

**AWARENESS SURVEY OF
SHROPSHIRE HILLS AREA OF
OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
SURVEY REPORT**

**for
Shropshire Hills AONB partnership
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SUMMARY

308 interviews were completed from two separate samples. 202 from a main sample of all residents except farmers living in or closely adjoining the AONB, and 106 from a second sample consisting entirely of farmers, drawn from the same area as the main sample.

The main sample consisted of 90 males and 108 females (with 4 where gender was not recorded). It contained respondents from all adult age groups, with a rather disproportionate representation of the over 70s.

The farmers sample consisted of 82 males and 22 females. It also contained at least one respondent from each adult age group, although the 50-69 age group accounted for over half the total farmers response.

70% of the main sample and all except one of the farmers had lived in the area for more than seven years.

Locationally, respondents were well distributed across the AONB.

Awareness of AONB

54% of the main sample respondents and 70% of the farmers knew that the Shropshire Hills had an official designation for landscape protection. But only a minority of them knew that the designation was called 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. The majority of them did not know what it was called.

84% of main survey respondents who knew of the designation of the area for landscape protection had heard the name AONB, and in the case of farmers this proportion was 95%, but in both groups the majority did not associate the name with the designation.

Unprompted, respondents mentioned stricter planning controls and environmental protection most frequently as implications of the AONB designation.

Attitude to AONB

Main sample respondents generally reacted favourably to key features of the management of the AONB, with "Planning Controls", "Funding for Conservation Projects", and "Support for Involving Local People" being most strongly endorsed. All the items listed on the questionnaire as key features of the management and administration of the AONB had many more main survey respondents giving them a score of 5 (= very good thing for the area) than a score of 1 (= not good for the area at all).

Farmers were generally less enthusiastic in their attitude to the key features of the area's management. They did generally approve of the funding for conservation projects and support for involving local people. But, in contrast to the main sample, in the case of four of the listed features of the AONB; "Stricter Planning Controls" "A Management Plan with legal status" "A partnership of Local Authorities and others" and "A small team of professional staff" more farmers gave them a score of 1, not good for the area, than gave them a score of 5, very good for the area.

In terms of the natural environment of the AONB, both the main sample and the farmers generally thought highly of it. Its scenery, landscape, wildlife, and the peace and quiet of the area are all very highly rated. And looking at the options for conservation and change in the future it is clear that the majority are anxious for preservation of the natural environment

Views on changes there have been for better or worse

More respondents from both samples could think of changes for the worse during the time they had lived in the area than changes for the better. Changes for the worse that were mentioned showed a significant emphasis on new development – both its quantity and its quality.

Attitudes to conservation and possible future change

Respondents showed a distinct tendency to be against change. 'Keep it as it is' is a frequently mentioned priority for conservation; and when they were asked what future changes they would like to see the majority of both the main sample and the farmers answered 'none' . But there was acceptance of better access provisions and facilities for visitors as desirable, as well as work to keep things as they are now.

Conclusions

As a benchmark the survey indicates a reasonable level of both awareness of the AONB and approval of what it does, but there is certainly scope for improvement on the present levels.

Points that may be worth following up include: the much higher level of awareness of the name AONB than there is of what it signifies, and the positive endorsement of aspects of AONB activities (e.g. "Extra support for involving local people") when there had apparently been little previous awareness that it was something the AONB Partnership did. These points suggest there may be benefits from trying to increase understanding of the connection between the name AONB and the landscape protection designation, and expanding that to introduce residents to the full spread of the AONB Partnership's activities.

The positive attitude of farmers towards the natural environment of the AONB is an encouraging sign which may well act to counterbalance their more negative attitude to some of the administrative aspects of landscape protection.

1. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1 This report describes the findings of a survey of people living in or adjoining the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) conducted on behalf of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership during February and March 2006.
- 1.2 The purpose of the survey was to get a picture of present awareness of the AONB, and attitudes towards the natural environment of the area and how it is being managed, amongst the people who live in the area. This picture of the present situation can then be used as a baseline against which changing attitudes and levels of awareness in the future can be monitored.
- 1.3 The survey was done by telephone. A total of 308 interviews of respondents living within or close to the boundaries of the AONB were completed. 106 of these were with farmers, whose views were of particular interest to the AONB Partnership, and 202 were with other residents. The two groups were entered onto separate database tables so that findings relating to farmers and to non-farmers could be presented separately. A third database table was created by merging the other two so that overall figures for all survey respondents can also be provided.
- 1.4 The next section of this report describes the characteristics of the survey respondents in terms of their age group, gender, whereabouts in the area they live and how long they had lived there, and, for the non-farmers, their occupation. Following that further sections deal with awareness of the AONB designation, views on different features of it, and their view on future priorities. A copy of the questionnaire used in the survey is included as appendix; and a full set of tabulations from the survey responses, and listings of comments made by respondents are included in a separate volume to this report.

2. THE RESPONDENTS

2.1 The survey recorded information on characteristics of the respondent's: their age group, whether they were male or female, whereabouts in the area they lived and how long they had lived there, and their occupation. This information was collected to provide a basis for checking that the respondents taken as a whole could be considered to be reasonably representative of the area, and also to enable comparisons to be made between different sub groups of the sample: different age groups for instance, to see if there were any significant differences in their responses.

2.2 Characteristics are as follows:

Age

Table 1. Main sample

Age	Number	%
<18	1	0.5
18-25	5	2.5
26-35	19	9.4
36-49	44	21.8
50-69	64	31.7
70+	69	34.2
Total	202	

Table 2. Farmers

Age	Number	%
18-25	3	2.8
26-35	1	0.9
36-49	29	27.4
50-69	57	53.8
70+	16	15.1
Total	106	

Gender

Table 3. Main sample

Gender	Number	%
Female	108	53.5
Male	90	44.6
NR*	4	2.0
Total	202	

Table 4. Farmers

Gender	Number	%
Female	22	20.8
Male	82	77.4
NR*	2	1.9
Total	106	

**NR =No Response*

- 2.3 Locations** The place of residence of respondents was coded by postcode sector, and by a broad definition of what were felt to be the main geographical divisions of the AONB. The following tables show the breakdown of the sample on the second of these locational bases. A map showing these geographical divisions is included as an appendix.

Location

Table 5. Main sample

Location	Number	%
Church Stretton	47	23.3
Clee Hills	46	22.8
Clun	35	17.3
Long Mynd	28	13.9
Wenlock Edge N	25	12.4
Wenlock Edge S	21	10.4
Total	202	

Table 6. Farmers

Location	Number	%
Church Stretton	1	0.1
Clee Hills	17	16.0
Clun	30	28.3
Long Mynd	21	19.8
Wenlock Edge N	9	8.5
Wenlock Edge S	28	26.4
Total	106	

Key to Locations

Church Stretton	The town of Church Stretton
Clee Hills	Area south east from Corvedale
Clun	Area south west from river Onny
Long Mynd	Area north west from Church Stretton.
Wenlock Edge S	Area north east from Craven Arms including Wenlock Edge north to Brockton and Easthope, Apedale, and Stretton Hills east of Church Stretton
Wenlock Edge N	Wenlock Edge north from Brockton and Easthope, and the Wrekin area

Length of residence

Table 7. Main sample

Time in area	Number	%
<1 year	12	5.9
2-3 years	21	10.4
4-7 years	26	12.9
7+	143	70.8
Total	202	

Table 8. Farmers

Time in area	Number	%
4-7 years	1	0.9
7+	105	99.1
Total	106	

Occupation

Table 9. Main sample

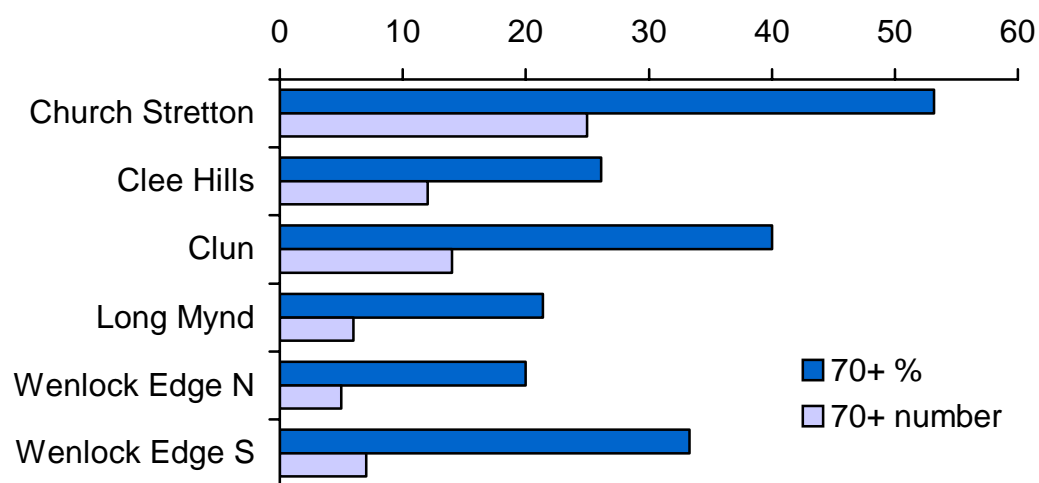
Occupation	Number	%
Managerial	13	6.4
Professional	23	11.4
Middle management and technical	23	11.4
Clerical, sales and personal services	19	9.4
Skilled and craft	24	11.9
Disabled	1	0.5
Semi skilled	6	3.0
Unemployed	3	1.5
Student	1	0.5
Retired	81	40.1
NR	8	4.0
Total	202	

2.4 Comments

Age There is little representation of the under 25s in the survey. Amongst the farmers this is an indication that there are very few farmers aged under 25. In the main sample this reflects actual age structure exaggerated by the difficulty of targeting this age group in the survey.

At the other end of the scale there is a very high proportion of over 50s. In the case of farmers this is again most likely a reflection of the actual age structure of the farming community. In the main sample the proportion of 34% of all respondents aged 70 or over certainly looks high. The 2001 Census shows just over 20% of the adult population (age 20+) of South Shropshire District aged 70 or over. The general ageing of the population will have continued since 2001 so the proportion is likely to have increased somewhat since the census; also the AONB survey area excludes Ludlow and Craven Arms, which between them account for about a third of South Shropshire's population and which are likely to have a rather younger age profile than other parts of the District. An examination of the age structure breakdowns by the different locational subdivisions of the area indicates that high levels of over 70s in the response from Church Stretton has a significant effect on the overall total. Chart 1 below illustrates this point.

Chart 1. Main sample respondents aged 70+ x location



- 2.5 Gender:** Females outnumber males in the main sample but are very much in the minority in the farmers sample. The cross tabulations in the tabulations volume show that there are differences between male and female attitudes in some cases, although this may be due to the respondent being a farmer rather than being male
- 2.6 Location:** Actual population figures for the locations defined in tables 7 and 8 have not been checked, but it is considered likely that the breakdown of response is a reasonable reflection of the actual distribution of total population and of farmers across the area.
- 2.7 Length of residence:** The great majority of main sample and all except one of the farmers have lived in the area for seven years or more. This is considered to reflect the actual situation in the area.
- 2.8 Occupation:** The main sample shows a high proportion of retired people. This is consistent with the actual situation in the area. For those in work the occupational breakdown shows a reasonable spread across the main occupational groups.
- 2.9 Weighting of Combined Sample:** In instances where the responses on a particular question from all 308 respondents are presented in a single table there needs to be an awareness of the relative size of the two samples. 34% of the total interviews were of farmers. This proportion is substantially higher than the actual proportion of farmers. So, where it appears that the views of farmers as a group differ from the views of other residents of the AONB, if the results are to be presented as a whole, there is a need to weight the survey findings to adjust them to the actual proportion of farmers in the population. However, a weighting exercise presents some problems because,

although the proportion of farmers in the population is undoubtedly less than 34%, it is rather difficult to establish what the true proportion is. The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has figures for farmers and for farm holdings in the AONB. But it appears that neither of these figures will precisely relate to the actual number of farming households that there may be. The figure for farm holdings may be a closer indication of the number of farming households, but it is known that some farmers (or farm businesses) operate more than one holding, so it is possible that the holdings figure is something of an overestimate.

- 2.10 The survey findings show one area where the views of farmers seem to differ from the views of the main sample. This is in the case of scoring of administrative and managerial aspects of the AONB. In dealing with this the report does include some weighted tables to give an overall picture as well as showing the attitudes of farmers and the main sample separately. The weighting assumes, based on the number of farm holdings, that farming households make up 16% of the total households in the AONB, but it is felt that this proportion, and therefore the weighted tables themselves, need to be treated with caution.
- 2.11 Elsewhere in the survey any differences there may be between farmers and the main sample, are shown in separate tabulations and no weighting is attempted.

3. AWARENESS OF AONB

- 3.1 Respondents were asked if they knew that the Shropshire Hills had a special designation because of the quality of its landscape. And if they answered yes to that question they were then asked if they knew the name of the designation.
- 3.2 Tables 10 and 11 and the charts following, show the levels of awareness both in terms of knowing that there was a designation and of knowing what the designation was called. They show farmers as more aware that the Shropshire Hills have a landscape protection designation than other residents of the area. Checks on the main sample show little difference in awareness by gender or by age group. But in locational terms there are some differences. Farmers from the Clun and Clee hills locations show a high level of awareness of the designation; and in the case of non farmers Wenlock Edge north and south and Church Stretton show higher levels of awareness than other parts of the area. However, it does need to be borne in mind that the actual numbers of respondents involved in these locational breakdowns are fairly small and so the figures need to be treated with caution.

Table 10. Know Shropshire Hills have landscape designation, main sample

	Number	%
Yes	109	54.0
No	93	46.0
Total	202	

Know name of designation

	Number of mentions	% of mentions
AONB	25	22.3
AONB wrong*	3	2.7
National Trust	2	1.8
SSSI	3	2.7
Others	6	5.4
DK*	73	65.2
Total mentions	112	

**AONB wrong = Name mentioned similar to but not actually AONB.*

**DK = Don't know*

Table 11. Know Shropshire Hills have landscape designation, farmers

	Number	%
Yes	75	70.8
No	31	29.2
Total	106	

Know name of designation

	Number of mentions	% of mentions
AONB	22	29.3
Blue remembered hills	4	5.3
Other	3	4.0
DK	46	61.3
Total mentions	75	

Chart 2. % awareness that Shropshire Hills have landscape designation

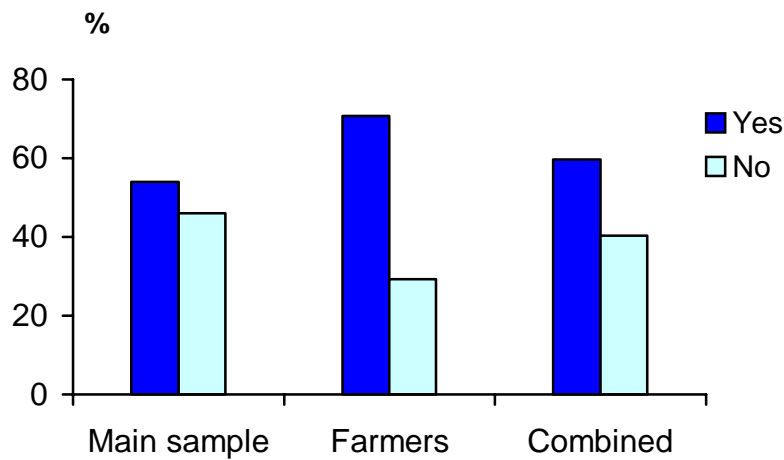


Chart 3. % who know of designation x location

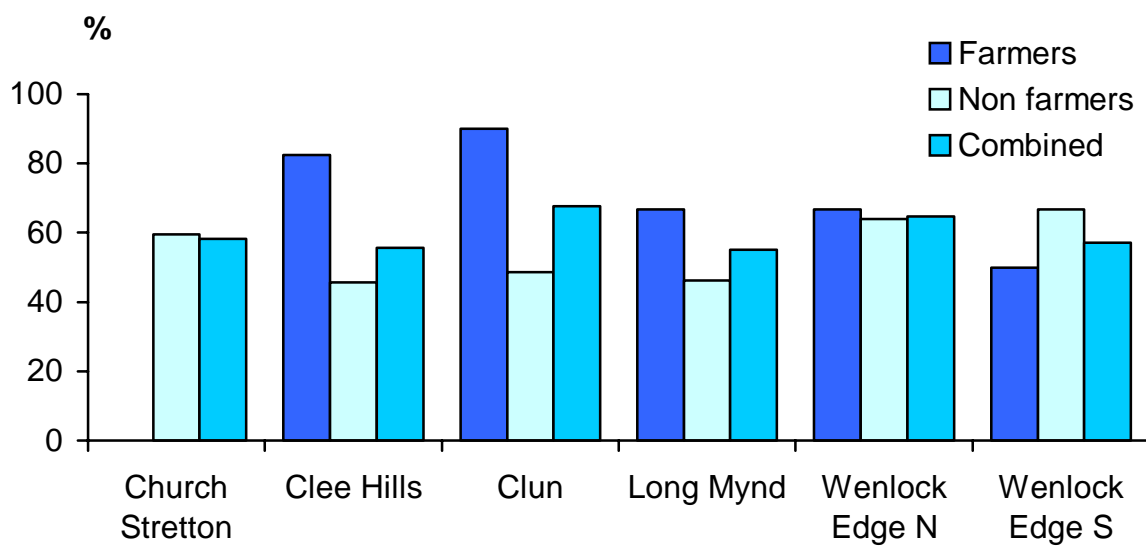
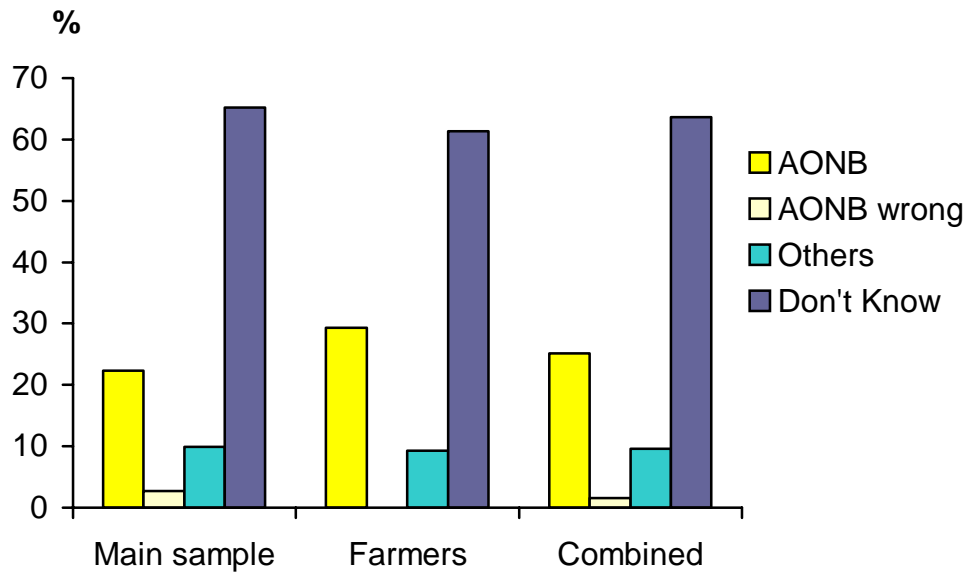


Chart 4. Answers given by respondents on name for landscape designation %.



3.3 Chart 2 shows that farmers know of the landscape protection designation more frequently than others. However, with both farmers and the main sample the level of awareness that it is called AONB is fairly low: Chart 4 shows about 30% of the farmers who knew that there was a special landscape designation knew that it was called the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (= 22 of the farmer respondents, just over 20% of all the farmers interviewed), and in the main sample the proportion of those knowing of the designation who also knew its correct name was just over 20% (12% of all main sample respondents). So, whilst knowledge that the area had a special landscape designation was by no means universal, even amongst those who did know the area had a special designation the majority of both farmers and other residents did not know what it was called.

3.4 Had people heard of the AONB

The respondents who knew there was a landscape designation for the Shropshire Hills but did not give its name as AONB spontaneously were asked if they had heard of it. The response is shown in table 12.

Table 12. Respondents who did not spontaneously mention AONB, heard of AONB.

Main sample

	Number	% of response
Yes	67	81.7
No	15	18.3
Total	82	

Farmers

	Number	% of response
Yes	49	94.2
No	3	5.8
Total	52	

Combined

	Number	% of response
Yes	116	86.6
No	18	13.4
Total	134	

- 3.5 Altogether a substantial majority of respondents who knew that the Shropshire Hills had a special landscape designation had heard of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as a name, but most of these did not associate the name with the landscape designation.
- 3.6 Amongst those who knew there was a landscape designation, those who knew that its name was AONB and those who had heard of the name AONB but did not recognise it as the name for the designation come to 89% of the total. This result amongst those who know there is a special landscape designation raises the possibility that many of those who are not aware of the actual designation may still have heard of the AONB but just don't understand its significance.

3.7 How people heard of the AONB

Table 13. How people heard of AONB, main sample

	Number	%
Media	23	24.2
Friends or neighbours	18	18.9
When first moved here	5	5.3
Local Council	4	4.2
Sign	3	3.2
Direct from AONB	3	3.2
Tourist information	3	3.2
Always known	2	2.1
Discovery Centre	2	2.1
General talk	2	2.1
School	2	2.1
Through National Trust	2	2.1
Other	8	8.4
DK	18	18.9
Total	95	

Table 14. How farmers heard of AONB

	Number	%
Media	13	18.3
Friends	12	16.9
From ESA notification	8	11.3
Always known	6	8.5
Local Council	6	8.5
When first moved here	5	7.0
Defra	2	2.8
Other	11	15.5
DK	7	9.9
Total	71	

Respondents who claimed to have heard of the AONB were asked how they came to hear of it. There was a wide spread of sources, but for both the main sample and for farmers the most commonly mentioned were the media or friends and neighbours. Only three respondents, all non farmers, mentioned hearing of it from the AONB partnership.

3.8 Do people know what the designation means?

When respondents who knew that the area had a designation for landscape protection were asked if they knew the significance of this designation more than a quarter of them did not know. This proportion was similar for farmers and other respondents.

- 3.9 The features mentioned by respondents who felt that they did know something of the significance of the designation are listed in the tabulations volume. They vary considerably, but they can mostly be grouped into the issues of: strict planning controls, environmental protection, the attraction of visitors, and the availability of grant funding for certain purposes. The breakdown into these broad groupings is shown in table 15.

Table 15. Grouping of unprompted responses on implications of AONB designation, combined sample.

Feature	Number of mentions
Stricter planning control	56
Environment protection	61
Attract visitors	17
Grants available	10
Other	17

- 3.10 It was not always clear when a response referred to protection whether the respondent actually had planning controls in mind rather than other forms of environmental protection, so there is almost certainly some overlap between those two groups.
- 3.11 There were noticeable differences between the views of farmers and of other respondents. 35% of farmers responding to the question mentioned environmental protection as a feature of the AONB compared to 25% of other respondents. And 31% of non farmers mentioned stricter planning control compared to 20% of farmers. Farmers also tended to see the affect of the AONB designation more negatively than other respondents: six of the farmers comments (such things as “Handicap for business, curtails employment and increases costs”) showed a very clearly negative attitude, as well as other comments such as “Nothing” or “Nothing of value to farmers”. In contrast there were only three negative responses from other respondents. A full listing of responses on this question is in the tabulations volume.

3.12 Scoring of the administrative features that apply to the AONB

The open ended question on people's awareness of the implications of the AONB was followed by one where respondents were asked to score a pre-set list of key features of the designation on a scale of 5 = a very good thing for the area to 1 = no good for the area at all. The responses on this question are shown in tables 16, 17 and 18 below, with the main sample and farmers tabulated separately and then a combined table with weighted percentages. It was explained in the previous section that there is some doubt over the proportions appropriate for a weighting exercise so the percentages in this table should be treated with caution, but this table does show that, where there is a divergence of view between farmers and others, the view of the others will have more significance in the overall picture. The charts following the tables contrast the lowest and the highest scores (1 and 5) for the listed features for the main sample and for farmers.

Table 16. Main sample scores for key admin differences between AONB and other areas, (5= very good thing, 1= not good at all)

Score	Planning Controls		Management Plan		Conservation Funding		Involving Local people		Partnership of LAs and others		Team of Professional staff	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	13	6.4	12	5.9	7	3.5	4	2.0	8	4.0	14	6.9
2	12	5.9	9	4.5	4	2.0	1	0.5	10	5.0	14	6.9
3	39	19.3	63	31.2	30	14.9	32	15.8	47	23.3	60	29.7
4	41	20.3	73	36.1	44	21.8	73	36.1	74	36.6	57	28.2
5	96	47.5	41	20.3	115	56.9	92	45.5	61	30.2	56	27.7

Table 17. Farmers scores for AONB admin differences

Score	Planning Controls		Management Plan		Conservation Funding		Involving Local People		Partnership of LAs		Team of Professional Staff	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	32	30.2	39	36.8	15	14.2	7	6.6	24	22.6	32	30.2
2	9	8.5	12	11.3	6	5.7	2	1.9	20	18.9	13	12.3
3	32	30.2	29	27.4	19	17.9	22	20.8	33	31.1	25	23.6
4	13	12.3	17	16.0	22	20.8	28	26.4	20	18.9	23	21.7
5	19	17.9	8	7.6	44	41.5	47	44.3	9	8.5	13	12.3

Table 18. Percentage scores for combined sample weighted on the assumption that farming households account for 16% of total households

	Planning Controls	Management Plan	Conservation Funding	Involving Local People	Partnership of LAs	Team of Professional Staff
Score	%	%	%	%	%	%
NR	0.6	1.8	0.8		0.8	0.4
1	10.2	10.9	5.2	2.7	7.0	10.7
2	6.3	5.6	2.6	0.7	7.2	7.8
3	21.0	30.6	15.4	16.6	24.5	28.7
4	19.0	32.9	21.6	34.5	33.8	27.2
5	42.8	18.3	54.5	45.3	26.7	25.2

Chart 5. % scoring 1 for AONB admin features

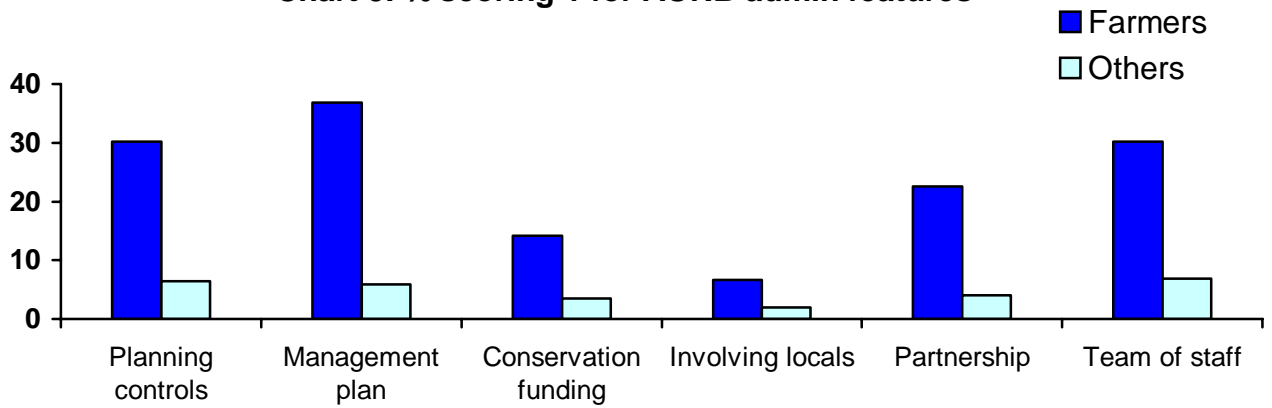
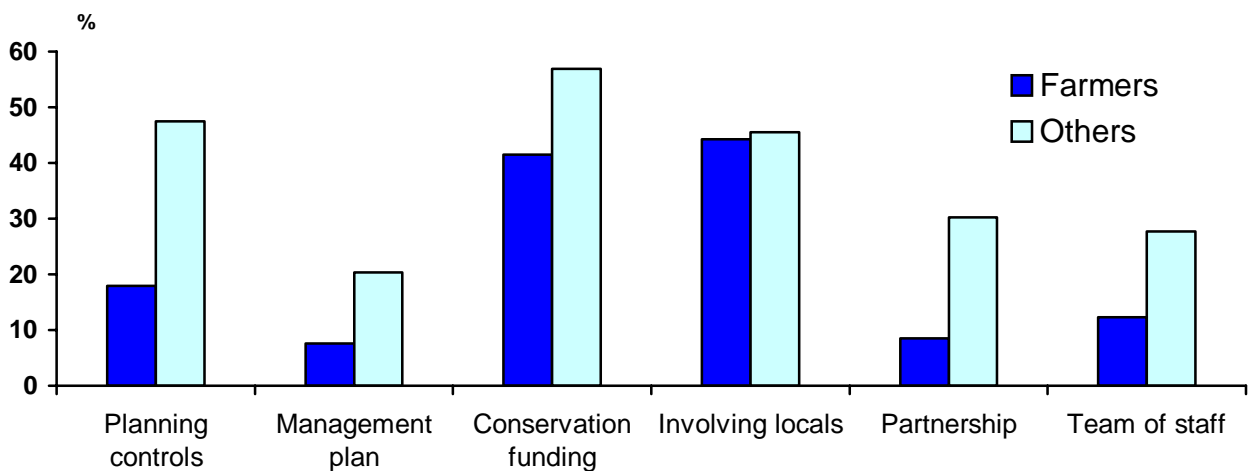


Chart 6. % scoring 5 for AONB admin features



3.13 Farmers tend to show rather less enthusiasm for the administrative features of AONB designation than do other residents of the area. The greater tendency towards a negative view of the AONB as a management or administrative tool that was shown by farmers in the unprompted responses is reflected in their response to the pre-selected list. In the responses from the main sample the score of 1 (i.e. not good for the area at all) is well below 10% in respect of every listed feature, whilst in the case of farmers the score of 1 is only below 10% in the case of “Extra support for involving local people. The score of 1 is over 30% for “Stricter planning controls” “A management plan” and “A team of professional staff”. The farmers score funding for conservation and support for involving local people fairly favourably, but on other features their reaction is clearly less enthusiastic than that of the main sample. The weighted table, subject to the reservations already expressed, does show the limited extent to which the farmers views affect the total view of the AONB population as a whole.

3. 14 Rating of the most popular features.

In all cases where a respondent had given more than one of the various listed features a top score (i.e. a score of 5) they were then asked to rate which feature was most important and which came second.

3.15 Tables 19 and 20 show the results of this rating process. In the case of the main sample it is strict planning controls which stand out as having the greatest number of top ratings, support for involving local people is the second highest rated, and conservation funding, which actually had the highest proportion of 5 scores in the first stage of this evaluation exercise comes third in the overall top ratings.

3. 16. With the farmers there are fewer cases where two or more features have been given a 5 score in the first place, so the numbers are smaller. Conservation funding comes out as the most positively rated feature with support for involving local people close behind.

3.17 One interesting aspect of this exercise in establishing people’s awareness of and attitudes towards of the AONB is that, in terms of spontaneous awareness, support for involving local people did not seem to register with the survey respondents – either the main sample or the farmers – yet when they were asked to score it on the preselected list of features of administering the AONB they scored it highly. This suggests it may be worth working to raise awareness of this feature of AONB activities.

Rating of AONB admin features

Table 19. Main sample

	Rating	
	Numbers	
	1	2
Planning controls	51	15
Management plan	4	3
Conservation funding	20	44
Involving local people	30	27
Partnership of LAs	6	13
Team of professional staff	9	17

Table 20. Farmers

	Rating	
	Numbers	
	1	2
Planning controls	5	8
Management plan	3	1
Conservation funding	16	14
Involving local people	15	14
Partnership of LAs		2
Team of professional staff	1	

- 3.18 In addition to these ratings, derived from cases where respondents have given more than one feature a maximum score, there are also the instances where a respondent gave just one feature a maximum score. Assuming that if a respondent allocates just one 5 score across all the listed features that must indicate a top rating for that feature, then the full list of top ratings is:

Table 21. Main sample

Planning controls	61
Management plan	6
Conservation funding	36
Involving local people	39
Partnership of LAs	7
Team of professional staff	9

Table 22. Farmers

Planning controls	8
Management plan	3
Conservation funding	24
Involving local people	24
Partnership of LAs	1
Team of professional staff	2

3.19 The overall picture does not change with this inclusion of responses where a single feature has been given a score of 5. And on this analysis stricter planning controls stands out as the aspect of managing the AONB that the main sample residents most value, with funding for conservation and support for involving local people also rating highly. Amongst the farmers stricter planning controls is not a highly rated aspect. Conservation funding and support for involving local people stand out as the main benefits of AONB designation in their eyes.

4. VIEWS ON FEATURES OF THE AREA

4.1 Apart from asking respondents their views on what the AONB means in terms of the management of the area they were also asked what they thought were its main attractions as an area of countryside, and how highly they rated particular facets of the physical environment.

4.2 The question produced a very positive response, with 470 mentions of special attractions from the main sample and 250 mentions from farmers. Just ten respondents from the main sample and five farmers did not suggest anything. A full listing of all the things mentioned is given in the tabulations volume. There is a broad division between general aspects of the area as a whole, such as “Views” “Hills” “Landscape”, and specific features, such as “Long Mynd” “Cardingmill Valley” “Clee Hill”. The most frequently mentioned individual feature is the Long Mynd, with the Clee Hills, The Stiperstones, the Stretton Hills generally, and Wenlock Edge all getting frequent mentions.

4.3 The choice of individual features is clearly influenced by a respondent’s location within the AONB. But it is noticeable that the Stretton Hills area attract mentions from respondents located right across the AONB. A table showing respondents’ first choice of individual features of the area that they value most highly, according to the location of the respondent, is included in the tabulations volume.

4.4 Scoring of environmental features of the AONB

As with the assessment of the management and administrative features of the AONB, in the case of its physical features respondents were asked to score a selection of listed features after they had given their own, unprompted views on what they felt to be significant. Tables 23 and 24 below show the overall results of this scoring exercise, whilst Charts 7 and 8 show how farmers and the main sample compare for scores of 1 and scores of 5 for each of the listed physical features.

Table 23. Main sample scores for key environmental differences between AONB and other areas, (5= very good thing, 1= not good at all)

Score	Scenery and Views		Landscape Variety		Wildlife		Historic Structures		Rural Traditions and Culture		Peace and Quiet	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	1	0.5			1	0.5	3	1.5	4	2.0	2	1.0
2					1	0.5	10	5.0	6	3.0	1	0.5
3	3	1.5	4	2.0	11	5.4	46	22.8	36	17.8	19	9.4
4	13	6.4	33	16.3	25	12.4	59	29.2	62	30.7	33	16.3
5	184	91.1	164	81.2	163	80.7	82	40.6	92	45.5	146	72.3

Table 24. Farmers sample scores for key environmental differences between AONB and other areas.

Score	Scenery and Views		Landscape Variety		Wildlife		Historic Structures		Rural Traditions and Culture		Peace and Quiet	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	1	0.9					5	4.7	5	4.7		
2					2	1.9	6	5.7	4	3.8	2	1.9
3	6	5.7	10	9.4	16	15.1	22	20.8	15	14.2	19	17.9
4	10	9.4	15	14.2	14	13.2	27	25.5	18	17.0	13	12.3
5	87	82.1	79	74.5	72	67.9	44	41.4	62	58.5	70	66.0

Chart 7. % scoring 1 for aspects of the local environment

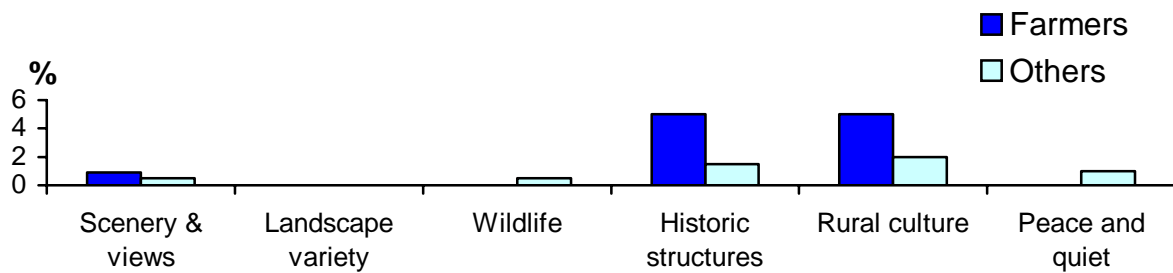
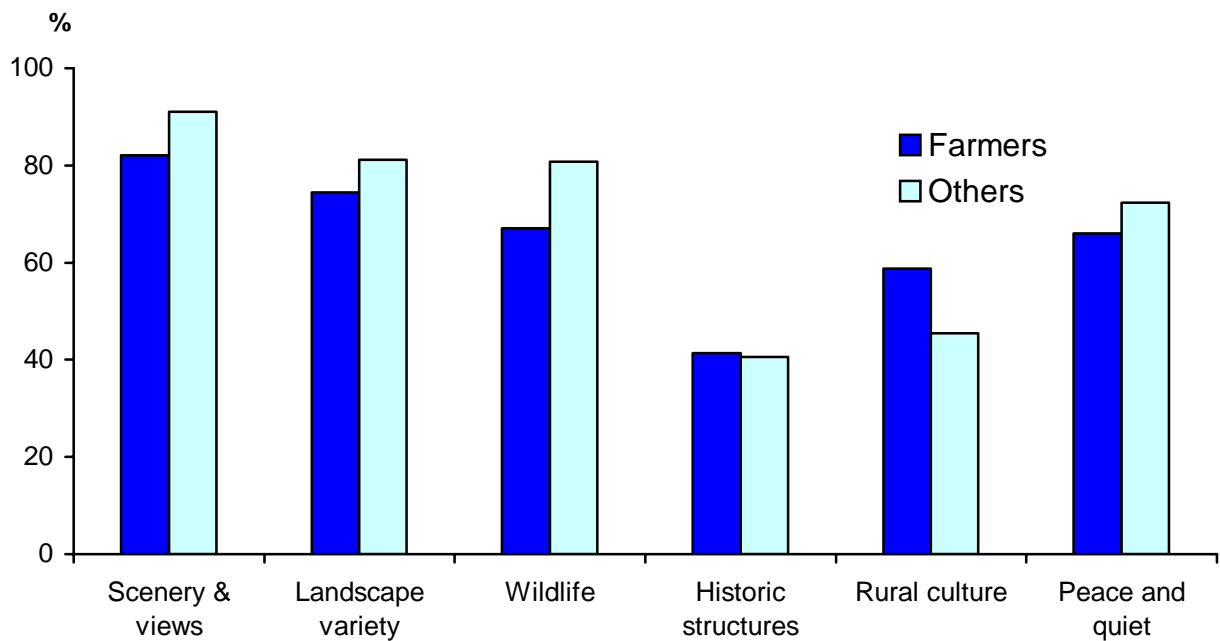


Chart 8. % scoring 5 for aspects of environment



- 4.5 The tables and charts show that there is a more strongly positive attitude towards the AONB's physical features than there is with its management and administrative features. Scenery and views for example has 91% of the main sample giving it a score of 5 and 82% of farmers giving it a score of 5.
- 4.6 With both farmers and the main sample it is "Historic buildings and monuments" and "Rural traditions and culture" that get the fewest top scores. But even with these features the scores are quite respectable compared to the proportions of top scores achieved by the management and administrative features. The 58.5% of farmers giving a score of 5 to "Rural traditions and culture" is significantly higher than the score they gave to any of the administrative features. The farmers still appear to appreciate the physical attributes of the AONB even though they may have reservations about the way it is managed.

4.7 Changes for the better or worse

Asked if there had been any changes in the landscape either for the better or for the worse during the time that they had lived in the area 66 respondents mentioned at least one change for the better. The proportions of the main sample and the farmers sample mentioning changes for the better were very similar: 22% for the main sample (44 respondents) and 21% of the farmers (22 respondents). 122 respondents mentioned at least one change for the worse. In the case of changes for the worse the proportions between the two samples were not quite so close: 42% for the main sample (84 respondents), and 36% for the farmers (38 respondents)

- 4.8 A full listing of the changes mentioned is given in the tabulations volume. In the case of the main sample improvements relating to the natural environment, such as tree planting and woodland maintenance, and also improvements affecting the accessibility of the area feature strongly in the changes for the better.. Amongst farmers changes for the better have a significant emphasis on farming practices, but there are also references to improved access and improvements relating to trees and woodland.
- 4.9 Changes for the worse that are mentioned include many about new development, particularly from the main sample. The actual quantity of new development is clearly a concern though there are quite a few mentions of bad location and poor quality of development as well. Traffic increases and litter and rubbish dumping are other features seen as worsening problems. Farmers are also concerned about development, and with a number of environmental issues relating to farming.

5. PRIORITIES FOR CONSERVATION AND CHANGE

- 5.1 Respondents were asked to say what they thought should be three priorities for conservation. From the combined sample 242 (79%) came up with at least one priority. There was a higher proportion of farmers (84%) offering one or more conservation priority than there was of the rest of the sample (75%). A list of all the suggestions is included in the tabulations volume
- 5.2 The listing of conservation priorities covers a variety of subjects. Some of them seem to be reflections of an individual's preoccupation rather than a considered view of what might be for the benefit of the AONB as a whole, and in some cases it is not quite clear what the respondent is looking for. For instance there are numerous references relating to trees, some of these are specific – e.g. “More tree planting” , or “Planting of native tree species” , but others which refer simply to trees or woodland could be interpreted in a number of ways.
- 5.3 A grouping of all things mentioned as conservation priorities into some broad categories is shown in tables 25 and 26. These tables show that in terms of broad categories the allocation of priorities by both the main sample and farmers puts landscape related and general management related actions as the two main areas of conservation priority. Actions related to Access and visitors come third in both cases, but whilst, in the case of the main sample, they come a close third, with the farmers there is a fairly big gap after the first two priorities. If landscape and wildlife are grouped together, conservation of the natural environment stands out as the main priority for both groups.

Table 25. Main Sample, Priorities for conservation

	Number of mentions	%
Landscape	83	25.1
Wildlife	52	15.7
Access/visitors	74	22.4
General management*	84	25.4
Development	38	11.5

** 24 of these mentions were for “Keep it as it is”*

Farmers, Priorities for conservation

	Number of mentions	%
Landscape	50	31.8
Wildlife	20	12.7
Access/visitors	21	13.4
General management*	51	32.5
Development	15	9.6

** 22 of these mentions were for “Keep it as it is”*

- 5.4 The most frequently mentioned individual first priority was “Keep it as it is”. This got a total of 40 mentions as a first priority. 22 of these mentions come from farmers, representing a fifth of all the farmer respondents.
- 5.5 The Access/visitors category of priorities covers reactions to the ways that visitors to the area may be encouraged or otherwise in ways which range from a straight negative ‘keep them out’ attitude in one or two cases, through suggestions of things that would reduce damaging impacts, to suggesting that things should be done to attract more.
- 5.6 The issue of development is less significant in these priorities for the future than it was in the case of respondent’s views of recent changes for the worse in the AONB. Some respondents do see the need to limit development generally as a priority, but they are a relatively small number. And there are others who feel there should be more housing provided for local people.

5.7 Changes people would like to see

The question on priorities for conservation was followed by one asking respondents whether there were any types of change they would like to see in the area. Overall 195 (63%) answered “None”. The proportion was a bit higher in the main sample (132 respondents = 65%) than it was amongst the farmers (63 respondents = 59%), but it is clear that in both cases a majority want things to stay as they are.

- 5.8 Amongst the minority who did suggest some changes, various forms of access improvements featured fairly strongly amongst the main sample respondents. Amongst the farmers, easing the restrictions on them and letting them get on with their work unhindered were often mentioned as desired changes, but so were more support for farming activities and for the local economy generally.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overall Awareness

Approximately 60% of all respondents knew that the Shropshire Hills had a designation to protect the landscape, but only a quarter of that 60% knew that the name of the designation was Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. At the same time 89% of all respondents who knew of the landscape protection designation had heard of the AONB. Only a minority associated the name with the designation.

6.2 Respondents who said they did not know of a special designation were not asked if they had heard of the name AONB. In the light of the findings for those who did know of the designation there seems a distinct possibility that many of the 'did not know' group may have heard the name AONB but have not known what it signified.

6.3 Attitudes

Main Sample: Respondents from the main sample have a lower level of awareness of a landscape designation for the area than farmers do. However their attitude towards it is more positive, both in relation to the function of the AONB in managing the area and in relation to the quality of the landscape that is being protected. The positive attitude seems to extend to accepting growth in tourist visitors to the area and providing facilities for them. There is general support for both strict planning controls on development in the area, and for environmental protection.

6.4 **Farmers:** Farmers share the appreciation for the quality of the environment they are working in shown by main sample respondents, and many of them approve of the support for traditional methods of farming in the AONB. On the other hand they tend to be less enthusiastic on other aspects. There are indications of resentment about the restrictions imposed on their activities and the encouragement of visitors to the area.

6.5 On the whole the encouragement of visitors to the area and provision of facilities for them is welcomed, although farmers do appear less enthusiastic than others in this respect. But when it comes to development generally there is a lot of concern about the quantity, and the quality and location, that there has been in recent years.

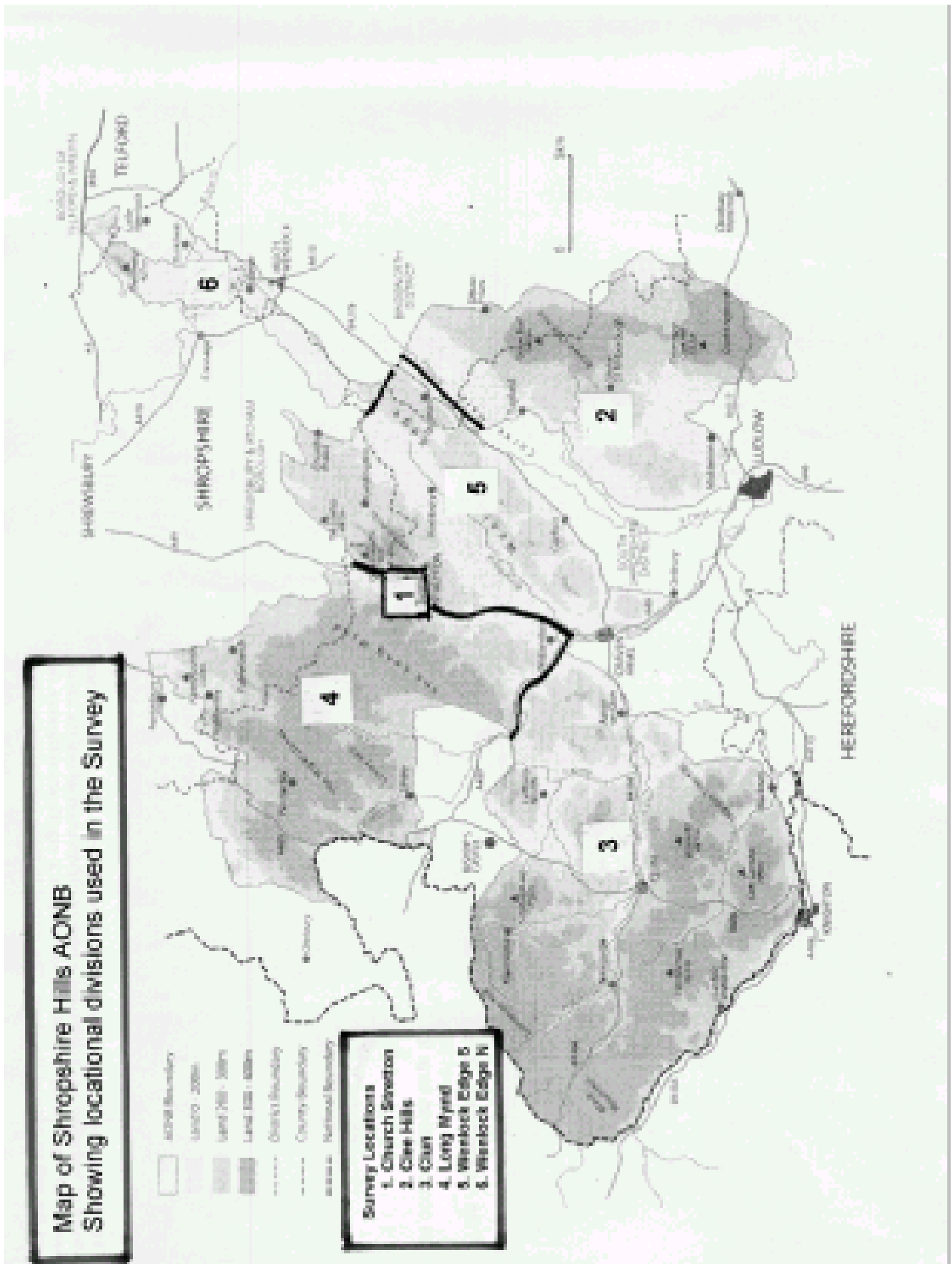
6.6 Looking to the future the majority view from respondents, both main sample and farmers, is that they want things to stay much as they are. There is a readiness to accept more and better facilities for visitors; but otherwise it is conservation work to keep things as they are and planning restrictions to limit new development and ensure that what there is is carefully located and designed, that are the changes people want if there is to be change at all.

6.7 Considerations

It is understood that the present survey is intended as the first stage in an ongoing monitoring process covering awareness of the AONB and attitudes towards it amongst residents of the area. Presumably in future years the AONB Partnership will hope to see rising levels of awareness and increasingly positive attitudes. In this context the survey's primary role is seen as setting a benchmark against which future achievements in these directions can be measured. It is hoped that it has been successful in doing this, although inevitably this initial exercise has thrown up issues which could usefully be given further examination, or could perhaps be approached in a rather different way in any future exercise.

- 6.8 As a benchmark the survey indicates a reasonable level of both awareness of the AONB and approval of what it does, but there is certainly scope for improvement on the present level.
- 6.9 In terms of achieving some improvement, the survey findings do provide some pointers. A particular issue is that of residents' understanding of what the AONB actually does. This can be seen at the general level where the much higher level of awareness of the name AONB than there is of what it signifies, suggests that there might usefully be a stronger focus on increasing knowledge of what lies behind the name. And in slightly more specific terms where it appears that those who are aware of the landscape protection designation see it very much in terms of stricter planning controls and protection of the natural landscape, yet they respond favourably to other aspects of AONB activities (e.g. "Extra support for involving local people") when they are asked for their reactions on them. So perhaps there would be benefits in introducing residents to the full spread of the AONB Partnership's activities.
- 6.10 The more negative attitude of farmers in terms of the administration of the AONB may be inevitable. Management of the area is bound to impose limitations on those who work the land which others, who may simply see the area as a backdrop to the enjoyment of their daily lives, do not experience. However, the fact that farmers show levels of appreciation of the natural environment of the AONB comparable to those of other residents, suggests they must have sympathy with a frame work which is designed to help the preservation of that environment.

Appendix 1. Map of survey locations



Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire

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SURVEY OF AWARENESS OF SHROPSHIRE HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AMONGST RESIDENTS

Interviewer Initials

Date

Introduction: Hello, my name is _____ I'm a market research interviewer working for Martin Horne & Company, an independent market research company.

We are doing an important survey to find out some of the things that people who live in this area know or think about the Shropshire Hills. May I ask you some questions about this, it should only take a few minutes.?

1. First, can I check where you are. Can you tell me the name of the town or village that you live in.

.....

And what is your postcode

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Record phone number dialled

2. How long have you lived in this area?

less than a year	
2-3 years	
4 - 7 years	
Over 7 years	

- 3 Did you know that the Shropshire Hills have a national designation to protect the landscape?

Yes		→ Go to Q4.1
No		→ Read out explanation below

If answered 'No' explain: an area from the Wrekin to the Clun Forest and from the Stiperstones across to the Clee Hills - is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (or AONB). This area includes or comes very close to where you live, and I would like to ask a few questions about what you think about some of the special features of this area. **Go to Q7.1**

Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire

4.1 Do you know what this designation is called?

Mentioned AONB (correctly named)		→ Go to Q5
Mentioned AONB (wrongly named)		→ Go to Q5
Mentioned others Specify		→ Go to Q4.2
DK		→ Go to Q4.2

4.2 **If AONB not mentioned**

Have you heard of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB?

Yes	→ Go to Q5
No	→ Go to Q7.1

5. Can you remember how you came to hear of the AONB

When first moved here	
Through the media	
From friends or neighbours	
Information from the local Council	
Information direct from the AONB partnership	
Other reason (specify)	

6 Do you know what difference the designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty actually makes to this area?

If respondent just says “Yes” follow with

Can you tell me what effect it has? **Otherwise do not prompt.**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire

7.1 The main purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Now I am going to run through some of the ways in which an AONB is different from other areas that don't have any special designation. For each point I mention I would like you to give it a score from 1 – 5 where 5 means that you think it is a very good thing for the area and 1 means that you don't think it is good for the area at all.

Feature	Score
Stricter Planning controls	
A Management Plan with legal status	
Extra funding for conservation	
Extra support for involving local people	
A partnership of local authorities and other organisations	
A small team of professional staff	

7.2 If more than two of the above list are given a score of 5
 Out of those that you gave scores of 5 can you say which you would rate as the most important feature and which as the second most important.

Read out ones scored 5

Feature	Rating
Stricter Planning controls	
A Management Plan with legal status	
Extra funding for conservation	
Extra support for involving local people	
A partnership of local authorities and other organisations	
A small team of professional staff	

8.1 Can you tell me three features of the Shropshire Hills that you value especially highly in terms of the natural beauty of the area?

- 1.....
.....
- 2.....
.....
- 3.....
.....

Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire

8.2 Now I have a list of features of the AONB that I will go through with you, and I would like you to give each one a score of 1 – 5 where 5 means that the feature is very important as an aspect of the special character of the area and 1 means that it is not at all important.

Feature	Score
Scenery and views	
Variety of landscape with hills, rivers, fields and woods	
Wildlife	
Historic buildings and monuments	
Rural traditions and culture	
Peace and quiet	

9 During the time that you have lived in this area have there been any changes for better or for worse in the landscape.

a. First can you think of any changes for the better?

.....

b. And now can you think of any changes for the worse?

.....

10 Can you tell me three things that you think should be priorities for conservation in the Shropshire Hills?

1.....

 2.....

 3.....

Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire

11. Can you tell me if there are any types of change you would like to see in the Shropshire Hills? **Do not prompt**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Now we want to be able to relate our survey findings to different age groups in the population, so could you tell me which of the following age groups you come into?

Under 18	
18-25	
26-35	
36-49	
50-69	
70+	

Record gender

Male	
Female	

13. And could you tell me the occupation of the highest wage earner in your household?
Record if Retired or Unemployed.

.....

That's all the questions I have. Thankyou very much for sparing the time to help with this survey.