



Dorset AONB Partnership  
Hosted by Dorset Council  
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## Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – Committee Room 1, County Hall, Dorchester

The meeting will start at 10.00 am sharp; the 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](mailto:kate.townsend@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

### AGENDA

Chairman's welcome, introduction & apologies

1. Minutes of the last meeting
2. Statement of commitment from AONB Chairs on Climate Action – **for adoption**
3. Delivering the AONB Management Plan: team activity, featuring Farming in Protected Landscapes the Purbeck Heaths Grazing Unit & Greening West Dorset
4. **Partner Presentation:** Dorset Council Climate & Ecological Emergency plan – update (Wendy Carmichael)
5. **Partner Presentation:** Engaging Communities in Climate Action (Tom Clarke)
6. 2020-2021 AONB Partnership accounts
7. Landscapes Review consultation
8. **Partner Presentation:** Dorset Peatland Partnership – for support (Grace Herve)
9. **Partner Presentation:** Rights of Way Improvement Plan – update (Tara Hansford)
10. Partners' 2-minute updates

### Proposed dates of next meetings:

Dates of next meetings

	Winter (agreed)	Spring (tbc)
<b>AONB Steering Group</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>AONB Partnership Board</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2023

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: Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Tues. 23rd November 2021 by Zoom

### Board attendance:

Organisation	Representative	Status	2021-11
Independent chairman	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Council for the Protection of Rural	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	
Dorset Council	Cllr Ray Bryan	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Cllr Jane Somper	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Natural History &	Jeremy Pope OBE DL	Voting member	Apologies
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	Present
Forestry Commission	Roly Boughton	Voting member	Present
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	Apologies
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	Apologies
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	Present
Purbeck Heritage Network	Brian Bleese	Attending member	Present
Dorset Council	Matt Reeks	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business	Elliot Hutt	Supporting Officer	Present
National Farmers' Union	Louise Stratton	Supporting Officer	Present
LAF	Janet Davis	Supporting Officer	Present

**DAONB Team:** Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Jill Hearing (Reconnecting the Ridgeway Project Officer), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Caroline Kelly (Wild Purbeck Project Coordinator), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Sue Dampney (Culture, Communications & Learning Officer), Ian Rees (Countryside Officer), Rachel Janes (FIPL Officer), Emma Russell (FIPL Support Officer), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

**Guests:** Chris Clark, Nethergill Associates

### Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, with particular welcome to our guest and new board members.

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

The minutes of the meeting held in May 2021 were agreed as correct. No matters arising.

### 2. The Agricultural Transition: opportunity or crisis? Presentation by Chris Clark, Nethergill Associates

Link to [PowerPoint here](#) and [live presentation](#)

Chris has been appointed as a consultant to look at the business model of 4 farms in the DAONB (around the Char Valley) as part of the River Char Community Project, to report how they can farm at both maximum profitability and maximum value to nature. Chris explained how his research into around 100 farms nationally has uncovered that the conventional model of farming is failing, and how unlike the traditional business model farmers have been using, his research has found that there is a sweet spot in which farming and nature coincide to their mutual benefit. This symbiotic relationship is explained through the laws of physics (thermodynamics) – you cannot get more out than you put in, in other words the greater the level of substitutes for nature (e.g. fertiliser) the greater the likelihood of becoming a loss-making business. In all farming businesses there is a Maximum Sustainable Output (MSO), a sweet spot at which land and nature are in equilibrium, working best for both farmer and nature.

Comments:

- a. WBond: queries the correctness of the terminology ‘maximum biodiversity’ (perhaps it’s where the nature benefits are being extracted at a renewable rate?); it’s not in line with current re-wilding trend (ultimate bio-diversity objective). Aside from this the whole concept makes sense, particularly to those with some training in agricultural economics. CClark – nature is under stress unless there is an equilibrium (4 laws of thermodynamics, related to farming & nature), any equilibrium must include calculation of energy in the aim to achieve the right balance between farming and nature. We must factor the science into our calculations.
- b. PBowyer: no reference to price? The model considers variable costs as opposed to marginal /extra costs as these are key to profitability. CClark if you analyse MSO you are at the most profitable. Marginal costs only work with a non-linear relationship.
- c. KCalder: current growth model for market economy is not sustainable, regarding MSO nature has adapted to life over the last 4 billion years, nature changed due to evolution, introduce humans and that has an impact on energy flow. We can’t change energy, we can harvest it, but does it equate to maximum biodiversity at the point you are adding in a relationship by farming? I think there may be a cost. I’m not sure if MSO does maximise biodiversity– mother nature does, not necessarily farming so I need to think more about this. Very helpful primer. CClark - Nature decides, it acts in a random way, if we as a society require food it is behoven on us to produce it in a sustainable way, nature has created an equilibrium. In farming changes have been incremental, we have to change the output at any cost approach.
- d. RTarr: How do we persuade people the way forward is as you suggest? We also need to bear in mind public access to the countryside and benefits of this, the footpath network in Dorset is excellent but neglected. CClark – by using business terms and illustrating that this is the way to maximum profitability. There should be a moral obligation on farms to understand fertiliser costs cannot be re-couped at the other end.

PSterling: thanks to Chris for a stimulating presentation into what the future may look like, for inspiring debate, thought provoking and we look forward to receiving your report.

### 3. Partners’ 90 second updates

- a. JDavis (Local Access Forum): assisting DC with ROW improvement plan. Urge DWT/NT/RSPB etc to speak to LAF about public access to the c-side. Thanks to Cllr Tarr for comments on ROW.
- b. KCalder (Environment Agency): involved in de-commission on Winfrith at a strategic level and where it sits in the Dorset Landscape. In Wessex EA looking at future priorities of which headwaters are a major focus – a pilot catchment strategy for Dorset Stour highlights a clear area of need is

- headwaters and similar issue for 4 different catchments so have adopted a Heart of Wessex programme - will be advertising a new position for a Project Manager & working on project funding. Will be working with partners such as NT etc.
- c. WBond (CLA): at a national level industry looking at alternatives to conventional agriculture, eg payments for biodiversity, investment money into biodiversity/ renewables etc as opposed to crop production. In Dorset adapting to change – FIPL, Poole Harbour Nitrate scheme. The industry is in transition. PSterling: lots of change happening within farming, may take years, a good time for entrepreneurs. WBond: even generations for change to be absorbed.
  - d. EHutt (CLA): busy with member enquiries on topics such as ELMS, access, planning. Nationally - lobbying net zero, levelling up & agri-transition / ELMS. New president elected.
  - e. RLloyd (NE): locally CS agreement lists for start dates 1<sup>st</sup> Jan and in HLS extension period, need to set up a Dorset Downs & Dales meeting soon – will arrange with TM. Ian Alexander moved onto work on Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Tania Kaplin taking over from him as a Team Leader. Ian will be concentrating on p-ship working. Cattle grids installed for Wild Purbeck grazing project on Hartland Moor/Stoborough Heath, tomorrow farmer cluster meeting at Gorwell farm, look around Valley of Stones etc to get NGOs and farmers together to see what can be done. TMunro: Gorwell Farm cluster supported through FIPL.
  - f. HJefferson (NT): winter c-side team busy out and about, recently 4 hillforts taken off heritage at risk register, exciting new acquisition, 25ha Hayden Down nr. Eggardon, includes some SSSI & 2 scheduled ancient monuments at risk.
  - g. RTarr (DC): encouraged by Keith’s comments, concerned about source of River Wey & pollution (EA project) and wants to be kept informed, concerned about DAONB Management Plan being ignored in planning applications, some counter to policy and the plan, and would like all organisations/consultees here to state they should be refused categorically if in the AONB. AONB team are doing fantastic work.
  - h. LStratton (NFU): In Dorset – focus on transition plan work and resilience events for farmers looking ahead in their businesses, Supporting Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Scheme, increasing information and looking at next steps and a pilot in the new year. Fresh from COP26 a Senior Climate Change advisor is visiting, also building a group of farmers involved in SLI and coordinating a response.
  - i. RBoughton (FC): new to role, focus on felling licences and ash die back, lots of site visits and meetings and very happy to be invited to meetings, in particular clusters.
  - j. GDickinson (CPRE): AONB continues to be undervalued in planning terms.
  - k. PBwyer (DAPTC): Amongst Town & Parish Councils there is a growing concern about the Dorset Local Plan and the no. of houses indicated for allocation in the AONB. It is felt that there is an inadequate approach by DC in its protective role of the AONB, the vast majority of Town and Parish Council want to see AONB designation adhered to and the prevention of development as opposed to mitigation measures. Concerned how bodies are promoting the use of SANGS. This morning’s presentation raised some serious economic issues and would be useful to continue discussion on another occasion. Purbeck Society have a register of non-listed heritage assets, buildings and assets outside of conservation area which could be used by DC & promoted.

#### **4. Delivering the AONB Management Plan**

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

##### **Sue Dampney (Engagement projects)**

Recent projects have seen a greater engagement amongst children & young adults, ‘[The Council of All Beings](#)’ involved 200 children, ‘[Beyond the Map](#)’ (a Parish Mapping project) reached out to 200 residents & children, an on-line ‘Map’ will be produced in the New Year, at ‘[Talking Tent](#),’ held in person at Inside Out

Dorset festival at Symondsburry, 350 conversations were generated. Some of these will be published in an online 'Talking Map' on the DAONB website in the New Year, when in addition there will be a Social Media promotional campaign about these projects, along with the publication of a new 60 Days Out guide.

### **Rachel Janes (Farming in Protected Landscapes)**

FIPL has received approx. 100 applications to date, 16 of which are now live.

Some examples of projects which have benefitted from the fund so far include:

- £5000 fencing project near Plush to enable sensitive grazing of chalk grassland slopes to protect and encourage a resident population of Marsh Fritillary / Duke of Burgundy butterflies
- £500 to Coppett Hill Farm towards the facilities for a Forest School, to enable Symondsburry Primary School to give all pupils
- £60,000 to a farm near Dorchester to plant 3.6km of hedging and support permissive bridleways between Martinstown and Winterborne Monkton and enabling access from southeast Dorchester to the AONB around Coneygar Hill.

Contact details for the team are on the [AONB website](#) if you would like further information.

### **Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature)** – Link to [live presentation](#)

Steph explained how the team are currently working on a new off shoot project – 'Your Seasons of Stories.' The concept for this new project is inspired by the 'Your Seasons...' books. 500 books have been given out so far, they are full of stories, poems & images to help prompt conversations and stimulate memories of seasons past. In this new project, funded by Arts Council England, they are asking people to create their own Seasons of Stories based on their own reflections of what nature means to them.

They have recruited artists, storytellers, poets and a videographer to co-facilitate the first phase of project which will explore how everyone can be artists in everyday life via a series of 20 workshops, each delivered to different community groups. The culmination of the project will be a new 'creative resource' which will be accompanied by 5 'might do' videos.

Copies of this final resource will be available in May 2022.

Comments:

RTarr: Fantastic work by the team – pleased to hear Elliott Hutt's comments on public access. Excited by the Symondsburry example (cycling facilities etc) and how the rural economy can be developed by public access and the importance of cycling.

IRees: We've had 101 enquiries into FIPL, lots about access improvements, it's an area of interest from the farming community.

RTarr: Could the Ward Councillor be notified or any access enhancement projects. IRees – Yes we will notify them.

### **5. AONB Business Plan budget headlines 2022-2023 (decision)**

TM presented the paper. The proposed budget is based on a flatline settlement. TM explained how the National Association for AONB's have made a strong case for an increased annual settlement from DEFRA, in light of their spending review announcement last month. PS encouraged board members to think of how increased funds could be used were this to happen.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

**The Board approves the proposed budget and funding priorities for next financial year.**



### ITEM 3: DELIVERING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

<b>ITEM FOR</b>	Information	<b>REPORT BY</b>	AONB Team
<b>SUMMARY</b>	The AONB team is leading, coordinating, promoting and supporting delivery of the actions and intent of the AONB Management Plan as the central part of its core duties and through specific projects.		
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	Delivery based on agreed budget and business plan.		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	The Board approves and notes the progress made towards delivering the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024		

#### CORE WORK

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

2021-22 has seen an increase in the number of consultations received, with the total for the year being 205. Although this number includes an increasing number of minor applications, which require a limited response, there have also been a relatively high number of large and complex cases arising in the past year. Some trends within the consultations are summarised below:

- a. There have been numerous consultations for solar energy development, including a number of large proposals in the setting of the designated area.
- b. Housing development remains significant issue, with both allocated sites progressing to application stage and speculative proposals being considered, particularly when the council has been unable to demonstrate a 5-years housing land supply.
- c. There has been substantial interest to maintain/enhance tourism ventures that have been successful during the pandemic, including changing the use of agricultural land to seasonal campsites and expanding/diversifying existing sites to provide upgraded facilities.
- d. There have been numerous consultations regarding the management of woodlands, many of which relate to the presence of ash die-back.

##### 3.2. **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
  - Dorset Catchment 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

##### 3.3. **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.

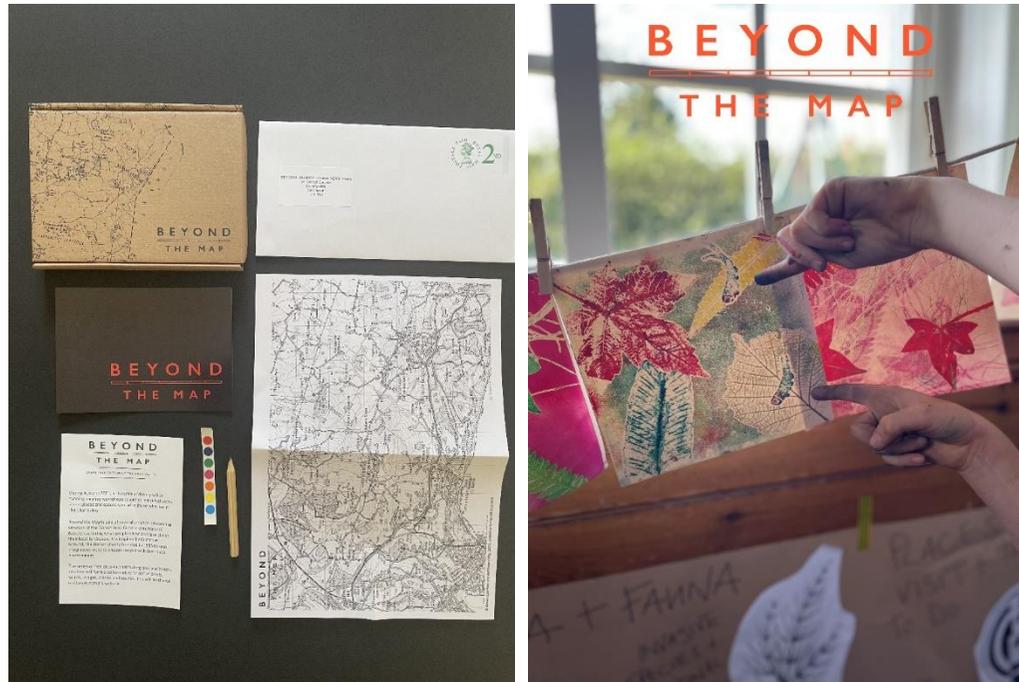
- b. Tom is also one of 3 AONB Managers who together with the NAAONB chief executive represent AONBs in a ‘close contact group’ with Defra’s Protected Landscapes Team. This group is a sounding board for development of the Glover Review recommendations; it has closed but required significant input over FY21-22.
- c. Tom is 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 and maintenance of 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. This sub-group is referred to in item 2.
- 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. Further work with the NAAONB includes the Communications Group and participation in the Defra EDI and Management Plan Consultation Workshops.

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

A significant programme of engagement activity was given support by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Dorset AONB. As a face-to-face engagement programme this was heavily impacted by Covid but we were delighted to deliver the projects in 2021-22. In signing off the final evaluation and claim, our NLHF officer wrote ‘I’m so pleased the project went so well and it has had such positive feedback. Many congratulations to you and the team for delivering the project so successfully especially in what has been very challenging times’. Work undertaken in 2021-22 included:

- a. Talking Tent: The Talking Tent project was based on pitching an interactive Tent at community & countryside events around Dorset to capture what people feel about the landscape; past present and future. Of all the 60th anniversary projects, this was perhaps one of the most hardest hit as relied entirely on events to be running and for 1:1 close contact between the artists who curated the Tent and the public. Due to roll out from Easter 2020, we delayed the Tent to 2021-22 hoping that public events would be running by then but there were very few and the public were still very reticent to come into close contact. By re-inventing the Tent online, as a pop up at countryside sites and through covid-safe Walk-shops, we were able to engage 479 people at just 7 events. During these 65 short audio clips have been gathered adding to the 8 1:1 longer interviews recorded with the help of Common Ground. At the events we were able to attend, the Talking Tent was very well received and we are looking at how we can pitch up at future events as opportunities and resources arise. [Find out more about the project.](#)
- a. Council of All Beings: This schools-facing project to explore and celebrate Dorset’s outstanding landscape was also seriously impacted by the pandemic, with schools closing in the Spring term just as the first approaches had been made. By delaying and re-working the project for 2021-22, the workshops were all held outdoors to be covid-safe and a total of 208 pupils and 24 staff and carers were engaged. The artist activities were repurposed into 8 short films to inspire exploration of different types of wildlife and these are backed up with 8 sets of lesson plans linked to the English KS2 curriculum and a map of sites where schools can do field studies. These resources were tested by the schools taking part in the workshop programme and we plan to promote these further to schools over the coming years once the school community is ready to embrace a wider range of activities once again. [Find out more about this project.](#)
- b. Love Maps, renamed Beyond the Map: We know from experience that people’s connection with place and the objects, ideas and stories within it, is frequently more emotional, and engaging people intellectually doesn’t bring out or explore those deeper, meaningful connections. This project built on the concept of Parish Mapping but was more about the process than a specific piece of creative product. Printmaker Emma Molony was commissioned for

this project and chose the 4 communities of the Char Valley to work with. Keen to reach as wide a cross section of the community as possible, Emma delivered a range of creative activities to encourage residents to share what they felt was special about the landscape around them. A total of 250 people were engaged through 14 free public workshop events held in villages halls throughout the valley together, 5 workshops at Charmouth school and activity boxes were posted to residents (delayed til autumn 2021 to be covid-viable). An online interactive map has been created bringing together some of the artwork from the events and giving a good picture of what local people love about their landscape. Notes and transcripts from conversations have also been documented and these give us useful evidence of what people value, which will help shape conservation projects in the future.



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

- a. The Dorset AONB has been chosen as 1 of just 20 AONBs and National Parks to host a [Green Space Dark Skies](#) event, part of a national project managed by Walk the Plank. Reaching out to people who don't regularly visit the countryside, preparations have been underway over the winter and spring for a large-scale event (1000 participants) on June 11th 2022, managed by Activate Performing Arts. As well as supporting Activate when heritage expertise as needed, the Dorset AONB is preparing a programme of events for June & July so participants can continue their journey of exploration into the landscape over the summer. Partnership Board members are welcome to join in this unique and free event, taking place at dusk near Dorchester.
- a. Dorset Magazine continues to support us, we have had a page dedicated to the Dorset AONB in each issue and further page spreads have covered different topics such as seasonal explore guides and highlighting specific projects.

- b. Regular e-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.
- b. Additional financial support from Defra was awarded in December 2021, used for strategic support for our communication activity and included social media strategy, campaigns assets and updated equipment for face to face activities.
- c. Social media following
  - 9,400 (+161) Twitter followers @DorsetAONB; 3655 followers on Facebook and 1495 followers on Instagram.

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

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

Background: Greening West Dorset’s Hills & Vales, funded by the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF), was delivered during April 2021 to March 2022 in partnership with Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC), Dorset Wildlife Trust, FWAG South West, Litter Free Dorset and National Trust. The landscape enhancement targets, scaling up existing delivery through Dorset Rivers and Landscape Enhancement initiative projects, were met or exceeded within the agreed budget:

- 6ha lowland meadow restored using plants and seed of local provenance
  - 868m existing hedgerow laid and restored (against target of 100m)
  - 1690m new hedgerow planted, including traditional ‘casting up’ to create a bank prior to planting
  - 70 hedgerow oaks planted (against target of 24)
  - 36 orchard trees planted (including on former orchard sites)
  - 11 ponds restored (clearing encroaching scrub, raising tree canopy)
  - Invasive non-native species controlled on 1 pond (Parrot’s feather) and 12km riverbank (Himalayan balsam)
  - 600m of River Asker and River Char restored (against target of 250m) - opening up tree canopy and protecting banks from further erosion
  - Natural flood management interventions undertaken at 5 locations in River Asker and River Char headwaters (laying trees into the river and its tributaries to slow the flow and reduce flood risk and severity downstream)
  - Access improvements completed at Kingcombe National Nature Reserve, including new signs and interpretation boards as well as restored infrastructure (boardwalk, bridge, benches)
  - 5 community litter action plans completed, engaging 110 participants directly in the active development and delivery of interventions to encourage positive behaviours and pride in place
  - 2 river catchment action plans developed engaging 273 people
  - Surveys and management statements completed for 10 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
  - Monitoring data collected and report completed by DERC
- a. Total project value: £237k (£214k funding via GRCF with £23k match funding from LEI projects, and additional volunteer time of over 130 days).

### **3.7. [Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve](#)**

Following the ‘super NNR’ declaration in 2020, the NNR Partnership of seven landowners have adopted a site management plan.

- a. The AONB Manager chairs the partnership; its function being to implement the management plan.

- b. Natural England's senior site manager leads the management planning process on behalf of all partners; further plans for fire and deer management have been compiled.
- c. The most significant delivery in the NNR is covered in the next item - the Wilder Grazing Unit.

### 3.8. [Purbeck Heaths Wilder Grazing unit](#)

- a. A bid to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund was successful in September 2020; match funded by the Wytch Farm Landscape Fund and the Heathland Mitigation Fund. The majority of delivery on the work programme happened in FY2021-2122; the GRCF element closed in Mar '22.
- b. Aims:
  - to create a single grazing unit of 1370ha for wilder grazing by cattle, ponies and pigs
  - engage the local community
  - work with local tourism providers to develop a sustainable tourism plan
- c. Financial governance: Dorset Council acted as accountable body and fund-holder (as host to DAONB); signatory partners were RSPB and National Trust; Natural England provided a key supporting role.
- d. Full project budget:
  - TOTAL SPEND: £867,629.94 (£857,821.93 in FY21-22)
  - GRCF income: £549,900.00
  - WFLF income: £261,009.07
  - HMF income: £56,720.87
- e. Management governance: The AONB Manager chaired the project steering group, as a sub-group of the NNR Partnership. Attending the steering group were the chairs of delivery sub-groups for Infrastructure (including Dorset highways), Land Agency, Engagement, Sustainable Tourism and Ecological Monitoring.
- f. There were 4 main elements to the project:
  - Infrastructure: install 7 highway cattle grids and two domestic cattle grids, erect approximately 20km perimeter fencing and dig XXX boundary ditch to secure the unit into which cattle, ponies and pigs would be introduced to graze together. This also required significant land agent work to ensure this was compliant with biosecurity and agri-environment rules and future grants were not jeopardised as well as creating new grazing agreements for 3 separate graziers. Alongside this, we committed to rationalising roadside parking and informal access to the heaths (providing more parking areas in lower impact areas; roadside ditching to restrict parking elsewhere).
  - Sustainable economy: work with local tourism partners to create a Sustainable Tourism Plan for the Purbeck Heaths as a whole
  - Community: work with local communities on an engagement programme
  - Monitoring: establishing an ecological baseline to monitor changes and adapt management accordingly
- g. Infrastructure headlines:
  - Highway boundary: 7 highway cattle grids (with associated bypass routes) and two domestic cattle grids were installed; one highway grid was decommissioned. All grids have an advisory speed limit. The new highways grids required the bypass routes to be dedicated as public highway; a commuted sum was included for long-term maintenance by Dorset Council and the infrastructure was formally adopted on the 23rd March 2022.
  - Agricultural boundary: approximately 20km perimeter fencing was erected or adapted to be pig proof with numerous associated gates; 2 km boundary ditch was dug/restored. 7.3km internal fencing was decommissioned.

- Roadside access to the heaths: informal parking areas were along the Arne-Norden road were rationalised: larger areas created at less sensitive sites; restricted by 8km roadside ditching at more sensitive locations.
  - Footbridge installed at 3 barrows to facilitate pedestrian access to Stoborough heath.
- h. Sustainable economy headlines:
- Over a series of workshops, local tourism businesses worked with the conservation sector, community representatives and landowners to co-create a sustainable tourism plan, downloadable from the Purbeck Heaths website here. This was launched at a public event.



- i. Community headlines:
- Engagement included the building of a Heathland Dwelling at RSPB Arne by Ancient Technology Centre (ATC), with linked heritage events held and scope for future such events, eg 'Iron Age' weekend held August Bank Holiday 2021 (approx 300 attendees)
  - Purbeck Heaths week held 20-26 September 2021 included engagement activities for young people and adults
  - An online visitor information hub was created at [www.purbeckheaths.org.uk](http://www.purbeckheaths.org.uk); site information for visitors was updated and new interpretation boards erected at 14 sites across the NNR; a new leaflet was created
  - 8 x Brown 'NNR' signs erected at key access points across the NNR
- j. Monitoring headlines:
- Full refresh of site habitat mapping including a new priority habitats map, 750ha grazing unit surveyed by drone-mounted sensors
  - 34 priority / indicator species were identified for long-term monitoring of the effects of grazing regime change; all 2015-2021 records for these species were collated and mapped
  - Historical grazing records from 1995-2018 were summarised and mapped; current grazing preference areas were mapped using GPS collars
  - Future monitoring plan agreed including more cattle GPS collars, trail cameras, futured drone survey and resurvey of 79 fixed quadrats

- Survey schedule agreed for 13 species requiring full distribution mapping; 46 fixed sample points agreed (36 20x20 quadrats and 10 ponds) for bi-annual surveys of all 34 priority/indicator species; surveys to begin 20 April 2022
  - Project designed to assess risk of pigs targeting reptile burrows and ground-nesting birds, to be delivered 2022
  - Purbeck Natural History Forum set up and constituted, as volunteer group who will carry out species monitoring work
- k. All works were completed by end March 2022

### 3.9. 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 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

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

- a. Background: a 3-year National Grid funded project at just under £200,000 delivering conservation activity across the South Dorset Ridgeway area in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust, FWAG South West and farmers and land managers on 11 sites. Although initially due to complete by December 2021, delivery of a final few outputs will continue in 2022.
- b. The following outputs have been achieved to March 2022:
- 1,850m of hedgerow laid
  - 1,600m new hedgerow planted
  - 6 standard hedgerow trees planted
  - 3 trees conserved by pollarding and 1 fenced
  - 3.8ha species-rich grassland managed for scrub
  - 120m dry stone wall restored
  - 2.6ha grassland enhanced through flower-rich seeding
  - 1 stile and dog-hatch installed to improve access (Eggardon Hill)

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

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, our own analysis and those that live and work in the area. This

is set out in a recently produced Issues Appraisal. The Dorset AONB represents the WDR&CS catchment at the Dorset Catchment Partnership. The Dorset AONB are also partners in Dorset Wild Rivers, the river restoration delivery body for the Dorset Catchment Partnership. DWR is a partnership of DTW, FWAG SW and Dorset AONB and has received 5 years of funding from Wessex Water to support delivery.

- a. In addition to delivery through Greening West Dorset's Hills and Vales Project (item 1.8, above), WDR&CS also secured £14,000 from the Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvement Fund to deliver the community-led approach on the Rivers Asker and Char. The funding was disbursed by DWR. Project management was undertaken by the Dorset AONB.
- b. The reporting below duplicates some of the reporting in the Greening West Dorset's Hills and Vales Project, but gives a full picture of the community-led approach on the River Asker and River Char.
- c. River Char Community Project
  - The launch of this project took place on 11th December, where the River Char Action Plan was presented. A follow-up on-line Q&A session took place on the 17th January.
  - Bespoke farm advice has been given to six farmers in the catchment, including a sustainable farm finances workshop and follow up advice looking to identify Maximum Sustainable Output, as presented at the November board meeting.
  - An online webinar on making pastures pay was held on 1st December, funded by Natural England, with a follow up site visit on the 14th December.
  - River restoration has taken place at six sites covering 300m. Volunteer sessions delivering restoration works also took place two further sites, covering 150m.
  - Natural Flood Management interventions were undertaken at four sites in the headwaters of the catchment.
  - In total, over 110 community members have engaged with the project.

d. River Asker Community Project

Background: A community-led project to improve the condition of the River Asker; has been ongoing since 2018. Delivered in partnership with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and FWAG South West along with community members of Loders, Uploders and Askerswell and farmers and land managers.

- 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.
  - A community meeting was held in March to update local people of the work to date and to explore their appetite for undertaking wider landscape enhancements to tackle the climate and ecological emergency.
  - A school session was held with Loders Primary School, delivered by Rowan Beecham and Martin Maudsley. 30 students attended.
  - Farm advice has been given to one farm, leading to a potential Countryside Stewardship application. 750m of track has benefited from cross drains to reduce water pollution.
  - Electrofishing survey of the fish population was undertaken at three locations, one of which was a demonstration for local people. A technical survey of Loders Weir and the impact on fish migration has also started.
  - 100m of river restoration was completed and two sites benefited from Natural Flood Management interventions. Comments from a local resident following this work demonstrated its benefit: "I have to say that I was seriously impressed by the leaky dams which Nick and his colleague put into the unnamed 'stream' in the field above me a few weeks ago – in the past, the quantity of rain which we had today would have meant that stream bursting its banks and coming across and up the road, but it behaved beautifully today. Fingers crossed that that happy state of affairs continues!"
- e. Dorset Wild Rivers
- Background: Dorset Wild Rivers is a partnership between Dorset AONB, Dorset Wildlife Trust and FWAG SW. It is the river restoration delivery body for Dorset Catchment partnership and has received five years of funding from Wessex Water through their Partners Programme to support delivery.

- The activity undertaken in the River Char and river Asker, are reported under the Dorset Wild Rivers banner. In total for 2021/22, DWR has achieved:
- 14ha of habitat improvement; 1.75ha of habitat creation; 10km of watercourse improvement; 185ha of flood plain connectivity and 220m of river restoration
- 2,300 trees planted; 754 people engaged

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

Background: FIPL 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 scheme will run until March 2024.

- Since the FiPL scheme started on 1st July, there have been 167 enquiries resulting in 69 applications. 45 projects were approved with 27 of these completed by March 2022 (the others are multi-year projects or due to run in the 22/23 financial year). A full list of projects supported, and three case studies are detailed on the Dorset AONB FiPL webpages.
- Smaller applications are assessed by the AONB Manager, whilst applications for more than £5k have been considered at 5 Local Assessment Panel meetings. Grants totalling £212,055.45 were paid out in Year 1 of the programme. There was a c. £60k underspend against planned Year 1 allocation due to the withdrawal of one large project.
- 75 farmers have benefitted from grant awards, with 21 of these not previously been engaged with Agri-environment schemes and 30 new to working with the Dorset AONB. With FiPL support, two new farm clusters have been created, with a further four existing clusters also receiving support.
- The following outputs have been achieved to March 2022
  - 1,482 ha of land being managed with regenerative farming techniques
  - 0.77 ha of woodland creation
  - 597 trees planted
  - 6 new permissive paths supported (1,987m)
  - 15 projects helped to make the landscape more inclusive for visitors (replacing stiles with gates etc)
  - 7 projects involved volunteers and supported greater public engagement in land management
  - 5,163 metres of hedgerow planted
  - 6,246 ha of habitat improvement for biodiversity
  - 13 projects involved work on SNCI's
  - 1 project involved work on a SSSI
  - 8 sites where impacts on SAM were considered
- Years 2 & 3 of the scheme have a grant allocation of c. £420k per year; £166k of Year 2 and £13k of Year 3 have already been allocated to projects. It is anticipated that the entire Year 2 allocation will be made by July 2022, as c.40 projects were in development or applications expected by the end of March 2022.

### 3.13. 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.

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. We are using the Catchment Based Approach to align priorities and drivers and a one year pilot phase started in autumn 2021.
- d. In 2021/22, the AONBs supported a number of Farm Transformation Plans through FIPL, helping dairy farms examine their systems and benchmark them with others. These plans also provided advice on how to enhance the environmental performance of these businesses.

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

- a. Continued promotion of the sector online and via social media; partnership with the Dorset Farmers' Market (DFM) continues.
- b. New collaboration with the Weymouth Farmers and Makers Market as delivery partners for the roll out of two [Welcome Back](#) Markets- Weymouth & Blandford. DF&D delivered spring and summer mini pop-up markets in Dorchester.
- c. Delivery of DF&D core events for 2021-22 include the Dorset Food & Arts Festival in Poundbury in collaboration with Dorchester Town Council and the Duchy of Cornwall, Abbotsbury Food Fair and the Athelhampton Christmas Fair.
- d. With the new 'Covid normal', more events and markets came back on stream. The market scene in Dorset was once again buoyant and vibrant with many more trading opportunities for DF&D members.
- e. DF&D have a seat on the [Dorset Tourism Association](#) board where issues, plaudits and good practice are shared. A sense check of the industry and the board findings are reported back to the Dorset LEP. There is a consensus that hospitality sector across the piece (and nationally) is still short of Chefs, Front of House staff and casual staff which will impact the levels of customer service and visitor experience. This trend is partly due to the impact of Covid and the number of staff leaving the sector to pursue jobs that offer a better work life balance.
- f. Dorset Food and Drink members had continued 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.
- g. 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.

### 3.15. [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 Purbecks 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 January meeting included updates from the NNR on management and promotion of the Purbeck Natural History Forum recorder recruitment meetings, NE led 'Making Space for Species project, Catchment partnership re: Peatland restoration 'Discovery Grant' application, Forestry England Purbeck Forest Plan review, Planet Purbeck introduction. In addition to this the following projects presented to the partnership: South Purbeck Coast NNR re: progress of the potential designation.
- e. In 2022-23, the Wild Purbeck Partnership has enabled the development of a Landscape Recovery bid extending from within the AONB between East Stoke and Stoborough Heath, extending northwards to Bere Regis and Upton/Lytchett Matravers.

### 3.16. 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 in May 2021 and February 2022 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 MANAGMEMENT PLAN CHAPTER "EXPLORING, UNDERSTANDING, ENGAGING"

### 3.17. Covid-19-related opportunities & demands

- a. The Promise to Love Dorset behavioural change campaign led by Dorset Council, Visit Dorset and Dorset AONB during summer 2021 is a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle awards, under the 'campaign of the year' category. Sally King and Jen Lowis (Dorset Council Head of Comms and Engagement) will present to the judges in early June, with winners announced 20<sup>th</sup> July. <https://awards.lgcplus.com/lgca/en/page/shortlist-2022>



### 3.18. 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 still low.

#### a. **Delivery**

- Picnic in the Parks Home page views 2830, Individual activity page views 7113. Discover the park: [www.picnicintheparks.org](http://www.picnicintheparks.org)
- Face to Face activity delivery
  - Calm in the Countryside – Upton Country Park and Blandford
  - Walk for Wellbeing - Shaftesbury
  - Dorset History Walks – various locations
  - WildWriting – Blandford Library
- Seasons of Stories Spring book has been created/distributed to assist connection to nature through poetry, story, imagery and conversation.
- Six Dorset History Walks Guides have been created with Steve Wallis and are now being sent out with 270 sent to date, with 6 more in development.
- Launch of Thriving Communities Nature Buddies, 2 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. **Health and Nature Dorset**

- HAND was officially launched in May 2021, webinar and other information can be found [here](#)
- Part Time Project Assistant position recruited to LNP for supporting HAND delivery for 12 months.
- Successful at being awarded a place on the Design Council '[Ideas to Change](#)' programme.
- In March 2022 we submitted a bid and was successful in securing £30,000 to 'Our Dorset' to support staff wellbeing across the Integrated Care System using nature-based activity.
- Health & Nature Dorset will lead on this work with support from the SiN team.

#### c. **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
- Courtyard Garden (Life is for Living) £2000 To provide new garden furniture and equipment to kickstart a garden club at independent living apartments in West Moors

#### d. **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.

- Recruited 6 creative freelancers, delivered 18 face to face/online workshops (155 attendees) to range of audiences including adults with learning disabilities, older adults living with long term health conditions including dementia and carers.

- Using workshops to inform the development of a self-led arts and nature themed activity resource to be launched late May. There will be 1000 copies in print and downloadable via Picnic in the Parks.
- e. **Collaborative work**
- Nature, Art and Wellbeing Community Fund launched on February 2022. Funding from:
    - Stepping into Nature with a reallocation of budget that was in danger of not being spent, National Academy for Social Prescribing Fund via the Thriving Communities Nature Buddies project: re-connecting to nature & art through activity, Contain Outbreak Management Fund via the Your Nature project: Dorset Council Better Days, Coast and Greenspace Teams
    - The fund aims to encourage nature, art and movement based interventions for wellbeing for those most experiencing health inequalities in Dorset.
- f. **Looking Forward**
- Allocation of underspend
    - Summer and Winter Seasons of Stories books
    - Self-management guidance
    - Piloting a test & learn with PCN regarding Personal Health Budgets
    - Development of support for self led PIPs?
  - Possible collaborative funding bid with HAND
  - Planning for post SiN – what are the next steps?

### 3.19. [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 Forum meetings and contributes and advises on visitor management and other issues.

The Purbeck Heaths Grazing Unit sustainable tourism sub-group continues to meet and is currently focused on seeking resources and continued commitment to deliver the Sustainable Tourism Plan for the Purbeck Heaths.

### 3.20. [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: Coastal Communities funded (£20,000) project to reduce, rationalise and improve community/ visitor interpretation in West Bay. Further interpretation and decluttering improvements. Working with the Town Council to provide interpretation about the Old Railway Line multi-use trail from Bridport to West Bay; its sustainable access to the Jurassic Coast and Dorset AONB, and the history of the railway. Also decluttering and providing some interpretation at picnic sites either side of the popular West Bay play area. £20,000 - funded by Coastal Communities Fund; expected completion July 2022
- b. Branscombe: Funding secured from partners to remove damaged on-site interpretation and replace four old panels with one new partnership panel, highlighting walks and signposting to further information. Working with Plymouth Coastal Observatory, agreement reached to install a CoastSnap fixed point photography cradle, overlooking the western end of Branscombe beach, where significant coastal erosion is ongoing, affecting the beach profile and the beach huts. It is hoped this will engage both local communities and visitors in coastal change and the impacts of climate change.
- c. Sidmouth: agreement with Sidmouth Town Council, Devon County Council and Ignyte (tourism marketing organisation) to increase profile of Jurassic Coast and East Devon AONB in the town. Partner funding secured but work yet to commence.

### 3.21. Sustainable travel

- a. Weymouth Station - Part of a working group to design and develop new interpretation at Weymouth station and in the town, as part of a major transformation of Weymouth station, including the forecourt area. Will include wayfinding and public transport connectivity, as well as walking and cycling. Interpretation will help people navigate their way around the town, but also inspire them to explore further by bus to connect to the Jurassic Coast and Dorset AONB. With the easing of Covid restrictions, we want to make it both easy and enjoyable for people to explore by public transport, reducing the number of cars on our roads and enhancing the visitor experience. This work is ongoing and funded by Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, South Western Railway, Community Rail Partnership and Dorset Council.
- b. Work continues with local walker and writer Robert Westwood to co-create 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. The book will be branded in the Dorset AONB house style.

### 3.22. 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.



### 3.23. Engaging Young People

- a. **Assessing the Accessibility of the Dorset AONB for young people:** In December 2021, we were successful in obtaining funding from the Farming in Protected Landscapes fund for Stage 1 of a project (feasibility study), using the specialist contractor Participation People, to assess young people's views of how accessible the AONB is currently, identify barriers as well as incentives to generate a blueprint of realistic actions. Analysis of the data collected will generate a report which will outline actions that are aligned to the objectives of the AONB which have been directed by the young people leading and taking part in the study. Actions will be a road map for the AONB, aiming to work with landowners to develop activities and projects that can lead to behaviour change among our young people. This will be Stage 2 of this project which will require additional funding and the potential for a subsequent application. Progress so far:
  - Jan-March 2022 - The initial phase has been focused on recruiting a group of 14 young people, training them in research and interview techniques and devising the themes and questions of the study, likely to be.
  - The next phase, April – August 2022, will be the delivery of the study where the young people will research the themes with their peers collecting both quantitative and qualitative data of their responses.
- b. In January 2022, the Dorset AONB team began to deliver the Year 1 of the [Urban Nature Project on behalf of Dorset Museum](#). The Urban Nature Project is a national project led to the [Natural History Museum](#), to inspire and equip young people to engage with the urban wildlife around them and understand their role as scientists in its future. Aimed mainly at KS3 pupils (age 11-14 year olds), we have successfully connected with science departments at secondary schools in the Bridport area and look forward to delivering on our target of engaging 300 students in outdoor workshops in the summer term.

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

### 3.24. 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.lowcarbondonset.org.uk/>
- b. Summary of total activity to end of March 2022:
  - Received 639 applications for support from Dorset's business, community and public sectors
  - Awarded 155 grants totalling £5.4m
- c. Summary of activity for year 21/22:
  - Received 181 applications for support from Dorset's business, community and public sectors
  - Awarded 47 grants totalling £2.6m

- d. So far, support and 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)
- £16.1m of investment in low-carbon projects in Dorset
  - An annual carbon reduction of 9,400 tonnes of CO2e in Dorset
  - The installation of 11.92MW of renewable energy capacity in Dorset
  - Improvements in the energy efficiency of 61 houses in Dorset
  - The development of 6 new low carbon products in Dorset
  - The reduction of energy used in public-sector buildings by 1,178,122 kwh/yr
- e. Programme updates:
- Recruited two new Project Support Officers
  - New case studies added to website: <https://www.lowcarbondorset.org.uk/case-studies/>
  - Produced a new [Guide to Reducing Emissions](#) for organisations
  - Current social campaigns: #DorsetFootprint & #LowCarbonLearningList

### 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 July 2021, November 2021 and March 2022
- c. To date there have been 25 projects that have been formally offered grant funds (not including 2 'In Principle'). Seventeen of these are now complete.
- d. Grants awarded 2021\_22 were for a total of 2 projects (relevant pillar x2 Biodiversity)
- **Currenden Farm Hedge Planting project** (£4,924) 1-year project to reinstate and enhance a thin and gappy hedgeline at Currenden Farm, which is part of the Swanage-Studland parish boundary, by the creation of an 8m wide corridor of shrubs.
  - **DC Purbeck Park (Norden) to Studland cycleway** (£200,000) The scheme aims to provide a safer, non-car alternative means of accessing Studland from Norden without visitors having to cycle along the A351/ B3351 which is narrow and busy.
  - **Kingswood Farm Hedge project** (£2176.40) To rejuvenate two gappy and over-managed hedgerows at Kingswood Farm, within the Rempstone Wooded Pasture Landscape Character Area.
- e. Additional support for the 'in principle' projects with Dorset Council to improve and create cycle routes from Nordon Park to Corfe continues with a revised application due to be submitted late 2022 and Purbecks Precious Past (DAONB led) working with landowners to develop a management plan and submit application in July 2022.
- f. **Purbeck's Precious Past** is being managed by the Wild Purbeck Officer and delivered with a part time project officer on secondment from Dorset Coast Forum. The project will be focused on 4 target areas throughout the Wytch Farm target Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Key aims of the project are to engage the local community in their heritage by developing an accessible survey, encouraging citizen science and, work to secure the future of veteran trees and the wildlife they support through practical work. Through collaboration we will work across the landscape with partners, local communities, and

schools. We will gather seed from historic local tree stock, grow on the next generation of trees and aim to use these saplings to plant hedges and strategically placed new woodland in the target areas.

g. The following outputs have been achieved to March 2022:

- 24 workdays and 338 volunteer hours. Surveyed over 100 trees in 3 sites, Rempstone Wood, Arne and Lulworth Ranges.
- Worked with RSPB volunteers for 4 days and they were involved in survey training. Completed 3 training sessions on winter tree ID, and survey training. This involved a free course by the Ancient Tree Inventory.
- Established 2 tree nurseries up with around 80 cuttings in the ground and over 500 seedlings in root trainers of over 13 species and more still stratifying.



### 3.26. Fingerpost Restoration

- a. Work to restore Dorset's traditional fingerposts continues, led by Roger Bond (Normtec) and his band of 12 volunteers, including Blandford & Dorchester Men's Sheds & students from Kingston Maurward College.
- b. Between April 2021 to March 2022, 33 Fingerposts have been fully restored across the County and 9 part works completed (Roundels or Fingers). Recent restorations include 4 around the Corfe Castle area, Studland, Wynford Eagle, Bradpole, Batcombe & Charminster.
- c. 9 Fingerposts are currently in the process of being fully restored, plus 1 partial restoration, these include. Church Knowle, Mosterton and Bockhampton. Another 12 are in the pipeline
- 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 MANAGMEMENT PLAN CHAPTER “WAYS OF WORKING”

### 3.27. [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. In the end £9,504 of grant funding was dispersed 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.
  - **Dorset Dry Stone Wall Association:** Extra skills and certification for dry stone wallers through subsidised members exam fees 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 increase mental & physical wellbeing.
  - **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. Report [here](#)
  - **The Place I Love:** Based in Boadwindsor, Creation of a village map through identification of the parish field names, points of interest and discovery of what the land was used for in the past as well as in the present. A celebration of the village landscape and heritage while promoting better understanding of and respect for the countryside ([website](#)).
  - **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. Further information [here](#)



## ITEM 6: 2021-2022 PROVISIONAL PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTS

<b>ITEM FOR</b>	Information	<b>REPORT BY</b>	AONB Manager
<b>SUMMARY</b>	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.		
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	This is a report on past income and expenditure, so has no implications on future funding		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	The Dorset AONB Board commends the funding leverage demonstrated by these accounts		

### 6.1. CORE FINANCE

The funding drawn down from Defra to support the AONB Partnership was all of the initial offer of £247,438 plus £29,000 offered as additional mid-year funding in December. 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 64.2%; Defra's contribution to the total direct spend was 12.2%.

Dorset Council contributed 17.8% towards core expenditure. The majority of the additional income was from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver the AONB 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme of celebration and engagement.

Core income	Budget	Actual
Defra	£ 201,936	£ 196,631
Dorset Council	£ 54,500	£ 54,500
Earned income / other grant	£ 12,812	£ 54,956
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 269,248</b>	<b>£ 306,087</b>

Core costs	Budget	Actual
Staff, ENI, Pens,	£ 235,948	£ 226,920
Travel	£ 4,800	£ 3,193
Training	£ 2,500	£ 873
Accommodation & Office	£ 6,000	£ 6,178
Partnership PR	£ 5,000	£ 3,892
AONB 60th projects	£ 10,000	£ 55,279
Partnership Running Costs	£ 3,000	£ 4,252
Monitoring, research & guidance	£ 2,000	£ 5,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 269,248</b>	<b>£ 306,087</b>







