcome group enabling them to continue the Miles without Stiles project around the Ross area, specially the Herefordshire Trail and loop walks</li> <li>• To purchase 11 gates for Fownhope PC</li> <li>• To purchase 2 gates for Sellack PC</li> <li>• To replace 1 stile on the English Bicknor Heritage loop walk, which has now made the whole walk barrier free.</li> <li>• To purchase 1 large mobility kissing gate to be installed at Homs Road car park in Ross-on-Wye as part of the Willow Walk.</li> <li>• To run a training session for volunteers (including the AONB volunteers) on how to install gates correctly and a separate session also train up the British Army to install gates for the AONB during a 3 day challenge.</li> <li>• To replace the front doors of Brampton Abbots Village Hall with fully accessible automatic doors.</li> <li>• To develop a new fully accessible loop walk off the WVV-The Willow Walk – a walk from Ross-on-Wye to Townsend Farm, Brampton Abbots.</li> <li>• 1 disabled accessible compost toilet at Townsend Farm.</li> <li>• 1 new footbridge along a permissive section of the Willow Walk at Netherton.</li> <li>• The development of a picnic site with 3 accessible benches for public use at Townsend Farm.</li> <li>• The continuation of surface improvements at Townsend Farm down to the River and picnic site for public use.</li> <li>• The design and scope to replace a narrow footbridge along the WVV/ Willow Walk at Ross Rowing Club.</li> <li>• The design of a leaflet for the Willow Walk.</li> </ul> |

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives<br>AONB Unit Initiatives |  | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|---|--|---|
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purchase of hand tools and back pack for future Wye Valley Walk Volunteers 'Friends of the WYW'.</li> <li>An audit of the proposed Willow Walk by Experience Community CIC.</li> <li>Running a 2 day Access training course for local authorities, local walking groups, associated community groups and representatives from the 'Wheeler' community lead by Craig Grimes from Experience Community CIC.</li> </ul> <p>There will be further DEFRA Funding in FY24/25, of which the CLO has already earmarked most of the funding for community projects. It is also planned that the Willow Walk will be further developed to include more of the WYW.</p> |
| WV-H1<br>WV-H3<br>WV-P5   | <b>Overlooking the Wye legacy</b><br>Continue to develop heritage & Community projects as part of the legacy of the Overlooking the Wye (OLW) Landscape Partnership Scheme <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing Cleddon Falls &amp; Wordsworth Walk enhancements with landowner(s)</li> <li>Review &amp; reprint of Walks leaflets</li> <li><b>3) Audit and repair &amp; maintenance of OLW infrastructure</b></li> </ol>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleddon Falls and Wordsworth Walk enhancements - the invitation to tender for the replacement of the unsafe bridge in the lower gorge was not successful. Permissive path closure and diversion signs have been erected and we hope to go back out to tender again soon or explore alternative options such as volunteers.</li> <li>The Wordsworth Walk leaflet is currently being redrafted with new information about the Cleddon Shoots and Woodland SSSI.</li> <li>Audit of OLW sites commenced with planned completion in 2023.</li> </ol>  |
|   | <b>Offa's Dyke Collaboratory</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate opportunities for future cross border partnership projects along the corridor of Offa's Dyke, promoting archaeological research &amp; investigation into the landscape significance of the 8<sup>th</sup> century monument</li> <li>Participate in Collaboratory conferences and events</li> <li>Support community based research and events.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&amp; 3) Discussion about projects in &amp; around Chepstow continued to be impacted by Covid-19 and resourcing complications.</li> <li>AM Collaboratory Convenor and sits on Offa's Dyke Journal Editorial Board. Convenors' meetings held on-line in May &amp; in Knighton in March.</li> </ol>  |
| WV-C2<br>WV-A1  | <b>Communications &amp; social media</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular social media (SM) posts e.g. Facebook, Instagram and twitter</li> <li>On-going updating and management of <a href="http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk">www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk</a>.</li> <li>Regular publication of on-line AONB newsletter 'Picturesque'</li> <li>Revise and publish AONB Map &amp; Guide</li> </ol>                                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook 162 published posts with 4,495 followers, receiving 3,800 'likes' and reach up 18.5% to 102,269.</li> <li>Website expansion and review on-going.</li> <li>Winter edition of Picturesque published</li> <li>Map &amp; Guide reviewed and design options appraised.</li> </ol>  |
| WV-C2<br>WV-E4<br>WV-A1   | <b>Outreach Activities</b><br>Promote the AONB through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talks/presentations to local groups</li> <li>Stands at relevant shows.</li> </ol>  | <b>1) Talks and presentations to local groups including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 22 – Llandogo Village Produce Association meeting – INNS talk (PO, NRO)</li> <li>September 22 – Annual AONB Study Tour for JAC members (NRO, DO, AM)</li> <li>January 23 – INNS presentation at GBNNSS National Conference (PO &amp; NRO)</li> </ul>  |



| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br/>                     AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives<br/>                     AONB Unit Initiatives</p>    | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b></p>   |
|---|---|
| <p>3) Promote, sponsor &amp;/or lead guided walks, events, activities and countryside craft /rural skills courses in and around the AONB</p> <p>4) Support the Wye Valley River Festival 2022</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- February 23 – INNS presentation for St Briavels WI (PO)</li> <li><b>2) Stands at relevant shows including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- July 22 – Friends of the Lower Wye ‘Wye July’ event (AM, PO &amp; NRO)</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3) Guided walks, events and activities including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- April 22 – Lancout guided walk for Chepstow Walking Festival (IO &amp; NRO)</li> <li>- May 22 – INNS Himalayan balsam training event with WaREN &amp; WUF in Tintern (PO &amp; NRO)</li> <li>- May 22 – INNS Himalayan balsam training event with WaREN &amp; WUF in Llandogo (PO &amp; NRO)</li> <li>- June 22 – Delivering weeklong programme of activity with Ashfield Park Junior School, Ross-on-Wye, engaging with 290 children around the topics of species recovery, particularly hedgehog and bumble bees, as well as water quality issues. (DO &amp; NRO)</li> <li>- June 22 – Capler guided walk for Herefordshire Walking Festival (NRO)</li> <li>- June 22 - Guided walk relaunching Herefordshire Trail, attended by Jesse Norman MP (DO &amp; IO)</li> <li>- June 22 – Balsam bash event with Raleigh International (PO &amp; NRO)</li> <li>- July 22 – Brockweir balsam bash community event (PO, NRO &amp; IO)</li> <li>- August 22 – 3 x Brockweir balsam bash community events (PO, NRO &amp; IO)</li> <li>- September 22 - Woolhope Dome Workshop. 70 attendees, funded by Woolhope Dome Environment Trust, facilitated by Herefordshire Meadows. (FO, DO, AM, NRO)</li> <li>- December 22 – 2 x Cleddon Bog winter work parties (PO, NRO &amp; IO)</li> <li>- January 23 – Traditional orchard management training event (NRO)</li> <li>- February 23 - Tree planting day organised by Woodland Trust as part of and promoting AONB facilitated Lower Wye Valley Nature Networks Project. (DO, AM, NRO)</li> <li>- February 23 – Dark Skies Week planetarium event (IO &amp; FO)</li> <li>- March 23 – AONB Winter Seminar event, funded by the EA and attended by over 80 people (FO, AM, PO, NRO, IO)</li> <li>- March 23 – Hedgehog Aware Monmouth event with Dylan Allman (NRO &amp; IO)</li> <li>- March 23 – INNS and recreation management talk for University of Worcester students (NRO, PO &amp; AM)</li> </ul> </li> <li>4) Hosted WVRF Advisory Board &amp; planning meetings at AONB Office. But little AONB presence at WVRF events due to lack of staff availability.</li> </ul> |

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives |   | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| WV-F4<br>WV-C2<br>WV-P6  | <b>Youth Rangers</b><br>1) Review programme and further opportunities to continue the model of engaging young people in conservation and heritage<br>2) Train new Leaders and scope for next Cohort, as required/appropriate  | 1) Programme reviewed with the new programme planned to be launched late summer 2023. The new programme will target a wider age range, from around 11-16 years of age and will include children and young people with additional needs.<br>2) The success of the Youth Rangers will depend on the recruitment of a number suitable volunteers to support the Community Links Officer during each session. A volunteer Job description was written with a view to recruit by mid-July. A training programme for new volunteers was reviewed & drafted. Questionnaire drafted for the taster event which will also be available on the website.   |
| WV-P1<br>WV-P2<br>WV-P6<br>WV-P7   | <b>Governance</b><br>1) Service and set agendas for JAC, TOWP and Steering Group<br>2) Organise AONB Partnership Annual Study Tour of key sites &/or issues in late September 2022<br>3) Run AONB Partnership Seminar/forum in winter<br>4) Continue implementation of recommendations from AONB Good Governance Review   | 1) 3 JACs, 3 TOWPs & 2 Steering Groups serviced and hosted.<br>2) 33 people attended the annual AONB Partnership Tour visiting a range of sites associated land-use and land management around various AONB projects and initiatives along with regenerative farming and recreation, including variously football, fishing and hostel accommodation in Ross-on-Wye, Brampton Abbots, Lydbrook & Welsh Bicknor in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire in the AONB.<br>3) Seminar on 16th March 2023 'Enhancing water catchment through innovative land management' 77 attendees. Speakers & topics included Andrew Blake, Wye Valley AONB, Emma Whitehouse, Environment Agency, Chris Uttley 'Working with nature to reduce flooding', Stephen Briggs 'Using agroforestry to meet water quality and land management challenges', Niels Corfield 'Towards the weatherproof farm', & Q&As.<br>4) Preliminary discussions with Inclusion, Diversity and Governance Excellence Strategic Lead from Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales. |
| WV-R2<br>WV-P1<br>WV-P3<br>WV-P4<br>WV-P5<br>WV-P6<br>WV-P7  | <b>Local Partnerships &amp; Collaboration</b><br>Influence & attend partnerships as appropriate; eg:<br>1) Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire<br>2) Wye Catchment Partnership<br>3) Wye Navigation Advisory Committee (WyeNAC)<br>4) Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association, South East Wales Tourism Forum, Visit Monmouthshire and Visit Herefordshire<br>5) Wye Valley River Festival CIC Advisory Board<br>6) Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership<br>7) Gwent Green Grid Partnership<br>8) Monmouthshire Local Access Forum<br>9) Support Town, Parish & Community Councils with advice & guidance as appropriate | 1) Nature Recovery Officer sits on the Herefordshire Local Wildlife Site Partnership and attended 3 meetings on 29/09/2022, 25/01/2023 & 10/03/2023.<br>2) Development Officer attended Wye Catchment Partnership meeting<br>3) AM attended 2 WyeNAC meetings<br>4) AM & IO liaised with WyeDean Tourism, South East Wales Tourism Forum & Visit Monmouthshire.<br>5) WVRF CIC Advisory Board meetings hosted at AONB Office.<br>6) PO gave presentation to LAF<br><br>DO sat on Farm Herefordshire Steering Group - 5 meeting and/or events sub group.<br>DO & NRO organised and facilitated 3 meetings of Lower Wye Valley Nature Networks Project Partnership  |

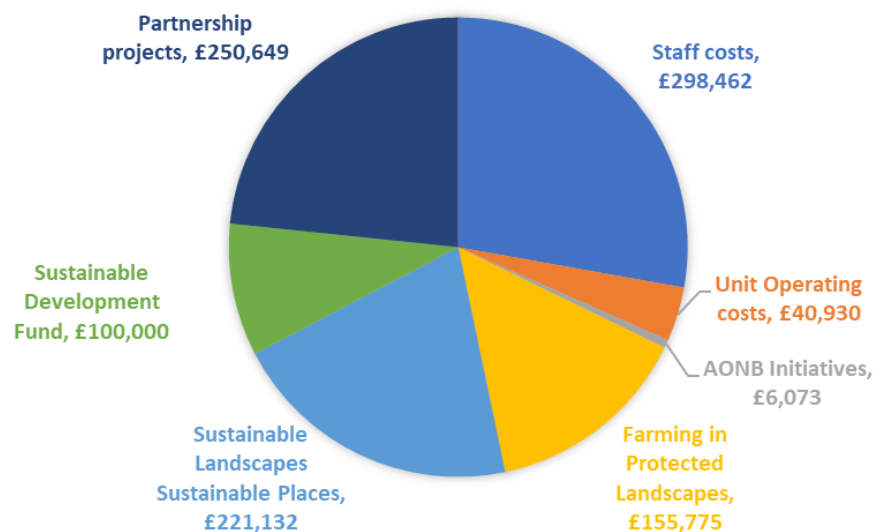
| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives |   | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| WV-P4<br>WV-P5<br>WV-P9  | <p><b>National Collaboration</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Support and engage with the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) and attend appropriate seminars &amp; events</li> <li>2) Work with Welsh Government and Landscape Wales (National Designated Landscapes Partnership) and other stakeholders, including NRW &amp; NAAONB</li> <li>3) Work with DEFRA and others in progressing the Glover Review of Designated Landscapes in England, including Natural England &amp; NAAONB</li> </ol> | <p><b>1)</b> Attended National Association for AONB’s conference September 2022 for talks networking, workshops and field visits. (AM, PO, NRO, DO, FO &amp; IO). AM represented AONB at NAAONB AGM &amp; Chairs’ Conference.</p> <p>- All AONB team took part in pilot Perception of Landscapes interviews &amp; team discussion for ‘Modelling Landscape Perceptions in European Protected Areas’.</p> <p><b>2)</b> Met with Emma Story from Tirweddau Cymru Landscape Wales (TCLW) in January 2023 to discuss the Wye Valley AONB, Nature Recovery and Carbon Sequestration initiatives, and wider work in this area. Also collaborating with Tom Johnstone from TCLW on NFM leaky dam works at Lower Gockett Farm, as a case study for ‘quick win’ NFM implementation and strong working relationships with County Council Flood Risk teams.</p> <p><b>3)</b> AM contributed to AONB Lead Officers; Meetings and DEFRA meetings/seminars.</p> |
| WV-L4<br>WV-B5<br>WV-H2<br>WV-S3<br>WV-P8  | <p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ongoing updating of the AONB GIS and State of the AONB data,</li> <li>2) Complete Phase 1 Habitat Survey mapping &amp; digitising</li> <li>3) Progress Nature Recovery Network map &amp; ground-truthing</li> <li>4) Investigate opportunities to update heritage, tourism and recreation monitoring.</li> <li>5) Monitor and review implementation of the AONB Management Plan</li> <li>6) Undertake Fixed point photography across the AONB</li> </ol>                             | <p>1) – 3) Nature Recovery Plan in progress. Wye Valley Nature Recovery Plan feeding into development of Local Nature Recovery Strategy in Gloucestershire. Noble Chafer surveys contributed new records for SoAR.</p> <p>2) Some progress made but digitised dataset still incomplete.</p> <p>6) Summer and Winter Fixed Point photography completed.</p>  |
| WV-P1<br>WV-P2<br>WV-P3  | <p><b>Funding and resources</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prepare grant bids and claims for NRW, Welsh Government and DEFRA, and other funding bodies as required.</li> <li>2) Continue pursuing funding and develop opportunities for external funding and securing sources for strategic and partnership projects</li> <li>3) Develop fundraising campaign for HCF Wye Valley AONB Fund</li> </ol>  | <p>1) All claims submitted but delays with NRW bid due to disproportionate requirements necessitating bid to be submitted 3 times.</p> <p>2) Lottery Climate Action Fund bid pursued with Herefordshire &amp; Radnorshire Wildlife Trusts.</p> <p>3) AM &amp; CLO met with HCF and AM attended HCF AGM.</p>   |
| WV-P5<br>WV-P9   | <p><b>Work placements</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Support the needs of student placements/group projects.</li> <li>2) Investigate new under-graduate and post-graduate research opportunities</li> </ol>  | <p>1) Some unsolicited requests received. But no placements offered primarily due to uncertainty over Covid rules and hosting requirements.</p> <p>2) preliminary investigation made over PhD research placement.</p>   |

| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br><i>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives</i><br>AONB Unit Initiatives |  | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>  |
|--|--|---|
|  | <b>Delegated Grant Programmes</b>  |   |
| WV-L5<br>WV-F1<br>WV-F2<br>WV-F3<br>WV-F4<br>WV-F5<br>WV-C2<br>WV-E2   | <b>Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme</b><br>1) Provide advice & guidance, as directed by DEFRA, to farmers and land managers to develop applications to help deliver bigger and better outcomes under the themes of Climate, Nature, People and Place.<br>2) Service the Local Assessment Panel in determining applications and allocating funding.<br>3) Manage delegated grants (<£5k)<br>4) Administer grant payments and monitor and report to DEFRA<br>5) Consider using the AONB Farming Award to present to a notable project. | 1) FiPL officer Anna Stankiewicz started August 2022<br>2) Programme budget of £172,739 received. Issues relating to contractor availability, seasonal issues and other delays resulted in £6,667 end of year underspend.<br>- 4 Panel meeting convened.<br>- 78 FiPL enquiries received in 2022/23<br>- 59 site visits delivered (including enquiry, progress, claim sign-off) August 2022-March 2023<br>- 18 projects approved, 2 declined.<br>- 23 grant payments issued (also multi year projects)<br>3) 5 delegated grants approved (under 5K)<br>4) Examples of 2022/23 outcomes (from Headlines Return Yr2):<br>- 43 ha of woodland managed, 26ha of scrubland managed, 59ha of land managed through regenerative farming, 3 projects to improve soil health, 2 projects to reduce flood risk, 244m of hedgerow planted, 580m of hedgerow managed, 958 trees planted (including 950 native trees), 112 ha of positive management of SSIs, 91ha of land managed for INNS to preserve landscape features, 2 ponds created or restored, 5 projects to make landscape more inclusive for visitors, 16 volunteers engaged through the programme, 3 educational days, 6 projects increasing resilience of sustainable farm businesses. 50 farmers engaged, 15 farmers engaged who have not been engaged with the PL before, total land supported 1250ha<br>Monthly monitoring forms submitted to DEFRA throughout the year.<br>5) LAF considered criteria for Farming Award. |
| WV-L1<br>WV-C1<br>WV-S2<br>WV-S4<br>WV-R4  | <b>Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places (SLSP)</b><br>1) Deliver & manage Welsh Government capital investment scheme focussed on:<br>a) Promoting Biodiversity and nature recovery<br>b) Accelerating Decarbonisation<br>c) Supporting Resilient and Green communities<br>d) Delivering Sustainable tourism.<br>including<br>2) Wye Valley AONB Villages Plan implementation<br>3) Wye Valley Walk enhancements<br>a) Piercefield Permissive Path<br>b) Wyesham Riverbank revetment   | 1a) various projects in 'Nature Recovery & Landscape connectivity' above supported.<br>1b) Work towards the decarbonisation of Community facilities includes:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pelham Hall were able to purchase new economical electric showers.</li> <li>• Llandogo received match funding to support their Lottery bid for solar panels and storage battery.</li> <li>• The Drill Hall purchased new thermal blinds and roof insulation.</li> <li>• Llanishen village hall purchased a new boiler and LED lights.</li> <li>• Monmouth sports pavilion have received a grant towards a new boiler and roof insulation.</li> </ul> 1c) & 2) Wye Valley Villages signage installed in all the 9 villages in the AONB in Monmouthshire; Devauden, Llanishen, Trellech, The Narth, Penallt, Catbrook, Llandogo, Tintern and St Arvans. Wye Valley Villages Delivery Group established.   |

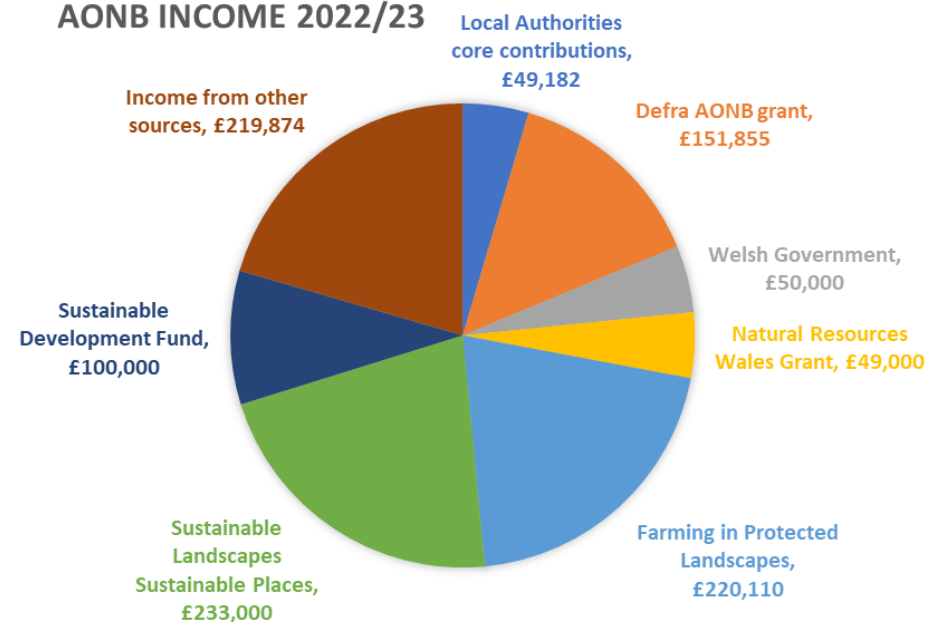
| <b>AONB Unit Work Programme</b><br>AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Strategic Objectives<br>AONB Unit Initiatives |  | <b>AONB Unit Achievements &amp; Outcomes 2022-23</b>   |
|---|--|--|
|   | 4) Engagement in collaborative projects across multiple Designated Landscapes<br>a) Wales Dark Skies   | 1d) Devauden village hall has had a cycle repair station installed in the hall carpark for public use.<br>3) see 'Wye Valley Walk' above.<br>4) contributed to Wales Dark Skies Week with planetarium event.   |
| WV-L1<br>WV-B3<br>WV-C1   | <b>Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)</b><br>1) Promotion of SDF to potential applicants<br>2) Assist potential applicants with application process and project development<br>3) Service SDF Assessment Panel for allocating SDF funds.<br>4) Manage delegated grants and Landscape & Biodiversity Enhancement Grants (<£3k)<br>5) Training for SDF Assessment Panel members<br>6) Administration of grant scheme and reporting to Welsh Government | 8 SDF applicants have been supported though the application process, 7 of which have been approved. 2 projects were delegated as they were under £3,000 and 6 were presented to the SDF Panel during a face to face meeting on the 11 <sup>th</sup> May, 1 was rejected and sign posted to MCC NIN project. The SDF application received are below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACE Monmouth- Climate Festival</li> <li>• Diverse Artist Network- Walk out West</li> <li>• Wye Coppice CIC- Woodland management apprentice scheme</li> <li>• Coed Lleol-Small Woods- Nature-based Wellbeing in the Wye Valley</li> <li>• Gwent Wildlife Trust- Restoring the Wern</li> <li>• Wye Valley Community Council- Repairs to The Pound</li> <li>• Wye Valley Community Council- Repairs to the Tintern VH retaining wall</li> <li>• ACE Monmouth- Schools Group- Rejected</li> </ul>   |
| WV-L1<br>WV-B3<br>WV-C1   | <b>Wye Valley AONB Fund with Herefordshire Community Foundation (HCF)</b><br>1) Promote Wye Valley AONB Fund with HCF to potential applicants<br>2) Assist potential applicants with application process and project development<br>3) Collate applications for the SDF Assessment Panel and liaise with HCF<br>4) Service SDF Assessment Panel recommending allocations to HCF.   | There has been continued progress to promote the AONB fund and work with HCF. This has led to a number of discussions with applicants to assist them in applying for funds, the flowing project have been approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brampton Abbots Village hall have successfully applied for funding to improve and repair the wall around the village hall that is adjacent to the road.</li> <li>• Save the Wye have successfully applied for funding to run an event at this year Hereford River Carnival. The event will be family oriented using arts engagement to connect local people to the river and the threats it faces. Outdoor event followed by a joint Ukrainian dance in local church.</li> <li>• Ross-on-Wye Rowing Club were successful in applying for funds to improve facilities and reach out to the wider community including refugees etc.</li> </ul> Pipeline projects- Arts project in conjunction with the Wye Valley River Festival, the LGBT community and Gay Pride events within the English areas Wye Valley AONB. |

| Wye Valley AONB Unit Accounts             |              | 2021/22        | 2022/23          |   | 2021/22        | 2022/23          |
|---|--------------|----------------|------------------|---|----------------|------------------|
| Expenditure                               |              | £              | £                | Income                                    | £              | £                |
| Staff costs                               |              | 243,843        | 298,462          | Local Authorities core contributions      | 49,182         | 49,182           |
| Unit Operating costs                      |              | 23,260         | 40,930           | Defra AONB grant                          | 132,443        | 151,855          |
| AONB Initiatives                          |              | 15,970         | 6,073            | Welsh Government                          | 75,000         | 50,000           |
| Farming in Protected Landscapes           |              | 96,525         | 155,775          | Natural Resources Wales Grant             | 45,500         | 49,000           |
| Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places |              | 233,000        | 221,132          | Farming in Protected Landscapes           | 96,525         | 220,110          |
| Sustainable Development Fund              |              | 100,000        | 100,000          | Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places | 227,500        | 233,000          |
| Partnership projects                      |              | 91,525         | 250,649          | Sustainable Development Fund              | 100,000        | 100,000          |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>804,123</b> | <b>1,073,021</b> | Income from other sources                 | 77,973         | 219,874          |
|   |              |                |                  | <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>804,123</b> | <b>1,073,021</b> |

WYE VALLEY AONB UNIT EXPENDITURE 2022/23



AONB INCOME 2022/23



Key officers' abbreviations: AM = AONB Manager; DO = Development Officer; CLO = Community Links Officer; IO = Information Officer; FAO = Finance & Admin. Officer; PO = Lower Wye Project Officer; NRO = Lower Wye Nature Recovery Officer; FO = Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer; SPO = shared AONB Planning Officer.