



EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

East Devon Area of
Outstanding Natural Beauty
Partnership

**ANNUAL
REVIEW
2022/23**



Front cover image:
Autumn trees at Umbourne,
Photo credit: Helene Buse

Right: Spring into Life
Wildlife Walk, Offwell
Woods

Back page: Newton
Popleford River Otter
walk; part of the July 2022
Ambassador event

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Alistair Handyside MBE
Chairman, East Devon
AONB Partnership

My final year as AONB Chairman coincides with the 60th Anniversary of the AONB. It's remarkable to think the AONB has existed since 1963; the year that the Beeching Report was published, leading to

the closure of hundreds of railway lines across the country, The Rolling Stones celebrated their first anniversary and when Martin Luther King had a dream and profoundly stated that '1963 is not an end, but a beginning'. It certainly was for the AONB.

Our anniversary timing is fortunate, given the enforced 'isolation' we have all experienced in recent years. We and many others have resumed 'business as normal', returning to physical meetings, with first AONB Partnership in-person meeting for 3yrs held this April at our offices in Kennaway House. An uplifting experience that makes one appreciate even more the significant benefit of networking and bonding on such occasions.

Kelly Pritchard has been busy coordinating the promotion of our 60th anniversary milestone, linking our events, activities and exhibitions across the year and culminating with our evening Annual Meeting and Awards on 27th September at Woodbury Park. This event will include materials and examples from our anniversary activity we and our many partners have been busy facilitating and delivering with our local communities.

Last year we reported on the significant government commitment of a £52m Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) to support farmers and landowners in all AONBs and National Parks as they adapt to the post Brexit farming changes. The programme is proving highly successful and as a result will be extended for a further year, with increased funding. Our highly experienced team of Pete Youngman (FiPL Officer) and Lou Maddocks (FiPL Admin Officer) have been key to that success in East Devon, guiding our excellent grant panel and advising and supporting our farmers with some wonderful outcomes this year.



We have continued to progress our commitment under the Colchester Declaration, promoting our elusive 8 'special species' (three butterflies, three bats, the Devon Whitebeam and Heath Lobelia) through an enthusiastically delivered public engagement programme managed by Ruth Worsley. This has been complemented by our arts engagement activity coordinated through talented local artist Emma Molony which for 2023 will include a 60th anniversary arts engagement programme co-funded by the Arts Council England.

The additional Defra funding Access for All funding this year for AONBs and National Parks, was very welcome but had to be hastily delivered. Thankfully our AONB Manager Chris Woodruff and Pete Youngman's close working relationship with many key partners across the area pulled together some great

projects which we look forward to building on over the coming two years.

Government action following the initial response to the 'Glover' landscape review is still pending. Although much is going on in 'the background' in rebranding AONBs as National Landscapes, establishing a national partnership for AONBs, National Parks and National Trails, and an Outcomes Framework and Plan Guidance for the next round of management plans, there has still been no statement on the Glover proposals for increased resources, extended functions and stronger purposes for AONBs.

I very much hope that a positive statement is just around the corner and that it will make this 60th anniversary and my final year as Chair an even more memorable one.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair, it has been an absolute privilege to both represent the AONB and to work with such a committed, talented team, and my thanks go to Chris, Pete, Kelly, Lou and all the others who made so much possible in this beautiful part of the UK.

I wish my successor well and special thanks go to Defra, our local authority funders, my wider Partnership, AONB Ambassadors and all our community and partners for their collective support, without which, much of what we do would not be possible.



A WORD FROM OUR MANAGER

In September 2002, I headed south from the Forest of Bowland AONB for an interview in a part of the world I knew nothing about and had never visited.

I was interviewed by former work colleague Charlie Plowden and the then head of planning, Kate Little, for the post of AONB Manager, to head up a brand new AONB service and Partnership and write the first Management Plan for East Devon AONB.

I had had a long call with Pete Youngman prior to interview. Pete was going to be the new project officer in the team, transferring from the former Heritage Coast/DCC Countryside team and he sounded like someone I would enjoy working with.

I obviously said all the right things and got the job and moved down, in December 2002- renting a room in a nearby farm.

My wife Velda and two young children were left to pack up and move from our home near Lancaster. It was a massive move for us all and a very stressful but also a very exciting time.

It was also an exciting time for AONBs, with the significant injection of funding and support from the Countryside Agency (and in time, Natural England).

Embedded in East Devon District Councils Countryside Service, my team comprised Pete Youngman as Project officer, Nick Butler as Assistant AONB Officer, and Annie Saunders (now Dallaway) as admin officer. We had a very healthy project fund in our first year with funding from both Devon and East Devon Councils. Heady days!

The first AONB plan was approved in 2004 by the new AONB Partnership which was Chaired by Cllr Tony Reed with Cllr Margaret Rogers as vice chair (who became Chair 2yrs later) –

two excellent Chairs.

The AONB Chairmanship opened up in 2007 and we would see flow of strong independent representatives taking the Chair from the NFU, Axe Vale and District Conservation Society, Clinton Devon Estates and the CLA. I have been blessed with exceptional chairs over the last 20yrs and I know that is a very rare thing in the AONB world.

Assistant AONB Officer Nick Butler lost his wife shortly after my arrival and left the AONB for a new chapter in his life. He was replaced by the ever-jovial Kimmo Evans as our Community Engagement and Comms Officer. Kimmo was the heartbeat of our team and despite his sad passing away in 2014 to leukaemia, his spirit, laugh and legacy remains around us today in so many ways.

Our early work focussed on branding and PR/awareness raising.

We created a new AONB logo - changing the former foxglove icon to a soaring buzzard, raising the profile of the AONB with projects like the recognisable AONB boundary signs and waymarker discs on all public rights of way.

We boosted the East Devon Way and established a Sustainable Development Fund which was a giddy £100k in its first year. Despite the cuts, we maintain that fund today, renamed as the Communities Project Fund, as a light touch and effective fund for community action that supports the AONB aims and purposes.

Over the next 20 yrs we would see the AONB team grow with EU project funding for programmes such as Making it Local or Heritage Lottery Fund projects like Parishscapes or Legacy to Landscape, whilst core funding cuts took their toll on the core team.

To reduce costs, the team moved first to the East Devon Business Centre in Honiton and then to Kennaway House, at each stage becoming more and more independent, more streamlined, more business-like.

In 2013, our 50th Anniversary, we established an Ambassador scheme and the Acland Award, with the aim of strengthening our relationship and networks with communities and businesses across the AONB and celebrating good practice.



Our Acland award, Bertie the Buzzard, is treasured by those that receive it and for us it serves as an excellent way of recognising the hard work of our 'de facto' AONB Ambassadors.

With increased funding pressure, our core funding relationship changed significantly in 2011 as we moved to direct funding from Defra, cutting out Natural England and setting AONBs on a growing relationship with Defra that would play a significant role in the Glover landscape review in 2019. This change has been instrumental in shaping our status with Defra and in forming new programmes such as Farming in Protected Landscape and the recent All Ability Access, both funded directly through Defra.

The National Association for AONB's has and will continue to play a key role in raising our profile and recognition within Defra and other government

departments. For those that have read the Glover Review, you cannot fail to note the positive light AONBs are seen in within this report as small, dynamic, cost effective and efficient delivery mechanisms with local connectivity and relevance.

I plan to finish my full-time career with the AONB in 2024. It's been a real privilege to be part of a great team and so well supported by Charlie Plowden and EDDC. I have thoroughly enjoyed the last 20+ yrs, particularly our work with local communities, volunteers and ambassadors. It is the energy from and engagement with grass roots action that is the most rewarding aspect of our work.

I will watch from the sidelines as a local resident and I will be intrigued to see how the new team, new Chair and hopefully the new dawn for AONBs emerges from between the lines of the Glover review.

Thank you to all I have worked with over the years and who have helped to make my work so pleasurable. Too many to mention, I am indebted to you all.

Chris Woodruff
Manager, East Devon
AONB Team



LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

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



An Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)

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.



Final stages

The Devon Ancient Woodland Inventory survey is progressing through the final stages of Phase 4, with the Devon Biodiversity Record Centre handing all the data collected to Natural England by the end of May 2023 for their final review of the work.

While there is still a portion of the dataset awaiting final decisions, Devon has added approximately 5000 hectares of ancient woodland to the county inventory so far.

This is an increase of almost a third of the size of the original inventory and is despite the revision of multiple boundaries of existing ancient woodland.

It is important to note that Natural England will review the data so the final figure may vary slightly depending on their input.

Throughout the course of the project the assessors have managed to visit nearly 500 sites for survey and have reviewed over 25,000 woodland polygons (including the extended areas).



Ancient woodlands are those that have endured since 1600, preserving their woodland canopy and unique ecological characteristics.



Biodiversity flourishes in ancient woodlands, which are abundant with uncommon and varied plant, animal, and insect species.



Steeped in history, folklore, and local traditions, ancient woodlands stand as cultural treasures of immense value.

Crucial Land Data

We are hoping to receive a more detailed report including a breakdown of the stats and mapping information and details once the final decisions have been made by Natural England.

This important dataset will feed into a variety of systems and help to influence the delivery and targeting of a range of land-based actions across planning, agri-environment and nature/species recovery.



Saving Devon's Treescapes (SDT)

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. Spanning from 2021 to 2025, the project has just completed its second year.

Collaborating closely with local communities, its primary focus has been nurturing and celebrating our cherished treescapes, while also supporting local action for wildlife and climate change.

During the last 12 months the project has planted around 25,000 trees outside of woodlands across Devon with 3500 of those being planted in East Devon. These trees have been planted in schools, private gardens, public community spaces and with landowners.



SDT in Action

- Communities in Ottery St Mary and Newton Poppleford hosted two tree hubs, distributing 600 trees.
- As part of monitoring species reliant on our treescapes, we coordinated two lichen workshops, boosting record submissions via our citizen science program. Also, the Devon Bat Survey ran last summer, based at Seaton Wetlands.
- A new community tree nursery was launched at Heathfield Farm, Broadclyst. Volunteers from across East Devon are helping at the nursery. Trees grown here will eventually be planted by communities and landowners across the county.



Lichen event, Phear Park Exmouth

Undergrounding Powerlines

Between 2015-23 National Grid (formerly Western Power Distribution) have been operating a £3m allowance fund to underground lower voltage powerlines in protected landscapes. Schemes have been delivered across the SW protected landscapes, with one scheme implemented in East Devon in 2022 in the River Otter at Budleigh Salterton.

Enhancing the Landscape

As part of the wider Lower Otter Restoration Project, c2.5km of 11kv lines were removed from the landscape, with 1.5km of these being undergrounded to the western side of the lower otter valley.

On the eastern side, the lines leading to the coast from South Farm were redundant and had not been in use since the 1990's when the power supply to the sewage outflow pipe off the coast at Budleigh Salterton was moved to the western side of the valley.

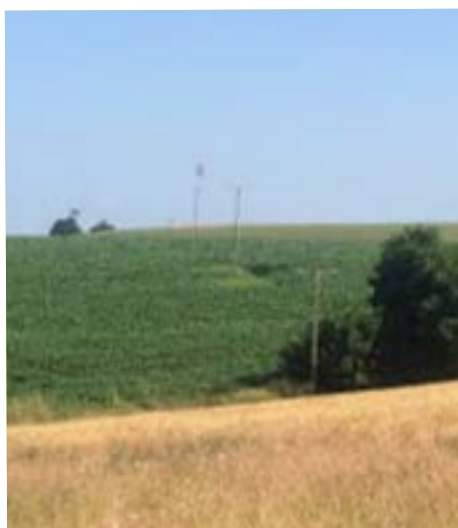
South West Water's discovery of this fact during the Lower Otter Restoration yielded significant cost savings for the site's undergrounding scheme.

nationalgrid



Western power lines removed as part of the wider Lower Otter Restoration Project

The removal of these power lines, poles, and related modern infrastructure has significantly improved the view, restoring the natural landscape



Eastern power lines before, during and after removal

BIODIVERSITY

Colchester Declaration: Nature & Species recovery

Nature & Species Recovery

Our Wildlife officer was on long term sickness leave for a considerable part of this year and left the AONB team in Spring 2023. Understandably this impacted on our nature recovery activity and plans.



Above and below: Newton Poppleford Parish Tree planting

Parish Positivity

However, we committed support to our two pilot nature recovery parishes in Newton Poppleford & Harpford (NP&H) and Uplyme.

The NP&H parish group were particularly active, implementing a range of tree planting schemes across the parish with support from the AONB, Saving Devon's Treescapes and Devon County Council.





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

Meadow Regeneration

The AONB supported meadow improvements on sites targeted for the grey long eared bat and citizen science based butterfly surveys.



Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary on Yellow meadow vetchling



We also funded woodland survey work and data analysis for bat habitat/root sites and strategic locations in and around the AONB.



Our survey/evaluation of the events programme showed for nearly 25% of participants, the AONB event was the first wildlife event they had attended.

All about trees event at Blackbury Camp

Engagement & Citizen science

As with 2021, we delivered a wide ranging public engagement programme with schools, groups and new audiences across the AONB; raising awareness of our special species and supporting survey work for species such as the brown hairstreak.

Thirteen events were run in East Devon AONB locations engaging a wide range of audiences.

Seven of these were open to the public and four were targeted at our pilot nature recovery parishes in Newton Poppleford and Uplyme.

We also ran two volunteer tasks and two events were targeted at specific groups - Honiton Carers (elderly) and the East Devon Young Carers.



Up Down Uplyme Event



Tree Safari event @ Shute ancient Deer Park



Batty about Bats' twilight event at Bolshayne farm & Meadow

Batty about Bats

Our evening bat walks were very popular with families, individuals and groups intrigued by these unique mammals and keen to explore meadows in search of some of our 17 UK bat species.

With guidance from Sarah Butcher, local bat expert from the Devon Bat Group, Noctule, serotine, brown long eared, lesser and greater horseshoes, common and soprano pipistrelle, daubenton and a myotis species were picked up on bat detectors.

Strategic initiatives

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

- Support to the Devon Local Nature Partnership
- Development of an AONB Nature Recovery Plan
- Development of a Devon Tree Strategy



Heath Lobelia, Nr Axminster

FARMING & LAND MANAGEMENT

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



EDFG Event

East Devon Farmers Group

The East Devon Farmers Group, comprising mainly of family run farms across the central area of the AONB, was set up in 2016 under the Countryside Stewardship (CS) Facilitation Fund to support farmers, foresters, and other land managers to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale.

With the Facilitation funding ending in 2022, the AONB Partnership endorsed the continued coordination and support of this group and encouraged opening its membership up to farmers and landowners across the wider AONB.

A total of 213 members from the local farming community actively participated in the program, keen to explore the techniques of nature-friendly farming.

In 2022/23:

- We endorsed 3 Mid Tier and 1 Higher Tier Stewardship applications from members
- Delivered 8 events with the group covering 8 different subjects including: Water capital grants, Mid Tier Stewardship applications, Mob grazing and regenerative farming, Hedge management under CS options and Herbal ley sowing and management.
- Supported a farm transition plan to encourage extensification of production on a intensive dairy farm.



Farming in Protected Landscapes

This farming programme for AONBs and National Parks has completed its second year and has an effective system in place now for approving and delivering agreements with farmers in the AONB.

The programme, originally bound to a strict 3yr timeframe, has been seen as a great success by Defra but more encouragingly, by farming communities across the National Parks and AONB's.

As a result of this positive feedback, the programme has been extended for a further year with additional funding in the final two years.



Farming in Protected Landscape projects: Top: Educational access trailer for shared use on farms in the AONB Above: Old stable converted to a bat roost Below: RSPB fencing for conservation grazing, Aylesbeare Common.



We have received 40 applications to the programme;



and currently have 20 live agreements in operation;



with 98.8% of our allocated grant funds committed to these agreements.

We have delivered on all 4 themes, Climate, Nature, People and Place which has also delivered for 16 Partnership Plan Policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE

The sustainable management of the natural resources of the AONB.

Lower Otter Restoration Project

This ambitious climate adaptation and mitigation project with AONB Partnership members Clinton Devon Estates and the Environment Agency has moved apace significantly this year.

The site has undergone a significant transformation with the elevated access road leading to White Bridge completed alongside car parking, landscaping, tree planting, path works and bird lookouts.

Digital interpretation points across the site keep users informed of progress as the scheme moves towards its completion phase, with the footbridge installation and breach in the banks connecting the newly laid out floodplain to the tidal network anticipated in Autumn 2023.



New flood resilient pathways in the lower Otter restoration project area



Coly 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 there have been NFM interventions, supported through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme in 2022, in the upper reaches of the Southleigh valley, including the installation of leaky woody dams.



River Otter

SLOWING THE FLOW OF
WATER, REDUCING FLOOD
RISK DOWNSTREAM

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 to ensure any proposed development influencing the proposed zones in East Devon (centred around Beer Quarry Caves SAC/SPA), triggers the necessary measures to protect our important at-risk bat species.

This guidance was approved by East Devon District Council in October 2022 and can be accessed on our website.





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, but we used our project funding to support planning advice and a consultation response to the emerging draft East Devon District local plan.

RECREATION, ACCESS AND TOURISM

Sustainable access, recreation and tourism that is compatible with the protected landscape and does not harm the conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.



New interpretative seating and improved access at Estuary View carpark on the Pebblebed Heaths NNR

Access for All funding

This year AONBs and National Parks received funding from Defra to promote and enable improved access for all. The funding is spread over three years but will be delivered in 2022/23 and 24/25, and will total £106k for East Devon AONB.

Our 2022/23 allocation was given top-up funding and was used to support a range of projects with partners, providing improved access for all across the AONB.



Access for All programme

Access for All projects

Project	Organisation	Summary	Project value	Grant
Estuary view - Pebblebed Heaths viewpoint	PHCT	Estuary view benches x 3 as part of wider access and interpretation enhancement to car parking locations on NNR.	£30,468.00	£9,468.00
EDW resurfacing	DCC	Resurfacing 180m section of East Devon Way to improve access for wider user groups.	£4,000.00	£746.88
Planet and People	AONB	Connecting farms and schools - Report and guidance on improving opportunity for educational access on farms.	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
EDDC Streetscene	EDDC Streetscene	88m of beach decking for improved access at Seaton.	£10,956.40	£9,774.40
Colyford Common access	EDDC C'side	Master plan, survey & assessment for boardwalk to improve all weather access and enhance site management for biodiversity.	£7,280.00	£5,000.00
Sensory Trust Audits	AONB	Accessibility audits reports for three locations that will lead to future enhancements for improved access for all.	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
Sensory Trust training	AONB	Accessibility training for countryside staff across the AONB - for increased awareness and knowledge, leading to improved service/delivery.	£2,209.00	£2,209.00
RSPB interpretation	RSPB	Virtual tour including sign language and on-site interpretation for the deaf, people with anxiety, and generally overcoming barriers to visiting.	£15,602.00	12,362.00
NT path/tables Branscombe	NT	Resting places/tables x3 and 120m improved surfacing	£7,108.00	£6,924.00
Totals			£82,123.40	50,984.28



East Devon Way

The East Devon Way is a 40 mile walking route that traverses the AONB landscape along an inland route between Exmouth and Lyme Regis in Dorset.

The route was created in the late 1990s and for the first time since its launch, a full access audit was undertaken by an access consultant.

The audit assessed and recorded all gates, stiles, crossings and

other details such as surfacing, maintenance, routing and interpretation. It also assessed the EDW website and promoted routes linked to the path.

The report and accompanying plan provide a clear framework for improvement which the AONB team will use to seek funding/partners to implement a programme of change over the coming years.

SUPPORT TO THE RURAL ECONOMY & COMMUNITIES

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



The Communities Project Fund (CPF)

Thanks to continued Defra funding and the desire of the AONB Partnership to support local action, we were able to operate this fund again in 2022/23 and use it to encourage small scale initiatives across the AONB.

The CPF funded community projects table outlines the range of projects supported.

Photos, clockwise: Ottery Larder community planters; Stoney Orchard traditional skills workshop; Sidbury Millennium pond, before and after.



COMMUNITIES
Project Fund



CPF funded community projects

Applicant	Proposal	Grant £ (% of project total)	Total £ Value
RSPB	<i>To fund 2 open air performances by Common Players during Heath Week, to widen the potential audience of this annual event</i>	2300 (60%)	4550
Axe Valley River Association	<i>To engage local people in river quality monitoring through assessing invertebrate life of sections of river and chemical analysis for pollutants. To undertake a river recovery survey for a section of a Coly tributary.</i>	3541 (34%)	11762
Ottery Community Volunteers	<i>To purchase and stock a series of planters to be located behind the Community Larder, a food waste initiative. To encourage residents to harvest fresh produce and learn to grow their own.</i>	2185.9 (50%)	7050
Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub	<i>To enhance a section of the riverside of the Sid near Alma Bridge to make it an attractive artistic and interpretative area.</i>	0 (8.5%)	0
Sidmouth Arboretum	<i>To print a revised version of a tree walk that starts in Sidmouth and climbs onto Salcombe Hill Cliff before descending back in the Sid Valley. Identifying trees on the way.</i>	800 (34.5%)	1450
Otter Valley Association	<i>Upgrade to website and archive database</i>	924 (50%)	1725
Friends of Higher Brook Meadow	<i>Site enhancements and accessibility improvements</i>	385 (22%)	2028
Newton Poppleford & Harford PC	<i>Tree planting scheme in Newton Poppleford as part of wider Parish initiative and AONB Nature Recovery pilot work</i>	533 (44%)	1179
East Devon Excellence	<i>An online guide and leaflet to outdoor activity providers in the AONB. Providing potential visitors with reasons to come and stay in the area.</i>	3579 (60%)	5995
Stoney Orchard Growing Community	<i>A series of countryside skills training workshops</i>	3200 (60%)	5370
Axewoods	<i>Protective equipment to facilitate volunteer engagement with practical tasks.</i>	210 (25%)	850
Sidbury Millennium Green Trust	<i>Repair & restoration to community pond</i>	1800 (23%)	7930
East Devon AONB	<i>To purchase tools to allow practical task delivery. Facilitating volunteer engagement in the countryside</i>	447.87 (60%)	447.87
Totals		19881	50337

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 Ambassador network brings together valued local advocates in support of the East Devon area of outstanding natural beauty.

Our annual Ambassador networking event was held in person in February 2023 at our HQ in Sidmouth after a 2yr break.

The AONB Manager shared a review of our work over the last 12 months before welcoming inspiring speaker Toby Taylor from the RSPB. Toby has worked in East Devon for over 30yrs, and he shared the depth of his knowledge with a keen and engaged audience, pleased to be congregating after 2yrs of remote meetings.

Presentations were also given by three local projects supported by the AONB Communities Project Fund - Axewoods Cooperative, Axminster Community Shed and Sidmouth Arboretum.

The Acland Award

Since our 50th anniversary in 2013, we have presented the Acland Award annually in recognition of excellence and exemplar activity taking place within the AONB.

Pre-covid, award presentations were made at our Annual Meeting in September. Unable to present the award for two consecutive years, the theme for the 2022/23 award was for the best Communities Project Fund (CPF) delivered in that period.

The Acland Award winner for 2021/22 was the Axminster Community Shed, one of a growing



number of 'sheds' developing across the country to provide a social networking and support function. A place where men and women with a bit of time to spare can chat, connect and create.

Connecting to nature through art

In the latter part of this year, we made an application to Arts Council England (ACE) to provide continued support for our ongoing arts-based nature connectedness project in the AONB. This initiative is being carried out in collaboration with local artist Emma Molony.

Our proposal will build on our Routes project, delivered in 2022, to engage people from a wide range of ages and abilities to connect with our landscape.

We expect confirmation of the ACE application in late May 2023 for implementation across 2023/24.

We have also supported the NAAONB Art in the Landscape funding proposal to ACE and have put ourselves forward to be a 'spoke' AONB in the emerging hub & wheel model that will get underway in 2023/24 should the NAAONB bid be successful.



Routes creative nature workshops on the Pebblebed Heaths

Our connection to nature is more important than our environmental knowledge in impacting the actions we take to help the environment and wildlife. Nature Connection Handbook

Interpreting our landscape

AONB Partnership member the Jurassic Coast Trust is updating the interpretation of the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site.

As part of this they have coordinated the rationalisation and updating of multiple interpretation panels at one of our most popular seaside tourism hotspots, Branscombe.

The new panel has been received extremely well by the local community and visitors alike.



Interpretation at Branscombe

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 have continued to adapt our IT operations this year to enable us to work effectively in a mixed office/home and hybrid working environment.

As reported last year, the AONB office still remains significantly less used than in pre-COVID19 times and the nature of our work is such that there is no imperative to return to full office operations.

Staffing

Video meetings and reduced travelling do provide environmental and budgetary benefits but remote working also has a noticeable impact team dynamics and with our new team members recruited on the back of the FiPL programme funding, this tested team efficiency.

In March 2023 our wildlife officer resigned following a long period of absence from work on sick leave.

Finance

Core

Our actual core budget for 2022/23 was overspent, largely due to the national pay and staff pay review awards (November 2023) increasing staff and support service costs.



Expenditure		Estimate	Actual
1	Staffing (inc.travel)	115,532	120,316
2	EDDC Support Services & Premises	5,850	8,280
3	Operational costs	16,103	16,809
4	Total costs	137,485	145,405



Income		Estimate	Actual
1	East Devon District Council	17,371	17,371
2	Devon County Council	17,000	17,000
3	Defra	103,114	103,114
4	Other (AONB reserves)	0	7,920
5	Total income	137,485	145,405

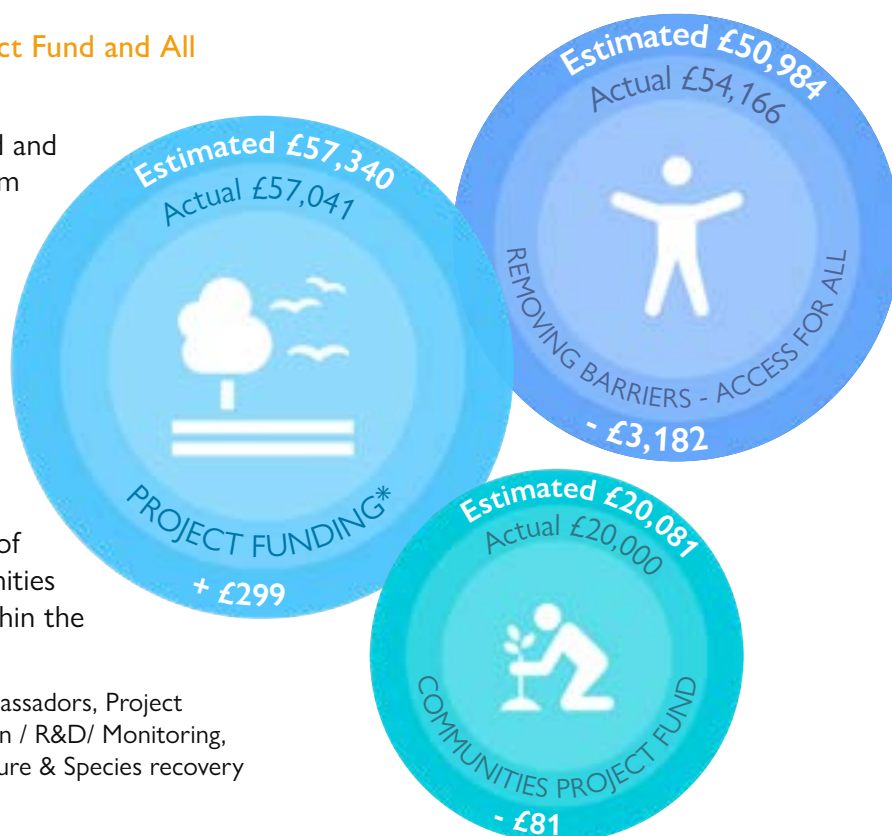
Project funding, Communities Project Fund and All ability Access funding

Our project funding was fully delivered and covered a range of project activity, from woodland surveys and NFM reports to operational reviews, Ambassador events, awareness surveys and recreational monitoring.

Defra confirmed AONB/NPs additional funding for all ability access, agreeing the contract details in mid-November.

We worked very hard with a number of key local partners to identify opportunities that could help to deliver this fund within the financial year 2022/23.

* Project Funding: Nature Connection, Ambassadors, Project Development, AONB collaboration, Mgt Plan / R&D/ Monitoring, Natural Capital/Agri-Env/Farm support, Nature & Species recovery



Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

Our FiPL spend is as reported separately through the FiPL monitoring programme. A summary budget for 2022/23 is outlined below.

FiPL funding	Estimate	Actual
Grant funding	173,669.25	173,225.86
Advice & guidance	29,406	29,050.44
Administration	17,298	15,619.34
Removing Barriers/Access for All funding	54,166	50,984



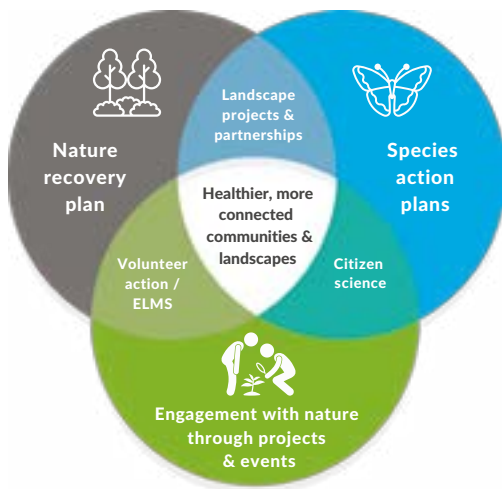
Our commitment to NATURE

The Colchester Declaration

Responding to nature in crisis

AONB Partnerships have made a commitment to increase the scale and pace of conservation action for nature.

Together we pledge to protect what remains and recover what has been lost in our natural environment.



East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- East Devon Way
- South West Coast Path



OVER 100 EAST DEVON AONB AMBASSADORS



59 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS



855 LISTED BUILDINGS



29 MILES OF COAST INC SOUTH WEST COAST PATH








14 SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST



JURASSIC COAST
DORSET AND EAST DEVON
WORLD HERITAGE SITE



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

 <p>HOME TO APPROX. 21,180 RESIDENTS</p>	 <p>40 MILE EAST DEVON WAY FOOTPATH</p>	 <p>COVERS 32% OF EAST DEVON (268 KM²)</p>	 <p>DESIGNATED IN 1963</p>	 <p>ALMOST 18% WOODLAND COVER</p>
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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:

