



AONB Family Update - September 2017

And then there was one The NAAONB has brought together its three websites under www.landscapesforlife.org.uk. The new website gives information about the AONB Family and also promotes the value and relevance of its work using case studies, news of events and activity, collaborative work, consultation responses, publications and images of our outstanding landscapes to support this promotion. Please add a link to your own website and encourage others to add a link to their websites. If you would like to add any information to the website please contact [Jill](#).



Outstanding Week 16-24th September 2017

Outstanding Week The AONB Family has come together, for the third year running, to organise a week (and a bit) long programme of events to help people enjoy and be inspired by Britain's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Running from this Saturday until next Sunday, **Outstanding Week** shows people how to get involved and get out into the AONBs' **outstanding landscapes** to enjoy country shows, dark sky discovery nights, walking festivals, archaeology walks, wood fairs, foraging and local food festivals, wildlife walks, coastal and marine days, thatching courses, drystone walling competitions, charcoal making, bioblitz, inspiration through art and music and many, many other activities. **Outstanding Week** shows how our AONBs are **Landscapes for Life** in so many different ways.

Over 80 events can be found on www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/events/outstanding-week/ and more are being added daily.

Demonstrating value for money using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) AONB Lead Officers gather annually to review the work of the AONB Family over the previous year. This year, under discussion were the KPIs agreed last year and how they have been, and might be, used to show the value of AONB Family work. Information is now being collated for this year's AONB Family Annual Review – see [Basecamp Lead Officer Forum](#) (members only). In the meantime, case studies demonstrating the value and relevance of the work of the AONB Family can be found [here](#). If you would like your AONB partnership's work showcased on the Landscapes for Life website please complete the template on the page and submit it for inclusion.



Evidence based value for money The NAAONB celebrates collaborative work across the AONB Family. This week, we are pleased to highlight the work being done by the North Pennines AONB Partnership. The [Nectarworks](#) project focusses on the enhancement, restoration and celebration of flower-rich habitats and the nectar-feeding invertebrates that depend on them. The project was the recipient of the [Bowland Award](#) at this year's [Landscapes for Life Conference](#).

Leading on liaison with CPRE A collaborative project between the NAAONB and CPRE to jointly commission independent research to initially investigate how national policies, such as the five-year land supply policy, interacts with policies at the local level, such as a local plan has gone ahead and data is currently being collated by the appointed consultees. The project focuses on all English AONBs and analyses housing development both pre- and post NPPF, to consider both national and local policy context. An area on Basecamp has been set up to manage this project. Members can see more information [here](#).



Leading on liaison with WCPA The NAAONB is working with the Global Protected Area Survey Team, which includes the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), which is carrying out the first global survey of protected area staff numbers and jobs. There are 200,000 protected areas in the world, covering over 15% of the land surface and 10% of the seas; but no record of how many people are engaged in managing them, or the range of jobs that they do. AONBs make up part of this total as Category V Protected Areas, recognised by the IUCN (of which the WCPA is part). Members can view the rationale for this survey on [WCPA Survey](#) or can contact Lauren Naylor lnaylor@globalwildlife.org for more information. The deadline for completion is end of September.

Leading on liaison with the Forestry Commission The NAAONB is working with the Forestry Commission to collate information on woodland creation and tree planting activity in England. The FC is seeking to collect data on the quantity and location of new planting of trees that has been funded by the UK Government within AONBs). Further information can be found on [Forestry Commission survey](#).



NAAONB Membership If you would like to become a member of the [NAAONB](#) please click [here](#) for more information. If you would to contribute to a future edition of **Leading, Sharing, Learning, Inspiring** please send your article/snippet/link to [Jill](#).



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House of Lords Select Committee Oral Evidence The NAAONB will be giving Oral Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 on 10th October. Earlier in the year the [Committee called for Written Evidence](#) on [natural environment, rural communities and biodiversity](#). If your AONB Partnership/CB submitted evidence then, please share it on [Lead Officers' Forum](#) so it can be included in our oral submission in October.

AONB Family Annual Report The NAAONB is collating both quantitative and qualitative evidence for an Annual Report which will demonstrate the value of the AONB Family's work. A call for this information was made on [Lead Officers' Forum](#) and the deadline for submission is 30th September.



Outstanding Week 16-24th September 2017

Outstanding Week The AONB Family came together, for the third year running, to organise a week long programme of events to help people enjoy and be inspired by the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Over 90 events were run during the 10 days with the NAAONB leading on the promotion of these with a dedicated page on the website. Both @AONBFamily and @NAAONB were active on Twitter to demonstrate the value and relevance of the AONB Partnerships/CBs and their work. Using key messages, we highlighted the difference the AONB Family makes and backed up our messages with the project case studies that form the AONB Family evidence base on the new [website](#).

Thank you to Defra and Welsh Government for their online promotion of the value and relevance and everyone else who got involved in Outstanding Week. With your support we were able to show how our AONBs are **Landscapes for Life** in very many different ways.

Living Landscapes – a joint publication with Europe’s Nature Parks The NAAONB has collaborated with almost 900 European Nature, Regional, and Landscape Parks to produce a book entitled [Living Landscapes](#) to demonstrate how protected landscapes are models for the sustainable development of rural areas. The book was launched at the first European Summit of Regional Nature Parks where a [declaration](#) was signed by the NAAONB and 20 other organisations who represent the European Parks. More information on the launch can be see [here](#). Members can see the presentations from the summit [here](#).



Brexit and collaboration within WCL As part of WCL (Wildlife and Countryside Link), the NAAONB is working with a large number of environmental organisations to secure a sustainable future for the UK’s landscapes post Brexit. In order to get our messages heard, we are collaborating with [GreenerUK](#) who are being effective at lobbying parliamentarians (see [briefings for MPS](#)). WCL are also working behind the scenes to get [amendments](#) to the Repeal Bill.

Defra’s 25-year Plan The NAAONB has learned that current thinking is that the 25 year plan

- will likely be **predominately England focused** with an international dimension. It will seek to avoid stepping on the toes of the Devolved Administrations,
- will probably be a mixture of the earlier ‘draft’ and some new material from Michael Gove – which **may** include some bigger ticket announcements, and
- it may be published in November as Defra is working to a very tight timescale



Evidence based value for money The NAAONB celebrates collaborative work across the AONB Family. This week, we are pleased to highlight the work being done by the North Devon AONB Partnership. The [Coastal Creatures](#) project focusses on the coastal wildlife of the North Devon AONB, making it accessible to residents, visitors and experts through a wide range of citizen science activities. The project was a nominee for the [Bowland Award](#) at this year’s [Landscapes for Life Conference](#).

Dates for your diary

- NAAONB Board meeting - Thursday 12th October
- Chairmen’s Conference and AGM - Thursday 23rd November
- Communications Officers Meeting - Wednesday 6th December

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Item 4 - Chairman's Annual Report 2016-17

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Report to	The Annual General Meeting of the National Association for AONBs
Subject	Chairman's Annual Report 2016-17
Date	23 rd November 2017
Purpose	For information

This report is dedicated to the memory of Michael Mounde who sadly died this year. An active and resourceful NAAONB Board member, Michael was a passionate believer in the virtues of protected landscapes. Michael's knowledge, good humour and all round decency are much missed and he will be long remembered.

As we fast approach the 70th anniversary of the legislation which led to the creation of AONBs, your Board is committed to taking every opportunity to further advance the AONB cause. The importance, the quality and the potential of your work is foremost in our thinking at each of our meetings.

Your Board's legal status as both a charity trust and company limited by guarantee aligns it well for the flexibilities increasingly expected by policy setters and funders.

To maintain the AONB designation at the forefront of environmental policy formulation and implementation, your Board is in the process of drafting and consulting on its next business plan. This draft is now with you for final consultation and we look forward to your views and suggestions towards its further refinement and adoption.

Maintaining relevance, and the influence that accompanies it, is now crucially important and timely. The whole policy context for the future of the environment, agriculture and the countryside is up for review as part of Brexit and the ending of the Common Agricultural Policy in the UK. Nobody should doubt the significance of this moment for the future of protected landscapes and the appreciation of their scientific, economic and aesthetic value and potential.

The significance of the moment is powerfully underlined by a keynote speech delivered by the Secretary of State, The Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP on the 21st July this year. The speech entitled [The Unfrozen Moment - Delivering a Green Brexit](#) is a remarkable statement of intent. It no less than raises the prospect of a truly significant positive step change for environmental protection and enhancement across all relevant contexts; economic, social and legal. This is an opportunity and challenge your Board is determined to rise to - a once in a generation, or two, opportunity to strengthen the impact of the AONB designation. With this in view, your Board is absolutely committed to responding powerfully and compellingly to what is an invitation to help recast environmental issues and, therewith AONBs, to nearer the centre of national priorities.

Already your Board has begun to respond to this invitation with our proposal to Defra to make AONB management plans and partnerships integral to future agri-economic support in protected areas. First indications are that this is being well received. Our proposal is, of course, only part of an ongoing dialogue with Defra and all relevant organisations. As the Secretary of State's vision moves towards implementation, your Board will ensure that AONB values and potentials are kept to the fore.

It has been very encouraging that right from the beginning of his appointment as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Gardiner has been very ready to engage with AONB issues. This has been demonstrated not only with an openness to dialogue with the NAAONB but further by a

Item 4 - Chairman's Annual Report 2016-17

readiness to visit AONBs to meet their Partnerships/Conservation Boards and see their work first hand. His commitment to spending a whole working day to be with us at this year's Landscapes for Life Conference in Winchester was a powerful example of his interest.

So, all in all, while approaching our 70th anniversary, the challenge and opportunity facing the AONB Family and its national charity has never been greater. Nonetheless, let us be optimistic, because there is ample knowledge, ability and passion throughout AONB Partnerships/Conservation Board and staff to rise to the moment.

At a personal level, it continues to be a thoroughly enjoyable privilege to chair the NAAONB and to celebrate and advocate the outstanding value and work of AONBs. I remain immensely impressed by how much is achieved with such modest cost by each and every Partnership and Conservation Board. I am particularly inspired by my Board and staff who work unstintingly to enable the national charity to have a truly national impact on behalf of all our members.

Philip Hygate FRSA
Chairman
National Association for AONBs

Item 5 - Chief Executive's Report of work completed for NAAONB Business Plan Oct 2016 - Oct 2017

Report to The Annual General Meeting of the National Association for AONBs
Subject Chief Executive's Report of work completed for NAAONB Business Plan Oct 2016 - Oct 2017
Date 23rd November 2017
Purpose For information

As we approach the end of this year it seems sensible to reflect on what we have achieved over the last year and consider the year ahead, but this is also the start of another phase for the NAAONB. We have come to the end of one business plan, written for the period 2015 to 2018, and in April will start the delivery of another. I am not going to talk you through the detail of what we have done – you can see that for yourself. I will, however, talk you through my headlines.

The context of the last business plan was one of public sector reform and enhanced devolution, something that remains at the forefront of our minds as we move into the next plan. The ways of working that were necessary to deliver on the last plan are as relevant now as they ever were – real collaboration, continued learning, skill sharing, enterprise, effective communication, and maintaining a strong supportive, and supporting, relationship with governments. This last element of our work always takes time but, when departments reorganise as often as they have over the last few years, it becomes more time consuming and even more important. With an increasingly smaller public sector with which to engage centrally, the value of a single voice for AONB Partnerships and Conservation boards is higher than ever.

A supporting relationship with government inevitably involves talk of funding. We were really pleased to report on a protected settlement in England over the course of this spending round. This is something that we had worked long and hard to achieve, but none the less was still a surprise. We know that local authority funding settlements for AONBs haven't necessarily been as positive across the board but we know we have helped maintain that single pot upon which you depend. We made the case at the time, and make it again – this is an investment by government in change – an opportunity to explore new ways of working, diversify your funding streams, and reduce the absolute reliance you have on what continues to be a reducing public purse.

Anyone that has read a relatively recent report by the Environmental Funders Network, entitled 'What the Green Groups Said' will know just how important change is, not just to ensure adequate resources but to actually have the positive impact required on the special places for which you all care...and these places are special, and people do care. I had the privilege of being invited to speak at the Chilterns Conservation Board's Annual Forum alongside Fiona Reynolds. The subject was natural beauty and the 300 seater hall was absolutely full. People really value natural beauty.

So, how have we helped you do your job over this last year?

As I said, we continue to be your mouthpiece to government, whether that is in England or Wales. The focus of the last year has clearly been on the role of AONBs, their partnerships and conservation boards, and management plans in relation to delivering on the challenges ahead. Our exit from the EU, and all that this brings with it, is clearly a central challenge – but this is a symptom not a cause. If we are to address root causes we have to value the environment more highly, and this doesn't mean shoe horning it into an economic model that has already failed us. Getting this right is our biggest challenge; getting it wrong would be our biggest mistake. Our exit from the EU gives us this opportunity, but we remain forever vigilant – mindful that the bulk of environmental protection legislation in the UK is currently EU based.

Item 5 - Chief Executive's Report of work completed for NAAONB Business Plan Oct 2016 - Oct 2017

We have worked closely with Welsh Government to develop their thinking on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, particularly the relationship between SMNR and natural beauty and the consequent future role of AONBs and National Parks. Getting this high-level thinking right, and ensuring that the notion of natural beauty is embedded from the start is an imperative – not just because that is what we do, but because everything that you stand for has a profoundly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the nation.

We have also worked with you to draft our next business plan – this has been a process of careful listening, thinking, and discussing. We can never hope to please every one of our members but we have done what we think is best to give you all, and the NAAONB, a secure and productive future.

Thank you for your membership of the NAAONB. I am really proud of what we achieve with such a small staff team. I am also really heartened by those of you that regularly step up and help deliver on national challenges. We really are your Association.

Thank you

Howard Davies
Chief Executive
National Association for AONBs

Please visit the below to view a complete RAG for period covering October 2016 - to October 2017
<http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/75th-RAG-12.10.2017.pdf>