

Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Thurs 20th May 2021

The meeting will start at 10.00 am sharp; the Teams meeting room will be open from 0945. If you are unable to attend it would be helpful if you could send a briefed representative or an update. Please send apologies to Kate Townsend on kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

AGENDA

Chairman's welcome, introduction & apologies

1. Minutes of the last meeting
2. Partner's 2-minute updates
3. Delivering the AONB Management Plan: team activity, highlighting the Magical Marshwood Landscape Enhancement Initiative & Stepping into Nature
4. 2020-2021 AONB Partnership accounts
5. Glover Review update
6. Farming in Protected Landscapes
7. Art in the Landscape – a national strategy for adoption
8. Presentations: Keeping Dorset safe – Bridget Betts of Dorset Council;
9. Summer visitor campaign – Sally King of Dorset AONB team
10. Summer site visit to National Grid undergrounding site
11. Housing delivery test & 5-year housing supply; implications for planning decisions

Proposed dates of next meetings:

Dates of next meetings

	Winter (agreed)	Spring (tbc)
AONB Steering Group	19 th October 2021	19 th April 2022
AONB Partnership Board	25 th November 2021	26 th May 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 19th November 2020, on Zoom

Present:

Organisation	Representative	Status	2020-11
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Commander Rupert Best DL	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Mike Jones	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Janet Page	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	Present
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Jim White	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope OBE DL	Voting member	Present
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	Present
Forestry Commission	Chris Gibbard	Voting member	Present
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	
National Farmers' Union	Robert Lasseter	Voting member	Present (chair)
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	Present
Purbeck Heritage Network	Brian Bleese	Attending member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Matt Reeks	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business Association	William Langer	Supporting Officer	Present
National Farmers' Union	Louise Stratton	Supporting Officer	Present

DAONB Team: Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), 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), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Caroline Kelly (Purbeck), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

Speakers: Stuart Fox (Nat. Grid), Simon Toogood (Nat. Grid), Maddy Pfaff (Lulworth Estate), Derek Billings (Lulworth Estate)

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all, with particular welcome to our guest speakers.

1. Election of Chair

TMunro: Jim White is standing down as the Chair from the partnership board. 2 candidates had expressed an interest taking over the role, Dr Phil Sterling and Robert Lasseter. Following a pre-meeting vote Dr Phil Sterling received the majority of the 14 votes cast. As per the process agreed at the previous Board Meeting, Dr Sterling will be elected as AONB Chairman.

Vice Chair Robert Lasseter will Chair this meeting as both Jim White and Dr Phil Sterling unable to attend.

RLasseter asked for condolences from the board to be passed onto Jim White

TMunro asked board members to email him/team if they had a personal message of condolence or thanks they would like us to pass onto JW.

2. Dorset Race Equalities Council – role on Board

TMunro introduced the paper developed following discussion with the Steering Group, recommending that the board invites a representative from Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC) to sit on this board as a full voting member, to act as a champion for equality, diversion and inclusion at a governance level.

Discussion:

- a. **RBest**- questioned if anyone speaks Dorset on the board and why we should be looking after other ethnic backgrounds when we don't look after ourselves. **TM** – it is about broadening, not diluting the work we do.
- b. **RTarr** – problems here not same as cities but there are many groups not visiting our landscapes. We need to be inclusive of other ethnicities living in and visiting the AONB.
- c. **HJefferson** –if broadening the AONB's reach by having DREC on the board helps us then it will be an asset.

NShearing from DREC explained more about the organisation – DREC is a charity and aims to

- support people from different ethnic backgrounds discriminated against due to their race or religion
- work with ethnic individuals/groups in Dorset to empower and promote their culture
- support statutory and voluntary organisations and businesses to help embed equality and diversity throughout their work.

Lots of people do not access or contribute to the local environment so what can we do to open up and broaden access to everyone? Hopes to be able to contribute by raising issues around inclusion and offering advice on how to broaden access and engagement of people from different backgrounds.

- a. **RLass** - Glover Review clear on this and if want to appeal to a particular group of people important that board reflects who appealing to.
- b. **RBest** – concerned the board is expanding into areas which don't concern the people who have built the AONB and who work in it.
- c. **RTarr** – we need to adapt and encourage people from different backgrounds/ethnicities as they are a vital part of the tourist industry.
- d. **JPope** – at the Tank Museum 200k visitors from all over the world which contribute to the local economy and we can't expect support from funders if we don't address this issue. An opportunity and not a threat.
- e. **RBest** – we have a mix of races in my local village and I don't see why we need to make an issue of it.
- f. **KCalder** – this is about inclusiveness, being actively inclusive and addressing unknown biases.
- g. **JSomper** – Young people are also missing from the board. **TM** – this was also picked up in Glover review and we are aware of it. **JSomper** – could be addressed through work with partners.
- h. **RLass** – This is a way of looking after the AONB for subsequent generations.

RESOLUTION: The board approves by majority vote a representative of the Dorset Race Equality Council joining the board as a full voting member

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meetings held in November 2019 and June 2020 were agreed as correct. No matters arising.

RESOLUTION: The board approves the minutes as a true record

4. National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (Dorset undergrounding project) (external speaker presentation)

Simon explained that this is one of four undergrounding schemes across the country and work on the project is well underway. Despite the disruptions of Covid, for which site mitigations & measures have been put in place, the project is progressing as planned.

Progress so far - 32% of ducts in, 32% of trench installed and 90% of the haul road has been installed.

Over the next few months they are looking at bird nest mitigation on the pylons, the first cable pull and completing the haul road.

Excitingly a vast amount of archaeology has been found during the project, such as stone barrows, roman buildings, pottery etc. These will eventually be on display in the visitor's centre on the site. Artefacts are going to Oxford for carbon dating.

Questions:

- a. **JPope** – hopes the artefacts can link in with the museum.
- b. **RTarr** – wonderful scheme and will bring in crucial visitors.
- c. **RBest** – asked when it will be finished and will the flooding issue be resolved? **SToogood** it will be finished in 2022, explained the team are working hard on flooding issues, defences went in last Thursday but there are still challenges.
- d. **HJefferson** – asked if they had talked to TV companies about it as it is an enchanting story. **SToogood** said he had been in recent contact with them and is in discussion.
- e. **RLass** - suggested contacting Countryfile
- f. **PBowyer** – asked about the opportunity for incorporating this in the Dorset curriculum and embed the journey with an educational experience, to spark curiosity amongst all age ranges. **SFox** said Covid had prevented this but they have a meeting with local primary school next week and have a rolling programme but asked if there is something broader then they would be happy to discuss it and get involved.
- g. **RLass** – Dorset AONB boundary at Upwey to Abbotsbury, asked about the possibility of Nat. Grid legacy work for future generations by turning branch line into cycle way. Asked if others in the room thought it was a project for AONB to get involved in. **SFox** – potential funding for this from Community Grant fund up to 20k or LEI. **SToogood** – LEI could be explored. **TM** – tramway has long been identified as a potential cycling route. LEI currently being used to assist farms affected by pylons. Once these projects have been completed the team will look at this for a future application.
- h. **RTarr** - a good thing to do as bringing more people, but not more cars into the area.
- i. **JPope** – chimes with museum relaunch, suggested someone from NGRid might make contact with Dorset County Museum.

5. Spring/Summer 2020: pandemic visitors, the experience from Lulworth (external speaker presentation)

Derek & Maddy explained that despite the pandemic, it was 'business as usual' at Durdle Door and they experienced very high numbers of visitors from out of the area. This led to a huge array of challenges for the team such as mass littering, graffiti, fires on grassland, tombstoning and parking issues. The team worked hard to find solutions, including working with DC on an operational plan, employing beach wardens and cleaners, increasing signage and an educational campaign. This has had a huge economic consequences for the estate(over £100k). They are now looking at long term measures to cope with increased visitor pressures in future years e.g. educational programmes, partnership work, Just Park App, 5G Alert Trial.

Questions:

- j. **RBest** – fascinating and horrifying – bought out concerns raised 20 yrs. ago when gov at time went for Right to Roam and remembers James Weld asking who would pay for maintenance and regulation for this new area of coastline being opened up to everybody. Covid makes the situation unusual but raises a warning of what happens when the government does something but does not fund it properly. How is estate being recompensed for extra expenses? Also raises question of tourism in DAONB, do we want our own people to be so inconvenienced by tourism? MPfaff parking charges help recompense additional cost but does not cover it. Government also needs to better educate people from cities visiting the coast.
- k. **PBowyer** (Chat) - Durdle Door-serious issues of capacity management + need to address the tensions between access, excess and tourism-maybe a future topic?
- l. **RBryan** – As the portfolio holder horrified by the huge bills incurred and the terrible treatment of Dorset Council Highways officers who were brought in to assist. This will not happen again and will be tackled through education and enforcement.
- m. **RLass** – AONB team may be able to assist with educational aspect – asked if the team could they facilitate a future discussion.
- n. **TM** – Agreed this and said team are looking out for funding sources for a sustainable tourism strategy and will continue to work with agencies such as Visit Dorset. Thanked Maddy and Derek for their presentation and advised them to get in touch if we can amplify messages.
- o. **Lucy Culkin** (Chat) - I would like to be involved with wider discussions regarding education and visitor management/behaviour across the Jurassic Coast and in particular 'honey pot' Sites.

Post meeting - Derek has asked if anyone wants to help or has any ideas for collaborative work, then to get in touch as they would love to hear any ideas or thoughts from board members.

RECOMMENDATION: The board recommends the AONB team invest time to assisting partners manage the impacts of Covid-related visitor impacts.

6. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

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

Ian Rees - update on the Defra Test & Trials scheme, an 18-month project trialling methods to map where in the landscape actions can be delivered to support improving landscape character and that help deliver DEFRA's 6 themes (clean air, thriving plants and wildlife, protection from hazards, clean air, climate regulation and beauty & engagement). At present they are looking at ways to link people to activities which they may benefit from, such as reducing flooding. For example mapping of the Cerne and Sydling valleys shows areas where there has been historical flooding and where there are more vulnerable communities. Such information leads to the identification of priority areas and informs where action e.g. tree planting should be undertaken. This information is on a landscape scale but they will be looking at a farm holding scale in the future.

Nest steps for the project are to test them out with farmers, report back to DEFRA and engage with a wider range of farmers about the benefits of ELMS & nature recovery strategies.

Caroline Richards (DF&D) – Most events were cancelled so they have been looking at other ways to trade, such as sharing pitches with Dorset Farmers' Markets. Following consultation with DAPTC members they had a positive response to the suggestion of Pop-up markets and will look to having a core body of travelling traders for these events next year.

Athelhampton Christmas event has been cancelled this year, but the Tank Museum Victorian Market is going ahead as well as some other Farmer's Markets which members will be trading at.

Steph Aburrow (Step into Nature) – Presented evaluation data, showing how activities have had a positive effect on their target audience, the full report is in the board papers. Another report is soon to be published - sharing the learning outcomes from the project.

An online resource hub is being created in place of live Picnic in the Park events this year (all cancelled due to the pandemic). Based on the 5 ways to wellbeing, it will be fun, interactive and very engaging. All activities will be pre-recorded and will grow and change with seasons. They are looking for new content so if anyone has anything suitable for the platform please get in touch. Once it is online a link will be circulated.

Julie Hammond (Step into Nature) – Reported they are looking at growing the Health and Nature Dorset collaboration with partners aimed at increasing engagement in nature for wellbeing and addressing inequalities. Following on from a workshop in 2019 with partners from health and environment organisations the collaboration recently put in a funding bid to Health Foundation's 'Shaping places for healthy lives' fund which, although unsuccessful, got through to the last 30. In conjunction with the CCG they also put in a submission of interest to 'Green prescribing for mental health' fund, which was sadly also unsuccessful. However the work put into these submissions will help them to move forward with their work in the next phase SiN and HAND. This extension (funded by the National Lottery Community Fund) hopes to address cultural barriers to accessibility through new activities, in the New Year they will be recruiting someone part time who will be testing assumptions and creating activities.

Sally King – Recently worked on a signage project at West Bay. The many old, worn signs at East and West Beach have been replaced with 2 new up to date signs, decluttering the area. They have been re-sited from the crest of the beaches to the beach access points so as not to impinge views. The project used funding from the Coast & Community Fund and was undertaken in conjunction with Bridport TC, RNLI, Dorset Coast Forum, DC (Harbour Master). They include safety advice, dog & litter free information – which was missing from the old signage boards. The NTrust have expressed an interest in a similar project at Burton Beach car park as have Lyme Regis TC.

Questions

- a. **PBowyer (Chat)** - 1. Dorset Council and the Strategic Land Availability Assessment. Some sites in the AONB that are in the SLAA are seen as unsuitable yet can be included in the Dorset Local Plan e.g 1000 houses at Worgret. Will the AONB comment on the SLAA and how can the Board respond to Dorset Council? Question 2 The SLAA supplies evidence to the Dorset Local Plan. Will the Board be consulted on the Dorset Local Plan and how can the AONB respond given that the Board meets twice per year? **TM** - no officer here from DC to comment but the Plan is in process and the AONB team is a consultee. Hoping the Board will hear an update from DC at next meeting.

RBrown (post meeting) Q1- A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a technical exercise to determine the quantity and suitability of land potentially available for housing development. It is not a site allocations exercise – the purpose is to provide a robust indication of aggregate housing capacity at local authority level. The SHLAA is a required part of the evidence base needed for the preparation of a Local Plan (as specified in the National Planning Policy Framework, para. 159). The Local Authority is required to consider all options, included sites within or close to designated areas. Sites are commonly put forward by landowners, but the Local Authority can also look at land that is not being proactively promoted. A sequential test of the overall land considered to be conceivably available for develop is then undertaken to consider the suitability of the sites. This process requires consultation with stakeholders, of which the AONB Team is included.

Q2 – The AONB Team are consulted on the Local Plan and a response is usually provided by the Landscape Planning Officer. In addition to formal consultation opportunities, the Team is involved in ongoing discussion with other specialist within Dorset Council on some specific sites of strategic importance, such as North Dorchester.

- b. **JSomper** – Team have input into LEP, DF&D seeking support from LEP how much influence do we have around this? Dorset Growth Hub, promoted by DF&D provided valuable advice to members, in part. small businesses. This Good Earth - uncomfortable with the wording used in the press release, one-sided. **TM** – hard to say how much influence exactly, but members from around this table also sit on it, eg. Luke Rake. This Good Earth received a small SDF grant, comments are provided by interviewees – farmers, landowners, academics.
- c. **RBryan** – RE. This Good Earth - concerned that DC logo has been used which implies DC fully supportive, will follow this up. Climate Change work is at consultation stage – please take part. Low Carbon Dorset have received extra money which will be used to advance things in Dorset. Thanks and congratulations to the team for all the work you do.
- d. **RLass**– Thanks to the team, huge value for money.

RESOLUTION: The Board approved and noted the progress made on delivering the Management Plan 2019-2024.

7. Dorset AONB 2020-2021 Budget Outline

TM presented the paper.

RESOLUTION – The board approved the proposed outline budget and funding priorities for the next financial year.

8. 90 second partner updates

- a. **JPage** – 3 of us on this board and represent all PC's in Dorset, we are a membership organisation and work closely with AONB on planning applications in particular.
- b. **MJones** – Also represent DAPTC and on the Cranborne chase AONB board. Do we know much about them and share ideas? **TM** – yes we meet and share ideas and activities – their dark skies expertise is of interest to us and we are supporting them in landscape partnership development.

- c. **RBest** – Land - involved in Agri Bill and Environ. Bill, tied up in ELMS and BREXIT and AONB much to do on these areas to work with landowners and farmers. Planning – looking at growth and synergy of villages. Communications – support a better communication network for Dorset. Economy – energy issues, need more housing, tourism of value next year– AONB can help educate and to direct tourists to quieter areas.
- d. **GDickinson (Chat)** - There are many including CPRE who feel that the continued decline in Dorset’s environment and natural capital will be reversed if the AONB is upgraded to a National Park. Point 9 of the recent Government’s “Green Industrial Revolution” paper yesterday was entitled “Protecting our Nature Environment”. It said “we will start the process of designating more of England’s iconic landscapes as National Parks and AONBs..”. So two questions please. 1) Dorset Council’s recent consultation on their Climate and Nature Emergencies Strategy showed a continual decline in Dorset’s natural environment. The AONB board have announced a similar one. So how will this board be involved in the reaction to Dorset Council’s statement? And should it be more involved in future Council consultations? 2) There was a recent report from Natural England - “Building Partnerships for Nature’s Recovery”. We wonder how this board will be involved in this too? It appears the AONB wasn’t mentioned in this report whereas others like RSPB, Forestry Commission etc were mentioned as key players. **TM** – Q1. we helped compile DC action plan and the team will be involved in consultation. Re a National Park the diversity of opinions on the board means there is no unified Board position; the team respond on the quality and impacts to landscape. Q2. Not seen that report but at launch of NNR delivery Partnership, Dorset AONB & the Purbeck Heaths were mentioned and AONBs are proposed as key part of NRN nationally.
- e. **PBowyer** – TCs/PCs concerned over Local Government reorganisation, in part. a shortage of planning officers and the secrecy of the development of the Dorset Local Plan – lack of community consultation, excessive housing targets, insufficient control locally of planning functions and members have expressed opposition to Government papers to a new planning system. Urged board members to look at current consultation on the main modifications to the Purbeck Local Plan as likely it will feed into Dorset Local Plan and have significant consequences
- f. **HJefferson** – NTrust severely impacted by pandemic, predicted losses £200m have led to a major reorganisation and restructure. Nature recovery still at heart of organisation. Locally small houses still closed, hope to open end of March next year using an e-booking model. Positive way to manage visitor flow but staff losses. Moving away from the direct delivery of events themselves (e.g. Springtide). Will need to talk to Caroline and Sue about this.
- g. **JPope**– redevelopment of County Museum – 5 new galleries, opening in spring next year, plus a huge new basement. 1 gallery for ‘Natural Dorset’ – to explain geological history, landscape etc so lots of synergy with this meeting. There will also be a temporary exhibition gallery for valuable collections which are visiting. A possible facility for NGrid finds? Plus a Learning centre in John White’s rectory.
- h. **RLloyd** – Team Leader with NE. NRN are the big thing at the moment and interested to learn what Boris’ Green Revolution will mean for them.
- i. **LRake** - LEP and also on LNP now and prospectus –Environment part of LEP priorities and investment will come but we don’t know when next capital tranche will come down from central government. As prospectus comes together will share with board as a key partner and will take feedback back to board.
- j. **RTarr** – along with Cllr Jane Somper, 2 local councillors and would welcome you to make contact if anything happening in your local area which would be of interest to them.
- k. **RLass**– Change in mood and more acceptance from Farmers to a change of direction. The challenge for AONBs, and government is 2-fold – networking landowners together on a landscape scale and providing early guidance to landowners to be able to implement changes. The ELMS trials need energy from the farming community, they are open to it but need forewarning. Exciting time for anyone involved in landownership though. **TM** - we will disseminate info around ELMS when received from DEFRA (due on 26/11).

9. Any Other Business

None

CORE WORK

3.3. [Providing landscape-related planning advice via the Planning Protocol:](#)

- a. Approximately 150 planning consultations were received and responded to in 2020-21, including a significant number of large-scale applications, as well as the draft Dorset Local Plan. From the start of April 2021, a further 20 consultations have been received, representing a similar trend in terms of the number and complexity of consultations.
- b. Ongoing major cases include the proposed extension to Swanworth Quarry, a large scale solar array near to North Fossil Farm, a further large scale solar farm near to Pulham, in the Blackmore Vale, the forthcoming reserved matters application at Verse Farm and various other housing proposals, including an appeal hearing for a 30 dwelling scheme at Milton Abbas.
- c. The overall trends within the planning consults is a significant uplift in solar proposals within the setting of the AONB, an uplift in proposed expansions of tourism accommodation sites (particularly camping and caravanning), the continuation of speculative housing applications that seek to capitalise on the absence of a 5 year land supply across much of the designated area and an interest in farm diversification projects, particularly those catering for staycations.
- d. An agreement for compensatory funding from the redevelopment of the Haven Hotel site, within the setting of the AONB in Sandbanks, has been reached. The applicant had already agreed to fund a warden post, in perpetuity, and it was agreed that a further fund would be created to deliver landscape enhancements in the AONB and the Sandbanks area. A total of £850,000 will be made available for eligible grants over a period of approximately 80 years.

3.4. **Accessing resources / project development**

- a. The AONB Team has steering input to the following strategic organisations which we anticipate could be a source of funds for conserving and enhancing the AONB
 - Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Rural Enterprise Group / Dorset Destination Management Organisation)
 - 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 ITEM 7)
- c. No update on the 3rd application submitted to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative for almost £200,000; decision expected Oct '21.
- d. The Dorset AONB collaborated in an application to Arts Council England for the project 'We Are Not Strangers Here'. This is a pilot investigation of racial inequality in access to the natural landscape. It brings together Dorset AONB & Activate with Dorset Race Equality Council to develop relationships with diverse communities in BCP & Dorset & commission artists-in-residence to creatively explore the local countryside. Each residency will build relationships between us, the communities & the artists, exploring the issues communities face accessing the arts & the natural landscape, & guiding us in producing new programming. We will hear the outcome of the application by July.
- e. See 4.3 (d) for planning compensatory funding

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

- a. AONB Manager Tom Munro is engaged in a small national steering group for the Colchester Declaration, and has co-authored the NAAONB guidance on producing an AONB Nature Recovery Plan, facilitated a national training session on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and produced a prospectus on nature recovery 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. 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.
- e. Arts in the Landscape - Connecting People to Nature: Sue Dampney also helps steer this Arts Council England funded project, led by NAAONB, which you will hear more about at the meeting.

3.1. Promotion of the AONB: AONB 60th 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: Talking Tent offers a space to weave together threads of thinking and conversations about the living landscape. Led by storyteller [Martin Maudsley](#) and landscape poet [Sarah Acton](#), the project aims to capture seasonal connections and personal relationships with the landscape past, present and future. Plans have been reshaped in the face of the pandemic; we will run a mix of online 'In Conversation' events and face-to-face 'Walk-shops' during the Spring and Summer 2021. They will also record 1:1 interviews which will be archived at the Dorset History Centre. Talking Tent will make appearance at the Inside Out Festival in Symondsburry, gathering conversations as well as creating a sound installation in its own right for people to visit. We would love to hear you thoughts, stories and memories about the Dorset landscape. [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 is being adapted so that it can be delivered in a Covid-safe manner in Summer Term 2021. Educationalist Rowan Beecham and storyteller Martin Maudsley have planned outdoor sessions with 8 schools in different habitats across the AONB. 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.](#)
- c. Landscapes for Life Photo Competition exhibition of 70 of the winning images is now showing at Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester until July 2021. Although not open to the public due to Covid restrictions, we have had very positive responses from staff and patients.
- d. Love Maps: Inspired by Common Ground's approach to parish mapping, this project will be creative-led and inclusive in its approach to one or two communities within the Dorset AONB area. This project is considered a pilot for fostering deeper community engagement with place by the AONB Partnership and outputs will help guide future conservation activity. As the result of an open invitation to quote, artist [Emma Maloney](#) has been commissioned to take on this project and is currently researching which parishes to focus on.



3.2. **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
 - 9,160 (+352) Twitter followers @DorsetAONB; 2,316 (+1,358) followers on <https://www.facebook.com/Dorset-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty-AONB-449270285224339/>; 1286 followers on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/dorsetaonb/>

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

3.3. **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. Permission to start has been received; all partners are starting activity.

3.4. **Purbeck Heaths 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: Dorset Highways have been appointed as lead engineer; detailed designs have been drawn. Invitations to quote for the significant border fencing have issued.
- b. Site management: partners are exploring options with grazing tenants for both cattle and pigs.
- c. Visitor management & sustainable tourism: partners and providers are being convened to develop an area Sustainable Tourism Strategy; an engagement programme is becoming more detailed and a heathland dwelling is being constructed on site (at Arne) by the Ancient Technology Centre.

3.5. **[Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative](#)**

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.

- a. The project has completed delivery. Overall project has:
 - Restored 6.5 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. A further 7.2ha of scrub clearance has taken place to improve the quality of existing species-rich grassland.
 - 2,155 metres of hedge laying have been completed, predominantly by hand with volunteers but 445 metres have been undertaken mechanically, trialling a cost-effective way of delivery.

- 129 hedgerow trees have been planted, again, mostly with the help of volunteers. Monitoring to ensure establishment has taken place.
- 72 Orchard trees have been planted.
- 8 ponds have been restored.
- 150m of river restoration is complete.
- Had a presence at one event: the well-established Melplash Show, after being asked by one of the landowners to attend.
- We have successfully established a wild daffodil nursery at Washingpool Farm to supplement future meadow restoration with locally grown plants.
- Dorset Environmental Records Centre are updating the monitoring report.
- 45 volunteer sessions with 635 attending totalling 3,235 hours.

3.6. [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

3.7. [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.
- c. The report is being finalised and will be shared shortly.
- d. 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 so far. Their concerns will form the basis of a State of the River Char report that will set out actions to tackle the main identified issues and threats. We hope to be able to start delivering on the ground action in Autumn 2021.

3.8. [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 cleared 12km of the upper Asker of Himalayan balsam and will repeat clearance work this coming summer / autumn.
- c. Due to the small size of the River Asker, there is a real chance that with concerted effort over the next couple of years, we could eradicate Himalayan balsam from the catchment.
- 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.

3.9. [Farming for the Nation](#)

- a. Background: The Dorset AONB is one of 12 AONBs that 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 was 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 was 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 until March 2021.
- b. Below is a summary of activity from the project:
 - Developed Strategic Landscape Plans for three areas in the Dorset AONB: the Brit Valley & Marshwood Vale, the Cerne & Sydling Downs, and south Purbeck.
 - From these three Strategic Landscape Plans, nine Farm Scale Plans were developed that went into more detail at a local scale.
 - We then tested these plans with a selection of 37 landowners through a series of farm walks and online discussions
 - In south Purbeck we also worked with a further 12 farmers to look at guidance and indicators for scrub management, farmland bird management and arable plant management.
- c. The main findings from this engagement were fed back to Defra. A summary follows:
 - Maps are a useful tool, a starting point for a discussion with a farmer. Maps need to be used alongside good advice from a trusted source.
 - Maps produced should use the best possible local data.
 - Checking and refining the maps with the input and co-operation from the farmer was seen as key to improving confidence in the process.
 - Collaboration amongst farmers was recognised as a critical part of future environmental land management. The Strategic Landscape Plans were recognised as a useful tool to help deliver this but would need trusted advisors to drive it forward.
 - Farm Scale Maps were recognised as being a helpful tool to guide environment land management decisions. They were less useful for smaller holdings compared to larger holdings, and for tenants rather than landowners. The maps require interpretation from a trusted advisor.
 - The maps did highlight the need for farmers to take account of their immediate surroundings and not just consider actions within the farm boundary.

- Species data is a useful addition to the Farm Scale Plans and would help drive collaboration.
- Farmers welcomed the opportunity to find their own, farm specific, response to delivering public goods. If management objectives were set at a landscape scale, farmers' local knowledge and expertise could be used to develop farm-specific actions and indicators.
- Annual flexibility is essential to be able to adapt and maintain delivery
- For many farmers, additional environmental data is helpful but needs incorporating into a single Farm Business Plan.

3.10. **ELM Advocacy**

- a. AONBs nationally received funding from Defra to undertake advocacy work for the new Environmental Land Management scheme set out in the Government's Agricultural Transition Plan (ATP). The National Association of AONBs held a webinar to update farmers on what we know and the options for navigating the transition between the old system of support and the new. Locally, we undertook a survey to find out farmers' readiness for the forthcoming changes, consulting NFU at an early stage and receiving help from NFU and other partners to disseminate the survey. We offered vouchers towards farm advice as an incentive and received feedback from 70 farmers representing a wide range of farm types and size and covering in total over 14,000ha or 13% of the AONB. The predominant view was that Defra's plan is still very much a 'work in progress' which provides financial detail on what will be lost (Direct Payments) but no financial detail on what will be available through the new support schemes. Headlines from the feedback include:
 - 50% of respondents said the loss of direct payments would have a serious impact on their business requiring major change; 20% said the impact could be so significant they might give up farming
 - 70% of respondents were already in agri-environment schemes
 - 40% of those who weren't had been put off by the bureaucracy, but 85% were nonetheless interested in learning more about the revised transitional scheme;
 - 20% had already diversified into commercial lets, direct sales, tourism, etc
 - 60% of respondents don't have an environmental adviser and 83% would welcome advice
 - Over 90% of respondents wished to stay in touch to hear about future opportunities for support from Dorset AONB
 - As a result of this work we are in touch with a greater number and wider range of farmers and look forward to supporting farmers to foster profitable and regenerative farming which sustains conserving and enhancing the AONB.
- b. The national project report is available [here](#).

3.11. **Triple Axe – the Axe catchment initiative**

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

- e. 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.
- f. 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.

3.12. [Dorset Food & Drink](#)

- a. Continued promotion of the sector online and social media. New DF&D website underway. Live by mid May 2021.
- b. Establishment of close partnership with the Dorset Farmers' Market (DFM) and roll-out of mini pop-up producers' markets across the county to give DF&D members more routes to market during lockdown and lockdown easing.
- 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
- 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 2020 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. Since the first lockdown, the appetite and support for local food and drink producers has increased and we continue to work on ways to meet that demand, shape an innovative offer and deliver a well thought out customer focused outcome.
- g. Pleased to report many Dorset Food and Drink members had success at the Great Taste Awards 2020 and in early 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.

3.13. [Wild Purbeck Partnership](#)

- a. The Wild Purbeck partnership continues to meet three times a year, to discuss projects related to the management of Purbeck.
- b. At the February meeting, the partnership was updated on the following projects: National Nature Reserve, Green Recovery Challenge fund, ELMS Test & Trial, Corfe Valley Vision, Downs LNR.
- c. 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 Purbecks Precious Past and Planet Purbeck
- d. Discussion centred around the following topics; Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and the potential for a catchment wide project, preliminary results from a PHD on Lulworth Skipper and management trials and projects south of the Purbeck Ridge and opportunities for collaborative working.
- e. 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.

3.14. Dorset Downs & Vales conservation group

In partnership with Natural England colleagues, a wider group of interested conservation partners has been convened with a view to establishing a conservation forum with a Dorset Downs & Vales geographical focus, to replicate the best of the Wild Purbeck Partnership. 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 MANAGEMENT PLAN CHAPTER “EXPLORING, UNDERSTANDING, ENGAGING”

3.15. Covid-19-related opportunities & demands

- a. Sally coordinated a Visitor Management meeting early March 2021 with stakeholders (including National Trust, Lulworth Estates, RSPB, Forestry England, DC and BCP, Cranborne Chase AONB, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Jurassic Coast Trust etc) to discuss preparedness for visitors post lockdown. This group is now acting as a sounding board for campaign work on visitor management.
- b. Sally has been heavily involved in a development and creation of a Summer Campaign which seeks to address some of the unwelcome behaviours seen in summer 2020, working with Dorset Council Comms and Visit Dorset. The campaign is due to be launched end May 2021. It will focus on positive and upbeat messages, to encourage responsible behaviour from visitors. Rather than preaching, telling people off or branding them as idiots, it will develop a collective sense of ownership of our amazing coast and countryside and use humour to get messages across. People have had enough of being told what they can't do; we want to show them what they can do. There will be short videos, static displays (e.g. in service stations on route to Dorset) and a wealth of social and online media friendly material for partners to use. We will be aiming to share the messages to as wide an audience as possible. Although we need to reach the new audiences who visited summer 2020, we also want there to be a legacy for this project, so we can build on it in future years. This has been funded by national government Covid Recovery fund - £120k total.
- c. Sally is also working with PeopleScape, behavioural change researchers based at Winchester University, to secure funding for a pilot project to monitor and evaluate the success or otherwise of the above campaign – i.e. has people's behaviour changed in a positive way? We are at final stage of bid submission to National Geographic Covid Science Fund for a fund of approx. £37k. The project would also look at the ecological and environmental impact of visitor behaviour patterns over the last 15 months.

3.16. [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. Delivery:

- a. Covid-19 has made us look at different ways in which to connect with people, creating resources that could outlive our current funding, below is some of these:
 - Picnic in the Parks – 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
 - A follow on Seasons of Stories Spring book has been created to assist connection to nature through poetry, conversation.

- We commissioned a storyteller, Martin Maudsley, to tell Dorset based landscape and folk inspired tales with Tom Hughes creating some captivating visuals. The popular history walks, led by Steve Wallis, are being converted into self led introductory history walk guides.
- b. Community Pot for catalysing change
- Bridport Community Health Champions awarded £1750 to improve an allotment site near the Medical Centre to make more inclusive e.g suitable for people with disabilities and people with mental health issues.
 - Angus Wood awarded £2000 to support for woodland management to ensure the woodland remains open for the community to access , Equipment & Promotion for Dementia friendly Woodland Breaks & Community engagement days
 - Let's Make It awarded £1380 to Pilot 6 weeks of seated exercises within a local park in Weymouth for free. Plus online training course for a volunteer to deliver seated exercise classes and professional to mentor the volunteer for a 6 weeks.
- c. Increasing Capacity - Over the last year we have been seeking additional funding to support new elements of SiN not currently funded and to grow the Health & Nature Dorset collaboration.
- d. HAND
- LGA – Shaping Places for Healthy Lives: through to the second round
 - Dorset LEP Investment Prospectus: possible further discussions
 - DEFRA - Green social prescribing: expression of interest – unfortunately not invited to next round
- e. SiN
- Sport England - Innovation Open Call (Nature Buddies): not invited to submit a full proposal
 - Arts Council - National Lottery Project Grants (Your Season of Stories): Awaiting decision
 - Thriving Communities Fund: Successful £50k in partnership with Arts Development/Active Dorset & Help & Care. Our part is to launch a Nature Buddies Network.
- f. **Developments: Nature Buddies**
- Part of the Thriving Communities Funded project looking at increasing opportunities for Social Prescribing using the Natural Environment. A Recent webinar was attended by 55 attendees from across the Health and Volunteer sector with a call to action to be involved.Over the next year SiN will recruit 30 trained Nature Buddies 6 providers signed up to NB network e.g. Help and Care, Age UK, GP surgeries.
- g. **Developments: HAND**
- Increasing the access to, use of and connection with greenspaces to support and enhance physical and mental wellbeing across Dorset. Work continues on building our network and investigating themes with an official launch of HAND planned for 13th May
- h. **Potential to begin group activities again.**
- SiN has been looking at the possibilities of delivering face to face activities with providers and we are cautiously moving forward at the moment in time in line with government advice and guidance.

3.17. [Visitor Management steering input](#)

- a. Sally was involved in interpretation, visitor welcome and access improvements at the Roman Town House in Dorchester. This work is completed and the site has reopened to the public.
- b. Sally is a board member of the Dorset Tourism Association representing Dorset AONB and the Jurassic Coast Trust. The Board continues to meet regularly, with the main focus now on industry recovery post Covid-19 and gearing up for the summer season.
- c. Sally continues to attend Litter Free Dorset / Litter Free Coast & Sea Working Group meetings and contributes and advises on visitor management and other issues
- d. Sally sits on the Purbeck Heaths Grazing Unit sustainable tourism sub group which is seeking to develop a Sustainable Tourism Plan for the Purbeck Heaths

3.18. [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.

3.19. [Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: West Bay signage](#)

Background: Coastal Communities funded project to reduce, rationalise and improve safety and community/ visitor interpretation in West Bay. £15,000

- a. Safety signs: 8 new signs installed at key beach access points. The new signs have combined information on them. They have received very positive feedback and other organisations (such as National Trust) keen to replicate. I even had a request for more details on this new style safety signage from Government of Queensland, Australia!
- b. Work to declutter additional signage in other locations in West Bay, including West Bay Road car park and play area, delayed due to other visitor management commitments

3.20. [Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Kimmeridge interpretation and access improvements](#)

- a. Background: partnership project with Dorset Wildlife Trust, Smedmore Estate, Dorset Coast Forum, Dorset Council, Natural England, MoD, and Etches Collection. Aim: 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.
- b. Access improvements completed by Dorset Countryside, and new 'swing-arm' interpretation in place on footpath between Bay and village
- c. 1st draft of new 2 panels underway; once design and content finalised with partners, hopefully installed mid June.

3.21. [Jurassic Coast visitor welcome: Fleet panels](#)

Discussions took place with Dorset Countryside and Ilchester Estate pre lockdown about replacing old and out of date panels along the Fleet. No progress as yet.

3.22. **Sustainable travel: Interpretation improvements and promotion**

No major progress due to public transport being discouraged during Covid; however, working with new Dorset Community Rail Partnership officer to replace old and faded Welcome to Jurassic Coast signs at Purbeck stations. Seeking to broaden the welcome to include AONB and NNR, so people really know they have arrived in a special landscape.

3.23. Dorset Rockfall and Landslip Protocol

Sally has been involved in giving advice on safety signage and messaging following a number of significant landslips along the Jurassic Coast spring 2021.

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

3.24. 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.lowcarbodorset.org.uk/>
- b. Summary of activity:
 - Received 481 applications for support
 - Awarded 125 grants totalling £2.8m
 - Supported 120 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)
 - £6.9m of investment in low-carbon projects in Dorset
 - An annual carbon reduction of 4,880 tonnes of CO₂e in Dorset
 - The installation of 4.4 MW of renewable energy capacity in Dorset
 - Improvements in the energy efficiency of 55 houses in Dorset
 - The development of 5 new low carbon products in Dorset
 - The reduction of energy used in public-sector buildings by 289,930 kwh/yr
- d. Programme updates:
 - Three new posts recruited to the Low Carbon Dorset team:
 - Programme Manager: Heather Kiel
 - Sustainable Energy Technical Officer: Matthew Peukert
 - Project Support Officer: Beth Barnard-Irons
 - Programme interim evaluation completed in Jan 21 (executive summary and summary graphic attached showing key findings of interim report)
 - New case study web page – 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.lowcarbodorset.org.uk/case-studies/>

3.25. **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 March 2021
- c. To date there have been 20 projects that have been formally offered grant funds (not including 2 'In Principle'). Nine of these are now complete.
- d. Grants awarded were for a total of 2 projects (1 met the Access pillar and the other Biodiversity)
 - Currendon footpath (£2,106) for the creation and improvement of off-road access.
 - Securing Purbeck's precious Past (£3,421.20) to develop a project focused on veteran trees and securing the ancients in our landscape through collecting seed, growing sapling and citizen science recording.
- e. Development of a project that will focus on invasive plant species is underway and additional support for the 'in principle' projects with Dorset Council to improve and create cycle routes from Nordon Park.

ITEM 4: 2020-2021 PROVISIONAL PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTS

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		

4.1. 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	£ 180,352	£ 179,152
Dorset Council	£ 54,500	£ 54,500
Earned income / other grant	£ 15,407	£ 5,384
TOTAL	£ 250,259	£ 239,035

Core costs	Budget	Actual
Staff, ENI, Pens,	£ 225,959	£ 211,024
Travel	£ 4,800	£ 334
Training	£ 2,500	£ 749
Accommodation & Office	£ 7,000	£ 5,006
Partnership PR	£ 5,000	£ 4,240
AONB 60th projects	£ -	£ 12,570
Partnership Running Costs	£ 3,000	£ 3,363
Monitoring, research & guidance	£ 2,000	£ 1,750
TOTAL	£ 250,259	£ 239,035

4.2. **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	£ 111,225	£ -	£ 111,225	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 111,225	Wytch Farm Landscape Enhancement Fund
	SDR	£ 1,928	£ -	£ 1,928	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,928	Project reserve
	Community Woodlands	£ 1,000	£ -	£ 1,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,000	Project reserve
	LEI - Marshwood	£ 61,507	£ -	£ 61,507	£ 4,920	£ 300	£ 5,220	£ 66,727	National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative
	LEI – Ridgeway	£ 48,510	£ -	£ 48,510	£ 6,860	£ 10,350	£ 17,210	£ 65,720	National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative
	Rural Roads - AONB	£ 2,457	£ 2,457	£ -	£ 8,000	£ 10,000	£ 18,000	£ 20,457	Volunters & Parish Councils
	Local food	£ 29,181	£ 29,181	£ -	£ 26,784	£ 2,000	£ 28,784	£ 57,965	Dorset Food & Drink CIC
	Stepping into Nature	£ 81,368	£ 7,000	£ 74,368	£ 13,700	£ 8,625	£ 22,325	£ 103,693	Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
	Visitor management	£ 25,555	£ 7,000	£ 18,555	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 25,555	Dorset Council
	Rivers	£ 11,692	£ -	£ 11,240	£ 10,288	£ 450	£ 10,738	£ 22,430	Coastal Communities Fund
	ELMS	£ 43,728	£ -	£ 43,728	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 43,728	Environment Agency
	GRCF Hills & Vales	£ 153	£ -	£ 153	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 153	Green Recovery Challenge Fund
	GRCF Purbeck Heaths	£ 9,542	£ -	£ 9,542	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 9,542	Green Recovery Challenge Fund
	loD 2020 / 2021	£ 8,000	£ 8,000	£ -	£ 5,000	£ 1,000	£ 6,000	£ 14,000	Arts Council via Activate PA
	Env Compensation	£ 1,080	£ -	£ 1,080	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,080	S106
Sustainable Development Fund	£ 14,648	£ 14,648	£ -	£ 52,035	£ 8,065	£ 60,100	£ 74,748	Grant recipient match funds	
TOTAL	£ 451,576	£ 68,286	£ 382,838	£ 127,587	£ 40,790	£ 168,377	£ 619,953		

ITEM 6: FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES (verbal update)

ITEM FOR	Information	REPORT BY	AONB Manager
SUMMARY	<p>First presented in the Agricultural Transition Plan, this is a new Defra-origin fund to be managed by AONB partnerships and National Park Authorities in this financial year and the coming two.</p> <p>The fund is to support farmers, landowners/managers and other potential applicants to deliver more for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate – <i>supporting the delivery of net zero through nature and nature-based solutions to help communities mitigate and adapt to climate change</i> • Nature – <i>supporting their leading role in the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network and achieving the Government’s commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030,</i> • People – <i>providing a natural health service that will improve the nation’s public health and wellbeing through increased access to nature across all parts of society, as part of our green recovery</i> • Place – <i>supporting these landscapes as centres of excellence and green innovation that are flourishing places to live and work, each with a strong identity and cultural heritage, and high recognition as attractive visitor destinations.</i> <p>The national total available fund for this financial year is around £25M; each protected landscape organisation will be offered an allocation which has been calculated according to various agricultural and demographic factors. This will come with an allowance which can be spent on administrative and project liaison costs (including new staff).</p> <p>The AONB team will manage an application process using national templates; decisions will be made by a Local Assessment Panel; funding agreements will be issued by the team.</p>		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Teams are likely to receive notice of their allocations are expected before the Board Meeting date.		

ITEM 7: ART IN THE LANDSCAPE: connecting people to nature through art and culture

ITEM FOR	Decision	REPORT BY	AONB Team
SUMMARY	With support from the AONB network, the NAAONB has commissioned and adopted the ' Arts in the Landscape Strategy: connecting people to nature through art and culture '. Each AONB is invited to adopt the Strategy as an indication of the joint commitment to deepen and diversify how we engage people in our protected areas through the arts. While the potential for this activity is extensive, particular note should be made of the opportunity to connect people to nature through art, such as enhancing the delivery and impact of Nature Recovery activity. This joint commitment will be powerful and effective at local, regional and national level, taking us further than we could get individually.		
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Voluntary contributions will be requested by NAAONB		
RECOMMENDATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The AONB Board adopts the Arts in the Landscape Strategy and participates in coordinated national and local action resulting from the Strategy. 2. The AONB Board is 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 uses arts to help join up its work in nature recovery and the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. 		

7.1. Background

- a. A national strategy has been created by the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) to galvanise action that enables people to experience a deeper connection to the natural beauty of the landscape through the arts.
- b. The Art in The Landscape Strategy was formally adopted at the NAAONB Annual General Meeting in November 2020 and all AONBs are invited to adopt the Strategy and participate in coordinated national and local action resulting from it. The Strategy helps the AONB Network achieve its Colchester Declaration aims, and those of Glover's National Landscape Review around:
 - Engaging with a wider and more diverse audience
 - Helping people to create deeper connections to nature, place and landscape
 - Inspiring pro-environmental behaviour to tackle the conjoined ecological and climate emergency
- c. The Art in the Landscape Strategy helps focus future delivery of art activity, collectively within the AONB family as well as locally. It also shows Arts Council England and other funders that the NAAONB and the AONB Network are committing

7.2. Relevance to Dorset AONB

- a. Dorset AONB's Special Qualities include the rich legacy of cultural associations with place. Such cultural associations past, present and future, offer a source of inspiration to us all and may help develop new ways of understanding and managing the AONB. The Dorset landscape continues to attract artists, writers and musicians to visit and live, with over 3% employment in the creative industries in Dorset.
- b. Through signing up to the [Colchester Declaration](#), the Dorset AONB Partnership are committed to actively engaging in nature recovery work This is happening through national and local strategic collaborations and practically for example through work in the Purbeck Heaths and West Dorset, currently funded by the Landscape Enhancement Initiatives and the Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

- c. Dorset AONB has had at least 10 years' experience of working with artists and arts organisations and has developed a good reputation for creating meaningful engagements with the landscape as well as exploring creative approaches to land management. For this Art in the Landscape initiative, Sue Dampney has been involved in the national Steering Group; Tom Munro has provided advice and contributed to the successful national training programme and Kate Townsend has received the free Art in the Landscape training.

7.3. Art in the Landscape Strategy Development

- a. The 'National Moment' in 2019, supported by Poet Laureate Simon Armitage with '[Fugitives](#)', presented the NAAONB with a high-profile stage to make an ambitious '[Art in the Landscape Statement of Intent](#)' - a commitment to engaging people with nature through the arts.
- b. Following this statement of intent, NAAONB resourced the development of the strategy with grant support from Arts Council England (ACE) and contributions from the AONB network. Activate Performing Arts were commissioned to:
 - Consult with AONB teams with different levels of experience in delivering arts and culture projects, importantly hearing from those who have not yet delivered major projects.
 - Research good practice from the three land guardians: National Trust, Forestry England and Canal & Rivers Trust who have Memorandums of Understanding with Arts Council England.
 - Consult with senior officers from Arts Council England and other agencies.
 - Deliver a training programme for the AONB members to offer insight into working with the arts and develop confidence in the teams.
 - Produce the Arts in the Landscape Strategy to provide direction for the NAAONB and AONB Network

7.4. Strategy Vision & Aims are detailed below, the full Strategy can be found on the [NAAONB website](#).

- a. To connect people to nature and the natural beauty of the AONBs – increasing creativity, wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviour.
- b. To challenge perceptions of access to the landscape in order to diversify engagement
- c. To broker new trusted relationships with the arts and cultural sector to co- create new programmes.
- d. To celebrate the existing creativity in the AONB teams and the local community.
- e. To work with arts and culture to understand and directly address the climate emergency and nature recovery.
- f. To welcome provocations and questions in exploring ways that arts can change perceptions.
- g. To inspire ambition by sharing exemplary projects of all scales.
- h. To capture the public's imagination through engaging them in creative responses to the landscape.
- i. To raise the profile of the landscape and the AONBs and the purpose of the AONB teams.
- j. To lever in resources and relationships at all levels for an ambitious programme.

7.5. Art in the Landscape Strategy: Summary of Recommendations

- a. Adopt the National Arts Strategy
 - The process of developing the Strategy was grounded in the consultation across the network. A nationally and locally endorsed strategy will have strong currency in discussions with external agencies, both national agencies such as government and funders and locally with partners, arts and cultural organisations.
- b. Deliver a National Creative Projects Programme

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan	Purbeck Local Plan (currently at examination)	North Dorset Local Plan Part 1
Five-year Land Supply – 4.93 years – the Presumption applies	Five-year Land Supply – 5.32 years	Five-year Land Supply – 3.3 years – the Presumption applies
Housing Delivery Test – 109%	Housing Delivery Test – 74% – the Presumption applies	Housing Delivery Test – 59% – the Presumption applies

3. Implications for decision making

Where the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ applies, local policies relating to housing supply must be regarded as out of date and cannot be given as much weight in decisions.

This means that development that is outside the settlement boundary, within an area subject to a local protection policy, or contrary to the detail of a local plan site allocation policy, may have to be allowed. If the council does not apply this approach then it will lose these cases on appeal.

A greater degree of weight may be given to the local policies where a plan area is very close to having a five-year housing land supply.

There is also additional protection where there is a three-year housing land supply and a neighbourhood plan that was made (adopted) in the last two years applies.

While the presumption means that local policies can be given less weight in decisions, it does not mean that all developments must be allowed regardless of harm. National policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues to be a material consideration in making decisions. This includes protection for a range of national designations including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. And the presumption is one in favour of ‘sustainable’ development: where the impact would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, development should still be refused.

4. Implications for the AONB

The NPPF sets out that even where the presumption applies, development should not be permitted if the application of certain of its policies, which protect areas or assets of particular importance, provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. These policies are listed in footnote 6 to paragraph 11 of the NPPF and include the protection of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Heritage Coast and a range of other areas. Where the presumption applies, national AONB policy is still an important consideration in decisions even if the wording of local AONB policies cannot be given as much weight.

Paragraph 172 of the NPPF states that *‘great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- a) *The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, on the local economy;*
- b) *The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.’*

While local policies carry less weight when the area does not have a five-year housing land supply or has failed the housing delivery test, there remains a strong basis in national policy against which any applications affecting the AONB can be assessed