



Landscapes
for life
.org.uk



AONB Family Update - March 2017



RIP Michael Mounde It was with great sadness that the NAAONB Board of Trustees learned of the death of their colleague, Michael Mounde. Philip Hygate, NAAONB Chairman, paid tribute to Michael with the following words “Michael, a thoroughly decent and good humoured man, had an abiding commitment to the many virtues the countryside in general and AONBs in particular. He will be much missed across the AONB Family and the NAAONB”.

Michael’s funeral will take place at Kingston Deverill Church at 2pm on 16th March.

You can read more about Michael’s life and his work for the NAAONB and AONB Family [here](#).

Advocating for the AONB Family NAAONB Chairman, Philip Hygate, met with Defra Under Secretary of State, Lord Gardiner, to discuss Defra’s 25 year environment plan and the role of the AONB Family, the next spending round, the public sector transformation agenda, a possible Conservation Board for the Shropshire Hills AONB and the role of the NAAONB. The Minister opened the meeting by stating his support for the work of AONB partnerships and conservation boards, as he had done for Outstanding Week, went on to express a wish to visit more AONBs and accepted an invitation to speak at the Landscapes for Life Conference 2017 subject to Parliamentary business. Members can see more information [here](#) or speak with their Lead Officers who have received a note on the meeting from [Howard Davies](#).

“Our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of our most special and beautiful places which should be enjoyed by all.

Outstanding Week was a real showcase of the activities on offer in these unique landscapes, encouraging residents and visitors alike to get involved and preserve them for generations to come.”

Lord Gardiner of Kimble
Parliamentary Under Secretary of
State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity



NAAONB Trustee News Papers showing items for consideration at the Board meeting on 13th March can be found [here](#). The Board co-opted Lucy Barron onto the Board and elected James Williamson to the post of Honorary Treasurer. More details of these two Trustees can be found [here](#). The Board discussed the role of the NAAONB in pre and post Brexit policy formulation and implementation. In particular, the key issues identified and subsequently prioritised at the NAAONB-led Landscapes for Life Chairmen's meeting in November 2016 were considered. The NAAONB has an opportunity to step beyond current thinking and articulate ambitious solutions to the delivery of our charitable objects. NAAONB members can read the L4L meeting notes [here](#). The Board considered a draft communications strategy which shows the direction NAAONB and AONB Family communications might take over the next four years. The Board paper can be read [here](#) and the draft Strategy [here](#).



Leading on liaison with CPRE The 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 received enough support from the AONB Family to allow it to go ahead. It will focus on all English AONBs and analyse 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](#). If you would like to contribute to the crowdfunding of this project please contact [Amber](#).

Leading on value for money and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) AONB Lead Officers gathered in February to review the work of the AONB Family over the past year. In particular, they looked at the KPIs agreed last year and how they have been used to show the value of our work, discussed collaborative and priority communications work and how to address Management Plan Review. Information collated last year was reported as an [Annual Review](#) launched at the NAAONB AGM. Case studies demonstrating the value 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. It usually takes only a couple of days to add.

Sharing experience of HLF The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) has launched a review and call for evidence on the efficiency, effectiveness and governance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Every government-sponsored public body is reviewed at least once in each Parliament to ensure it is fit for purpose and provides good value for money. Heritage, natural environment and other cultural organisations, as well as members of the public, are invited to submit their views by completing an [online survey](#) by 6th April.

Landscapes for Life Conference 2017 - 18-19th July 2017 in Winchester. Through engagement with colleagues and external organisations - public, third sector and corporate – delegates will look at innovative, efficient and effective ways of working. By leading, sharing, learning and inspiring

our Partnerships will be able to provide a robust and sustainable future for our outstanding landscapes. Reports from previous L4L conferences can be found [here](#).



Sharing and inspiring while mapping the places we value Between October and January, Natural England trialled a new way of recording the places people value. [Arnside and Silverdale AONB](#) was the first area in the country to be covered by the new website. Almost 100 people placed 387 pins on the map. This means that for the first time the Partnership has good quality evidence on how people feel about places within the AONB, something that has been difficult to quantify in the past. This information can be used when considering landscape change and making decisions in the future. WordCloud credit: [tagul.com](#)

Sharing, Learning and Inspiring with daffodils in the Tamar Valley AONB [Tamar Valley AONB Partnership's](#) Heritage Lottery Funded project, [Heralds of Spring](#) will record and raise awareness of the special historic daffodil varieties growing in the Tamar Valley landscape. Over the next two months, there are plenty of ways to get involved through training and monitoring events, guided walks, talks and a visit to Ron Scamp's nursery in Falmouth. All events and volunteer opportunities can be found at www.tamarvalley.org.uk or call 01822 835030.



Sharing, Learning and Inspiring Basecamp Guidance has been updated and can be found [here](#) by members. This includes a current list of all areas available on Basecamp and advice on how to manage the email alerts to your inbox. If there are areas that you would like to be added to or if you are not a member and would like to benefit from the fount of knowledge to be found on the site, please contact [Amber](#), our membership manager.

Sharing Learning Westminster Forum Projects is holding a seminar on "The future of UK agriculture policy". For details see <http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/conference/agriculture-2017>

Job Vacancies Wye Valley AONB Partnership [Information Officer](#) East Devon AONB Partnership [Communications Officer](#). Suffolk Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale AONB Partnerships [Project Officer](#).

Non salaried positions Chilterns and Cotswolds Conservation [Board positions](#)

If you want to contribute to a future edition of **Leading, Sharing, Learning, Inspiring** please send your article/snippet/link to [Jill](#).

Howard Davies posted a new message:

[Informal note of the NAAONB meeting with Lord Gardiner – 28th February 2017](#)

Dear all,

Philip and I met with Lord Gardiner last week. I have prepared below an informal note of this meeting for your information. Please note that following the NAAONB Board meeting next week I will be updating you all on the NAAONB position re Brexit and how we intend to take issues forward. This will effectively pull together the internal discussions to date, the outcome of the Chairman's meeting, the continued close working with National Parks England, and developing relationship we have with Lord Gardiner.

Informal note of meeting.

The agenda covered the following areas

1. Defra's 25 year environment plan
2. The next spending round
3. The public sector transformation agenda
4. A Conservation Board for the Shropshire Hills AONB
5. The role of the NAAONB

These meetings are never as scripted as a formal agenda would indicate, but we covered the subject areas effectively.

The Minister opened the meeting stating his support for the work of AONB partnerships and conservation boards. He was obviously keen to make his commitment known. He highlighted how important it is to care for the countryside and stressed the role of farmers and land owners in making this happen. He stated that 70% of land is farmed, and the importance of appropriate and sensitive agricultural land use. He reiterated the point that farmers are key people with whom we must work. He opined that the agricultural systems themselves made these landscapes worthy of designation, and this fact should be reflected in the composition of AONB partnerships, conservation boards, and the NAAONB board.

We responded explaining how well represented the farming sector is on AONB partnerships and conservation boards, and highlighted the good working relationship the NAAONB has with the CLA and the farming unions.

He made it clear that he didn't want this meeting to be a one off, suggesting that we may want to consider regular catch-ups. We agreed this would be a valuable approach.

He had clearly found his visit to the Chilterns AONB informative and enjoyable. This visit had obviously left a positive impression, highlighting to us the value in getting the Minister out to AONBs and seeing for himself what is going on. He expressed a keen interest in visiting other AONBs. This is something that we will bring up at the next tripartite meeting.

We made the case for AONB partnerships as delivery agents, specifically around the 25 Year Environment Plan and Natural England's Conservation Strategy, and made the case that AONB management plans are powerful tools to help integrate policy at the local level. We reiterated the fact that the AONB Family covers 8000 square miles and its partnerships are formed of around 700 elected members.

The Minister discussed the importance of maintaining a dynamic countryside, and highlighted that the designation was as much about enhancing as conserving. He reminded us that support for AONB partnerships by government is an investment of tax payer's money, so these areas should be available to be enjoyed by people. We then discussed the relationship between AONBs and the rural economy. I raised the £16Bn GVA associated with AONBs and suggested that the Minister might be interested in our submission to the Economic Growth Review. He has since been sent a copy (attached for those that may not be familiar with it).

We discussed the public sector reform agenda. The Minister was keen to make the point that the focus was on making the public sector work better, not delivering an ideological or political agenda. He was, however, interested in identifying any 'log jams' and identifying which areas require a more serious look. The Minister remarked on the changing balance of funding, and the increasingly necessary ability to raise funds locally. The Minister agreed to speak at the next Landscape for Life Conference.

We discussed the specific case of the Shropshire Hills AONB partnership and their proposal to become a Conservation Board. The Minister made it clear that he didn't want a situation where all AONB partnerships aspire to Conservation Board status. He was particularly keen to understand whether we felt that a successful AONB is disadvantaged by being a 'normal' AONB. We made it clear that the proposal for the Shropshire Hills was specifically designed to address the governance challenges being faced in this instance, and these could only be appropriately addressed through the application of a suitable governance solution. The Minister was clearly interested in his role regarding the appointment of members, and stressed the importance of getting this right.

We discussed the next spending round, and the Minister highlighted the direction of travel. He implied that Defra would need to continue to make savings as they had been doing. We highlighted the apportionment of funding across Defra's protected landscape budget.

We discussed the value and importance of the AONB management plan and the process employed to create it. The Minister agreed to write a foreword for the AONB Family to use in their next round of plans. This would be followed up at the tripartite meeting on the 9th March.

Howard
NAAONB