



Dorset AONB Partnership
Hosted by Dorset Council
County Hall, Dorchester DT1 1XJ

tel: 01305 228246
web: www.dorsetaonb.org.uk
twitter: @DorsetAONB

Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Tues 26th Nov 2019, Shire Hall, High West Street, Dorchester

The Shire Hall is on High West Street, a short walk from Dorchester's Top o Town and only 10 minutes' walk from the train stations. The meeting will start at 10.00 am sharp, with refreshments from 9.45am. If you are unable to attend it would be helpful if you could send a briefed representative or an update. Please send apologies to Kate Townsend on kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

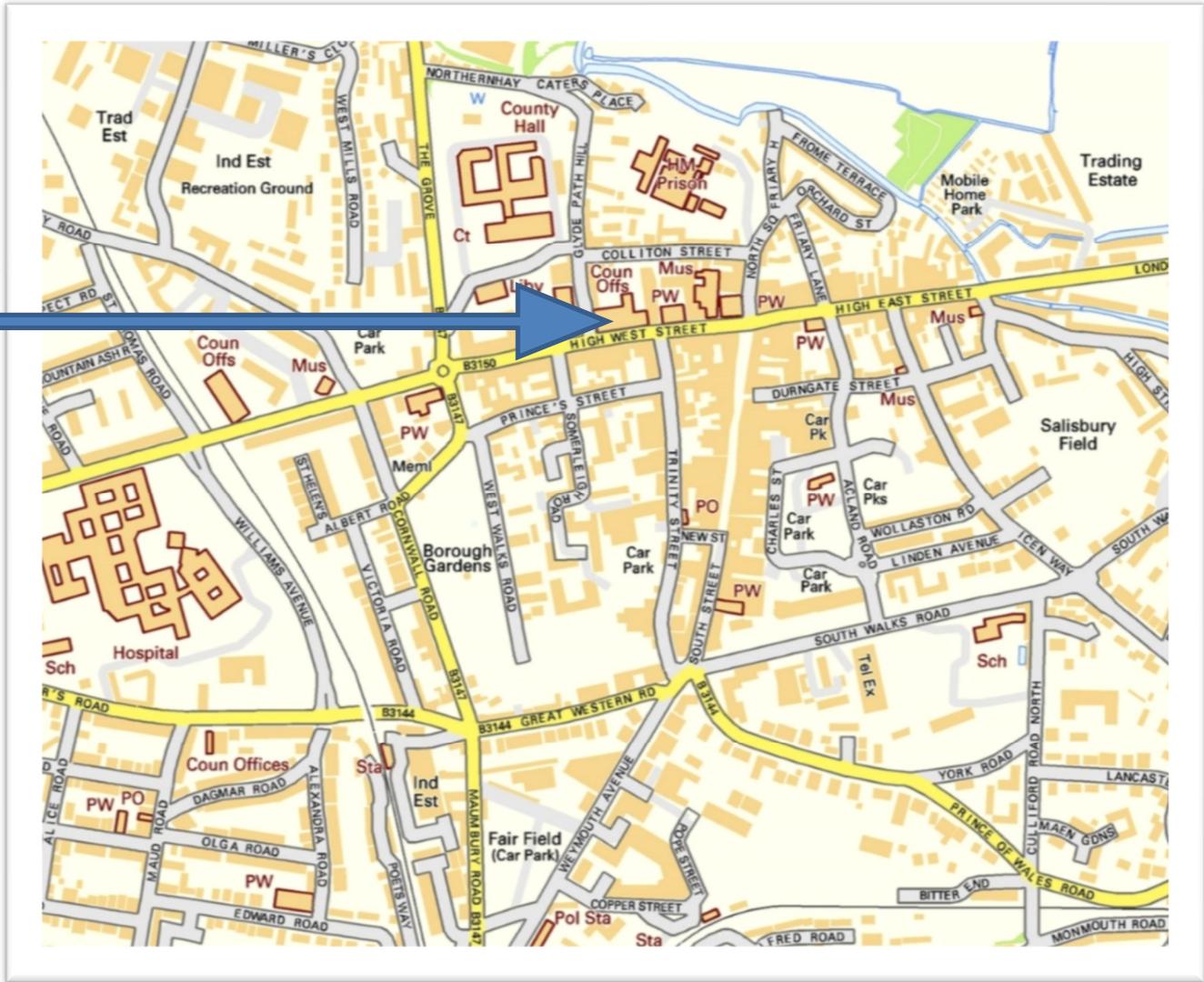
AGENDA

Welcome, introductions and apologies

- 1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**
- 2. 90-second Partner updates**
- 3. Delivering the AONB Management Plan** (information) highlighting AONB 60th anniversary engagement projects, a new agri-environment grant scheme test & trial, enhancements on the River Asker (& beyond), Landscape Enhancement Initiative
- 4. Purbeck Beaver Reintroduction Feasibility Study** (presentation)
- 5. Dorset Council Climate Emergency Declaration** (presentation)
- 6. NAAONB Colchester Declaration** (information)
- 7. Glover Review of Protected Landscapes** (information)
- 8. Dorset AONB 2020-2021 Budget Outline** (decision)
- 9. Any other business**

Proposed dates of next meetings:

Partnership Board: 26th May 2020
Steering Group: 23rd April 2019



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ITEM 1: DRAFT MINUTES of the last Partnership Board meeting (11th June 2019, Shire Hall, Dorchester)

Present:

Chairman: Jim White (also Dorset Local Nature Partnership - LNP)

Dorset Council Members: Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Roland Tarr

Sector representatives: Louise Stratton (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Rupert Best (Country Land and Business Association - CLA), Hannah Jefferson (National Trust), Marie McLeish (National Trust Project Manager)

Defra family officers: Ian Alexander (Natural England)

Local Authority officers: Alison Turnock, Hilary Jordan

DAONB Team: Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature Project Officer), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Katharine Wright (Dorset Food & Drink Coordinator), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Sue Dampney (Communications Officer), Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Jill Hearing (South Dorset Ridgeway Project Officer), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

Apologies:

Brian Blease (DWP), Will Langer (CLA), Sam Rose (Jurassic Coast Trust), Matt Low (Natural England), Kim Goonesekera (EA), Robert Lasseter (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Alison Moore (Local Enterprise Partnership - LEP), Ken Buchan (Dorset Council), Kiera Diment (Dorset Food & Drink).

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all, with particular welcome to our new councillors in attendance for the first time - Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Roland Tarr.

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as correct.

RBest asked if it was good practise for invited speakers to stay throughout a meeting if a decision was required by the board (e.g. as per at previous meeting Glover review discussion) TM replied that in future we could ask them to leave the meeting at this point. RBest queried the use of initials in the minutes if shared by more than one member, TM agreed that this will be changed for next time. RBest queried if meetings should be held more frequently as unable to remember what was said so far back, TM said this could be discussed under item 4 of the agenda – Governance Review.

Update on 'Action Points' from previous meeting - TM:

- I. Management Plan – the plan has been published and a copy available for all board members to take away. A section on 'How we Measure Success' was inserted, following review by the Review Group.

It is available online via

https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DAONB_Managementplan.pdf

II. National Park / Glover Review – No responses received from the board.

2. 2-minute partner updates

Ian Alexander (NE) – at a national level working with DEFRA on new agri-environment scheme (Environmental Land Management System or ELMS), which will impact land owners in AONB. Matt Low (our usual representative) currently on secondment from the team working on ELMS guidance.

Hannah Jefferson (NT) – reported a staff restructure is taking place and recruitment underway. Current workstream is restoring environments, in the future she will be looking at supporting farmers both tenant of NT and their neighbours & sustainable tourism in electric car charging points in car parks.

Cllr Bryan (DC) – new in role but electric hook ups for cars are in his portfolio, as well as dealing with the climate emergency.

Rupert Best (CLA) - said CLA are interested in the wider issues of Brexit impact, Agriculture Bill, interest in public money for public goods to help align public sector to AONB & they are anticipating Glover Review. Will Langer recently interviewed on Radio Solent - pushing for better broadband/4G for rural areas.

Cllr Tarr (DC) – new in role, explained his background working for Peak District National Park, Dorset Heritage Countryside Officer and Planning Chairman for Dorchester.

Jim White (LNP) – LNP are currently concentrating on the 25-year Environmental Plan. Several speakers had attended a recent conference, including Tom Munro from the Dorset AONB. Dorset's 25-year plan will follow the national format and is due to be published in 2019.

Sally King (for JCT) – a Partnership plan for the Jurassic Coast is being developed and meetings underway with partners. This should be finalised by the end of the year.

Louise Stratton (NFU) – locally NFU working on Poole Harbour catchment proposed nutrient management scheme to manage nitrates. This has strong support from farmers, who are driving it forward along with partners.

TM said he had been asked to write a letter of support for the scheme and asked if members would like to ask questions to Louise about the scheme before deciding to show support?

- a) **AT** asked how it will work? LS explained that current legislation is not sufficient to manage the issue. This scheme is a trading scheme, an overarching management group would set the amount of nitrate which could leach in the catchment reducing on an annual basis. Individual farmers would be given an annual target to reach, which would be reduced each year but if they were over target then the trading scheme would kick in and they would purchase from those under target.
- b) **Cllr Somper** asked what is the size of the catchment? LS – It is 1/3 of the county. Map available at <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/environment/catchment-partnerships/poole-harbour-catchment-partnership/poole-harbour-catchment-information>
- c) **Cllr Tarr** said he was very supportive of this proposal.
- d) **HJe** agreed and said that she would like the learning to be shared on a national level. LS said engagement with wider teams will be taking place. There are similar schemes in NZ / USA which they are learning from and which, vice versa, are keen to learn from this approach.
- e) **IA** said he was supportive. Wessex water have a trading scheme also. Advised that Stour and Avon waters flowing into the channel at Christchurch Harbour also can come back into Poole Harbour with the tidal flow so further work will be needed.

Action Point - Board agreed that TM should write a letter of support on behalf of the Board.

Cllr Somper (DC) – recently elected and declared an interest as her husband’s business is a member of Dorset Food & Drink. She covers a rural ward in North of the County and is also Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee (People). She has a long personal interest in rural affairs.

Hilary Jordan (DC) – a report is going to cabinet about future Local Plans, which will recommend 1 plan for the area (replacement the 5 local plans currently in use) by 2020. Consultation will take place, including with the Dorset AONB on the plan. Stressed that this is an opportunity to be more strategic.

RT asked what will happen in the meantime and HJ said existing Local Plans and the National Policy will apply.

Alison Turnock – read out an update from Brian Blease (for Purbeck Heritage Network / DWT) – currently working with other organisations to establish Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve, development phase of Wild Brownsea project complete and round 2 funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund submitted for £1.2M. If all goes to plan with start in October.

TM read out a message from Sam Rose, who has is leaving the Jurassic Coast Trust and is standing down from the board as follows:

"To Jim, Tom, AONB Team and Board, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to play a role in helping to safeguard Dorset's outstanding landscape - through both my role as manager of the World Heritage Site, and also in my place on the Partnership. I wish the Team and Board very best wishes in which I hope will be a time of opportunity. I also wish to put on record now [and please say with a smile!] that whilst I have been known in the past to say that the AONB is simply 'the hinterland to the Jurassic Coast', I will also now acknowledge publicly that the Jurassic Coast is, of course, the 'sea defence for the Dorset AONB'."

He also advised that Alison Moore (LEP) has stood down from the board.

3. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery.

Discussion points:

- a.) Question from **RBest** re. Low Carbon Dorset as to the size/type of schemes being undertaken. **IR** replied that they are smaller scale schemes mainly renewable energy schemes on small / medium sized premises. AONB particular interest in bio-mass/woodland schemes. **Cllr Bryan** said that there are grants available, but the application form is overly complicated and not good awareness and thus uptake about the grant scheme amongst businesses. Fear that if the money is not used up it will be clawed back. He said Dorset Council will be pushing this scheme, there are meetings with businesses planned and he will report back at the next meeting. **IR** agreed that getting larger scale businesses involved would help.
- b.) Following the update on the SDF grant fund **RBest** asked is there is any funding available that farmers can access for advice. **TM** advised that we have done this before through landscape-based projects (e.g. South Dorset Ridgeway, Wild Purbeck and the LEI programmes). These had achieved good outcomes and the team will continue to work advice provision into future projects as positive feedback was received from farmers, leading to changes in the way they work. **HJe** advised that the Woodland Trust will come out and advise for free and different charities may do similar depending on funding.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved and noted the progress made on delivering the Management Plan 2014-2019.

4. AONB Partnership Governance Review

TM presented the paper.

Discussion points:

- a) **JW** – Asked do we want to invite 3 councillor members reduced from 5? **Cllr Somper** said that the 3 councillors at the meeting today, representing different areas and the portfolio holder who is essential, and this seems an even distribution. **RBest** asked who lived in the AONB out of the councillor's present - Cllr Tarr does, Cllr Sompre covers part of Dorset AONB and part of Cranborne Chase AONB and Cllr Bryan is the Portfolio Holder. **AT** said we should consider what would happen if needed a chairman's vote. **TM** asked if all in agreement that a Portfolio holder and 2 other Cllrs from the AONB should be part of the board and this was agreed.
- b) **JW** asked members to consider who was not on the board that should be? **IA** stressed the importance of Parish/Town council representation following Local Government Re-organisation. **Cllr Tarr** suggested inviting a member of DAPTC and a Parish/Town Cllr to attend. **TM** said that Janet Page from DAPTC is on the board and usually attends. **RBest** said that commerce could be better represented and suggested attendance by the Federation of Small Businesses and wider business sector. **TM** said that the LEP representative has recently stood down, so he will revisit this. **KW** said she could pass on a contact for the FSB following a recent meeting. **Cllr Bryan** said that economic growth crucial to the success of the council and he would be happy to get the Portfolio holder / member of this team to come along to this meeting from time to time. **HJe** said that arts could be better represented.
- c) **JW** asked if the frequency of meetings is sufficient – at present twice yearly plus the annual forum but reminded the board that there needs to be a balance in resources of team to organise the meetings. **RBest** proposed an additional meeting to focus on current issues such as Brexit/Common Agricultural policy. **TM** suggested these topics could be added to the current schedule. **JW** suggested that we try this at the next and following meeting but if this is not satisfactory we could call an extra meeting. **TM** agreed.

RESOLUTION: The Board resolved to:

1) Invite 3 elected members from Dorset Council to sit on the AONB Partnership Board, comprising the relevant Portfolio Holder and two others whose wards are within, or include parts of, the Dorset AONB.

In addition, representation from DNHAS, LEP and DAPTC will be followed up and renewed, with the DAPTC invited to have more than 1 member.

2) The Terms of Reference on membership will be amended to delete former councils and replace with Dorset Council

3) The Terms of Reference on quorum will be amended from '6 members' to '6 organisations.'

ACTIONS:

TM to amend to the Partnership Board terms of reference as above, including a new clause: 2 missed meetings should be a trigger for seeking a new representative

TM to contact DNHAS & LEP to request they name a new representative, and DAPTC to offer up to 3 places

TM to offer all new representatives a briefing on the Dorset AONB, the Partnership and its work

AONB Steering Group to select an agenda for the November meeting focussing on agricultural policy

5. 2018-19 Partnership Finance Report

TM presented the paper.

RESOLUTION: The Board noted the funding leverage demonstrated by these accounts.

6. 2018 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) – Richard Brown

Presentation: <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Presentation-Dorset-AONB-Board-Item-6-Landscape-Character-Assessment-11.06.19.pdf>

RB explained that this is a layered mapping system he uses to record landscape character and condition throughout the AONB - both physical and perceptual. It highlights areas for conservation, enhancement and allows us to analyse change over time in conjunction with a bank of Gigapan images of the areas. It was updated in 2019 to co-incide with the new Management Plan and new website.

Questions:

- a) **JW** asked if this happens across AONBs? RB replied we are ahead of others and they have contacted us about it. He doesn't believe there is another AONB with level of evidence of change analysis.
- b) **Cllr Tarr** asked if there are images of the fossil forest, RB said they can discuss this together.
- c) **Cllr Bryan** asked where the maps are from as Cllr Atkins has his own mapping company if needed, and access to a large scale scanner at the Bodleian Library.

JW said it is a fantastic baseline for the future and thanked RB for his hard work. He explained RB will be leaving the team for a one-year sabbatical in July.

7. Wessex Hillforts & Habitats project – Marie McLeish

Presentation: <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Presentation-Dorset-AONB-Board-Item-7-Hillforts-and-Habitats-11.06.2019.pdf>

MM explained project she is managing a project for the NT on improving the condition and landscape character of Wessex Hillforts and habitats, many of which are located in the AONB. This is a 2-year project, costing £400,000. Work includes better visitor interpretation and long-term habitat management. In particular she stressed the important work volunteers are undertaking in the delivery of this project.

Questions:

- a) **Cllr Tarr** commended the good work the NT are undertaking, particularly coastal conservation and the impact this has on attracting good quality tourism.
- b) **HJe** said the NT are keen to re-focus visitors away from Stonehenge, bringing smaller sites together and working out the local issues, such as farmers and dogs.
- c) **MM** explained this is why volunteers are so important, e.g. to carry out condition surveys so resources are therefore best used.

JW said he was impressed by the good condition of Hambledon Hill and thanked MM for a very informative presentation.

8. Ecosystem Approach System – Ian Rees

IR explained the Ecosystem Approach self assessment will be used to evidence delivery of Outcome 1C in the government's Biodiversity 2020 strategy. To complete is successfully requires board members in-put. IR will circulate an on-line survey, consisting of 8, high levels questions for members to complete with their feedback. He asked members to keep an eye out for this email, complete and submit the questionnaire. This feedback will then be passed back to NAAONB's and DEFRA. There were no questions from board members.

		CORE WORK	Wild Purbeck	Community Woodlands	DF&D	Fingerposts	Stepping into Nature	LEI Marshwood Vale	LEI SDR	JC Visitor Management	Rivers	Heritage Tourism (INTERREG)	LPS Development	Low Carbon Biomass	H&W (Winchester Uni Collab)	Fisheries Feasibility
Defra's core functions of an AONB staff unit																
a	Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the CRoW Act AONB Management Plan															
b	Promoting the AONB vision and management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside															
c	Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan															
d	Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service/attain the highest possible standards in countryside mgt															
e	Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets															
f	Monitoring AONB landscape condition															
g	Accessing resources for management activities															
h	Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, sharing advice and best practice nationally and regionally															
i	Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level															
j	Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB															
k	Providing landscape related planning advice															
NAAONB's Strategic Objectives (Strategic Plan 2016-2020)																
1	Support policies for conserving and enhancing natural beauty															
2	Develop an understanding of AONBs and the issues they face															
3	Improve the way in which AONB partnerships and the NAAONB work together															
4	Secure and manage resources															
Dorset AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) Objectives																
A1	Management of land and sea conserves & enhances natural heritage, natural assets, ecosystem flows and the services they provide															
A2	Management of land and sea conserves & enhances the historic environment															
A3	Management of land and sea supports natural processes and allows evolution with environmental change															
A4	Skills for sustainable land management and the green economy are fostered															
A5	Markets for sustainably produced goods are promoted and supported															
B1	Opportunities to experience and access the landscape for health & wellbeing benefits are plentiful]															
B2	High quality sustainable tourism and access is widely available															
B3	There is wide awareness and understanding of the Dorset AONB landscape, its special qualities and management															
B4	Local people are actively engaged in conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB, its special qualities, natural processes and ecosystem benefits															
C1	The AONB and its setting is conserved and enhanced by good planning and development															
C2	Landscape assessment & monitoring is effective and supports good decision-making															
C3	Necessary development is supported															
C4	Development which has negative effects on the natural beauty of the AONB, its special qualities, ecosystem flows and natural processes is avoided															
D1	Local people are engaged in key decisions relating to their local environments in the AONB															
D2	Decision-making is supported by the best available information, understanding, good practice, tools and organisations															
D3	Monitoring informs and enables adaptation to achieve best outcomes															
D4	Collaborative working is developed through partnerships															
25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN GOALS																
1	Clean air															
2	Clean and plentiful water															
3	Thriving plants and wildlife															
4	A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought															
5	Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently															
6	Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment															
7	Mitigating and adapting to climate change															
8	Minimising waste															
9	Managing exposure to chemicals															
10	Enhancing biosecurity															

CORE WORK

3.3. Providing landscape-related planning advice via the Planning Protocol:

- a. The AONB Team has been invited to attend Dorset Council's Strategic Planning Forum.
- b. Appeals: Verbal advice provided in relation to Bredy Farm, Burton Bradstock- barn proposal/ festival site.
- c. Minerals: We have provided a response (objection) on the revised proposal for a major expansion of the Chard Junction mineral workings (Westford Park Farm).
- d. DM Caseload: Majors: Responses have been sent for the following;
 - Knoll House Hotel, Studland (re-consultation on the major re-development of the Hotel Site and associated facilities) Objection maintained.
 - Steppingstones, Stoborough – Housing proposal. Objection to revised scheme.
 - Middle Beach, Studland Café/Car Park – pre-app on the re-location of a new café and the restructuring of the car parking). Support in principle.
 - Milton Abbas Housing – advice given on the principles of housing development. Objection maintained on grounds of scale and non-compliance with development test contained within NPPF.
 - Rampisham Solar Park – response provided on the proposed extension of working life. Support.
 - Drimpton Affordable Housing – ongoing dialogue with Case Officer. Objection in principle to the layout and design.
- e. Others:
 - Manor Farm, East Stoke – Storage barn, A35/Litton Cheney telecoms Pole – objection, Luckford Wood Camp Site – Conversion of Barn to dwelling, Burlington Road, Swanage – stabilisation works, Knap Farm, Buckland Newton – Track re-surfacing.
- f. Latest cases:
 - The Moors at Arne Coastal Change – response due to be sent on Scoping Opinion (EIA), Land East of Fairways, East Cliffe, West Bay – Application for 5 houses

3.4. Accessing resources / project development

- a. The AONB Team has steering input to the following strategic organisations which we anticipate could be a source of funds for conserving and enhancing the AONB
 - Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Rural Enterprise Group / Dorset Destination Management Organisation)
 - Southern Dorset Local Action Group
- b. National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative: a third bid is being developed for submission in January 2020. This will follow the format of the previous applications, gathering a portfolio of landscape interventions across several holdings in the eligible area. Interventions include stone walling, tree planting, hedging, sward enhancement and wildflower work, scrub management, etc.
- c. Creative Europe: we have been invited to join a developing partnership for a Creative Europe application being led by Activate Performing Arts; our role in the project is as 'land steward' to provide expertise in land and access management to creative partners engaged in outdoor arts.
- d. National Lottery Heritage Fund:
 - The team secured £88,900 for a series of engagement projects for the AONB's 60th Anniversary. The project description is appended to these papers. This year-long programme will provide audience development and evidence gathering for the following project.

- The team is continuing to build a landscape scale conservation project in the Marshwood Vale with the Heritage Lottery Fund the likely target for majority funding. HLF are currently reviewing their grant programmes (Landscape Partnerships are closed to new applicants); we plan to be an early applicant into a new programme.
- e. National Lottery Communities Fund: The Stepping into Nature team have passed the first round with a bid of £300,000 to further develop and scale up their landscape-based delivery for older people.
- f. Alzheimer's Society Accelerator Fund: The Stepping into Nature Team applied for £75k (with an additional £25k of in-kind support from the Alzheimer's Society) to develop training resources to support delivery of nature-based activities for older people.
- g. Health Foundation Fund: to be launched in mid-November, this grant could contribute to Stepping into Nature; up to £300k available.
- h. Purbeck station interpretation improvements work in partnership with Purbeck Community Rail Partnership planned for 2020: raising awareness of AONB, JC and encouraging sustainable bus/ rail travel

3.5. **National Association for AONBs / Protected Landscapes** collaboration

- a. The NAAONB Annual Report 2018-2019 has been published https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/download_file/2601/0
- b. The NAAONB is working on a range of actions to develop practical actions in response to the Glover Review.
- c. AONB Manager Tom Munro is engaged in a small national steering group for the Colchester Declaration (further details in ITEM 5)
- d. AONB Culture, Community & Learning Officer Sue Dampney and AONB Countryside Officer Ian Rees are completing the Taking the Lead programme in November, which has focussed on AONB family staff development and building resilience in the organisation. Their contributions to working groups focussed on selected priorities across the AONB national family:
 - Landscapes for Life Week in September, which includes a 'national moment' to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act received much publicity and engagement. Over 1000 people took part in the 'National Moment' on 21st September at 2pm, forming hearts in the landscapes they cherish across England and Wales. Poet Laureate Simon Armitage was commissioned to write a poem for this event, which featured in The Times as well as The Observer and The Verb and a short film of his reading at Arnside & Silverdale AONB can be found here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SC_2e_MHggM. A copy of his poem 'Fugitives' will be available at the meeting or can be found, together with a short film of the National Moment, on the NAAONB website <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/art-landscape/national-moment>.
 - The AONB Management Plan process, capturing good practice and sharing learning will be reporting their findings in November.
- e. Sue Dampney and Tom Munro worked with the National Association of AONBs to submit a bid to Arts Council England for funding to develop an Arts Strategy for the AONB family and training to support its development. The bid was successful and the first stage of letting the contract for the strategy development and training was completed in early November, with Activate - the Dorset based arts organisation – winning the contract. A Statement of Intent for developing our use of arts was launched with poet laureate Simon Armitage on 21st September and can be found on the NAAONB website <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/art-landscape>.

3.6. **Promotion of the AONB:** outreach

- a. A significant programme of engagement activity has been given support by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. A description of the longer-running aspects of this programme are appended to these papers. The programme also included outreach during the Landscapes for Life Festival in late September and the Annual Forums in October.

- 8,542 Twitter followers @DorsetAONB; 958 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/Dorset-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty-AONB-449270285224339/>
- 21,667 Twitter followers @DorsetFoodDrink; 4,322 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/dorsetfoodanddrink/>
- 675 Twitter followers @StepIn2Nature; 1296 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/stepin2nature/>

PROJECTS: THOSE RELATED TO MANAGMENT PLAN CHAPTER “THE WORKING LANDSCAPE”

3.8. Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative

- Three-year funded project by the National Grid at just under £200,000, running to Spring 2021. Conservation activity is being delivered in the Marshwood Vale in partnership with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and National Trust along with 24 farmers and land managers.
- It has been a quiet summer for the delivery team involved in the Marshwood Vale LEI, but work parties have started up again for the Autumn / Winter period and we are planning to deliver this season:
 - 3 pond restorations for Great Crested Newts, 48 hedgerow trees plants, 300m of hedge laying, 3ha scrub clearance, 50m of river restoration, 2ha of grassland restoration, 24 orchard trees planted

3.9. Reconnecting the Ridgeway Landscape Enhancement Initiative

- Three-year funded project by the National Grid at just under £200,000, running to 2022. Conservation activity is being delivered across the South Dorset Ridgeway area in partnership with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Southwest with 13 farmers and land managers.
- Work is underway on 4 sites, about to start on 3 more, with quotes/contracts/permissions underway on a further 4 sites.
- To date volunteers have restored 50m of dry stone wall, laid 500m of hedge and made a start on clearing areas of scrub to restore chalk grassland sites.

3.10. West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams

- A community-led project to improve the condition of the River Asker. Funded by the Dorset Governance Group (delivering the Catchment Based Approach in Dorset), Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset AONB and the Environment Agency. Annual budget: £35,000. Delivered in partnership with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest along with 30 community members of Lodgers, Uploders and Askerswell and farmers and land managers.
- Practical works have been limited over the summer, but we have secured additional funding from the Environment Agency to deliver further Natural Flood Management works in the catchment as well as looking at issues in the adjacent Walditch Stream catchment.
- This winter will see further installation of leaky woody-debris dams, track renovations, hedgerow planting and land management change to reduce overland flow into the river.
- 8 volunteers have been monitoring the fly life in the river over the summer, using this to determine the health of the water. Further equipment has been purchased to allow greater chemical analysis to take place.
- A community event was held to show off the work completed by volunteers over the winter. It was a wet and miserable day, but 30 people braved the elements to find out more about our work.

- f. And finally, two successful sessions were held tackling the Himalayan balsam infestation in the headwaters. Work will be repeated next year to get on top of this invasive species.

3.11. Farming for the Nation

- a. The Dorset AONB is one of 12 AONBs that have successfully submitted plans to deliver a test and trial of the new Environmental Land Management System.
- b. Funding is from Defra and is close to £1m for all AONBs, with £67,000 allocated for Dorset.
- c. The project will be delivered in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest, Dorset Environmental Records Centre and a number of farmers and land managers in four Landscape Character Areas within the AONB.
- d. The aim is to test how we can get the aspirations set out in our management plan into a spatial land management targeting document at a landscape scale and then into a farm-scale management plan. Further work will also look at the requirements of successful scrub management on chalk grassland.
- e. The test will start in January 2020 and run for 18 months.

3.12. Dorset Food & Drink

- a. As described in 3.2d, Caroline Richards has joined the team as Dorset Food & Drink Project Officer.
- b. DF&D Community Interest Company has filed its first active annual accounts with Companies House (for 2018-2019) with the assistance of Old Mill, DF&D's accountancy partner.
- c. Summer 2019 included many food and drink events, with direct delivery of Poundbury's Food & Arts Festival and support for
- d. Ignyte Publishing were contracted to deliver sales and communications for DF&D and have expanded membership and social media following. They have also made changes to the DF&D website.
- e. Current membership of over 200 Dorset businesses
- f. Show your support for Dorset Food & Drink, and stock up on excellent, local, festive goodies by attending the Athelhampton Xmas Food & Drink Fair on the weekend of 23rd – 24th November.

3.13. Wild Purbeck Partnership

- a. The Wild Purbeck partnership continues to meet three times a year, to discuss projects related to the management of Purbeck.
- b. At the September meeting, the partnership discussed deer management with a representative from the Deer Initiative (to be taken forward through the new Purbeck Heaths NNR), Back From the Brink (Dorset's Heathland), Purbeck Nature Map, Arne Moors, the large grazing unit, the new NNR, ELMS test/trial, farmer facilitation fund application from South Purbeck and information related to the potential for a beaver release on the southern shores of Poole Harbour.

3.14. Dorset Downs & Vales conservation group

In partnership with Natural England colleagues, a wider group of interested conservation partners has been convened with a view to establishing a conservation forum with a Dorset Downs & Vales geographical focus, to replicate the best of the Wild Purbeck Partnership. Since its steering role for the 3-year funded NIA programme ceased, that forum works well for the Wild Purbeck NIA for the purposes of

- a. Sharing conservation activity, ideas, priorities and opportunities

- b. Building collaboration between partners
- c. Bringing forward joint projects where opportunities arise

PROJECTS: THOSE RELATED TO MANAGMENT PLAN CHAPTER “EXPLORING, UNDERSTANDING, ENGAGING”

3.15. Stepping into Nature - background

Stepping into Nature is funded by the National Community Lottery Fund till March 2020. Recently we submitted an extension proposal to widen the project area up to cover all Dorset Council area for 2020 – 2023. We have been successful in the first round and have been invited to submit a full proposal for funding from the Reaching Communities programme. Only 20% of ideas submitted to this fund reach this point.

3.16. Stepping into Nature outputs: April – September 2019

- a. Budget total for 2019/20 to £141,289 on target to March 2020
- b. 57,000 of in kind / partner match currently in Year 3
- c. 102 activities delivered, 728 attendees
- d. Received 431 registration forms to date (individual people) and 750 feedback forms, contributing to an independent assessment of the health impact with Public Health Dorset
- e. Year 2 evaluation report can be found in resource library <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/resource/stepping-into-nature/>
- f. 18 face-to-face participant interviews completed
- g. 2381 people engaged with SiN through events/talks/meetings
- h. 8 Community Pots in progress totalling £13,236 with £23,908 in kind match & 208 volunteer hours
- i. SiN conference with 120 attendees all slides in resource library <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/resource/stepping-into-nature/>
- j. 5 Picnic in the Park (event to encourage living well, loving nature)
- k. CCG System Leadership Team presentation (requesting co-investment) leading to opening conversations around developing links with national ageing well strategies. More work to progress this further.
- l. Online
 - New SiN blog – <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/stepping-into-nature-stories/>
 - Monthly E-news with 272 subscribers
 - Twitter / Facebook stats as per 3.7; 120 Stepping into Nature Community Group members on Facebook closed group

3.17. Stepping into Nature, coming up:

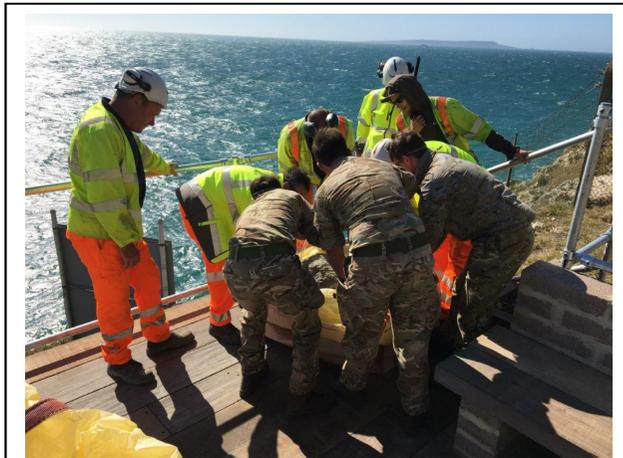
- a) Case study for Public Health England - “An Evidence summary of health inequalities in older populations in coastal and rural” report areas” https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/824717/Health_Inequalities_in_Ageing_in_Rural_and_Coastal_Areas-Messages_and_summary.pdf
- b) Submitted Stepping into Nature Season of Stories bid to Alzheimer’s Society Accelerator Programme application

3.18. Jurassic Coast Visitor Management

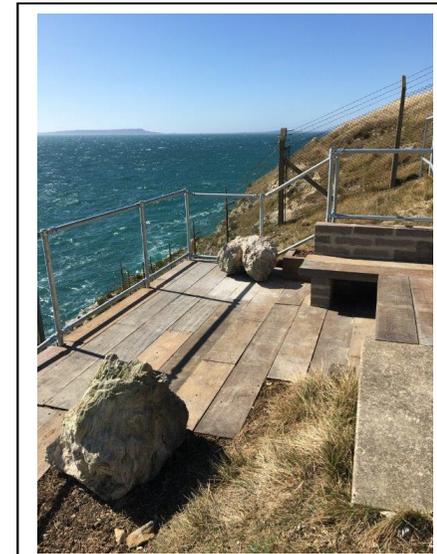
- a. Sally King continues to deliver the Jurassic Coast Visitor Management role as described in the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Management Plan on behalf of Dorset Council and Devon County Council.

3.19. Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Fossil Forest

- a. Background: 2.5 year project to reinstate access to the Fossil Forest, following closure in 2015 due to rockfalls. Expected project cost: £181,644. Funders: Coastal Communities Fund, Ministry of Defence, Lulworth Estates, Geological Association Curry Fund, Arts Development Company
- b. We've overcome rock-falls, unexploded bombs and a site which is closed due to MoD firing most of the year and ... the works are nearly complete! Over the next few weekends, the mesh will be put in place between the railings and interpretation (one panel, plus safety signs and an oak welcome sign; as well as a panel in Lulworth village) will be installed. The site should be re-opened by Christmas when the Ranges are open to the public. The project has been a real partnership effort, with fossil trees donated by Albion Stone and delivered by military helicopter (as part of an exercise); recycled wood donated by BPC council; and a determined DC Highways team who spent much of summer 2019 carrying heavy loads up and down the 97 steps which lead to the site!



Dorset Council Highways and Naval Air Squadron manoeuvre the fossil trees into place



Fossil wood in position in the new seating area

3.20. Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: West Bay Central Hub

- a. Background: 2.5 year project to (a) create public realm improvements in a central area in West Bay, incorporating artist designed seating, an orientation feature & motorcycle parking and (b) replace interpretation panels at the end of the pier & outside the Salt House. Expected project cost: £230,000. Funders: Coastal Community Fund, Dorset Council, Bridport Town Council, South West Coast Path Association, Arts Development Company
- b. There is a lot to do between now and project completion in (hopefully) mid December:

- c. SWP Concrete have completed casting of the first of the 4 benches. It looks really good! All 4 should be complete by 25th November
- d. Western Power will commence work to lower the raised link box and re-route electrics
- e. DC Highways will re-establish the worksite with fencing, cones, barriers, welfare etc; mobilise crane to unload benches (will require bus route road closure); then replace damaged kerbs and install bronze interp plaque and cycle racks.
- f. Finally, WJ Road Markings will lay resin-bound outer perimeter.



West Bay bench at SWP Concrete



West Bay bench at SWP Concrete

3.21. **Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Kimmeridge**

- a. Meeting taken place between Dorset Coast Forum, Dorset Countryside and AONB in November– agreed Sally will co-ordinate the interpretation side of the project. Meeting with all partners planned January 2020

3.22. **Sustainable travel: Axminster Station interpretation improvements**

- a. New vinyls installed on the back of the bus shelter at the station which promote accessing the East Devon and West Dorset coast and countryside by bus. Funded by East Devon partners and Devon & Cornwall Community Rail Partnership. In addition, 4 YouTube videos created by All the Stations documentary team which also promote train/bus travel to East Devon and West Dorset.

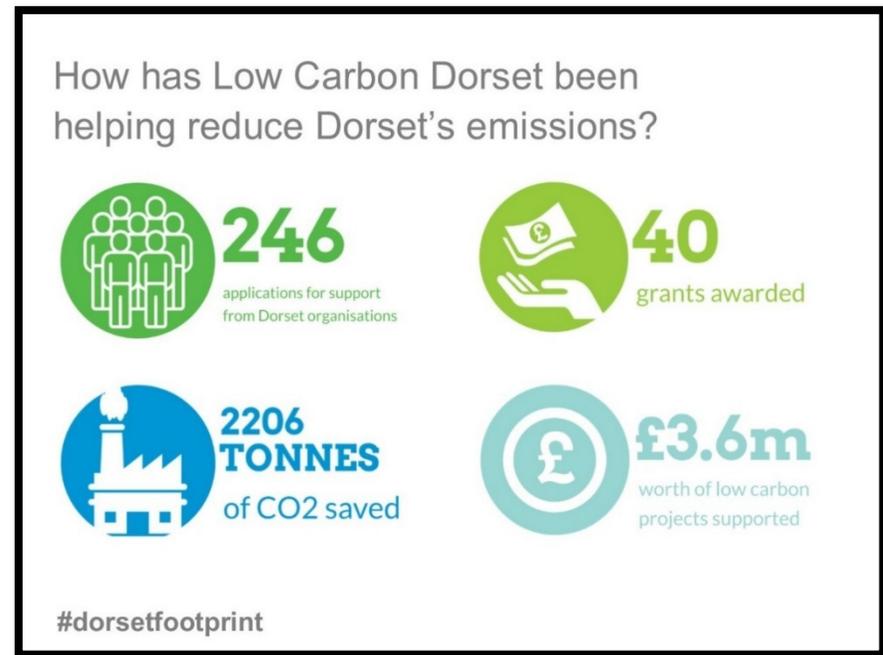


Bus shelter promotional design

PROJECTS: THOSE RELATED TO MANAGMENT PLAN CHAPTER “PLANING FOR LANDSCAPE QUALITY”

3.23. Low Carbon Dorset

- a. A three year & £6.5m scheme funded by the European Rural Development Fund, Dorset Council and the Dorset AONB to deliver advice on renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures within Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The advice is backed up by a grant scheme to support capital investment that is open to community groups, local authorities and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. It runs unto December 2020. www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk
- Summary of activity: 264 applications for support , £3.6m worth of low carbon projects supported through the programme (£3,571,547), 40 grants awarded, totalling £1.4m (£1,428,555), 61 Dorset businesses (SMEs) supported to help reduce carbon footprint
- b. So far support & funding from the Low Carbon Dorset programme has/will* contribute to: (*some of these projects are contracted but not yet completed, grants have been awarded from Low Carbon Dorset for them but works have not yet begun on some)
- An annual carbon reduction of 2206 tonnes of CO2 in Dorset
 - The installation of 2.7 MW of renewable energy in Dorset
 - Improvement in the energy efficiency of 55 houses in Dorset
 - The development of 1 new low carbon product in Dorset (a zero carbon housing design)
 - Technologies funded:
 - 3122 LEDs (26 projects)
 - 9 solar panel projects = totalling 1.3MWp of installed renewable energy
 - 10 Air-source heat pumps
 - 1 Ground-source heat pump
 - 2 Biomass Boilers
 - 1 Microgrid and battery storage project
 - 2 Boiler upgrades
 - 2 insulation projects
 - 3 improved window glazing projects
 - 1 Conversion to Passive Conditioning project



3.24. Wild Purbeck: Wytch Farm Landscape & Access Fund

- a. The Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Panel makes recommendations on funding for projects which strengthen landscape character, enhance biodiversity and encourage no-car access in the landscape character areas affected by the operation of the Wytch Farm oilfield. Funds are held by Dorset Council and were secured through a section 106 agreement to ameliorate the effect of the oilfield's continued presence in the AONB. The fund totals £1.7M.
- b. Since the last board meeting the panel met in July and October and recommended support for 5 projects, namely

- c. It cannot be delivered by AONB teams and partnerships alone, and is in part a challenge to Government to make available sufficient resources for AONB Partnerships and teams, the wider network of organisations delivering on this front and agri-environmental support to effect the changes required.
- d. The following in bold is copied from the Colchester Declaration; “we” in that context is the NAAONB and wider AONB Family.

6.2. **CONTEXT**

Set against a backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world, and intergovernmental reports that the current global response to the effects of human impact on nature is insufficient – the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty believes that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and pace of nature conservation activity in AONBs. Using our unique network and partnership model, we are making a collective Declaration on Nature in AONBs, setting out our strategy for change.

With many AONB host authorities having taken the step of declaring a Climate Emergency we are demonstrating our readiness to act to redress declines in species and habitats within the context of a wider response to climate change.

6.3. **We believe**

- a. **Natural Beauty has intrinsic value and means so much to people**
- b. **AONBs should be places of rich, diverse and abundant wildlife**
- c. **Nature recovery is central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty**
- d. **Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one of the greatest threats to biodiversity.**
- e. **Designated landscapes offer some of the most powerful solutions to the challenges of climate change**
- f. **The network of AONBs and National Parks, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders offer a unique solution to tackling environmental challenges**

6.4. **We pledge**

- a. **By July 2020**
 - **To enable an approach that creates opportunities within AONBs for people to make an emotional connection with nature.**
 - **To prepare [or commence preparation of] a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB**
- b. **By 2024**
 - **To embed an ecosystems services approach into all AONB Management Plans**
 - **To ensure all AONB management plans include meaningful measures around climate change mitigation and adaptation, including clear, measurable targets to support Net Zero**
- c. **By 2030**
 - **That at least 200,000 ha of SSSIs in AONBs will be in favourable condition**
 - **That at least 100,000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites will have been created/ restored in AONBs to further support the natural movement of plants and animals**
 - **That at least 36,000 ha of new woodland will have been planted or allowed to regenerate in AONBs following the principle of the right tree in the right place**

- 7.1. The review was introduced in the Board Papers for November 2018 while the review panel was seeking responses in its call for evidence. The Dorset AONB response to this call can be downloaded here: <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2018-12-DAONB-response-to-Review-of-Designated-Landscapes.pdf>
- 7.2. The team engaged further with the review team during the drafting phase. This can be seen by the inclusion of 5 case studies of, or mentioning, the Dorset AONB and its partnership's activity.
- 7.3. The full report was published in September 2019, and can be downloaded here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf
- 7.4. The review grouped its 27 recommendations in 5 key themes. A key paragraph outlining the ambition and scope of each theme is quoted below:

Summary 1. Landscapes alive for nature and beauty: “The 2010 Making Space for Nature review and the most recent 2016 State of Nature report are explicit about the crisis of nature and what needs to be done to bring about a recovery. There is no need, in this review, to restate the excellent and mostly chilling analysis they contain, except to say that we agree and we want to see national landscapes lead the response.”

Recommendation 1: National Landscapes (NLs) should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature, and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service.

Rec. 2: The state of nature and natural capital in our NLs should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action.

Rec. 3: Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities for actions for nature recovery, including but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed by stronger status in law.

Rec. 4: NLs should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries.

Rec. 5: A central place for NLs in the new Environmental Land Management Schemes.

Rec. 6: A strengthened place for NLs in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the NPPF.

Summary 2. Landscapes for everyone: “We want our nation’s most cherished landscapes to fulfil their original mission for people, providing unrivalled opportunities for enjoyment, spiritual refreshment and in turn supporting the nation’s health and wellbeing.”

Rec. 7: A stronger mission to connect all people with our NLs, supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service.

Rec. 8: A night under the stars in a NL for every child

Rec. 9: New long-term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors

Rec. 10: Landscapes that cater for and improve the national health and wellbeing

Rec. 11: Expanding volunteering in our NLs

Rec. 12: Better information and signs to guide visitors

Rec. 13: A ranger service in all our NLs, as part of a national family

Rec. 14: NLs to become leaders in sustainable tourism

Rec. 15: Joining up with others to make the most of what we have and bringing National Trails into the NL family

Rec. 16: Consider expanding open access rights in NLs

Summary 3. Living in Landscapes: “If we are serious about demonstrating the value of ‘lived in’ landscapes to the global family of national landscapes, then we need to be serious about the people who live in them and show how it’s possible to offer meaningful social and economic support for them.”

Rec. 17: NLs working for vibrant communities

Rec. 18: A new NLs Housing Association to build affordable homes

Rec. 19: A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing NLs

Summary 4. More special places: “We think there is a case for several larger AONBs to take on National Park candidate status, as well as for a new AONB (or National Landscape as we propose they are called in future). The success of the National Forest is also a model which should be replicated. We also think that a changing nation needs new ways to come together to support natural beauty and access.”

Rec. 20: New designated landscapes (including an invitation for ministers to consider the case for Dorset and East Devon National Park)

Rec. 21: Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition

Rec. 22: A better designations process.

Summary 5. New ways of working: “We want our landscapes to focus on enhancing natural beauty, supporting communities and visitors. But to do it better, we think they need to change and work together more.”

Rec. 23: Stronger purposes in law for our NLs

Rec. 24: AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as NLs

Rec. 25: A new NLs Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts.

Rec. 26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society.

Rec. 27: A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising.

- 7.5. An immediate NAAONB response made by its chairman Philip Hygate was issued and can be downloaded in full here: https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/download_file/view/2579. The NAAONB’s response leading paragraph states, ““I am delighted the report recognises the immense value and potential of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and sets bold ambitions for their higher profile within the urgent imperatives of nature recovery and improving the health of the Nation. The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will work to ensure the Report is prioritised in the widest of policy contexts in the coming months and years. It is of the highest importance that the challenging but very positive messages of the Report are not lost sight of in the welter of pressures facing Government and Parliament. Indeed, fulfilment of the Report's recommendations offers an unequivocally decent and positive focus for public and political dialogue and an opportunity to reunite a divided Nation”
- 7.6. The AONB Board has discussed the Dorset and East Devon National Park proposal at previous meetings (2013-05 and 2018-11) and resolved to keep the matter under review, in line with the view of the local authorities which had formally considered the case. Dorset Council’s Cabinet considered the proposal anew in November 2019.
- 7.7. Defra and government are likely to be watching the responses made to the review; the extent of changes they make are likely to be coloured by these. It is important that any response from this Partnership considers the report as a whole and doesn’t just focus on recommendation 20.

and trusting relationship with AONB Partnerships. Individual SDF initiatives will be identified as part of an AONB’s programme of work. SDF will remain as a visible funding stream in the AONB family and should continue to be recorded and good practice registered to inform Defra and key partners. There are opportunities to use SDF to add value by encouraging greater uptake of innovative, often community-based, projects. The SDF programme has associated guidance prepared by Natural England which steers the kinds of projects to be developed. This guidance was revised in 2009 to place greater emphasis on encouraging innovation and risk-taking, as well as meeting AONB Management Plan objectives. These risk and innovation elements help clarify the distinction between SDF and other funding streams. Innovative SDF projects should be assessed from local, regional and national perspectives. We make SDF available to projects through a competitive process.

- c. PROJECTS: AONB Partnerships are free to determine how they use resources to deliver projects. If 100% AONB project funding is the only way to achieve the desired outcome, this is for the Partnerships to decide in developing their programme. Defra believes that delivery of AONB Management Plan objectives is generally greater and more sustainable if undertaken in partnership, particularly for large scale or landscape scale projects. It therefore encourages all AONB Partnerships to use their project funding to help lever in additional resources. The ability and willingness of partners to contribute to projects will be variable from partner to partner and from year to year. It is recognised that staffing costs can be met by project funding.

8.3. INCOME FORECAST

The Dorset AONB’s Local Authorities are intending to maintain their contributions in transition to becoming part of Dorset Council. The team also has an external fundraising target.

Total “single pot” income via the Dorset Council & Defra:

	Source	2019-2020
LA & Treasury income	Defra TOTAL	£ 244,022
	Dorset Council	£ 54,510
	Other income (NLHF for 60th)	£ 30,000
	TOTAL non-Defra income	£ 84,510
	TOTAL	£ 328,532

8.4. CORE COSTS

Efforts continue to ‘projectise’ a reasonable proportion of the team’s overheads depending on any restrictions imposed by the funding body: all projects make a contribution towards accommodation at a minimum.

Maximum core costs are 4 times the non-Defra income: £250,260; our projected costs are less.

	Cost heading	£
Core costs	<i>Core staff salaries, ENI & pension</i>	£ 225,500
	<i>Travel & training</i>	£ 7,300
	<i>Accommodation & office equipment</i>	£ 6,000
	<i>Partnership running costs</i>	£ 3,000
	<i>Communication, outreach etc, inc forum & AONB 60th outreach programme</i>	£ 35,000
	<i>Monitoring research & guidance</i>	£ 2,000
		CORE TOTAL

8.5. **PROJECTS & SDF**

The difference between the projected core costs and total single pot income is just over £49,000.

Maintaining a SDF of around £10,000 (to supplement the AONB 60th Community Fund) leaves £39,000 to be invested in the following projects:

- a. Dorset Food & Drink
- b. Stepping Into Nature
- c. West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams Catchment Management
- d. Dorset Fingerposts / Rural Roads
- e. Development of a multi-objective landscape scale project for Marshwood Vale & Brit Walley
- f. Inside Out 2020
- g. Visitor Management projects
- h. Woodlink

We are budgeting for the following projects which have no requirement for a contribution from the AONB Partnership:

- i. Wytch Farm Landscape Enhancement,
- j. Landscape Enhancement Initiative projects for the Marshwood Vale and the South Dorset Ridgeway,
- k. Dorset Low Carbon Economy programme

We are currently projecting a total budget (core, SDF & projects) of around £1.1M.