



Dorset AONB Partnership  
Hosted by Dorset Council  
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## Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

The meeting will start at 10.00 am sharp; the Zoom meeting room will be open from 09.55 am. 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](mailto:kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

Link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88240986233?pwd=bzBBMFlvVVo0MWWw3ejlobUYvdkppZz09>; Meeting ID: 882 4098 6233; Passcode: 898011

### AGENDA

Chairman's welcome, introduction & apologies

1. Minutes of the last meeting
2. Partner's 2-minute updates
3. The Agricultural Transition: opportunity or crisis? (Includes presentation by Chris Clark of Nethergill Associates; information)
4. Delivering the AONB Management Plan: highlighting Farming in Protected Landscapes and Stepping into Nature (information)
5. AONB Business Plan budget headlines 2022-2023 (decision)
6. Glover review & Government's response update (information)

### **Proposed dates of next meetings:**

Dates of next meetings

	Spring (tbc)	Winter (tbc)
<b>AONB Steering Group</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	18 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2022
<b>AONB Partnership Board</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 2022

Anyone wishing to bring an item forward for discussion by the Board, please ensure suggestions are sent to [Tom Munro](#), [Kate Townsend](#) or the [AONB Chairman](#) at least 7 days before the date of the Steering Group meeting which precedes the Board meeting. This group recommends agenda items to the Chairman for decision.

## ITEM 1: DRAFT MINUTES of the Partnership Board meeting 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021 (virtual)

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	The Board agree the minutes as a true representation of the meeting
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### Attendance

Organisation	Representative	Status	2021-05
Independent chairman	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Ray Bryan	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Jane Somper	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	TBC	Voting member	
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope OBE DL	Voting member	Present
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	Present
Forestry Commission	James Robertson	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	
National Farmers' Union	Robert Lasseter	Voting member	
Natural England	Robert Lloyd	Voting member	Present
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	Present
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Nathalie Sherring	Voting member	Present
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	Apologies
Purbeck Heritage Network	Brian Bleese	Attending member	Apologies
LAF	Janet Davis	Attending member	Present
Dorset Council	Matt Reeks	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business Association	William Langer	Supporting Officer	Apologies
National Farmers' Union	Louise Stratton	Supporting Officer	Present

**DAONB Team:** Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature Project Officer), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Jill Hearing (Reconnecting the Ridgeway Project Officer), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Caroline Kelly (Purbeck), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

**Guests:** Terry Sneller (DC Strategic Planning) and Bridget Betts (DC Env. Advice Manager)

### Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all, with particular welcome to our guests/speakers.

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in November 2020 were agreed as correct. No matters arising.

### 2. Housing delivery test & 5-year housing supply; implications for planning decisions

TSneller explained that National Planning Policy provides guidance which must be applied to housing development proposal where the local authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing. In areas with a valid Neighbourhood Development Plan, this remains relevant as long as a 3 year supply of housing can be demonstrated. However, the so called 'tilted balance', which suggests that development may be more likely to be acceptable where a local or neighbourhood plan is 'out of date', does not necessarily apply if a development adversely affects a designated area, such as an AONB.

Comments:

- a. PBowyer: Concerned about Langton Matravers development, lack of DC action and concern the Dorset Plan will create an open playing field for building houses
- b. JPope: Extremely worried about Local Plan
- c. Cllr Tarr: very worried, large-scale housing proposals detrimental to our special landscapes and we should protest: greenfield site development increasing but populations are declining
- d. RBrown: We have a Management Plan for the AONB which is not invalidated by a Local Plan's inability to demonstrate a sufficient land supply. This plan, and provisions of NPPF, such as paragraph 172, provide protection to the AONB. The AONB Team have expressed an opinion that the extent of designations and constraints across the Dorset Plan area might justify restraint in responding to the objectively assessed 'need' figure. However, it is also noted that the Dorset Local Plan makes a limited number of 'major' proposals in Dorset AONB, thereby responding to a comment made in the Examination Report for West Dorset Local Plan, that subsequent efforts to address housing need should seek to limit allocations within the designated area.

### 3. Partners' 90 second updates

- a. GDickinson: Threat to the AONB from housing development is increasing – CPRE report [here](#)
- b. WBond: Locally big changes include the Poole Harbour Consent Order limiting nitrates, now in implementation phase. ELM – great desire to hear more detail from Defra to enable decision-making as agricultural support is on the cusp of change.
- c. CllrRBryan: £19m of Government funding to de-carbonise Dorset Council buildings by September being delivered by Property and Assets team. Work on exchange of fuels started (from gas to battery power). Low Carbon Dorset team achieving great results and hope to extend beyond end date of 2022.
- d. JPope: Dorset County Museum reopens on 28<sup>th</sup> May, many synergies with the AONB and urge all to visit. JCT – lots of progress being made with the supervision of the site and an excellent annual review issued [here](#)
- e. CllrRTarr: Congratulated the team on a successful 18 months of work and in particular visitor management project delivery.
- f. KCalder: Wessex Env. Agency are in transition and looking at how it delivers more and better environmental outcomes. Looking at the delivery of the Poole Harbour consent order, LNRN priorities for the future and a catchment strategy for the Stour.
- g. RLloyd: Dealing with Countryside Stewardship, SSSI's, Dorset Downs and Dales meeting next week, nature recovery networks ongoing and positive.
- h. HJefferson: NT houses are re-opening, visitor management issues – warmer weather increases visitor numbers and problems such as overnight parking etc, gearing up for a busy summer. Investment in Hive Beach car park -sorting out drainage issues, safety signage etc

- i. NSherring: Bringing diversity into the natural environment. In contact with Tom Clark (NT) ref Studland VM – taking a proactive approach to limiting tensions between locals and visitors from London/Eastern European backgrounds.
- j. PBowyer: Would be helpful for PCs to know what no. of houses planned. Described Swanage’s non-designated heritage assets survey; to be shared and sent to us accordingly.
- k. JDavis: Local Access Forum has not met for several years but back in operation now and will be working on a new DC Rights of Way Improvement Plan. ELM – looking to see if there will be opportunities to enhance public access to countryside.

#### 4. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery report. Team members updated the board additionally: -

**Ian Rees** – Virtual [presentation](#) on the Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative. Over the past 3 years the LEI has worked to improve this farmed landscape, laying hedgerows and fencing sites, planting hedgerow Oaks and orchard trees to create and expand traditional orchards, undertaken meadow restoration and scrub control, undertaken pond restoration to protect the great crested newt and established a wild daffodil nursery. This project was undertaken with volunteers (valued over £32k). An application is currently in with the National Grid, and if successful this initiative will continue.

**TM** – explained that other linked projects include Reconnecting the Ridgeway (also LEI), West Dorset Rivers and Streams, including the Asker River project and Farming for the Nation (DEFRA test & trial for ELMS land management) – we will share this report when ready (see link section 3.10 of board papers)

**Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature)** –Health and Nature Dorset (HAND) launched last week. This group aims to develop collaborative projects to deliver health outcomes. They have 8 priorities, one of these is Social Prescribing activities which ties into the Nature Buddies – Connecting to Nature through activity, a Thriving Communities funded initiative. This initiative is looking at opportunities for nature, art and physical need activities across Dorset and includes training community groups to deliver activities. There are training opportunities available at the moment around I&D so please do circulate these. Picnic in the Park has had a spring update so urged all to take a look.

Health & Nature Dorset <https://dorsetlnp.org.uk/hand/>

Thriving Communities <https://theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk/our-work/nature-buddies/>

Picnic in the Parks [www.picnicintheparks.org](http://www.picnicintheparks.org)

For more information please email [Julie.hammon@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.hammon@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

#### 5. Art in the Landscape – a national strategy for adoption

Virtual [presentation](#) from Sue Dampney on the benefits of the arts in engaging and deepening people’s connection to landscape, and the benefits to the partnership in adopting the newly commissioned [Arts in the Landscape Strategy: connecting people to nature through art and culture](#) through embedding the arts in our strategy.

Comments:

- a. Cllr Tarr: Strongly support it, and as NSherring said the arts can also encourage people to visit inland such as Hambledon Hill/Milton Abbas where businesses need trade as much as in coastal areas.
- b. JPope: One of the new galleries at Dorset County Museum is entitled ‘Artist’s Dorset’ which is looking at all forms of art include. sculpture, photography etc so many synergies in this field.

- c. KCalder: Feel excited and inspired by the presentation. We are looking at the bigger picture which will bring benefits to the partnership in the long run.
- d. PSterling: SD Ridgeway project transformed the landscape and arts projects a big part of this. Important to link in with other AONBs and the national messages which can be spread.
- e. TMunro: The new post proposed would be a small amount per AONB (at most £1500)

PSterling – Thanks to Sue for an excellent presentation

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

- 1. The AONB Board agrees to adopt the Arts in the Landscape Strategy and to participate in coordinated national and local action resulting from the Strategy.**
- 2. The AONB Board agrees to be open to the future contribution of funds to the collective Arts in Landscape fund, in particular the proposed 5-year national post that will provide a resource to all AONBs.**
- 3. The AONB Board agrees that it will use the arts to help join up its work in nature recovery and the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.**

#### **6. The Glover Review (update)**

TM reported a government response to the Glover Review is imminent. On Countryfile recently ‘The National Landscape Service’ was reported as being the Ministers preferred employing body for all NP and AONB staff including the creation of an ALM body going forward which has caused concern. However, it’s believed details around this will be part of the Minister’s statement to be announced in 2-3 weeks time. There is a new Minister for Landscapes – Lord Benyon. Natural England will also be announcing a new landscape strategy in a few months’ time which we will circulate.

#### **7. Farming in Protected Landscapes - FiPL (update)**

TM reported that he is sitting on a working group with DEFRA to help develop a new agri-transition fund - FiPL. DEFRA have just approved the principle and it will be going to board soon to be ratified. This is a substantial fund of £500,000 to be distributed on farm projects (climate, nature, people and place) over a 3-year front loaded programme. The AONB team intend to recruit 2 additional members of staff to administer the scheme. A local assessment panel will need to be created to meet every 6-8 weeks. Contact Tom if you are interested in being part of this. Please do not share this news beyond your organisations. There will be a national launch in June.

#### **8. Dorset AONB 2020-2021 Provisional Partnership Accounts**

TM presented the paper.

Comments:

- a. PSterling congratulated the team as the figures looking very good despite the pandemic.

#### **9. Presentation: Keeping Dorset Safe – Joint barbeque & fire campaign**

[Presentation](#) from Bridget Betts, Environment Advice Manager. Bridget explained that the problem of BBQ’s / campfires is a growing issue, as highlighted by Wareham forest fire last year. In light of this Councillors have asked for a co-ordinated approach to tackling this which she is leading on. Having undertaken extensive research with many partners it was agreed that a new BBQ and Wildfire policy was needed which has now been adopted, along with other measures such as electric BBQ’s (currently monitoring Bournemouth’s scheme), new fire warden scheme, including dog walkers in Heathland locations this year and lots of campaign and comms work in conjunction with a wide range of partners across Dorset.

Measures being taken include:

- Clear, consistent messaging
- Build on Urban Heath Partnership work – banners etc
- Litter Free Dorset are encouraging supermarkets and shops not to sell BBQ's and/or put up safety messaging signage
- New signs – posters and banners, include. more road signs
- Using Town & Parish Councils to deliver messages
- Leaflets for DC staff (& partners)
- Digital campaign 'Picnic not BBQs', joint website on DC site, getting people to sign up to support it

Comments:

- a. WBond: Supportive of road signs going out as many visitors not from the local area but further afield and come armed with BBQs.
- b. PSterling: Congratulated Bridget on the campaign and partnership working.

### **10. Presentation: Summer Visitor Campaign**

[Presentation](#) from Sally King, Visitor Tourism and Access Manager.

Sally explained some of the visitor management challenges faced after the first lock down. How a lack of resources and guidance coupled with a heatwave, furlough and a new visitor demographic unfamiliar with the countryside led to increased anti-social behaviour, negative publicity and additional costs for landowners in Dorset.

To address potential VM challenges this summer Dorset AONB team have co-ordinated stakeholders to improve joined up ways of working and DC have set up a collaborative Operations Group. Consequentially a sub-group of this have devised a new Summer 'Behavioural Change' campaign which is upbeat, energised and features younger people to appeal to the new visitor demographic. Led by DC Comms and funded by Central Government this new campaign entitled 'Promise to Love Dorset' will be launched in time for half term. This takes a positive DO approach and will feature static displays, posters, leaflets and videos promoting the Promise which can be used in a mixed marketing approach. All the assets are unbranded and available on the [Visit Dorset website](#) . Partners are encouraged to use and share the resources. Evaluation of the campaign will be on-going.

Comments:

- a. PSterling: impressed with the speed at which the campaign has been devised, the excelled collaborative working and useful evaluation scheduled.
- b. RTarr: An excellent piece of work
- c. HJefferson: Thanks to both Sally and Bridget – both pieces of work are great evidence of partnership working which punch above their weight.

### **11. Summer site visit to National Grid undergrounding site**

An afternoon site visit is scheduled for Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June for board members. Full details to be circulated. Please let Kate or Tom know if you would like to attend.

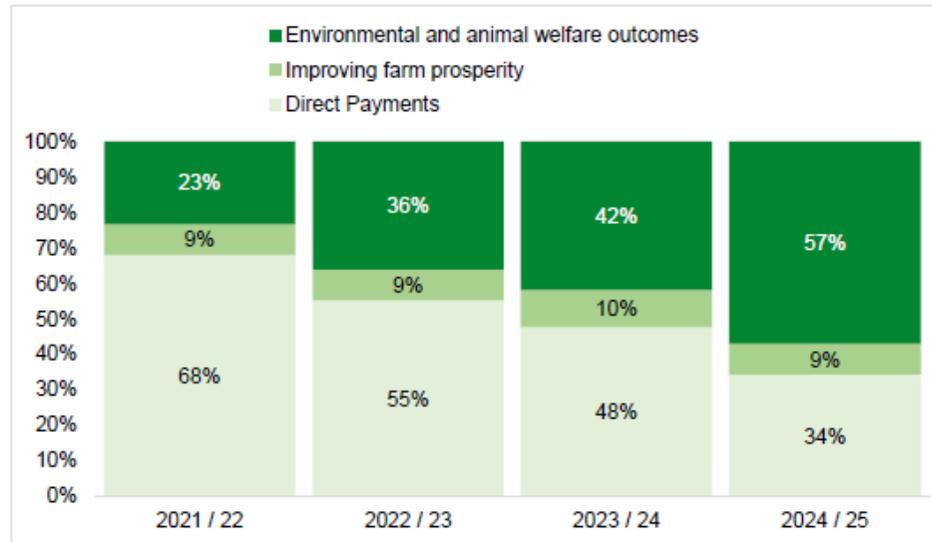
### **12. Any Other Business**

None

## ITEM 2: Presentation: Agricultural Transition: crisis or opportunity?

<b>ITEM FOR</b>	Information	<b>REPORT BY</b>	Tom Munro (introductory paper); Chris Clark, Nethergill Associates (presentation)
<b>SUMMARY</b>	The next 5 years will bring significant changes to the way farming businesses are supported, with the potential for negative impacts to the AONB. This information report is to raise awareness of the issues, and to introduce work the team has commissioned in the Char Valley which promotes an alternative approach to looking at farm economics.		
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>			
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>			

- 2.1. The AONB is largely a farmed landscape with farming occupying 77% of the area. The number of land holdings in the AONB is 1,057. Changes which affect all farming businesses have the potential to have a marked impact on natural beauty, landscape function and the sustainability of the area's communities.
- 2.2. Farming businesses have long been in receipt of subsidy payments deriving from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), introduced to increase farm production at a lower cost to the consumer. This investment caused large environmental declines. In 2005, these payments were decoupled from production and linked to maintaining minimum agricultural standards.
- 2.3. A core intended outcome of exiting the European Union was to phase out direct payments, replacing them with 'public payments for public goods'. Environmental Land Management (ELM), the new agri-environment scheme in development, is meant to be the main mechanism for achieving this.
- 2.4. In November 2020, the [Agricultural Transition Plan](#) was published, detailing the phasing out of direct payments (see graph on the following page). Farming in Protected Landscapes was introduced in this document that as one of several interim support measures.
- 2.5. CAP investment encouraged many farming businesses to focus on increasing yields, often delivered at an environmental expense. This subsidy supported the farming industry to champion a high production/high-yield mindset among many farmers for over a generation. Many farm businesses invested heavily over this time in high external input systems (machinery, diesel, fertiliser and agrochemicals) to deliver high outputs. The cost of such inputs has risen sharply over recent years.



- 2.6. High input systems are associated with greatest environmental harms, in terms of habitat loss, soil damage and loss, erosion of carbon stocks and the on- and off-farm impacts of pesticides and fertilisers. Particularly on less productive land (which is often more prevalent in protected landscapes) these systems don't necessarily deliver greatest profitability. Also, by considering the impacts to natural capital stocks on which sustainable farm productivity relies, a high input system can erode the future productivity of that land.
- 2.7. Many English farm businesses, most notably beef and sheep farming, rely on direct payments to be profitable. Beef and sheep farms frequently maintain land of the best environmental quality in the AONB; losing this conservation grazing would be a serious negative impact to the AONB.
- 2.8. [Nethergill Associates](#) has been commissioned by the AONB team to work with farmers in the Marshwood Vale / Char catchment, to deliver farm business advice in the context of increasing understanding of how profitability and environmental returns can be maximised in tandem.



#### 4.4. **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)
  - Dorset Local Nature Partnership
- b. TM engaged in significant efforts to design and roll out Farming in Protected Landscapes as part of Defra's Core Working Group (see 1.10); the programme started in July 2021.
- c. The 3<sup>rd</sup> application submitted to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative for £200,000 was approved enabling a continuation of this programme.
- d. See 4.3 (c) for planning compensatory funding

#### 4.5. **National Association for AONBs / Protected Landscapes** collaboration

- a. AONB Manager Tom Munro is engaged in a small national steering group for the Colchester Declaration, which continues to promote activity on nature recovery, people's connection with nature and efforts towards net zero within AONBs.
- 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. Tom is also representing all AONBs with one other AONB lead officer, alongside 2 National Park Directors and one National Park CEO on the Defra Core Working Group for the development of a new funding programme, Farming in Protected Landscapes.
- d. Tom is also contributing to a NAAONB Agriculture & Climate Change Working Group, part of the NAAONB's collaborative climate change action. Recent work included a workshop for AONB & National Park staff to share and inspire agricultural activity relating to carbon sequestration and landscape resilience.
- e. AONB Culture, Community & Learning Officer Sue Dampney continues to support the NAAONB through their Values working group, exploring AONB Family values and how they can better align with the principles for wider engagement in the Glover Review Arts in the Landscape - Connecting People to Nature: Sue Dampney also helps steer this Arts Council England funded project, led by NAAONB. The group is working with Arts Council England to agree a Memorandum of Understanding that we hope will unlock further resources and support in the future.

#### 4.6. **Promotion of the AONB: AONB 60<sup>th</sup> programme outreach**

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. Since the last Partnership Board meeting there has been much 'behind the scenes' work on several projects which have been postponed and will now be adapted due to coronavirus:

- a. Talking Tent: The Talking Tent project has been very active since the last Board meeting. Lead artists Martin Maudsley and Sarah Acton have been able to open up conversations with people who live and work in the AONB to explore how they feel about the AONB landscape and its future. Walkshops, pop ups and workshops with schools were all successful, as were longer in depth interviews which have been curated by Common Ground and will be archived at Dorset History Centre. The Talking Tent pitched up at Inside Out Dorset festival in Symondsburry and had a fantastic response with 80 schoolchildren and 350 individuals joining in the Tent conversations. A Talking Map of recordings is being finalised and will be launched at the beginning of December. [Find out more about the project.](#)

- b. Council of All Beings, a project exploring and celebrating the AONBs diverse wildlife is aimed at primary schools delivered 8 workshops to schools in a Covid-safe manner in Summer Term 2021. Educationalist Rowan Beecham and storyteller Martin Maudsley planned outdoor sessions with 8 schools in different habitats across the AONB, involving 240 children. Stories are being recorded on film and bespoke lesson plans with a focus on literacy are being developed for each of the Beings and these will be available on our website. [Find out more about this project.](#) Love Maps, renamed Beyond the Map: Inspired by Common Ground's approach to parish mapping, this project aimed at fostering deeper community engagement with place by the AONB Partnership and outputs will help guide future conservation activity. Artist Emma Maloney was commissioned to take on this project and ran over 10 workshops with communities and school groups in the Char Valley area. Emma is producing an interactive map to showcase the elements of the Char Valley that people cherish, which will be published online in January 2022.



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

- a. Dorset Magazine continues to support us, inviting us to submit features and updates for each issue.
- 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. Work is still 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. We have invested time in getting all the sites on our website.
- d. Social media following
  - 9,237(+77) Twitter followers @DorsetAONB; 2,804 (+488) followers on <https://www.facebook.com/Dorset-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty-AONB-449270285224339/>; 1416 (+130) followers on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/dorsetaonb/>

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

#### 4.8. **Greening West Dorset’s Hills & Vales**

Background: the Green Recovery Challenge Fund bid for £214,000 succeeded, to support a portfolio of landscape enhancements, scaling up existing delivery through partner organisations engaged in Dorset Rivers and Landscape Enhancement initiatives. Proposed outputs include 9 ponds, 250m river restoration, 6ha lowland meadow restoration, 36 traditional orchard trees ,1.7km new hedgerows, 24 new hedgerow oaks, 100m laid hedge, riverside Himalayan balsam clearance and 8km headwater tributaries better managed to slow the flow of water. It also included enhanced visitor infrastructure at Kingcombe Meadows (DWT) and community litter projects (Litter Free Dorset).

- a. Activity is well underway with most of the seasonal work due for completion over the winter and the following completed:
  - 12km of riverbank along the Asker have been enhanced through control of Himalayan balsam by a mixture of contractors and volunteers
  - 100m of hedgerow has been laid and fenced for protection from stock
  - 30 orchard trees and 6 hedgerow oaks have been planted
  - 2 litter action plans have been developed and delivered with communities in Bridport and Lyme Regis/Charmouth to foster responsible behaviour

#### 4.9. **Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve**

- Following the 'super NNR' declaration in 2020, the NNR Partnership of seven landowners recently adopted the new site management plan.
- The AONB Manager has been invited to chair the partnership; its main function now to implement the management plan.

#### 4.10. **Purbeck Heaths Wilder Grazing unit**

Background: the Green Recovery Challenge Fund bid for £540k was successful to enable a project (value of £880k) for 7 highway cattle grids and around 14km perimeter fencing securing over 1300ha lowland heath for grazing by cattle, pigs and ponies. This is in partnership with the RSPB & National Trust. Alongside this capital work there is a proposed engagement programme and series of visitor management interventions.

- a. Infrastructure: The Infrastructure Sub-Group is chaired by the Dorset AONB Manager
  - Cattle grid installation of all 7 grids, plus one removed including resurfacing, completed Thurs 28th Oct (see photos)
  - Road signage re cattle grids installed (Nov 2nd)

- White line and 'Slow' painting completed (Nov 2nd)
- Grid bypass gates including pedestrian access to be installed once gates arrive (no date confirmed yet by suppliers to DC Highways)
- Access Agreement (legal document) for highways grids signed off by all parties
- Domestic (householder) cattle grids installed at Arne and Thornmoor (see photos)
- One fencing contractor began work, with other two to begin in November
- Parking rationalisation work to begin once formal planning permission provided
- Planning permission application for parking rationalisation still awaiting response (despite 'chasing' - as at 8th Nov)
- Roadside ditching & banking to begin by end November
- Internal ditch work to begin Nov/Dec (slight delay whilst completing work on another site for one of the project partners)



- b. Ecology / monitoring: The Ecological Sub-Group is chaired by the NT Landscape Partnerships Manager. Key progress:
- Monitoring habitat changes: Data processing and analysis ongoing – between NE and RSPB teams
  - Monitoring species: Data from 2021 surveys being collated and merged with that from previous years; Sample design for future species surveys being developed, to be discussed at next sub-group meeting
  - Purbeck Heaths Natural History Forum: Launch event happening on 19th January 2022 at Harman's Cross Village Hall. Footprint Ecology contracted to oversee development of this umbrella group for volunteering, which will be key to doing the species monitoring of the PHGU (and wider NNR)
  - Future funding: NERC bid for 4 year research project taking shape. It will involve comparison with other sites in NW Spain, where wild grazing (cattle, ponies, deer and boar) is well established over a large upland heath (11000 ha), and where wolves are still present.
- c. Land Agency Group key progress (chaired by Natural England Team Leader):
- Update being sent to Rural Payments Agency (RPA) regarding the agreed future grazier arrangements (as reported in Sep Highlight report) and corresponding agri-environment schemes – response unlikely before New Year

- Appropriate arrangements to be put in place to prevent any ‘nose-to-nose’ contact between Arne Farm herd and Grazing Unit herd, once unit is fully up and running
- Agreed that grazing licences need to be as simple as possible, as three landowners and three grazier partnerships will require nine licences to safely cover all parties’ liabilities.
- Agreed that any non-standard stock handling arrangements (eg sick animal, etc), will be accommodated ‘at source’, rather than necessarily at home location of grazier.
- Operational protocol can be drafted now that grazier arrangements are agreed. Decision made to combine/develop the protocol from a form of ‘handbook’ for graziers

d. Visitor management & sustainable tourism: The Sustainable Tourism Sub-Group is chaired by the RSPB Reserves Manager. Key progress:

- First stakeholder workshop held on 19th October, hosted by Brenscombe Outdoor Centre. Well attended with 30+ participants from local tourism businesses, land owners, Parish Councils and community groups. The lead from the Flanders Tourism Board joined the meeting virtually to share their experience of changing the way they view and manage tourism. The Travel Foundation led the workshop in person.
- Next two workshops scheduled for 10th November (Blue Pool) and 8th December (Castle View, Corfe)

e. Community engagement – key progress:

- Sizeable underspend in some aspects of originally planned engagement activity (due mainly to covid restrictions with schools and other stakeholders), means more budget available for on-site interpretation to be delivered by the end of the project.
- Dates agreed with Wessex Conservation Grazing between 21st Sept and Feb half term, to deliver sessions as part of engagement activities (including ‘live’ calving if possible!)

#### 4.11. Linking Chalk, River and Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative

Background: A three-year funded project by the National Grid at £200,000, that runs to Winter 2022/2024. Conservation activity will be delivered in the Marshwood Vale and South Dorset Ridgeway in partnership with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and National Trust along with 28 farmers and land managers.

a. The project was awarded funding in October 2021. Over the course of the next three years, the project will:

- Plant, protect and manage 60 hedgerow oak trees
- Lay 1,270 metres of hedgerow
- Restore 140m of drystone wall
- Restore 7 ha of semi-natural grassland.
- Undertake 4.7 ha of scrub clearance to ensure no loss of important grassland habitat.
- Enhance management of 10 ponds and wetlands for wildlife, particularly great crested newts
- Create 0.75ha of wildlife corridors to increase habitat connectivity

#### 4.12. [Reconnecting the Ridgeway Landscape Enhancement Initiative](#)

Background: a 3-year National Grid funded project at just under £200,000, running to December 2021. Conservation activity is being delivered across the South Dorset Ridgeway area in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West and farmers and land managers on 11 sites.

a. The following outputs have been achieved to date:

- 1,100m of hedgerow laid
- 1,075m new hedgerow planted
- 2,100m fencing installed to protect hedges and grassland
- 6 standard hedgerow trees planted and protected
- 3ha species-rich grassland managed for scrub
- 100m dry stone wall restored
- 2.6ha of grassland has been enhanced through flower-rich seeding
- A new stile and dog-hatch have been installed on Eggardon Hill to improve access and fencing has been replaced to protect the Sea-mark Thorn from grazing stock

#### 4.13. [West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams](#)

- a. Background: The Dorset AONB Partnership are host to the West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams Catchment Based Approach. The area covers the main rivers and lakes that flow into the English Channel from Dorset, including the Char, Brit, Bride, Wey and Swan. We champion a community-led approach to protecting the water environment, based on the issues and threats identified by the Environment Agency and those that live and work in the area.
- b. We secured funding from the Environment Agency through their Water Environment Improvement Fund to update the Issues Appraisal that was originally undertaken in 2015. This work involved liaison with statutory agencies, other organisations, farmers and communities in the area to better understand the issues and threats facing the water environment and what we can do about overcoming them. This was completed recently and covers the 11 waterbodies in the catchment.
- c. We have also been working with Char Valley Parish Council on developing a community-led response to issues facing the River Char. We have held a community consultation with 33 respondents. The concerns raised through this consultation has formed the basis of a State of the River Char report that will set out actions to tackle the main identified issues and threats.
- d. We are launching this report on the 11th December and have a winter of delivery to follow, including natural flood management, habitat enhancement and farm liaison. Some of this will be delivered by volunteers.

#### 4.14. [River Asker Community Project](#)

- 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. 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. We have repeated the 12km clearance of Himalayan balsam in the upper Asker of Himalayan balsam. This is the second year of control, with marked improvements already being seen, but future control is still required.
- c. A winter of activity is planned, including continued community consultation, volunteering opportunities, river restoration and a survey of a weir to see if there is a feasible way of improving passage for migratory fish.
- d. We have reviewed activity within the catchment over the past 3 years of the project. The headlines are:
  - Over 70 people directly engaged with the project, including eight skilled citizen scientists
  - 1.4km of habitat improvements.

- 2km of natural flood management covering the headwaters of the catchment.
- 15ha of improved land management and 400m of new hedges for the benefit of the water environment.
- At least 700 hours of community effort.

#### 4.15. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL)

Background: FIPL was introduced in the previous board papers. It is a national initiative funded by Defra through which the English AONBs and National Parks are supporting farmers, landowners and others to deliver projects which meet the programme's outcomes for People, Place, Climate and Nature.

- The FiPL project started on 1st July, with two new staff joining the AONB team in August. A Local Assessment Panel has been established, who consider applications for over £5k grant. Smaller applications are considered by the AONB Manager. The Local Assessment Panel includes AONB Board members Robert Lasseter and Will Bond are joined by Dougal Hosford (farmer at Durweston) to represent farming interests, alongside the AONB Manager, Dorset Council's Matt Reeks and Lyn Cooch representing access and greenspace interests and integration with other available grants, Imogen Davenport (DWT) representing biodiversity interests and Rob Lloyd (NE). Expert advisers are available for issues of diversity and inclusion, specialist wildlife, archaeology etc.
- There have been 100 project enquiries to the FiPL team, leading to 21 applications. These have resulted in 1 completed project, 12 live projects, 1 rejected project and 7 further submissions under consideration. Successful applications have included projects to set up a forest school, enable correct grazing to enhance Duke of Burgundy butterfly populations and significant lengths of hedgerow planting.
- A further 9 applications are expected before Christmas for delivery in 21/22. Grants totalling £117k have been awarded to date, with a further £150k in the pipeline.
- Dorset AONB's initial year 1 fund for grants was around £500k; this has successfully been reprofiled into future years due to the programme's delayed start. We are on track to spend all of our new Year 1 allocation of circa £270k.

#### 4.16. Triple Axe – the Axe catchment initiative

Background: the team is working with colleagues from the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs to champion nature's recovery in this catchment through holistic delivery of public goods & services, via environmental land management on a catchment scale.

- The East Devon Catchment Partnership is the driver of the Axe Catchment Project and consists of a broad coalition of stakeholders, decision makers and active partners in the area, who have an established track-record and reputation for action. The Axe catchment has been identified as the number one priority due to its poor condition and SAC status.
- The Axe pilot forms an integral part of a new collaborative and ambitious project- Triple Axe (Farming, Nature & People)- an East Devon Catchment Partnership project.
- We are using the Catchment Based Approach to align priorities and drivers and a costed Action Plan (co-created with stakeholders in early 2021) is being used to secure funding for a one year pilot phase starting later in 2021.
- Our intention is that through aligning and re-shaping activity on nature's recovery (terrestrial and marine), climate resilience, water quality (phosphate) and other objectives including flood and drought (all underpinned by regulation), we can take action together in an integrated way that delivers multiple objectives and exceeds key targets.
- In 2021/22, we plan to secure more funding for this integrated delivery, piloting activity and taking (an inclusion and diverse range of) communities and stakeholders along with us on the journey to restore the Axe catchment.

#### 4.17. [Dorset Food & Drink](#)

- a. Continued promotion of the sector online and social media. New DF&D website now live. .
- b. Partnership with the Dorset Farmers' Market (DFM) continues and roll-out of mini pop-up producers' markets across the county to give DF&D members more routes to market during lockdown easing into 2021 has been a success with 15 pop ups
- c. DF&D partnered with the following places and venues who invited us to trade.
  - Borough Gardens, Dorchester
  - Nothe Fort, Weymouth
  - DFM- Barrack Street, Bridport
  - Sherborne Market
  - Tank Museum
- d. To address Covid impacts, alternative income streams are being developed including: developing new membership products (online) and making a short-term bid for funds to support a community-led 'Dorset Menu' idea supported by a local philanthropist. – Ongoing.
- e. The summer of 2021 pop up markets and partnership with the Dorset Farmers Market (DFM) presented an opportunity to give DF&D members the space and confidence to get back out on the market scene, and for the public to support and buy from local producers. Pitch fees were reduced to help members get back on their feet.
- f. Whilst COVID-19 adversely affected our members' trading opportunities and routes to market, transversely it has precipitated an increased demand for local produce and supporting local independent producers and makers. So, the opportunity to strengthen and capitalise on the 'buy local' message has never been more relevant or vital.
- g. Pleased to report many Dorset Food and Drink members had success at the Great Taste Awards in 2021. This trend was also reflected in the recent Dorset Tourism Awards, with wins and highly commended placings for DF&D member businesses and attractions. There has also been an uplift in local awards celebrating producers, innovation and localness.
- h. Next steps for the DF&D board –future proof Dorset Food & Drink by looking at the current membership model and explore options for a tighter more focused way to link back to the original core AONB/DF&D principals, and evaluate the opportunities of a post pandemic Dorset Food & Drink future.

#### 4.18. [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. The May meeting included updates from the following projects: NNR update on the management & infrastructure as well as visitor management strategies, Dynamic Dunescapes – cattle and collar experiment, National Trust Beaver Project, and the newly funded Wytch Farm LAE project: Securing Purbeck's Precious Past and Planet Purbeck. May meeting discussion was centred on the Forestry England plan for Wareham forest in terms of work completed to date and intentions as well as the opportunity for consultation on the upcoming Forest Design Plan. In addition to this, Firewise UK presented an opportunity to work collaboratively with partners in terms of building a fire resilient Purbeck.
- c. The September meeting included local project updates from the NNR, Purbeck Heaths Grazing Unit, NT Beaver Project, South Purbeck NNR, Landscape recovery Pilot, Peatland restoration fund application and NE led Making Space for Species. In addition to this the following projects presented to the partnership: Bere Regis project – Wild Woodberry, Farming in Protected Landscapes, Mitigation funds-heathland nitrate, Poole harbour recreation.
- d. The Wild Purbeck Partnership is considering extending the nature recovery network from

**4.19. 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 third time in May 2021 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”**

**4.20. Covid-19-related opportunities & demands**

a. Promise to Love Dorset – the behavioural change campaign led by Dorset Council, Visit Dorset and Dorset AONB across the summer months focused on addressing some of the unwelcome behaviours seen in summer 2020 by asking visitors:

- Do respect the environment (fires and BBQs)
- Do put litter in a bin
- Do be aware of hidden coastline dangers
- Do take care on the roads
- Do be considerate of residents (parking and camping)

b. Through static images, gifs and [videos](#) and with a hashtag of #PromiseToLoveDorset, the social media aspect of the campaign achieved:

- A ‘reach’ of 3.8 million
- Over 280,00 ‘interactions’
- 18.8 million ‘impressions’

c. The campaign was backed by an extensive marketing plan, including out of home advertising, beach front ads, roadside billboards, petrol station and supermarket advertising as well as sponsored digital and social media advertising. As things stand, there is no funding available to run a generic campaign of this scale again in summer 2022.

d. Work with PeopleScape, behavioural change researchers based at Winchester University, continues. In September, they were successful in securing £36,000 National Geographic Covid Science Funding- unfortunately this came in too late to use for direct monitoring and evaluation of the campaign. However, Peoplescape did 149 on-site surveys and received 180 on-line surveys and the results are being analysed.

e. We have gathered some initial evidence from Dorset Council colleagues that the campaign messages worked.

	2019	2020	2021
No of heath fires	85	110	57
No of parking fines	15,609	14,080	11,454

f. We are still gathering data on litter etc.



- g. So far, we know that Dorset waste overall April to September 2021 is up 4.53% from April to September 2019. Splitting data between more rural areas (east and north) and coastal areas (Purbeck, West and Weymouth and Portland) shows rural areas experienced a reduction in waste of nearly -3%; whereas the coastal areas experienced an increase of nearly 10%. Worth bearing in mind this is waste collected, so reflects large numbers of visitors rather than negative behaviour.
- h. Our colleagues at Lulworth also shared some data with us: in 2021, 965 bags of litter were collected at Durdle Door over the summer period. In one day in June 2020, they collected 2000 bags.

#### 4.21. [Stepping into Nature](#)

Stepping into Nature is an award-winning project funded by the National Community Lottery Fund till March 2023, facilitating nature-based activities for an older audience coupled with a rigorous Public Health assessment of participants' wellbeing.

It is worth noting that Covid is still playing part in delaying activity delivery with partners and participation numbers at face to face events are still low.

##### a. **Delivery**

- Picnic in the Parks 2500 pageviews – a website full of ideas to live well and love nature is now live. Created in partnership with Natural Choices, Active Dorset, local organisations and community groups. Discover the park: [www.picnicintheparks.org](http://www.picnicintheparks.org)
- Seasons of Stories Spring book has been created to assist connection to nature through poetry, conversation.
- Six Dorset History Walks have been created with Steve Wallis and are now being sent out with 270 sent to date
- Recruitment of a P/T post for Health & nature Dorset with joint funding from SiN & LNP to be hosted by LNP for a year.
- Launch of Thriving Communities Nature Buddies, 5 organisations and 6 volunteers signed up to work with SiN to develop and deliver the Nature Buddies Volunteer Network. This has had slow progress across the whole funding stream and will now be extended by 3 months to June 2022.

##### b. **Community Pot** for catalysing change

- Windrose Rural Media Trust awarded £2000 for The Place I Love to celebrate the village landscape and heritage while promoting better understanding of and respect for the countryside.
- In Jolly Good Company awarded £2000 to support an additional staff member and additional activities for the Step Outside group at Kingston Lacy, delivering outside opportunities for people living with dementia.
- Durlston Castle Parkrun awarded £2000 to set up and deliver our new weekly parkrun event for Purbeck catchment area and going forward the Core Team will need a start-up funding

c. **Your Season of Stories.** Supported by £45,000 public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Your Season of Stories will gather seasonal memories, traditions and stories from people living in Dorset, living with a long term health condition or are in a caring role to co-design a 'creative resource' which will help spark connection to nature and others for improved wellbeing.

##### d. **Looking Forward**

- Allocation of underspend
  - Summer and Winter SOS
  - Self-management guidance
  - Piloting a test & learn with PCN regarding Personal Health Budgets
  - Development of support for self led PIPs?
- Collaboration on bigger community pot fund with SiN, TC & COMF
- Possible collaborative funding bid with HAND

#### 4.22. [Visitor Management steering input](#)

Sally is a board member of the Dorset Tourism Association representing Dorset AONB and the Jurassic Coast Trust. The Board continues to meet regularly. Sally continues to attend Litter Free Dorset Land Coast and Sea Forum meetings and contributes and advises on visitor management and other issues. Sally sits on the Purbeck Heaths Grazing Unit sustainable tourism sub-group which is developing a Sustainable Tourism Plan for the Purbeck Heaths.

#### 4.23. [Jurassic Coast Visitor Management](#)

Sally 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.

- a. West Bay signage. Coastal Communities funded (£20,000) project to reduce, rationalise and improve community/ visitor interpretation in West Bay.
  - Work to declutter signage in various locations in West Bay, including West Bay Road car park and play area, has commenced and is to be completed by April 2022
- b. Kimmeridge interpretation and access improvements Background: partnership project which aimed to address access and footpath issues; remove interpretation clutter and provide new improved interpretation; and create an improved visitor experience by better connecting Kimmeridge village with the Bay. Funding: £20,000 Wytch Farm, £11,000 Dorset Coastal Connections and £5,000 in kind.
  - Two new interpretation panels installed September 2021- one at east end of Bay car park and one on toilet block wall. Designed to be engaging, inclusive and stimulate further exploration. These two signs, plus a new safety/ range opening sign and a new bathing water sign (4 in total) will replace 11 old signs!
  - Access improvements completed by Dorset Countryside, and three new 'swing-arm' interpretation points in place on footpath between Bay and village.



- c. Branscombe: Sally is also working on a project to reduce clutter and improve interpretation at Branscombe, working in partnership with East Devon AONB, National Trust and South West Coast Path Association amongst others.

#### 4.24. Sustainable travel

- a. Worked with Dorset Community Rail Partnership to design and install new Welcome signs at Wareham station. Formerly only promoted the Jurassic Coast; now includes Dorset AONB.
- b. Approached by well-known local walker and writer Robert Westwood – agreed to work together to produce a book of Dorset AONB walks. Focused on less well-known areas, especially inland (where the infrastructure allows). Will also include walks from bus stops and accessible walks. We hope to apply our branding to the book so it becomes part of the AONB offer.

#### 4.25. The Inside Out Dorset Festival

- a. Organised by Activate Performing Arts, the festival included weekend of events at Symondsburry Estate which were supported by the Dorset AONB and attracted 5400 visitors.
- b. In line with the festival themes of sustainability, land use and lifecycles, human and environmental, among the many highlights were the installations of artist Luke Jerram’s astonishing Gaia. The seven-metre scale model of Earth made using NASA photography offered an out-of-this-world opportunity to see our planet as an astronaut would view it from space, prompting thoughts about climate change and humanity’s effect on the planet in many of people that visited the installation, either in person or among almost 3,500 that viewed video footage online.



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

### 4.26. Low Carbon Dorset

- a. Low Carbon Dorset is a five-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.lowcarbondorset.org.uk/>
- b. Summary of activity:
  - Received 580 applications for support
  - Awarded 152 grants totalling £4.9m
  - Supported 129 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)
  - £15.8m of investment in low-carbon projects in Dorset
  - An annual carbon reduction of 9,825 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in Dorset
  - The installation of 10.8MW of renewable energy capacity in Dorset
  - Improvements in the energy efficiency of 108 houses in Dorset
  - The development of 8 new low carbon products in Dorset
  - The reduction of energy used in public-sector buildings by 578,481 kwh/yr
- d. Programme updates:
  - Currently recruiting for Project Support Officer
  - New case studies added to website – here you can find a selection of our supported projects which have now been categorised by sector and project type to make easier to navigate: <https://www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk/case-studies/>
  - Featured in Dorset Council’s Festival of the Future. The full session can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/R6CREHGct0w>
  - COP26 eNewsletter special issued this month. View newsletter here: <https://mailchi.mp/dorsetcouncil/enews-low-carbon-dorset-cop26>

### 4.27. 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. A panel meeting was held in July 2021 with the postponed October meeting now on 17<sup>th</sup> November

- c. To date there have been 22 projects that have been formally offered grant funds (not including 2 'In Principle'). Fifteen of these are now complete.
- d. Grants awarded were for a total of 2 projects (both met the Biodiversity pillar)
  - **Purbecks Invasive Plants-audit & control Phase2** (£10,590) to employ a contractor to ground truth invasive plant data derived from DERC.
  - **Purbecks Precious Past Phase 2** (£47152.38 ) includes salary costs to deliver a project focused on veteran trees and securing the ancients in our landscape through collecting seed, growing sapling and citizen science recording.
- e. Additional support for the 'in principle' projects with Dorset Council to improve and create cycle routes from Nordon Park continues with a revised application due to be submitted to the next panel meeting in March 2022

4.28. **Fingerpost Restoration**

- a. Work to restore Dorset's traditional fingerposts continues, led by Roger Bond (Normtec) and his band of volunteers, including Blandford & Dorchester Men's Sheds.
- b. Since 1st April 2021, 26 Fingerposts have been restored across the County. Recent restorations include 3 in Corfe Castle, Kingston Hill, Compton Valence and Wynford Eagle.
- c. 31 Fingerposts are currently in the process of being restored, include. 3 in Studland, 2 in Church Knowle, 3 in Evershot and 1 in South Perrott
- d. Dorset AONB continues to contribute towards the cost of Roger's time and some materials. Further information on the project can be found [here](#).



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

### 4.29. Sustainable Development Fund

- a. 10 applications with a total request of nearly £15,000 were considered by the SDF Panel in June for a smaller fund pot this year compared to previous years. The panel were also keen to support projects that would help to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. We were able to offer £11,470 to support the following 8 projects:
  - Hope Corner Farm: Setting up a new community allotment and rural arts hub – targeted towards engaging young people in rural crafts, skills & environmental stewardship, as well as offering therapeutic collective activities for those suffering from mental or physical health challenges.
  - Arts Development Company: Working with Planet Purbeck on a creative co-production to implement creative interventions to help encourage conversations and practical action around the climate crisis.
  - Dorset Dry Stone Wall Association: Extra skills and certification for dry stone wallers through subsidised members exam fees, initial training of an additional instructor and help towards the purchase of additional safety equipment.
  - Dorset Himalayan Balsam free zones project: Targeting the removal of patches of Himalayan Balsam in the Sydling Brook and River Cerne using new techniques to eradicate the plant and aid the re-establishment of native plants.
  - Bridport goat club: fencing and construction costs to build an enclosure for the goats in a nature friendly, low impact way using local recycled materials. The aim is to benefit families by learning animal husbandry, experience the joy of working the land collectively and the associated increase to mental & physical well-being.
  - Let’s Make Art on the Beaches: A series of six site specific playful art sessions for children aged 2 – 4 yrs and their parents/carers led by Oops Wow Messy Art. An opportunity for children to experience, explore and engage with the landscape and environment in new ways. Particularly beneficial after lockdown as a positive way to spend time with others whilst being creative in nature.
  - The Place I Love: Based in Boadwindsor, this project will identify the parish field names, points of interest and discover what the land was used for in the past as well as in the present. Its aim is to celebrate the village landscape and heritage while promoting better understanding of and respect for the countryside.
  - Planet Purbeck Festival (Sept 2021): Costs towards the hire of The Mowlem Centre in Swanage as a festival hub, enabling them to reach a wider audience and connect with the community, in particular young people around the climate & ecological emergency.
- b. Case studies of previous projects supported by the SDF fund can be found [here](#)

## ITEM 5: BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2023 BUDGET HEADLINES

ITEM FOR	Decision	REPORT BY	AONB Manager
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<p>In the 2021 Autumn Statement &amp; Budget the Chancellor made no specific commitment to AONBs &amp; National Parks, however accompanying press releases suggest protected budgets for AONBs &amp; National Parks. Our core grant level is being decided through Defra’s internal Business Planning process. The National Association for AONBs has made a credible argument for doubling all AONB budgets by the end of this parliament at a total cost of £12M, but we have no indication of the likelihood of success.</p> <p>This Business Plan is based on a flat settlement (ie no inflationary increase from last year: £247,438). It should be noted that this is a 33% real terms reduction in grant since 2011. Dorset Council is expected to maintain its core contribution (£54,510 in 20-21).</p> <p>This item outlines the proposed allocation of these funds and those from the AONB’s contributing Local Authority. Recommended priorities for spend if core grants increase are outlined.</p>		
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	This item covers all AONB finance for 2022-2023.		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	The Board approves the proposed budget and funding priorities for next financial year		

### 5.1. HM Treasury 2015 Autumn Statement

Following the Glover Review, a one-year inflation-proofed flat settlement for 2020-2021 was agreed. The 2021 Spending Review (SR21) set departmental spending levels until 2024-2025. It is expected that Defra will maintain its contributions at current levels, although we have been warned that there is significant competition for funds at this time.

### 5.2. AONB Budget structure & Defra guidance

The AONB budget is split into 3 areas: core, the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Projects. Funds from Defra, our majority funding partner, are provided according to the ‘single pot guidance’ as set out below.

#### a. CORE: Core Functions are critical to the successful operation of AONB Partnerships.

Within core functions it is to be expected that staffing and associated overheads should merit particular protection. As set out in the Defra grant offer letter the grant offer includes a maximum contribution to core funding of 75% and is conditional on AONB Partnerships securing match funding of a further 25% of core funding from other sources. It is hoped and expected that Local Authority partner contributions to all Core Functions continue at a minimum of 25%, or even at the same levels that have previously been invested.

Contributions from bodies other than local authority partners and/or earned income can be used to support core functions; this would release Defra-origin funds for other activity. Core Functions are defined in the Defra MoA and as such provide guidance on minimum standards to allow successful operation of an AONB unit and the delivery of the AONB Management Plan.

#### b. SDF: The SDF was established as a Ministerial initiative and has political support. Defra believes the previous success of SDF will ensure its continuation in a meaningful way without the need to impose minimum levels of spending, which would go against the ethos of an interdependent 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.

### 5.3. INCOME FORECAST

The Dorset AONB’s Local Authority contributions is expected to be maintained. The team also has an external fundraising target.

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

	Source	2021-2022
<b>LA &amp; Treasury income</b>	Defra TOTAL	£ 247,438
	Dorset Council	£ 54,510
	Other income / reserve	£ 12,600
	TOTAL non-Defra income	£ 67,110
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 314,548</b>

### 5.4. 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; our projected costs require the income target of £12,600 as outlined above.

	Cost heading	£
<b>Core costs</b>	<i>Core staff salaries, ENI &amp; pension</i>	£ 247,409
	<i>Travel &amp; training</i>	£ 6,900
	<i>Accommodation &amp; office equipment</i>	£ 5,000
	<i>Partnership running costs</i>	£ 3,000
	<i>Communication, outreach etc, inc forum &amp; AONB 60th outreach programme</i>	£ 4,000
	<i>Monitoring research &amp; guidance</i>	£ 2,000
	<b>CORE TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 268,309</b>

### 5.5. PROJECTS & SDF

- a. The difference between the projected core costs and total single pot income is just over £46,000.
- b. Maintaining a SDF of around £15,000 leaves £31,000 to be invested in the following projects: Dorset Food & Drink, Stepping Into Nature, West Dorset Rivers & Coastal Streams Catchment Management, Dorset Fingerposts / Rural Roads, Visitor Management projects, Woodlink.



