



Dorset AONB Partnership
Hosted by Dorset Council
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Dorset AONB Partnership Board papers

These papers are for the meeting date of 11th June. Due to social distancing restrictions at the time of writing and the risk of facilitating the spread of COVID-19, the meeting has been cancelled. The team has prepared 4 short presentations with recorded commentary, available online via the links provided in the report.

These papers include specific questions on which we invite your responses: **please respond with your answers by 11th June to Kate Townsend** on kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

If you want to discuss anything in these papers, Tom Munro will be available for this purpose on 01305 228237 (or Teams/Skype/Zoom) on Weds 10th June (10am to 12:30pm) and Thursday 11th June (10am to 12:30pm). Please get in touch then or by email to arrange an alternative time to talk if those aren't possible for you.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last meeting
2. Partner updates
3. Succession of chairman
4. Delivering the AONB Management Plan: team activity update, with presentations with commentary from team members on [Stepping into Nature, our work on the River Asker](#) and the recently completed coastal welcome/orientation points at [West Bay](#) and the [Fossil Forest](#)
5. 2019-2020 AONB Finances
6. Dorset Local Plan – an update from Hilary Jordan
7. Dorset Council's Green Infrastructure Advice Team – an update from Matthew Reeks
8. National Grid's Visual Impact Provision project (Winterbourne Abbas to Corton undergrounding of electricity transmission) – update from Stuart Fox, appended as a separate document

Proposed dates of next meetings:

Next Partnership Board **19th November 2020**. This is preceded by a Steering Group on **20th October 2020**

If you wish to raise an item for the agenda of a future meeting, please get in touch with the team or the chairman before the date of the Steering Group meeting which precedes the Board, and sets the agenda for it.

ITEM 1: DRAFT MINUTES of the Partnership Board meeting 26th November 2019, Shire Hall, Dorchester

Present:

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

Dorset Council Members:

Cllr Roland Tarr

Sector representatives:

Rupert Best & Will Langer (Country land and Business Association - CLA), Hannah Jefferson (National Trust), Brian Bleese (DWT), Robert Lasseter (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Janet Page (DAPTC), Jeremy Pope (DNHAS), Lucy Culkin (JCT)

Defra family officers:

Jane Wright (NE), Ali Maxwell (EA)

Local Authority officers:

Hilary Jordan, Ken Buchan

DAONB Team: Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature Project Officer), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Sue Dampney (Learning, Culture & Communications Officer), Jill Hearing (Reconnecting the Ridgeway Project Officer), Sarah Barber (Landscape Planning Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

Invitees in attendance: Cllr Mike Dyer (Dorset Council Environment EAP Chairman), Gen Crisford (NT), Anthony Littlechild (Dorset Council)

Apologies:

Cllr Ray Bryan & Cllr Jane Somper (Dorset Council) Louise Stratton (National Farmers' Union - NFU), Ian Alexander (Natural England), Luke Rake (KMC), Maria Clarke (Dorset LNP), Ross Simonds (Eng. Heritage), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink Coordinator), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager).

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all, with particular welcome to our new board members in attendance for the first time – Jeremy Pope, Lucy Culkin & Ali Maxwell and our guests.

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as correct. No matters arising.

2. 2-Minute partner updates

Janet Page (DAPTC) – Big issue from T&PC's is the Climate Emergency. Many towns are declaring their own Climate Emergency and are working hard to support DC's declaration.

Cllr Tarr – Covers the Winterborne / Broadmayne Ward. Currently working on the funding issues relationship between the Parishes and DC.

Ali Maxwell (EA) – Dual role at the moment, working as Catchment Co-ordinator (until Jan/Feb) & Natural Fund Management for the area. Worked with Ian Rees on the Asker project and looking at how to expand on this work in the future.

Jane Wright (NE) – There has been a recent restructure and Dorset is now covered by the Wessex team (S'et, Wilts, Avon & Dorset), managed in Dorset by Nikki Hiorns. Recently co-hosted (with DAONB) the first meeting of the Dorset Downs & Vales Conservation Forum, also working on stewardships, aftercare visits and working with NFU/CLA on Nutrient Management Scheme.

Hannah Jefferson (NT) – In September 2020 will hold Southwest Outdoor Festival at Golden Cap (Filcombe Farm). Hoping partners will be involved. Within the team they are recruiting for a Volunteering Development Officer to support volunteers & diversify their offer. The Hillforts project has been very successful and they are applying for Lottery Funding to extend the project.

Lucy Culkin (JCT) – New Chief Executive of the Trust. Busy summer working on the new Partnership Plan, consultation taken place over the summer and will be published end of March 2020. Then they will be working on the themes coming out of the plan.

Ken Buchan (DC) Executive Advisory Panels being set up to advise on key issues – Climate Emergency, Highways etc. EAP is not a decision-making panel but will advise cabinet & portfolio holders. Consider how environmental practices cut through the whole of Dorset Council, and a review of the Council's green assets is being undertaken.

Will Langer (CLA) – Nationally lobbying about Brexit & creating a new brand 'Rural Powerhouse' – trying to unite rural stakeholders. Locally they are working on the Poole Nutrient Trading Schemes with NFU. Hustings taking place throughout the SouthWest.

Anthony Littlechild (DC) – Sustainability Manager for DC, his work covers developing an approach to the Climate Emergency and Low Carbon Dorset. Presenting to PB on this later in the meeting.

Brian Bleese (DWT) – Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve official opening postponed until after the election for reasons of purdah. Commended the work of NE and the NT. Poole harbour clam/cockle fishery-sustainable fishing station has good results. Wild Brownsea - partnership with NT, investing £1.3m on visitor access to the island. Reviewing strategic plan. Hustings tonight in West Dorset with Transition Town Bridport.

Cllr Mike Dyer (DC) - Chair of new Environment EAP. First meeting is set for January. There are 6 councillors on the panel. First priority will be to set the Terms of Reference.

Hilary Jordan (DC) – Service Manager for Spatial Planning. Currently preparing the new Local Plan for the whole of Dorset.

Robert Lasseter (NFU) – Reported there is good support from farmers for the Poole Harbour Nutrient Trading Scheme. Commended the AONB for their work on this & ELMS. Reported the widely-held view that Brexit will cause the biggest change to farming since the abolition of the Corn Laws and will have dramatic effects on the landscape.

Jeremy Pope (DNHAS) – Dorset County Museum is undergoing a £15m redevelopment. Natural History is now being taken more seriously. There will be 5 new galleries – Natural Dorset (exploring 250 million years of history), People's Dorset, Writers' Dorset, Artists and a temporary exhibition gallery.

Rupert Best (CLA) - It has been an outstanding year for the apple harvest – not sure why. There is a project to re-discover the lost varieties of cider making apples and create a unique Dorset taste (using DNA analysis). At Portland Port new power station plans have been announced (from refuse). Cruise ships continue to feed into visitor numbers (60/70k) which could feed into the efforts of AONB.

Luke Rake (KMC) - via Robert Lasseter – the Governors have instructed the team to go carbon neutral by 2025. They will be the first school to do so. Staff and pupils in support and working on this. Great opportunity for engaging youngsters in going carbon neutral and ties into the aims of the AONB.

Jim White (LNP) – LNP focussing effort on the health & well-being agenda and doing lots of work with the AONB team.

3. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery.

Team members updated the board additionally: -

Sue Dampney reported that following on from the success of the National Moment and the Landscapes for Life Festival there are a series of events planned over the coming months to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the designation of the Dorset AONB, including:

January – launch of photo competition

February – ‘Have a Go’ events

March – Council of All Beings

April - Talking Tent (conversations will be recorded and archived)

May – Love Maps - mapping where people love to visit

June – ‘60 Days Out’ guide to be published

August – Photo exhibition at Durlston Country Park featuring photos from the competition.

Ian Rees reported on the improvements being made to the River Asker. Working in conjunction with the EA & local community, volunteer activities have been carried out to enhance the habitat, including silt traps, opening up the canopy and the removal of Himalayan Balsam. 8 volunteers have been trained to monitor the fly life in the river to determine the water quality. Further funding has been secured and he is looking at how this can be rolled out to other rivers.

Julie Hammon reported that following on from the success of the Picnic in the Park events which were arranged jointly with LNP / Active Dorset they are developing a Health & Nature Alliance to promote joined up working between health and well-being sectors. The first meeting was held last week.

Discussion points (in relation to National Grid Visual Impact Provision (undergrounding) and Landscape Enhancement Initiative):

- a. **RL** commented that only a relatively small amount of money is being received by the AONB from the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Fund and asked could larger a larger sum be applied for? **TM** commented that it is a small fund with strict parameters including a cap on each application & tightly regulated. If the cap moves, we’ll keep applying to it. The team’s approach of a portfolio of projects means we can fill pretty much any budget with good, relevant interventions.

- b. **JP** asked about the archaeological finds on the Ridgeway as a consequence of the undergrounding work. **TM** replied that interesting burial sites & monuments have been discovered, along with flints and other artefacts. These will be deposited in the County Museum.
- c. **R Tarr** reported that there is a visitors centre but it won't be open to the public (appointments only) and that road closures (due to the removal of pylons) will be posted on the DC website.

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

4. Purbeck Beaver Reintroduction Feasibility Study – Gen Crisford (NT)

Presentation can be found [here](#)

GC explained how the NT in Purbeck and a group of local partners are working on a project aiming to re-introduce Eurasian beavers back into the wild in Purbeck. She explained how we are behind in doing this compared to other countries and how although there have been other trials, this would be the first licensed wild introduction in England, as opposed to fenced projects.

She gave information about the species, its behaviour and consequential impacts - in particular with regard to positive flood management, increased bio-diversity and ecotourism. She also explained how some of the unwanted impacts could be managed & mitigated. Work is being undertaken with Exeter University to ensure that the location chosen for the re-introduction will be the best fit for the beaver, at present Littlesea, Rempstone Estate and Snag Valley are under consideration, with more checks continuing to be done on the ground. At present a feasibility study is being undertaken (consultation with stakeholders), following this a Task Group will be formed to create a Management Plan with the involvement of the wider community.

There were no questions from board members.

JW thanked GC for her very informative presentation.

RESOLUTION: The Board supports the aims and ambitions of the feasibility phase of this project.

5. Dorset Council Climate Emergency Declaration – Anthony Littlechild

Presentation can be found [here](#)

AL explained how the Council's carbon emissions are decreasing, but there is a lot of work to be done, not just by DC but by everybody. The aim is to get to net 0% and although DC has not set a target date to reach this, the national target is 2050. His team will be looking at ways this can be achieved as quickly as possible and will produce an Action Plan. An EAP has been set up which will meet once a month, working in conjunction with the Technical Officer groups. From this a Draft Action Plan will be ready Spring 2020 and will go out for consultation. Alongside this they will be looking at 'quick wins' that can be implemented straight away.

Questions/comments from the board:

- a. **WL** commented that if we are to go electric we need the necessary infrastructure to be able to do so.
- b. **JW** said we need to look at Mineral Resource Plan.
AL replied that work will be taking place to look at the infrastructure issues, the grid network and renewable energy production.
- c. **R Tarr** said that in Norway, electric cars more common, but they have found better public transport is key.

- d. **JP** commented that in the recent DC newsletter there was no mention of community transport. DC did a hatchet job on public transport but towns are creating their own. **AL** replied that this is now being looked at through a different lens. **JP** said they should consult the communities that have implemented their own public transport schemes.
- e. **RB** commented that there is probably not enough power nationally. **AL** said this will need a clear steer from national level. Lobbying is required from LA's to affect national policy.
- f. **AM** said future planning and flooding needs to be considered to make sure it is as resilient as possible.
- g. **WL** if changing diets we need to think about where our food comes from – consider the carbon footprint & use local produce.
- h. **BB** commented that a green infrastructure will need to be implemented.
- i. **JW** thanked AL for his presentation and said that he is very grateful that the Council has taken bold steps in its leadership to deal with this.

RESOLUTION:

1. The Board declares a climate and ecological emergency.

2. The Board endorses the team's engagement with Dorset Council in its response, particularly using the AONB Partnership's advocacy role, and in-house expertise in planning and coordinating mitigatory and adaptive nature recovery and natural climate solutions.

6. NAAONB Colchester Declaration

TM summarised the report circulated with the board papers. At the NAAONB's conference this year a joint declaration was formed by the AONB's, as a consequence of the Glover Review, to make a broad commitment to nature recovery in the landscape and to combat climate change.

Of the targets which have been set (see section 6.4 of the report) the following steps are being taken by the Dorset AONB:

- a. – By July 2020

Emotional engagement projects being delivered as part of the AONB's 60th celebrations.

Nature Recovery Plan: Farming for the Nation – ELMS Test/Trial will have taken place.

- b. By 2024

We have commenced taking an ecosystems service approach and will continue to learn and refine this.

Implementing targets for climate change is a challenge, the challenge is measurable targets - but we have good carbon sink in the landscape (below ground / wood) and will continue to work on this.

- c. By 3030

Species recovery - we will be looking at an endangered species we can collectively champion and extending trees into the wider landscape/tree crops and agro-forestry.

The declaration to some extent throws down the gauntlet to the government to provide the power and resources among the AONB Family and all others engaged in this field to make these targets achievable.

TM is active on the national steering group and is in particular championing regenerative agriculture and natural climate solutions in terms of nature-based carbon drawdown into soils and terrestrial biomass.

There were no questions/comments from board members

RESOLUTION: The Board notes the ambition and targets, and supports the team's engagement in delivering this ambition.

7. Glover Review of Protected Landscapes

TM summarised the report circulated in the board papers. He explained that the Glover Review has received a strongly positive response following its publication. It has been acknowledged by its authors that there are areas it didn't cover (notably coastal issues and issues of cultural/built heritage). Both the main political parties have expressed their support for the findings of the review.

Key challenges have come from the review which TM has summarised in the Appendix –

These include:

- Nature Recovery
- Relevance to society – See [YouTube video](#)
- Planning policies stifling development
- Collaboration and partnership working
- Issues around making AONBs / National Parks equal

Questions/comments from the board:

- a. **KB** – reported that DC cabinet has discussed NP proposal and will keep things under review until the government responds to the Glover Review. Concerns raised around Dorset AONB becoming a National Park and the impact of this on the new Local Plan, but this will go ahead as the NP proposal is a long way off yet.
- b. **Cllr Dyer** – said that it cannot be assessed as yet until we know the bigger picture.
- c. **JP** – commented that DAONB is effective as it is and expressed fears that a new NP would increase bureaucracy.
- d. **JWh** – said it will increase resources.
- e. **WL** – said lots of the Glover Review is good. Not keen on DAONB becoming a NP, but increased funding to DAONB desirable.
- f. **R Tarr** – commented that within the NPPF both AONBs and NPs have the same level of protection, so conversion to NP should not represent an increase in restrictions. Converting to a NP would bring a financial boost, not necessarily another layer of bureaucracy. NP's bring a rural tourism benefit.
- g. **RL** – said the Glover Review has lots to offer us – a Ranger service and landscape scale environmental work, to bring individual farmers together. Colchester Declaration and Environmental Emergency Declaration not working fast enough. Agree with having one name, 'National Landscapes', to soften borders and join the land up.
- h. **JWh** – said he agrees with softening boundaries/ joining up a wider geographical area and calling it a National Landscape.

ITEM 3: SUCCESSION OF CHAIR

ITEM FOR	Decision	REPORT BY	AONB Team Manager & outgoing chairman
SUMMARY	Jim White MBE was initially elected to the chair in 2014, succeeding Andy Foot. He was then re-elected for a term to oversee the publication of the 2019-2024 Management Plan.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Few. The chairman may claim reasonable expenses (travel etc) but is expected to volunteer the time committed (or be supported by the organisation which appoints them as a representative to the Board).		
RECOMMENDATION	The Board approves the process and makes nominations for election at the November 2020 board meeting		

- 3.1. The Partnership Terms of Reference state:
- The Board will elect a chairman who represents the Board independently of any one organisation or particular interest or viewpoint, for an expected term of 3 years [however, recent practice has been to elect a non-local authority member of the Board]. A sitting chairman may be re-elected for successive terms.
 - The Board will also elect a vice-chairman (normally a member of the Partnership Board). The role of vice chair is to support the chairman as an ambassador for the AONB and to provide cover for attending required AONB meetings. When acting in place of the chairman, the vice chair will be expected to represent the Partnership Board independently of the organisation they may normally represent.
 - Nominations for election will be sought from the Partnership Board at the meeting preceding the end of chair's term or if the chair stands down
 - The chairman / vice chairman can stand down, giving reasonable notice.
 - The minimum annual expected time commitment from the Partnership Chair is for 2 Partnership Board meetings and 2 Steering Group meetings.
- 3.2. The Partnership Chair is also welcome to attend other events including Dorset AONB Community Forums, any Dorset AONB Annual Forum events (or those of neighbouring AONBs), National Association for AONBs Summer Conference (several days; cancelled for 2020) and the NAAONB Chairman's conference (single day).
- 3.3. Reasonable travel and fees may be reimbursed through the Partnership budget.
- 3.4. The Partnership is invited to send nominations for both chair and vice chair to the AONB Office by email (kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) or post (c/o County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ) by Friday, 16th October 2020.
- 3.5. Please follow the guidelines below:
- You may self-nominate and/or nominate someone else with their knowledge and consent.

		CORE WORK	Wild Purbeck	Community Woodlands	DF&D	Dorset Fingerposts	Stepping into Nature	LEI Marshwood Vale	LEI SDR	JC Visitor Management	Rivers	Landscape-scale project dev	Inside Out Dorset 2020	AONB 60th Anniversary Fund	Farming for the Nation
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														

4.2. **AONB Team – COVID-19 impacts**

- a. The whole AONB team is currently well and have had no cases (suspected or otherwise) of COVID-19. All are working from home supported by decent IT systems that give similar technological functionality as we would expect in County Hall. The team is keeping in touch online. However, outputs are not precisely as they would be under normal circumstances:
 - Several of the team have childcare responsibilities; some have responsibilities caring for vulnerable relations, friends and neighbours
 - Dispersed working is not as efficient as being present in the same office as teammates and wider colleagues
 - 2 team members are seconded for at least part of their available time to Dorset Council’s COVID-19 response programme assisting shielded and vulnerable individuals.
 - Social distancing measures mean certain modes of work are not possible

4.3. **COVID-19 impacts to work programme**

- a. Certain parts of the work programme are paused or being reprofiled or undertaken in different ways.
- b. CORE WORK:
 - Planning site visits have been paused. Casework has been completed by desk study, with the assistance of the Gigapan images (http://gigapan.com/profiles/Dorset_AONB/gigapans) that the Partnership has invested in. High priority site visits will resume where they can safely undertaken.
 - Communications have focussed on supporting the national and local COVID-19 messaging related to essential travel and access to the outdoors
 - Partnership working: many partnerships, steering groups and working groups we are engaged with have met online. The AONB Partnership Community Forums planned for spring, autumn and winter are currently on hold.
 - AONB 60th Anniversary programme: this summer was due to be the focus of the main engagement elements of this programme (The Talking Tent, Love Maps and The Council of All Beings). These are currently on hold with the expectation to resume delivery in Spring/Summer 2021. Social distancing is also having an impact on the delivery of projects to which funding assistance has been offered through the AONB 60th Anniversary Community Fund.
- c. PROJECTS:
 - Stepping into Nature: the team is fortunate to be in a project phase between major bouts of delivery. Concentration has been on evaluating the last 3 years (a completed project) and setting the parameters for the next (new project). The next major delivery phase has been planned to be facilitated, social sessions (as per the last 3 years), but there is an alternative strand of work developing to put materials online and in print which will help those isolating connect with nature alone or within their social bubbles.
 - Dorset Fingerposts: our key contractor and coordinator, Roger Bond has been able to continue some repairs and provision of materials to volunteers working alone. Progress has slowed but is still being made.
 - Landscape Enhancement Initiatives (Marshwood & South Dorset Ridgeway): some contractors have continued to work throughout and will likely be more willing to work as lockdown restrictions are eased. No volunteer events have taken place since the beginning of restrictions – the summer

programme includes quite a lot of walling by volunteers. Jill Hearing is working with those volunteers and the main facilitator organisations to see who remains willing and how they may operate and access the sites safely if volunteer tasks resume.

- Inside Out Dorset: the major arts festival has been cancelled, to be re-run in September 2021. Much preparatory work has been completed and the team will still support Activate Performing Arts to enable a successful festival then.
- Farming for the Nation: this project has been designed around facilitated, face-to-face consultation and workshops. These have been re-profiled into a number of online exchanges. Results have not been as comprehensive as we would have expected through normal means, but there has been some progress.

CORE WORK

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

- a. **Minerals and Waste Casework:** Variation of Conditions application at Chard Junction Quarry, EIA scoping advice on the extension of Povington Pit, EIA scoping advice for the Portland Energy Recycling Facility (ERF) (also agreed viewpoints for the LVIA) and advised on the implications for the drilling of a vertical oil well on land adjacent to Athelhampton Road.

- b. **Major Development Casework:** Responses have been sent for the following

RESIDENTIAL:

- Cattistock Road, Maiden Newton: 14 proposed social houses – recommending enhancements to the design of the Scheme.
- The Old Malthouse, Langton Matravers: 20 dwellings.
- Spyway Orchard, W. Lane Stoborough: 15 dwellings.
- Red Lion Hotel, Winfrith Newburgh (objection maintained).
- Cattistock Lodge, Cattistock: Conversion of derelict dwelling & development of additional 7 dwellings: Objection on the basis of poor design and over-massing.
- West Street Corfe Castle: 14 affordable dwellings.
- Drimpton: Affordable rural exception site ongoing dialogue with Case Officer as scheme is of a poor design.

LOCAL PLAN SITES:

- BEAM 1: Land to North of Broadwindsor Road – advice given on site master-planning

EQUESTRIAN:

- Higher Crocker Moor Farm racing stables: Redevelopment of existing dairy farm to equestrian use.
- Lower Chapel Marsh Farm, Beaminster: International equine development that has negatively impacted on a sensitive valley location. Ongoing dialogue with the Case Officer.

LEISURE/TOURISM:

- Bingham's Grange Camp Site, Melplash: Pre-app. Advice provided and advice on viewpoints for LVIA
- Whitcombe Monymusk Racing Stables: conversion to extensive leisure development (Objection).

- George Albert Hotel Holiday Lodge, A37: Major redevelopment of Site and creation of extensive holiday lodge facilities (Objection).

OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- Dorset County Hospital – proposed Multi-storey carpark and associated infrastructure: Outside the AONB but of a scale that effects would be perceived from Maiden Castle Hill Fort.
- c. **Other (non-major) development casework:** advice is also being provided for numerous non-major cases.
- d. **Responses to Neighbourhood Development Plans:** (NDPs): advice provided for Puddletown, Chickerell and Milton Abbas.
- e. **Latest cases:**
- Kimmeridge Bay Oil Well Site: Installation of new plant.
 - Austral Farm, Alton Pancras: Proposals for mixed-use development with residential units.
 - SSDC: Patemore’s Transport: Extension of yard facilities.
 - Valley Lodge, Harmans Cross: Replacement dwelling.
 - Furzebrook Road, Wareham: Development of 4 no. B1 Units.
 - Owlhayes Farm, Buckland St Mary: Erection of agricultural barn.
 - Chard Junction Quarry: Temp. permission to extend quarry.
 - Tranquility Lane, Winterbourne Houghton: Demolition of exiting 2 dwellings and the erection of 5 new units.
 - Lyme Regis Golf Club: Formation of temp. access road.
 - Galton and North Fossil Farm Solar: Ongoing input into the master planning of these two sites (dialogue with landowners/agents/ and Environment Agency and Natural England).
 - Land at the George Albert Hotel, Wardon Hill: Re-consultation on Holiday Lodge Scheme.

4.5. 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)
 - Dorset Local Nature Partnership
- b. A third application was submitted to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative for £200,000. It follows the format of previous bids, delivering a portfolio of landscape interventions across 28 holdings in the eligible area (which stretches through the AONB following the National Grid infrastructure). Interventions include stone walling, tree planting, hedging, sward enhancement and wildflower work, scrub management, etc. We are not sure when we’ll hear a final decision as the process has been paused as a result of Covid-19, but it is unlikely to be this year.
- c. National Lottery Communities Fund: The Stepping into Nature team have successfully secured £381,000 to develop and scale up their landscape-based delivery for older people.
- d. Health Foundation Fund: to be launched in mid-November, this grant could contribute to Stepping into Nature; up to £300k available.

4.6. National Association for AONBs / Protected Landscapes collaboration

- a. AONB Manager Tom Munro is engaged in a small national steering group for the Colchester Declaration, and has co-authored the NAAONB guidance on producing an AONB Nature Recovery Plan.

- b. Tom is also one of 3 AONB Managers who together with the NAAONB chief executive represent AONBs in a 'close contact group' with Defra's Protected Landscapes Team. This group is a sounding board for development of the Glover Review recommendations.
- c. AONB Culture, Community & Learning Officer Sue Dampney continues to support the NAAONB, helping to coordinate communications across the network during the Covid-19 pandemic and in the recruitment of a new NAAONB Communications Manager.
- d. Arts in the Landscape - Connecting People to Nature: Sue Dampney also helps steer this Arts Council England funded project, led by NAAONB. Dorset-based arts organisation Activate to develop a strategy for arts engagement for the network. The timescale of this project has been held up with the pandemic but the scoping stage which included questionnaire surveys and face to face focus group meetings early in the year has given the initiative a firm foundation of knowledge to build on.

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

- a. A significant programme of engagement activity has been given support by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Dorset AONB. The programme was launched with the Landscapes for Life Festival in late September, followed by the 3 Annual Forums in October. Since the last Partnership Board meeting there has been much 'behind the scenes' work on several projects, some of which have been put on hold due to coronavirus:
 - Talking Tent which was due to launch on 1st April. The Talking Tent project aims to stimulate and record conversations about the landscape – what people value about it now and the hopes for future landscapes. The Tent was due to visit 10 major public events in Dorset over the Spring, Summer and Autumn but unfortunately this has been postponed due to Covid-19. Storyteller Martin Maudsley and poet Sarah Acton will run the Tent and have contributed ideas of how a virtual Tent could be set up should social-distancing impact on major events next year.
 - Council of All Beings, a project exploring and celebrating the AONBs diverse wildlife is aimed at primary schools and has also been developed but put on hold while schools recover from closures.
 - Landscapes for Life Photo Competition has been able to run, opening in December and closing on 1st May. Although prolonged wet weather then the lockdown has severely curtailed promotion, we have had 400 images submitted by over 80 photographers. Unfortunately promotion of the Youth category in the run up to the Easter holidays was cancelled and we are considering re-opening this category when restrictions ease further. Judging takes place in June and an exhibition of the winning images is planned at Durlston Country Park and Dorset County Hospital from August to January 2021. The top 13 images will also appear in Dorset Magazine's 2021 Calendar and a contribution from sales will be made to the AONB.
 - A short programme of Have A Go sessions were promoted and booked up immediately, including Fingerpost Restoration, Hedge-laying, Rivers Surveying and Woodland skills. Some of these had to be cancelled due to bad weather but we are keen to run more as an effective form of engagement.
 - Annual Forums: We had planned to reconnect with parish & town councils and place based community groups in Spring (Bridport), autumn (Blandford) and winter (Wareham) but this has been put on hold and we will review how best to renew the contact when we are able.

4.2. **Promotion of the AONB:** Print, website & social media

- a. Dorset Magazine continues to support our 60th anniversary with a monthly page article and features focussed on the Landscapes for Life Photo Competition.
- b. Regular newsletters continue to be circulated to c18,000 members of the public and local organisations, with news of events, training, activities and project updates. This mailing list is developed through sign ups at public events and through AONB Team contacts.

- c. Since the Lockdown, the AONB network have been collectively reducing the amount of messaging and underlining to enable the important 'stay home' then 'think twice' messages to be prominent. We are very aware of the issues for communities, landowners and businesses relating to the lockdown and easing of lockdown restrictions and are (virtual) meeting weekly to ensure that our messaging is appropriate.
- d. Work is underway to update our popular '40 Days Out in the Dorset AONB' booklet, which will include 60 places and activities which highlight the 4 special qualities of the AONB designation and promote sustainable visits. Re-distribution of the Field Guide series of walking maps for the South Dorset Ridgeway as well as the South Dorset Ridgeway Guide are in hand but also on hold.
- e. Social media following
 - 8,808 Twitter followers @DorsetAONB; 958 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/Dorset-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty-AONB-449270285224339/>

PROJECTS: THOSE RELATED TO MANAGMENT PLAN CHAPTER "THE WORKING LANDSCAPE"

4.3. Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative

- a. Background: A 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.
- b. Over the course of the past two years, we have:
 - Restored 4.5 hectares of lowland meadow by ploughing out existing poor-quality grass and drilling it with locally sourced wild-flower meadow seeds from another LEI site.
 - Laid 1,855 metres of hedge, predominantly by hand with volunteers but 445 metres have been undertaken mechanically; trialling a cost-effective way of delivery.
 - 87 hedgerow trees have been planted, again, mostly with the help of volunteers. Monitoring to ensure establishment has taken place.
 - 24 Orchard trees have been planted with others grafted on to suitable root stock ready for planting this winter
 - 7 ponds have been restored
 - 5.2 hectares of scrub has been cleared with a further two hectares underway.
 - One river restoration project is complete with a further one underway.
 - Run 44 volunteer sessions with 629 attending totalling 3,205 hours.

4.4. Reconnecting the Ridgeway Landscape Enhancement Initiative

- a. Background: A 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.
- b. Work is underway on 8 sites, completed on 1, with work in planning for the remaining 3 (some delay due to the very wet winter).
- c. The following outputs have been achieved to date:
 - 1,100m of hedgerow laid
 - 875m new hedgerow planted
 - 1,360m fencing installed

- 6 standard hedgerow trees planted and protected by post & wire guards
 - 2.2ha chalk downland managed for scrub control
 - 65m dry stone wall restored
- d. Some of this work has been undertaken by local contractors, and some by volunteers who have generated match funding valued at £18,000, with landowners and partner organisations contributing £9,500 in kind.
- e. Following the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions in mid-March, some delivery continued thanks to the willingness of the contractor to adapt to safety guidelines, but volunteer delivery (principally dry stone walling at this time of year) is on hold. National Grid are currently reviewing the situation across all their LEI projects, and we are looking at how delivery might safely resume in the future as national and local government advice develops.

4.5. **West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams**

- a. Background: 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 community members of Loders, Uploders and Askerswell along with farmers and land managers.
- b. Over the course of the past twelve months, we have:
- Planted 400 metres of hedge across slopes to intercept overland runoff
 - Worked with a landowner to improve management of land with a high runoff risk. This also included reinstating silt traps and field buffers, and ensuring muddy runoff could not escape on to the road.
 - We have installed a further three silt traps at high-risk sites, and delivered natural flood management solutions throughout the catchment.
 - Surveyed the catchment for invasive plant species (and spent two of the volunteer sessions pulling out Himalayan balsam).
 - Run 6 volunteer sessions with members of the local community and Dorset Wildlife Trust volunteers. 80 have attended.
 - Hosted two talks in Loders on the river and its wildlife. 122 attended.
 - A group of dedicated volunteers are also delivering monitoring of water quality at a number of sites along the river through the Riverfly Partnership
- c. Presentation with commentary from Ian Rees, AONB Countryside Officer <https://youtu.be/3w7KaAAskp0> (6 ½ minutes)
- d. Prior to Covid-19 restrictions being imposed, we had engaged Westcountry Rivers Trust to look at the feasibility of easing fish passage at Loders Weir, as this is the main reason the watercourse is failing Water Framework Directive standards. We are working with the landowners immediately surrounding the weir to ensure that they are happy with our proposals.

4.6. **Farming for the Nation**

- a. Background: 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. Funding is from Defra and is close to £1m for all AONBs, with £67,000 allocated for Dorset. 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. 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. The test started in January 2020 and run for 18 months.

- b. The first workshop looking at what elements should be included in a Strategic Landscape Plan was postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions and has been held virtually instead. The session was split into three and delivered throughout May, with participants responding to a recorded presentation covering different parts of the Landscape Plan.
- c. The new format has worked well but takes much longer to deliver. Fortunately, the next phase - where we take a draft plan to landowners and farmers - is scheduled for later in the summer and therefore we have not slipped behind schedule.
- d. We have engaged Westcountry Rivers Trust to prepare a draft Strategic Landscape Plan, as they have excellent data analysis capabilities, have worked on similar projects elsewhere and are helping a number of other AONBs in the national Test & Trial.

4.7. **Dorset Food & Drink**

- a. Since the Covid 19 outbreak and directive to work from home, Caroline has been splitting her time and duties between DF&D work and an internal redeployment to Dorset Councils' Food and Medicine team as a Spoke coordinator for the government Shielded community distribution of self-isolation boxes and meds.
- 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, support and sponsorship for the Dorset Food and Farming awards and Dorset Tourism awards.
- d. Ignyte Publishing were contracted to deliver sales and communications for DF&D and have expanded membership and social media following.
- e. They have made changes to the DF&D website, added a virtual shop and are working in partnership with the DF&D board and project officer on facilitating a series of virtual membership networking events, workshops and webinars to help and support members with up to date business and grant information so they still feel connected to DF&D and are able to share information with each other. They also have access to, help and support from our corporate sponsors Old Mil, Porter Dodson and NFU Mutual Wessex.
- f. Current membership of 173 Dorset businesses.
- g. Show your support for Dorset Food & Drink members during the Covid 19 crisis by stocking up and buying local food and drink from a wide range of members offering products online; special deals, home deliveries, self-isolation boxes and ready-made food for collection or delivery to enjoy at home including Sunday lunches.
- h. In line with the social distancing guidance and following Government advice that large gatherings should not take place, we have taken the decision not to go ahead with our planned events programme e.g. Abbotsbury Food Fair, Dorset Food and the Arts Festival. This will have a big impact on our ability to generate income for the CIC and reinvest and grow other aspects of the business. With so many high profile and long established Dorset food festivals already being cancelled including the Christchurch food Festival, Seafood Festival and Sturminster Cheese Festival, then we will be watching and assessing the situation as lockdown easing continues so we can make an informed decision about proceeding with our popular Christmas Fair at Athelhampton- with appropriate social distancing measures in place, but also to see if there is still an appetite from the public to attend and more importantly, spend.
- i. We are all waking up to the fact that we cannot go back to 'pre-COVID' ways; instead, using the crisis as a springboard to accelerate the sustainability of the food, drink and hospitality sector. Our members have been amazing over the last few weeks, stepping in and up, and taking bold, rapid and decisive action in the face of an unprecedented crisis. We have connected with local people and communities far more during this crisis and we need to keep that going and growing. We must build and maintain our understanding of interconnectivity and interdependency of social, economic and environmental issues. Not go back to dealing with these issues in 'Silos', work and innovate with the private sector and ensure local food and drink supply chains can feed into the local economy.

- j. Our members will need us even more as we gradually return to a new normal, as lockdown measure ease and more business can continue to trade. But we also know that the current climate could mean that DF&D are in a fragile financial position, so we must plan for that.
- k. We look forward to better times ahead and shaping Dorset Food and Drink, with our members, to ensure we come out of this with resilience and make the most of this limited window of opportunity to ensure DF&D is truly fit for the future and the challenges ahead.

4.8. **Wild Purbeck Partnership**

- a. The Wild Purbeck Partnership continues to meet three times a year chaired by the AONB Manager, to discuss projects related to the management of Purbeck.
- b. At this point the partnership provides a forum for ensuring the best collaboration, creation of new opportunities and information sharing between various initiatives in the area, including
 - Back from the Brink (Dorset’s Heathland Heart) which is coming to an end this summer,
 - Purbeck Heaths NNR and the management plan creation process,
 - National Trust’s beaver reintroduction feasibility projects
 - Purbeck Farmer Facilitation Group, which is also engaged with the AONB Partnership’s Farming for the Future
 - Wytch Farm Landscape & Access Enhancement Fund
 Considering the future of visitor management and engagement in the area

4.9. **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. This group met for the second time in March to ensure:

- 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”

4.10. **Stepping into Nature - background**

- a. Stepping into Nature was funded by the National Community Lottery Fund till March 2020. Recently we secured another three years funding of £381K to widen the project area to cover all Dorset Council area for 2020 – 2023.
- b. Presentation with commentary from Julie Hammon & Steph Aburrow <https://youtu.be/7ewp71ZtseU> (4 minutes)

4.11. **Stepping into Nature outputs: Sept 2019 – March 2020**

- a. Total amount claimed over 2017/20 - £316, 281 with £228,255 in kind/match (£12,263 underspend to be allocated)
- b. 474* activities delivered, 827 individuals registered (*374 with data received)
- c. 2646 places filled on activities with 37% repeat attendance
- d. 21 face-to-face participant interviews completed

- e. 9000 people engaged with SiN through 60 events, talks, presentations, workshops
- f. 19 Community Grants totalling £27,906 for £53,769 in kind & 672 volunteer hours
- g. Dementia awareness sessions to 214 front line staff and volunteers
- h. Online
 - SiN blog – <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/stepping-into-nature-stories/>
 - Monthly E-news with 444 subscribers
 - Twitter 751 followers / Facebook 1672 followers /Instagram 163 followers
 - SiN Facebook Community Group 174 members
 - Over past year the number of people reach of information about our events enter their screen was 92.7K people, with 5.3K responding interested on going on events, 56% of people engaged were 55+

4.12. **Stepping into Nature, coming up:**

- a. Full Evaluation reports to follow
 - Final Project Report Part 1 Evidence Base
 - Final Project Report Part 2 Process
- b. Due to Covid 19 the project delivery is on hold following government guidelines on social distancing, The National Community Lottery is continuing to support the project.
- c. We are now looking at developing a series of “Stepping into Nature at Home” resources to aid the recovery phase as lockdown restrictions change.

4.13. **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.
- b. Images showing the Fossil Forest steps and new interpretation board at Lulworth Visitor Centre are shown at the end of this item.

4.14. **Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Fossil Forest – PROJECT COMPLETE**

- a. Background: 2.5 year project to reinstate access to the Fossil Forest, following closure in 2015 due to rockfalls. Total final cost: £176,849. Funders: Coastal Communities Fund, Ministry of Defence, Lulworth Estates, Geological Association Curry Fund, Arts Development Company
- b. Presentation with commentary by Sally King <https://youtu.be/zM2C1CEqlo> (2.5 minutes)
- c. The Fossil Forest re-opened to the public on Saturday 21st March (the weekend before the UK went into lockdown due to the Covid-19). The steps, railings and mesh inserts have been replaced, which together with the previously installed rock netting and catch fence, means the site is ready and waiting to receive visitors. The entrance area at the top of the access has been tidied up and an attractive simple oak sign welcomes people with the message "Fossil Forest. 97 steps down... And 97 steps back up". About a quarter of the way down, a new seating and interpretation area has been created on a flat bit of land which already had a retaining wall. Using recycled timber kindly donated by Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Council as decking, the seating area proudly displays two large pieces of fossilised wood generously donated by Albion Stone. Together with an information panel, the fossil wood gives people a good idea of what the 'forest' would have looked like 145 million years ago. Two sets of safety symbols on the way down warn people of the potential hazards at the site (the same potential dangers which exist along most of the Jurassic Coast). A new gate has also been put in place which can close off the site in the event of future rockfalls.

- d. James Weld of Lulworth Estate said: “We are delighted the Fossil Forest is accessible once again and were pleased to work closely with all parties involved, to ensure the visitor experience will be of great value, both as an educational tool and as somewhere to visit on this unique and stunning UNESCO World Heritage Site.”
- e. A new interpretation panel has also been installed in Lulworth village, opposite the Visitor Centre, and in the Centre itself, a new Fossil Forest interpretation area has been created.

4.15. **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: £231,557. Funders: Coastal Community Fund, Dorset Council, Bridport Town Council, South West Coast Path Association, Arts Development Company
- b. Presentation with commentary by Sally King <https://youtu.be/bYDhrz4bGpg> (3 minutes)
- c. The West Bay Visitor Hub was completed and opened to the public in December 2019. The formerly tired and dull looking space has been transformed. Artist Michael Pinsky's design has been brought to life with a circular demarcated outer area for motorcycles to park, stunning new cast concrete benches and an inner area of beautiful new paving with a bronze compass/ signposting feature at the centre. The benches are curved in a way suggestive of the sea and the local cliffs, and have seating facing both inwards and out. They have purposely been kept at a low height so that views of the harbour, countryside and local architecture of West Bay can still be fully enjoyed. They do also afford a peaceful, more secluded space for people to sit, relax, and eat and drink, away from traffic. The ground level bronze compass, made locally by Bridport Foundry, also signposts to key locations in West Bay. An outer area of durable resin aggregate provides overspill motorbike parking for busy days. Four new gull proof recycling bins have also been put in place on the outer resin.
- d. Bridport Town Council, who have taken ownership of the Hub said: “It will become a much-valued asset for visitors and residents to enjoy for years to come.”

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

- a. Project delays due to COVID-19 lockdown

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

- a. A new panel is in the pipeline for Honiton station, promoting sustainable travel (bus, bike and walking) from the station to the Jurassic Coast, East Devon AONB and Dorset AONB (the West Dorset part). This will be funded by the Devon & Cornwall Community Rail Partnership. No progress yet due to other priorities.
- b. The promotion of the four YouTube videos created by All the Stations documentary team promoting train/bus travel to East Devon and West Dorset has been put on hold due to the Covid-19 situation. We will share the link when using public transport for pleasure becomes a viable option again.

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

4.18. Low Carbon Dorset

- a. Low Carbon Dorset is a three-year programme of activities to help stimulate growth in Dorset’s low carbon economy and reduce its carbon footprint.
 - The programme offers free technical support and grant funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to businesses, public-sector and community organisations in Dorset.
 - It aims to help Dorset based organisations to improve energy efficiency, increase the use of renewable energy, and aid the development of new low carbon products.
 - The programme is led by Dorset Council (DC) and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).
 - More details can be found on the programme website: <https://www.lowcarbondonset.org.uk/>
- b. Summary of activity:
 - Received 332 applications for support
 - Awarded 70 grants totalling £1.9m
 - Supported 86 Dorset based SMEs through either 12 hours support or a grant of a minimum of £1k
- c. 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 but works have not yet begun)
 - £4.8m of investment in low-carbon projects in Dorset
 - An annual carbon reduction of 3,700 tonnes of CO₂e in Dorset
 - The installation of 3.4 MW of renewable energy capacity in Dorset
 - Improvements in the energy efficiency of 55 houses in Dorset
 - The development of 2 new low carbon products in Dorset
 - The reduction of energy used in public-sector buildings by 236,000 kwh/yr
- d. Programme updates:
 - Earlier this year the programme was shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Award in the Environmental Services category, members of the team travelled to London earlier this year to present to the judging panel, winners were set to be announced at an event in March - this has now been postponed to October.
 - The programme has recently submitted a bid to secure an additional £4.26m of funding from the ERDF, which will bring Low Carbon Dorset’s value to £14.9m. If successful in this bid the programme will be extended until June 2023. Low Carbon Dorset is hoping to find out in July 2020 whether it will be awarded the additional funds.

4.19. 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 has not met to examine further projects.
- c. Interviews for a project officer to be hosted by the Dorset AONB Team, are currently on hold due to the COVID-19 situation. Candidates have been shortlisted and are primed for interview which we hope can take place in late June.

PROJECTS: THOSE RELATED TO MANAGEMENT PLAN CHAPTER “WAYS OF WORKING”

4.20. AONB 60th Anniversary Community Fund

- a. This fund was part of the portfolio of engagement and celebration projects which won support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)
- b. The fund totals £18,000 and is administered in a similar manner to our Sustainable Development Fund, enabling delivery of the Dorset AONB Management Plan aims by the community and wider partnership. Assessment criteria included the extent to which these projects delivered on NLHF objectives.
- c. 20 application requests for nearly £42,000 of funding were considered by the Panel which met in December 2019. The supported projects are:
 - West Bay Discovery Centre (Bridport Area Development Trust): to build on the success of the AONB funded ‘Discover the Wildlife of West Bay’ leaflet by holding complimentary storytelling sessions, nature walks, art & craft sessions for children.
 - Past Participate CIC: To fund a series of free volunteer training workshops into historical archaeology, as part of their ‘Revealing a Prehistoric Landscape in Dorset’ archaeological project.
 - The Bluebell Project: continuation funding for an arts programme which interprets and celebrates the woodland ecology around Wraxall/Cattistock.
 - Bridport Town Council: to assist in the creation of a Bridport Area Tree Plan, culminating in a community tree planting day.
 - Asker River Community Volunteer Group: for their on-going, previously AONB supported project -‘Evaluating and enhancing the biodiversity of the Chalk River Asker in Dorset AONB,’ in particular to purchase trail cameras to monitor and quantify the use of the river by key mammalian and bird species and provide subsequent evaluation.
 - The Arts Development Company: funding towards the creation of a new green space sculpture trail around Bridport, featuring the work of artists who live and work in the Dorset AONB, promoting the connection between the arts & green spaces and improved mental health & well-being.
 - Inside Out Dorset 2020 – schools engagement project: associated to the Inside Out Dorset 2020 Festival at Symondsburry Estate working farm, this will offer participation in land-based cultural activities to pupils from local rural primary schools as they explore the beauty and heritage of their local landscape through learning, including interactive installations and performances on themes such as climate change, land use and natural environment.
 - Char Valley Community Project: to help fund a study into the water quality of the River Char, leading to the development of a summary action plan report identifying ways in which the health of the river could be improved.
 - Dorset Local Nature Partnership: funding and input to facilitate a partnership & stakeholder approach to revise and update various existing reports and evidence to assist in the creation of a ‘Nature Recovery in Dorset Plan’.
 - Kingcombe Trail - DWT: funding towards a new circular walking trail showcasing wildlife habitats & biodiversity, new relevant interpretation signage and improved accessibility - with the aim of attracting visitors from more socially isolated backgrounds.
 - Transition Town Bridport: help towards the cost of planting an orchard, hedgerow and wild meadow within St. Mary’s school sports field as part of their ‘Edible Garden project’ which aims to simultaneously encourage children to discover the benefits of nature and healthy eating.
 - Friends of Wool Station: a gateway to the AONB – a small amount of funding awarded for improved Tourist Information signage.

ITEM 5: 2019-2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	AONB Manager
SUMMARY	The Dorset AONB team continues to be successful in demonstrating good funding leverage in terms of income generated from a modest local contribution to the core budget. Despite being the year after the closing of our largest project (the South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership), significant additional funds and value have been levered in this financial year. Below is a draft account summary which will be presented to Defra as per our reporting requirements.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	This is a report on past income and expenditure, so has no implications on future funding		
RECOMMENDATION	The Dorset AONB Board commends the funding leverage demonstrated by these accounts		

5.1. CORE FINANCE

The funding drawn down from Defra to support the AONB Partnership was £244,022 (100% of the offer). The agreement with Defra stipulates that they can contribute no more than 75% of the core costs. This year, Defra's contribution to core costs was at 68.5%; Defra's contribution to the total direct spend was 30.4%.

Dorset Council contributed 22.1% towards core expenditure. The remaining funds were drawn down from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver the AONB 60th Anniversary programme of celebration and engagement.

Core income	Budget	Actual
Defra	£ 187,694	£ 169,131
Local Authorities	£ 54,510	£ 54,509
Earned income / other grant	£ 33,055	£ 23,313
TOTAL	£ 275,259	£ 246,954

Core costs	Budget	Actual
Staff, ENI, Pens,	£ 225,959	£ 199,521
Travel	£ 4,800	£ 5,509
Training	£ 2,500	£ 895
Accommodation & Office	£ 7,000	£ 6,138
Partnership PR	£ 5,000	£ 6,470
AONB 60th projects	£ 25,000	£ 23,188
Partnership Running Costs	£ 3,000	£ 5,157
Monitoring, research & guidance	£ 2,000	£ 75
TOTAL	£ 275,259	£ 246,954

5.2. PROJECT EXPENDITURE & VALUE

Estimates are highlighted in yellow.

		DIRECT VALUE			INDIRECT VALUE				
		DIRECT EXPENDITURE	Single pot	Cash income	Partner spend & in kind	Volunteers	TOTAL ADDED VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	Major source of cash income (excluding Single Pot)
PROJECTS	Wild Purbeck	£ 47,376	£ -	£ 47,376	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 47,376	Wytch Farm Landscape Enhancement Fund
	SDR	£ 6,601	£ -	£ 6,601	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 6,601	Project reserve
	LEI - Marshwood	£ 76,362	£ 2,000	£ 74,362	£ 11,350	£ 9,600	£ 20,950	£ 97,312	National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative
	LEI – Ridgeway	£ 84,139	£ 5,000	£ 79,139	£ 9,423	£ 18,225	£ 27,648	£ 111,787	National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative
	Rural Roads - AONB	£ 11,331	£ 11,331	£ -	£ 5,000	£ 8,000	£ 13,000	£ 24,331	Volunteers & Parish Councils
	Local food	£ 30,699	£ 11,000	£ 19,699	£ -	£ 250	£ 250	£ 30,949	Dorset Food & Drink CIC
	Stepping into Nature	£ 168,601	£ 10,000	£ 158,601	£ 69,513	£ 5,120	£ 74,633	£ 243,234	Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
	AONB condition / character assessment	£ 4,675	£ 872	£ 3,803	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,675	Local Partners
	Visitor management	£ 53,218	£ 12,000	£ 41,218	£ 291,131	£ -	£ 291,131	£ 344,349	Coastal Communities Fund
	Rivers	£ 26,463	£ -	£ 26,463	£ 2,000	£ 3,660	£ 5,660	£ 32,123	Environment Agency
	FLAG	£ 8,023	£ -	£ 8,023	£ 1,200	£ -	£ 1,200	£ 9,223	Fisheries Local Action Group
	ELMS	£ 16,426	£ -	£ 16,426	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 16,426	Defra via NAAONB
Sustainable Development Fund		£ 22,688	£ 22,688	£ -	£ 41,645	£ 33,645	£ 75,290	£ 97,978	Grant recipient match funds
TOTAL		£ 556,602	£ 74,891	£ 481,711	£ 431,262	£ 78,500	£ 509,762	£ 1,066,363	

5.3. SUMMARY

- Total direct spend by the AONB Partnership is £803,556 (core and projects)
- Total 'added value' from partners and volunteers contributing to partnership projects is £509,762
- Total delivered value is £1,313,317. This is calculated from direct spend (core, SDF & projects) plus 'added value' defined as contributions from volunteers and partners to AONB Partnership-led projects and projects supported by the Partnership's Sustainable Development Fund.

ITEM 7: DORSET COUNCIL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TEAM

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	Matt Reeks (Service Manager for Coast & Greenspace)
SUMMARY	A new team formed within Dorset Council's Coast and Greenspace Service		

- 7.1. The new Green Infrastructure Advice Team (GIAT) has been established since Local Government Reorganisation, bringing together expertise across the service to collaboratively advise and deliver projects on Publicly Accessible Greenspace and Public Rights of Way across Dorset. It is one of six teams that make up the Environment Advice Team at Dorset Council, which further broadens the value of the team and the range of professional disciplines that it represents. Their aim is to work in partnership across the whole of Dorset Council area to support colleagues, developers, stakeholders and local communities in Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space work. They will also act as the gateway for the Coast and Greenspace Service in relation to the construction, management and maintenance functions that are undertaken across operational teams within it. Key work areas include:
- a. Planning and Policy Advice – supporting the work of the Development Management and Policy teams by providing an early screening service to include comments, advice and concept designs to highlight risks and to ensure the best possible outcome for people, landscape and wildlife in relation to Publicly Accessible Greenspace, Public Rights of Way, Landscape visual impact and character advice, Mineral extraction and waste, protocols and relevant position statements, oversight and delivery of net gain / compensation mechanisms, etc.
 - b. Public Open Space and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace - Provide a contracted fee charging service to local developers to advise and design POS and SANG provision
 - c. Landscape design and management - Work in collaboration with a range of teams in Dorset Council (e.g. Highways, grounds etc) and external stakeholders to advise on development and implementation of engineering and architectural design at all stages of a project.
 - d. Green Infrastructure Projects - Work with a range of in-house teams, external organisations and communities to advise or develop, coordinate and deliver quality projects that improve and enhance Dorset greenspaces and public rights of way
 - e. Heathland Infrastructure Projects – Provide development support and funding agreements of heathland infrastructure projects to Dorset Council in liaison with external partner organisations including Natural England
 - f. Rights of Way Improvement Planning Process (ROWIP) - work with others to enable the links between access, sustainable transport, health, economy, diversity, equality, environment, art and tourism are met.
 - g. Coordinate the Dorset Local Access Forum - Coordinate and support the DLAF in its role as a statutory advisory body to facilitate improvements to the public access network for outdoor recreation and sustainable travel.
 - h. Coastal Corridor, National Trails & Promoted routes – Provide strategic development, improvement and funding of coastal corridor access network, Coast Path, England Coast path, National Trails and promoted routes
 - i. Diverse other relevant areas including Climate Change, External funding, Health and wellbeing
 - j. Monitoring – Develop and support monitoring of green infrastructure
- 7.2. AONB Team Manager comment: This team, led by Bridget Betts, is comprised of officers with whom the AONB team has good working relations. The AONB team will continue to provide relevant advice via the AONB Planning Protocol direct to planning officers, but will also work with this team on other matters relevant to the AONB and the Partnership's programmes of work.