



EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

East Devon Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty
Partnership

**ANNUAL
REVIEW
2021/22**



Front cover image:
A view along our Jurassic
coast, to Sidmouth and
beyond.

Right: Walking in
Branscombe.

Back page: Local cubs
on a Grey Long Eared-bat
Meadow Walk.

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CONTACT THE AONB

Phone 01404 46663
Email info@eastdevonaonb.org.uk
Write / East Devon AONB Partnership
visit Kennaway House, Coburg Road
Sidmouth, EX10 8NG



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CONSERVE
AND ENHANCE
THIS SPECIAL
LANDSCAPE



CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Alistair Handyside MBE
Chairman, East Devon
AONB Partnership

COMMITMENT
TO NATURE
RECOVERY

It has been two years since we last held the AONB annual meeting in person. Today, we find ourselves emerging from the dark clouds of Covid19 on a path towards a new horizon, a 'new normal', with greater levels of hybrid working and far less work-related travel as zoom replaces room.

In this new normal, the AONB team is predominantly remote working, progressing towards more contact and office time, internally and with partner, as their work streams have readjusted and adapted to new ways of operating.

Nowhere was this adaptive working better exemplified last year, than in the joint hosting of the National Association for AONBs Annual Conference 2021 in Devon in July. Cancelled due to COVID in 2020, the Devon AONBs and NAAONB hosted the event virtually, with virtual field trips and on-line conferencing that allowed participants to join us from across the country and further afield. It was a big success.

The event served to develop the AONB team's digital media skills and provided lasting post-event media. For those that have not already seen some of this media, I encourage you to explore the AONB further by taking a look at some of it at www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk/events-4/annual-meeting-2021.

The most significant development for AONBs in 2021/22 was the government's commitment under their Agricultural Transition Plan to support AONBs and National Parks through a £52m Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL).

The FiPL programme aims to support farmers and landowners in AONBs and National Parks to adapt to the farming transition across 2021-2024 as farm payments/subsidies are reduced over the coming years.

The delivery of the FiPL programme in East Devon required staff changes, with Pete Youngman spending half his time on the new programme supported by a new part time FiPL Admin officer, Lou Maddocks. We also appointed a new Wildlife Officer, Lindi Rich, to deliver our Colchester Declaration commitment to nature.

It was a huge challenge for our small AONB unit to get this programme and staffing underway after a delayed start and I am extremely grateful for the support of EDDC in this and key partners and farmers across the AONB in establishing a grant panel to help determine the FiPL grants.

Despite operational restrictions across 2021/22, we have continued to progress our commitment under the Colchester Declaration, focusing on our elusive 8 'special species' of butterflies, bats, a tree and a very special flower! For one of those species, we completed a successful Green Recovery Challenge Funded project with the Bat Conservation Trust, which supported a range of activities to enhance populations of the Grey Long Eared Bat.

The government's response to the Glover review of protected landscapes and the Beaver reintroduction consultation took place last year.

Whilst the next steps have just been outlined for the beaver reintroductions, we still await final confirmation of the response to the Glover review, which will have significant implications for AONBs. I look forward to the governments continued commitment to the evolution of the AONBs and to developing opportunities that help to further conserve and enhance this special landscape for us all.

My thanks go to our local authority partners, my wider Partnership, AONB Ambassadors and local community partners for their on-going support.

LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Managing the distinctive landscape and historic environment features of the AONB, to ensure they are maintained, enhanced, understood and appreciated.

Right Place, Right Tree

Last year we reported on our support to the Devon Local Nature Partnership for the development of a guide for tree planting initiatives in Devon.

The guide was completed and has been integrated with the Devon County Council online mapping tool - Environment Viewer - to assist in deciding where and what to plant.

Tree planting is a key 'climate change' tool and Devon County Council has been busy planting 4,000 trees through the Woodland

Trust's Emergency Tree Fund (ETF) project, carried out by a partnership of local councils, community groups and schools.

Thanks to the £300,000 fund, Devon County Council has teamed up with Parklife Southwest who will be co-ordinating the work on the ground.

ParkLife Southwest is a not-for-profit social enterprise set up in 2019 to provide opportunities for individuals and community groups to get involved with environmental projects in the places where they live.

The benefits of planting trees



An Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) survey across Devon

This project, part funded by the AONB and coordinated through Devon Biodiversity Record Centre, is producing a substantially updated ancient woodland inventory using a consistent and quality-controlled methodology defined by Natural England.

During 21/22 we saw the first ground-truthing commence, checking direct observations on the ground against electronic data, using a mix of DBRC staff, trained volunteers, and specialist contractors.

Towards the end of the year this also included a targeted wood-pasture exercise, with surveys of ancient and veteran trees in key locations being undertaken by specialist contractors. The data gathered from the field surveys forms an integral part of the evidence base, which will support the new inventory of ancient woodland. This field-based phase will continue through 22/23 and possibly into spring of 23/24.

The new methodology being used in this review brings the inventory up to date, using modern mapping and digitising techniques, and allows for a much smaller threshold of 0.25ha for sites.

Considering the previous threshold of 2ha, we expect numerous new sites to be added to the final mapping layer. In addition, some existing sites may lose their classification, due to original errors back in the 1980's.

As a mapping layer used to underpin many statutory planning processes, it's important that the quality of the work is high, providing confidence to the eventual end users.

POTENTIAL FOR
SIGNIFICANTLY MORE
ANCIENT WOODLAND



© Devon Biodiversity Record Centre

Devon is a large and fragmented landscape, and many areas aren't well documented. Aerial images remain a useful tool, but can often vary in quality, with wooded areas being in shaded valleys, where resolution is compromised.

Whilst the new inventory will be a significant leap forward, it may require continued additions, as new survey information is forthcoming in future years.

<https://www.dbrc.org.uk/projects-surveys/current-projects-and-surveys/awi-review-partners/>





Musbury school hedge planting

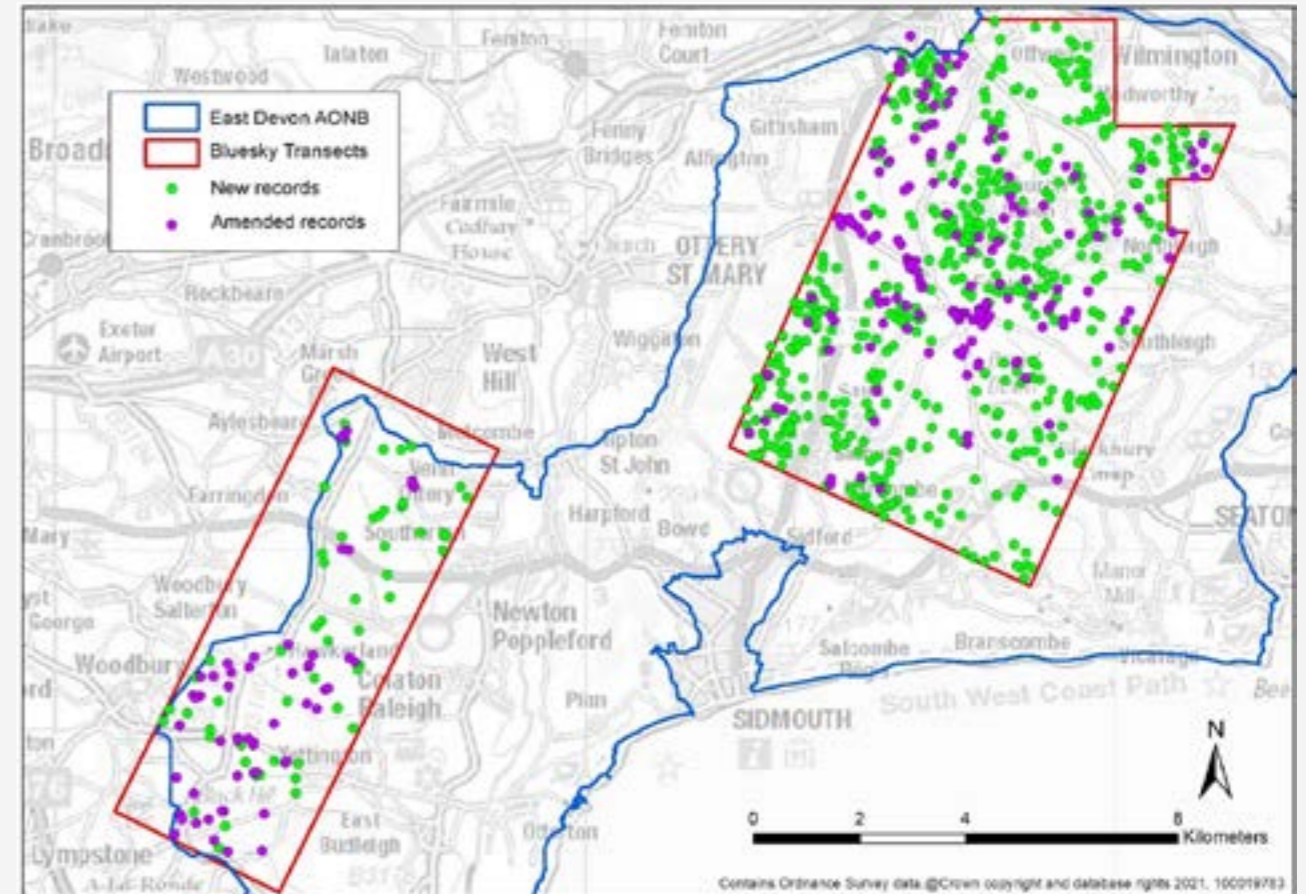
Devon LIDAR Survey

The final report for the AONB LIDAR survey was published this year and the survey data from this area of East Devon is being added to the County historic environment records and identifying further research opportunities.

One of the most striking images in the report is of Woodbury Castle iron age hill fort, which clearly shows the main road cutting through the site.

The majority of the survey results are of the post-medieval era (Late 1400s onwards) with the most common monument feature being extraction pits.

*LIDAR is an airborne mapping technique which accurately measures the height of the terrain and surface objects on the ground, through the use of a scanning laser.



New and amended records from the two LIDAR areas surveyed

Saving Devon's Treescapes

Devon's stunning woodland habitats are rich in wildlife, but under threat from ash dieback, which is estimated to kill at least 90% of Devon's ash trees in the coming years.

This National Lottery Heritage Fund Partnership project, led by Devon Wildlife Trust and supported through AONB funding, is addressing the threats to our landscape trees and working with local communities to care for and celebrate our treasured treescapes, supporting local action for wildlife and climate change.

Over the last year the project has planted 2000 trees in East Devon and over 15,000 across the county.

This has included distributing trees to local residents via free trees hubs, as well as working with larger landowners to plant hedgerows and

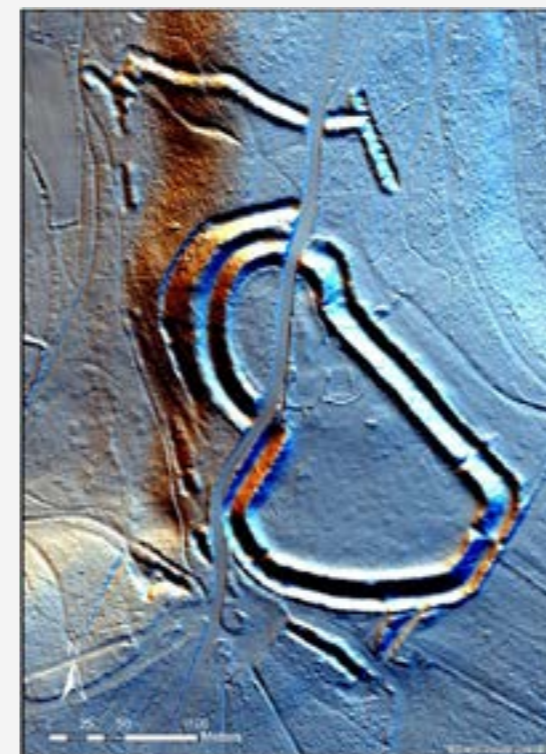
hedgerow trees, and supporting community groups to plant community orchards.

The project has also engaged with a number of schools in East Devon, including Musbury primary school, who planted 140 trees in a hedgerow to border their grounds.

Citizen science training events have also taken place, including sessions on the brown hairstreak butterfly (one of the AONBs #specialspecies), and lichens, where people are encouraged to continue to record sightings on the projects app.

The Devon Bat survey has also launched for summer with a host centre at Seaton Wetlands and summer bat walks will take place along with tree ID events.

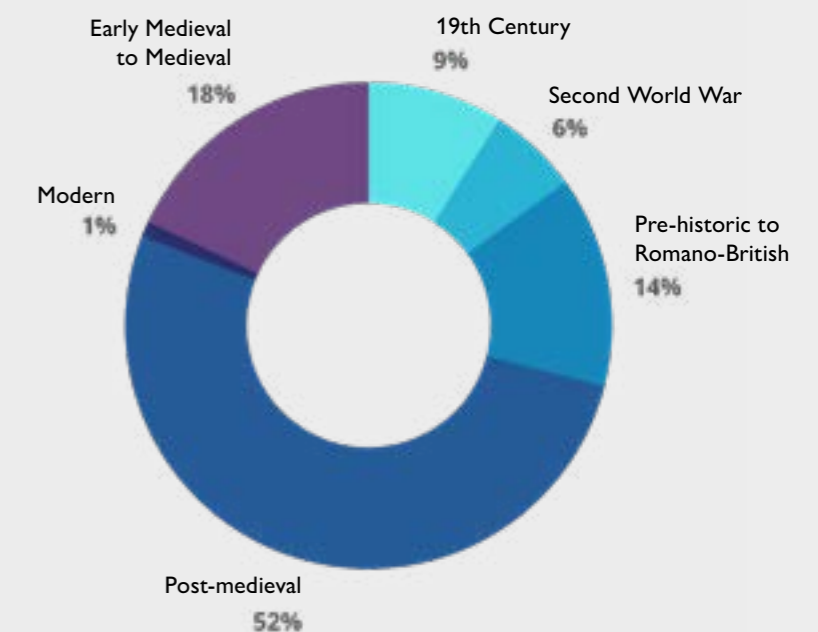
2000 TREES
PLANTED IN
EAST DEVON



The earthworks of the late Bronze Age Woodbury Castle are well defined

(MDV10500) (LIDAR SY0387 Bluesky International DTM 24-APR-2016). Shown on DTM hillshade with 16 direction lighting visualisations. © Devon County Council.

Proportion of monuments by period



BIODIVERSITY

Colchester Declaration: Species recovery

Grey Long-eared Bat Project

Last year we reported on our successful Grey long-eared bat project – The Return of the True Night Rider (RTNR) - delivered with partners, the Bat Conservation Trust.

RTNR was a 15-month project (January 2021 until March 2022) funded by DEFRA (Department for Farming and Rural Affairs) through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

It comprised a grant of £69,200, providing 100% of the project costs, and was an extension to ongoing work for the grey long-eared bat (GLEB) undertaken through the Back from the Brink (BftB) NLHF funded project.

BftB ran from 2017 to 2021 and involved a number of species recovery projects across England, including a focus on GLEB in Devon.



Colyton brownies meet a rescued bat

THE GREY LONG EARED BAT NEEDS SPECIES RICH MEADOWS TO PROVIDE ITS INSECT PREY.

The grey long-eared bat is one of the Elusive Eight #SpecialSpecies we are targeting under the Colchester Declaration in East Devon AONB.

One of the rarest bat species in the UK, there are only an estimated 1000 individuals remaining and just eight known maternity roosts (where the bats gather to give birth and raise their young during the summer).



Grey Long-eared Bat



Farmers GLEB walk



Wildflower seed drying

The BftB project worked across Devon on the landscapes around four of these maternity roosts, connecting the landscape with pockets of species-rich meadow creation and enhancement, to increase availability of quality habitat in proximity to the roosts (within the bats foraging zone) and to allow flow of bats between the roosts.

The opportunity arose to continue and extend this work through the RTNR project, by working between the eastern most Devon roost and the closest roosts in west Dorset, providing targeted advice to landowners and raising the profile of the grey long-eared bat amongst local residents.

ACTION	QTY
Members of public engaged	1973
School children engaged	412
Special interest group members	227
Public events	3
Events for disability groups	3
Landowners engaged	47
Farm walks	1
Grassland enhanced (Ha)	19.25

Outputs from RTNR project

Green Recovery Challenge Fund



Delivered by





A large maternity bat box being placed on a target tree by volunteers

Bechstein's bat project

In 2021 the East Devon AONB and Blackdown Hills AONB's successfully applied for and received Seedcorn funding from Natural England.

The funding allowed for:

- Liaison with landowners to raise their awareness of Bechstein's bats and the area's importance for the conservation of the species in East Devon.
- 40 Schwegler bat boxes (36 2FN and 4 x 1FW hibernation boxes) to be erected along the Umborne Valley that connects the two AONB's and positioned to follow known Bechstein's bat flightpaths from Beer Quarry Caves SSSI and SAC (hibernation and swarming site) to known breeding and foraging areas in the north Umborne Valley.
- 2 radio tags were provided to allow radio tracking of Bechstein's bats found at Beer Quarry and Caves SAC.

The project was delivered by Ecologic-Consultants supported by volunteer effort from the Devon Bat Conservation and Research Group. Long term monitoring of the boxes will also be carried out by the group.

Engagement & Citizen science

In addition to the above project, we delivered a public engagement programme with schools and groups across the AONB, raising awareness of our special species and coordinating surveys on species such as the brown hairstreak.

Four bat discovery walks were held, with emphasis on greater horseshoe, Bechstein's and grey long eared bats - our 3 target bat species.

One of these was conducted as a virtual bat walk, which was filmed and later posted online for people to follow at their convenience.

This attracted over 800 viewings.



All of a flutter at the Creative Cabin ©THG

Butterflies

Butterfly walks and creative activities were organised to raise awareness of the pearl bordered and small pearl bordered fritillaries, led by a local volunteer butterfly expert and our wildlife engagement officer.

A brown hairstreak butterfly egg identification session was also organised as part of the Saving Devon Treescapes project.

Heath Lobelia

The Heath Lobelia colony, one of only 6 colonies remaining in England, has been the focus of continued effort as our Heath Lobelia group continued to grow plants on from seed.

We supported the formation of the Kilmington community action group who have taken over positive management of one of the transplant sites.

Kilmington community action group managing a heath lobelia site



In search of Devon Whitebeam walk, Branscombe

We continue to be part of the Species Recovery Trust's national Heath Lobelia Group.

Trees & woodland

Three woodland walks were organised, these gave opportunities to learn about the Devon Whitebeam and to enhance understanding of woodland management and veteran trees.

IN TOTAL THESE
EVENTS ENGAGED
WITH 1450
PEOPLE.



© Clinton Devon Estates: New creek and flood plain channels connecting to the historic river Otter floodplain

Lower Otter Restoration Project

One of the most significant landscape schemes in the AONB in decades, the Lower Otter Restoration Project finally got underway this year after many years in the planning.

The project is adapting the downstream part of the River Otter, its estuary, and its immediate surroundings for future generations in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

The major partners in the Lower Otter Restoration Project include Clinton Devon Estates, who own the land around the estuary, and the Environment Agency, the government body that has responsibility for improving resilience to climate change, flood defence, increasing biodiversity and improving habitats and water quality.

This managed realignment scheme is being supported through mitigation funding from the EA and is part of a wider EU funded Project called PACCo – Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts – which will receive €17.8m from the Interreg VA France (Channel) England programme.

PACCo also supports a very similar project in the Saône valley in Normandy and projects elsewhere and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

Works have progressed apace after a tricky start, with the channels and waterways created and the road, bridge and access network underway as we write.

If you have not had the chance to visit the site yet we encourage you to do so and see first-hand this transformational project. Alternatively, visit the project website for videos and further information: www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk/

AN AMBITIOUS CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION PROJECT

Strategic initiatives

Our Defra biodiversity funding this year has also helped support a range of strategic policy/guidance projects including:

- Support to the Devon Local Nature Partnership
- Development of a Nature Recovery Network plan for Devon
- Development of an AONB Nature Recovery Plan



Undergrounding powerlines

Alongside the Lower Otter Restoration Project, the AONB team has been working with Western Power Distribution, as part of the protected landscapes undergrounding powerline programme.

This will see the majority of the lower voltage powerlines in the Lower Otter project area either removed or undergrounded in 2022.

This includes a section on the eastern side of the river Otter, running down to the headland, which, following further investigations, was confirmed as redundant and can be completely removed rather than undergrounded – a win-win outcome.

The AONB Manager is the Chair for the SW committee for the WPD programme.



FARMING & LAND MANAGEMENT

A sustainable farming and land management sector that helps conserve and enhance the character of the AONB



Manure and slurry farm event

Farm facilitation

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) facilitation fund supports people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale.

It builds on the principles of partnership, working to deliver environmental benefits supported through earlier farmer-led Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and farmer clusters.

The East Devon Farmers Group comprises 69 farms, centred in the heartland of the AONB.

The government support for this programme comes to an end in September 2022 following a one-year extension, so the AONB Partnership has approved the continuation of this valuable activity by the AONB team under its project funding programme.

This year we have endorsed a further 8 Mid-Tier Stewardship applications from members and got back on track delivering nine events in the latter part of the year.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

This new and exciting programme for AONBs and National Parks was one of the most challenging areas of work for the AONB Team this year, absorbing a significant amount of time and energy.

It required establishing the necessary approvals and agreements with both Defra and our host authority, implementing internal AONBs systems, policies and procedures, employing new staff, appointing a local advisory panel (LAP) to help deliver the grant made up of largely external partners, developing new website details/ information and finally getting the messages out to our farming community that the grant was available.

Since July 2021 we have offered 18 agreements to 17 landowners.

The LAP has met 4 times and approved 6 applications, 5 over £5,000 (and one which was an application from the AONB Team) and 12 delegated applications.

We had allocated 95% of our available funds for grants. However, for reasons beyond the applicant's (and our) control we had some significant under claims.

Unfortunately, this meant only 63% of the allocated grant was spent at the end of the financial year. It is expected that this underspend will be held in reserve but deducted from our Year 2 allocation.

FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES EAST DEVON - YEAR 1 OUTCOMES

4 PROJECTS DELIVERING FOR CLIMATE	5 PROJECTS DELIVERING FOR PEOPLE	17 PROJECTS DELIVERING FOR NATURE	12 PROJECTS DELIVERING FOR PLACE
<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.3 ha of woodland creation • 3 projects helping to reduce flood risk • 4 projects increasing carbon storage on farm 	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1km of new permissive paths • 3 projects delivering educational visits • 4 projects making landscape more inclusive for visitors • 2 projects supporting public engagement in land management 	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600m of hedgerow planted • 22.5ha of habitat improvement for biodiversity • 0.6ha of improved habitat connectivity • 1123m of Devon hedgebank restored 	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 historic structure & features conserved/enhanced • 5 projects increasing resilience of nature-friendly farm businesses • 12 projects enhancing the quality & character of the landscape

18 projects supported - 16 projects completed - 24.4 ha of land supported - £153,353 of FiPL funding

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE

The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.



The Southleigh Valley

Natural Flood Management (NFM)

We have continued to support activity in the Coly valley to develop opportunities with landowners to address the control and management of water in our landscapes.

Progress has been slow but its looking positive for some key interventions in 2022 in the upper reaches of the Southleigh valley.

These include the installation of leaky woody dams, ditch blocking and the creation of scrapes, to intercept and store surface water as in-channel leaky woody attenuators allow increased flows to reconnect with the floodplain.



Brush in-channel NFM measures adopted by the landowner

PLANNING, POLICY AND ADVICE

Planning and policy protects the special landscape-character and tranquillity of the AONB and will enable appropriate forms of social and economic development that are compatible with the landscape, so conserving and enhancing the environment.

Policy

Bat conservation

The AONB team has been instrumental in the development of bat consultation zone guidance in East Devon, drawing on the model developed for the South Hams SAC, which was completed in October 2019.

The Steering Group of local experts from national and local organisations has produced guidance that will ensure that any proposed development influencing the proposed zones in East Devon (centred around Beer Quarry Caves SAC/SPA) triggers the necessary measures, and checks to protect our important at-risk bat species.

Building design guidance

In collaboration with Devon Landscape Policy Group we have provided officer time and funding for the creation of a Devon-wide Farm Building Design Guide.

The new guidance document, which it is hoped will be completed during 2022/23, will help address the impact of the changing scale and nature of farm development in our landscapes, whilst supporting a sustainable farmed landscape.

Consultations and Advice

Although not a statutory consultee, the AONB responds, where workloads allow, on behalf of the wider AONB Partnership on applications likely to have an impact on the landscape character of the area.

Our workloads this year have restricted our ability to input significantly in the development management process.



East Devon bat consultation zone

SUPPORT TO THE RURAL ECONOMY & COMMUNITIES

A sustainable rural economy that serves to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the landscape



Axminster banners © Axminster banner group

The Communities Project Fund (CPF)

Thanks to continued Defra funding, and the desire of the AONB Partnership to support local action, we are able to operate this fund to encourage small scale initiatives across the AONB.

Our funds were almost fully allocated but for a few projects underspending.

The table opposite outlines the diverse range of projects supported by the fund across the AONB in 2021/22.

The Partnership made changes in the match funding arrangements for the fund, following its name change from Sustainable Development Fund to Communities Project Fund, seeking a 10% minimum cash contribution and limiting to a maximum grant of 60% funding.

These changes do not appear to have restricted the interest or ability of groups to deliver projects and have allowed the available grant to be more widely distributed.



CPF funded community projects*

Applicant	Project	Grant £ (% grant)	Total £ Value
EDDC	<i>Two hills, No fences</i> - GPS collars to allow fence less grazing on Fire Beacon Hill and Trinity Hill Local Nature Reserves	4000 (60%)	6666
Devon Wildlife Trust	<i>Bystock Pools</i> - Path improvements to enhance accessibility of DWT reserve and interpretation board	2919 (60%)	4865
Axewoods Co-operative	<i>Axewoods community support</i> - To organise events, workshops and workdays that encourage social interaction, combat loneliness, offer good exercise, learning opportunities and fun. To co-ordinate many of the people, woodland owners and other charities we work with, keen to explore ways of offering more contact with the natural world. To enhance the hardstanding area at the Log Bank to facilitate the use of the area for outdoor activities.	962 (21%)	4810
Sidmouth Museum	<i>Tindall Digitisation</i> - To digitise Tindall's 10 volumes of 'Shingle', the first archive digitisation of our long-term project. To celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the beginning of Tindall's 10 year ('extraordinary endeavour')	1400 (60%)	2333
Branscombe Project	<i>Changing Landscapes exhibition</i> - To mount archive and modern materials on exhibition boards to be displayed at their series winter talks.	549 (56%)	908
Axminster Community Shed	<i>Equipping the community shed</i> - To provide tools to allow a newly formed Men's Shed group to undertake projects in their local community.	3576 (60%)	5960
Totally Locally Axminster	<i>Axminster Banners</i> - To develop banners to enhance the street scene of Axminster. These will showcase the attractions of the town and surroundings with the aim of enhancing footfall and spend in local businesses.	1070 (60%)	1783
Fairlynych Museum	<i>Lower Otter cultural history</i> - Using video footage, oral histories, exhibits and panel displays develop a local hub to explain the historical and current day changes to the management of the valley.	3600 (60%)	6000
Kilmington Parish Council	<i>Community action project</i> - Supporting establishing a sustainable population of Heath Lobelia and other local wild plants as well as insects that depend on them. Involving local people and sourcing local seed supply.	300 (60%)	500
Kairen Hooker	<i>Tedbridge ponds</i> - Restoration of open water in Tedbridge Ponds, with future development for recreational, therapeutic and artistic activities.	1080 (60%)	1800
Total		19,456*	35,625

*+£200 admin subject to final audit

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS

A greater awareness of the AONB, the purposes of the designation, the role of the Partnership and the range of opportunities for involvement in environmental education



Ambassador scheme

Our annual Ambassador meeting is a key event in the AONB calendar, giving us the opportunity to bring together our valued local advocates, businesses, AONB Partnership members and Ambassadors, in support of our area of outstanding natural beauty.

Each year we hold an annual Ambassador networking event in February at our HQ in Sidmouth. Hosted online for the first time, the event welcomed two inspiring speakers and shared a review of our work and the success of our partnership projects over the last 12 months. We also included a session on the government consultation response to the 'Glover' Landscape Review.

The Acland Award

Since our 50th anniversary year in 2013, the Award has been presented annually by the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, in recognition of examples of excellence and exemplar activity taking place within the AONB.

The Acland Award is named in recognition of Brigadier Acland, who was influential in the designation of East Devon AONB in the early 1960's.

In pre-covid years we have awarded our Acland Award at our Annual Meeting in September. As we have not given the award for two years it is proposed that the theme for the 2022/23 award will be the best Sustainable Development Fund /Communities Project Fund (CPF) delivered in the past two years.

A shortlist of projects will be compiled by the AONB Project Officer for the CPF Assessment Panel to deliberate over and decide the winning project.

Connecting to nature through art

We secured Arts Council funding of c£8.8k this year to support an arts-based nature connectedness project in the AONB, delivered through local artist Emma Molony and alongside Exeter based Double Elephant Print Workshop.

The project, branded ROUTES, built on and used our experience and links from the earlier East Devon Way based arts project and our relationship with Clinton Devon Estates.

A focus for the work was Harpford Woods near Sidmouth/Newton Poppleford, where a nature trail was created, with discovery boxes.

Each box contains a different creative prompt designed to encourage people to enjoy nature in new ways.

These were used alongside other techniques to engage people from a wide range of ages and abilities.



Harpford Woods creative nature box

We will be using the learning from this work to further develop our nature connectedness activity.

Landscape monitoring

We continue to build on work from last year to evolve a citizen science landscape monitoring project and have provided mobile phone fixed point photography brackets to a number of local partners/projects for use in their activities.

We have also made it a condition for a number of FiPL projects to use the brackets to help monitor their habitat/landscape change supported through the fund.

We have been working with Plymouth Coastal Observatory and the Jurassic Coast Trust on a further CoastSnap coastal monitoring site at Branscombe to help monitor coastal change.



Sidmouth CoastSnap fixed point photo location. 12 May 22

OPERATIONS, STAFFING & FINANCE

The Partnership will act as ambassadors for East Devon AONB, influence policy and decision making affecting AONBs and work to secure funding for the long-term coordinated management of the area, annually reporting on its actions

Operations

We implemented additional IT security this year to enable us to continue to work effectively in a mixed office/home working environment.

Despite COVID19 restrictions easing, the office still remains significantly less used than in pre-COVID19 time and given the nature of our work it is unlikely we will return to full office operations; our work simply does not demand this.

However, whilst video meetings and reduced travelling has budgetary and environmental advantages, the isolated nature of operating remotely also has an impact on individual members of the team and as a result, has tested team efficiency.

Remote working was an obvious challenge for new team members and in 2022/3 we will be undertaking a full assessment of our future working options as part of our host authority's Worksmart 2022+ programme, in order to consider options for hybrid working and our 'new normal'.

Staffing

Wildlife Officer

In September 2021 we appointed wildlife officer Lindi Rich, on a 3yr part-time fixed term contract, to help deliver our commitment to nature recovery.

The post covers our nature/species work previously delivered by the AONB Project Officer, who now oversees the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL).

Lindi has had a varied career working in nature conservation, with experience in protected and rare species conservation, nature reserve management/monitoring, and planning application ecological advice.



FiPL Administrator

We also appointed an administration officer for our FiPL programme, Lou Maddocks. Lou has a wide range of public sector administration experience in planning and tourism research, including special projects, databases, and website administration.

Having lived in a rural area most of her life, she also brings a strong appreciation and understanding of the countryside and the AONB.



East Devon Farmer's Group Event

Finance

Core

As detailed in our final claim to Defra, our core budget was under this year, largely because of our reduced engagement opportunities due to COVID19, and reductions in core staffing costs - resulting from our AONB Project officer time on FiPL being backfilled with a reduced salary Wildlife Officer post. This will result in reduced core costs for the following 2yrs whilst FiPL is in operation.

Project funding

Our project budget supported a range of activity including LIDAR reports, Natural Flood Management project development work, species recovery activity, nature recovery planning, farm events and equipment for community projects/work on nature recovery.

The budget was slightly underspent in part due to COVID19 and the additional workload demand of setting up and delivering the new Defra funding for the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), details of which are reported in these papers.

Our Defra project funding was supplemented with a late additional offer of £25k, which was used to purchase nature engagement equipment and - with support from key partners, the National Trust, EDDC, Natural England, and Clinton Devon Estates - we also installed additional recreational monitoring and interpretation across the AONB.



Recreational counter installation, Branscombe (National Trust)

Other funding

Our East Devon Farmers Group programme slowly returned to activity but was also underspent last year as a result of COVID19 restrictions.

As detailed on previous pages, we successfully delivered a series of additional projects in partnership with others. These include our joint Green Recovery Challenge Fund with Bat Conservation Trust, a joint Bechstein bat monitoring and enhancement project with Blackdown Hills AONB (Natural England funded), and an Arts Council England funded nature engagement project that carried into summer 2022.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

Our FIPL spend is as reported separately through the FiPL monitoring programme.

We were very disappointed, after a very challenging year setting up the programme, that two large and ambitious projects did not complete all elements in the financial year (due to circumstances beyond the AONB team and the applicant's control), creating an underspend and impact on our allocation for 2022/23.

Core funding

Expenditure		Where the money was spent	
		Operations: £14,500	
		Support services: £8,838	
		Staff: £116,748	
ESTIMATED	2021/22 total: £144,426		
ACTUAL	2021/22 total: £132,899		
		Staff: £110,083	
		Support services: £7,970	
		Operations: £14,846	
Income		Where the money came from	
		Devon County Council: £17,000	
		East Devon District Council: £17,687	
		Defra: £108,319	Other: £1,420
ESTIMATED	2021/22 total: £144,426		
ACTUAL	2021/22 total: £132,899		
		Defra: £99,674	
		East Devon District Council: £16,613*	
		Devon County Council: £16,612	

(*Does not include in-kind contributions)

Defra project funding

■ Estimated ■ Actual

Communities Project Fund	Projects
Estimated: £20,000	Estimated: £53,806
Actual: £19,656	Actual: £51,707

Other projects

Projects	Estimated	Actual
East Devon Farm Facilitation	£8,084	£8,084
Grey long eared bat Green Recovery Challenge Fund	£69,200	£58,714
Bechstein Bat - Seedcorn (NE)	£6,826	£6,826
'Routes' - Arts Council England	£23,640	£25,590

Farming in Protected Landscapes

Estimated	Actual
£153,353	£91,719

(Subject to final audit)

EAST DEVON AONB AT A GLANCE



LANDSCAPES FOR LIFE

The National Association for AONBs is the National voice for 46 AONBs across the UK



- AONBs are about managing positive landscape change
- AONBs are strategic national assets covering 8000 square miles and involving 700 elected members
- AONBs are locally managed nationally important landscape areas



OVER 100 EAST DEVON AONB AMBASSADORS



58 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS



855 LISTED BUILDINGS



29 MILES OF COAST INC SOUTH WEST COST PATH



14 SITES OF SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC INTEREST



HOME TO APPROX. 30,000 RESIDENTS



40 MILE EAST DEVON WAY FOOTPATH



COVERS 32% OF EAST DEVON (268 KM²)



DESIGNATED IN 1963



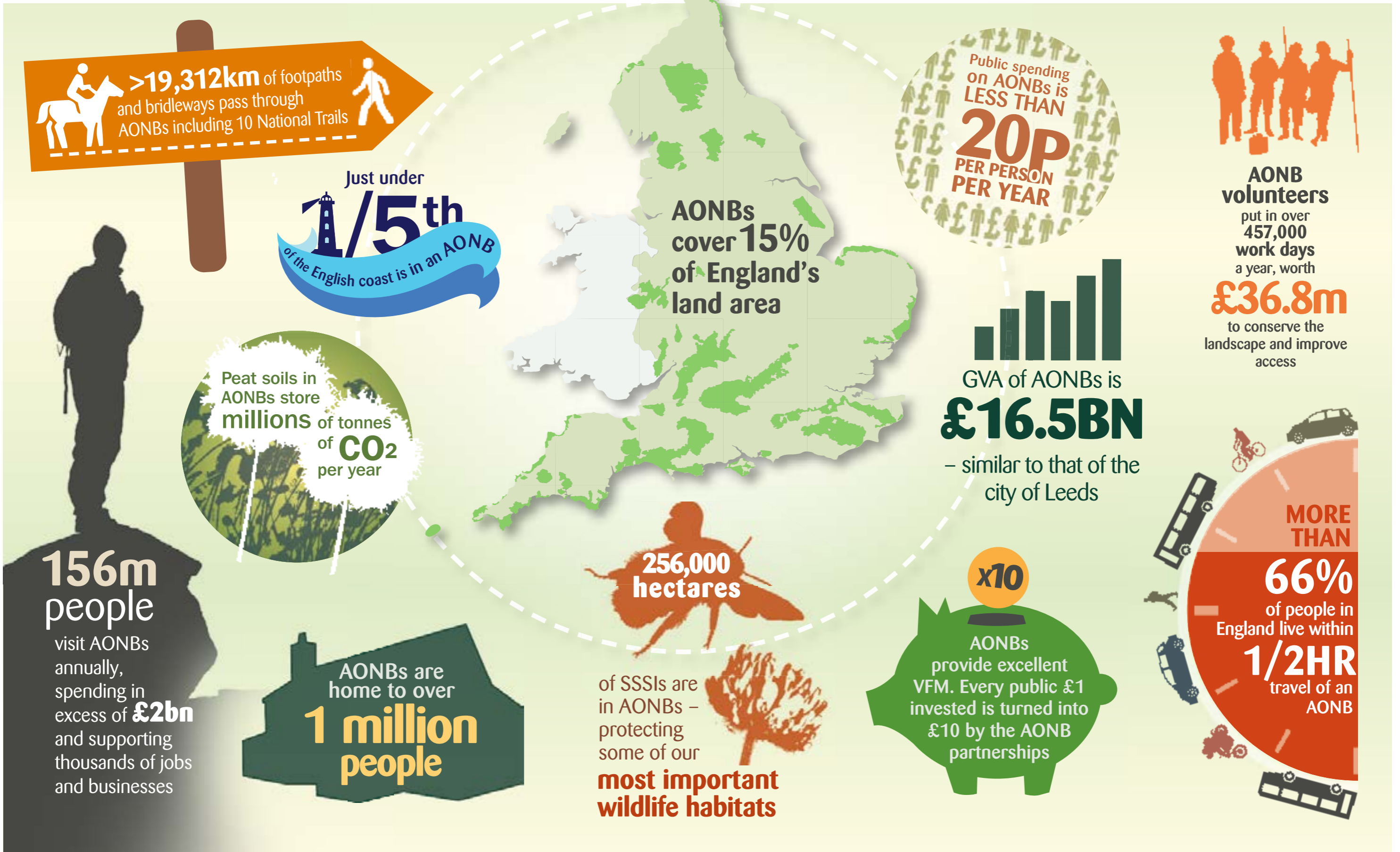
ALMOST 18% WOODLAND COVER

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A designation for the 21st century

Landscapes
for life
.org.uk

THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
Areas of Outstanding
Natural Beauty





The East Devon AONB Partnership is a joint initiative:

- Hosted by East Devon District Council.
- Core funded by Defra (75%), East Devon District and Devon County Councils (25%)
- Guiding the implementation of the AONB Partnership Plan and the work of the AONB team

FUNDED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:

