



Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Annual Review 2019-20

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About the Shropshire Hills AONB

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers almost a quarter of Shropshire. The Long Mynd, the Wrekin, Stiperstones, Clee Hills and others are treasured by residents and visitors alike.



The Shropshire Hills have evolved through the interaction of people and nature over a long time. Some activities enhance the landscape, while others can harm it.

Special places give us a sense of belonging, and contact with nature is good for our health. An outstanding landscape is good for our wellbeing and quality of life, provides a sense of identity, and attracts business investment. The landscape underpins the economy - food production needs soils and water, while our hills and woods help to manage flood risk.

To do all this, it needs careful looking after by both land managers and those who use and enjoy it, paying particular attention to the qualities that make it special. This means sharing ideas and knowledge, and working together.

The AONB designation recognises this landscape as nationally important, but most of it is privately owned and managed.

With the designation there come legal duties on local authorities, and a Management Plan setting out policies and actions.

A broad Partnership structure supports all this and makes sure that local people and organisations are involved and have a sense of ownership. The Partnership encourages collaboration and mutual understanding among different interest groups.

A small staff team of 8 people support the work of the Partnership, both through taking action and delivering projects directly, and through influencing, advising, supporting and facilitating.

Alongside the Partnership and staff team is a charity, the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust, which raises and distributes money in support of conserving and enhancing the AONB.

The Annual Review gives an update on this range of activity over 2019-20.



The main purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills landscape. A legal duty to fulfil this rests with Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.

The AONB also has protection in planning policy, and a statutory Management Plan for the area is reviewed every five years, led by the AONB Partnership. The Partnership is a local authority joint advisory committee of 36 members.

Foreword by Chair of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

This review covers the 2019-20 year up to the end of March 2020, when for all of us life suddenly changed. Only a few of the impacts of Covid-19 are detailed in the review, as its focus is the 'normal' year which led up to the start of restrictions.

The pandemic has made the Government realise the importance of our countryside and in particular the National Landscapes, with regard to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population, and we are now hoping that the recommendations in the 2019 Glover Review for an increase in funding from Defra will be implemented in the upcoming Government Spending Review.

In my introduction to last year's review I mentioned some of the recommendation from the Glover Review – we are still waiting for these to be implemented but we do know much work is being undertaken on this matter within Defra and there is an expectation that some of the recommendations will be actioned in the next 12 to 36 months.

Whilst all this is going on at a national level the team in the Shropshire Hills having been doing some really good things and I would like to pick up on a few of them -

- The 2nd stage bid for the "Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons" project has got the go ahead from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This project will work in Dartmoor, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales National Parks, and the Shropshire Hills.
- We were also awarded NLHF funds for our Young Rangers project, which will do much to increase awareness amongst the less privileged youngsters in the county to experience the wonderful countryside and opportunities it provides them right on their doorstep.
- The team is actively involved in the Shropshire Climate Emergency activities and as mentioned last year are developing a plan for nature recovery within the area – we see nature recovery as an integral part of the Climate emergency activities.

- We have ongoing projects to improve the water quality in the River Clun and are active in increasing the number of trees being planted in the area through several grants for the Woodland Trust.
- We have also been very active in the area of sustainable tourism – a subject which will be important going forward.

Finally I would like to mention the very dedicated and hardworking staff team for achieving so much, and give a thanks to those who volunteered at the start of the Covid-19 lockdown to work in the Council's Community Reassurance Team and in the team processing business grants – they did this alongside carrying on their work within the AONB.

James Williamson

Chair and individual member of the AONB Partnership



AONB Management Plan progress

The Plan sets out actions for the area by many partners under three priorities. Some highlights of progress in 2019-20 are shown here:



Land Management Supporting Landscape and Natural Beauty

- Defra tests/trials for **Environmental Land Management (ELM)** scheme
- **'Our Common Cause'** project - visions for 3 commons and development phase completed
- **Stepping Stones** project - work with farmer group and support for community groups
- **Clun Catchment** - habitat and water projects
- New **Peatlands** initiative scoping
- **Water Environment Grant (WEG)** projects providing advice to farmers
- Increase in **tree establishment** - landowners, local groups, MOREWoods scheme, events
- **Road verge** biodiversity projects
- **Wildlife survey** and monitoring by a variety of groups

Priority next steps:

Complete AONB **Nature Recovery Plan**

Collaborative work on **ELM development**

Disseminate guidance on **tree establishment**

Expand work on **Natural Flood Management**

Showcase activity on **regenerative farming**

Progress **social forestry** activity

Planning for a Sustainable Economy and Communities

- **Environment & Climate Emergency** - AONB Partnership recommendations to Councils, and two community events attended by 100+ people.
- Better engagement of **local authorities** following Management Plan approval
- Specialist **landscape support** contracted for AONB Partnership input to Ironbridge power station site redevelopment proposals
- **Landscape Guidance** document in draft
- Better AONB Partnership **liaison with Planning Committee members and officers** - through briefing session and casework
- **Church Stretton Community Led Plan** in progress
- Monitoring and mapping in progress of **planning applications** in the AONB

Priority next steps:

Identify and support activities leading to **net zero**

Pursue AONB-specific **planning policy**

Consult on and publish **Landscape Guidance**

Seek greater planning controls over **motorsports**

More capacity within AONB team for **planning work**

Evidence to demonstrate **value of the landscape to the economy**

People Enjoying and Caring About the Landscape

- **Young Rangers** project bid successful
- **Destination Partnership** and AONB team input into new Marches Visitor Economy Strategy
- **Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism** adding weight to AONB sustainable tourism activity
- **Shropshire Hills Shuttles** bus service ongoing
- Better promotion of local **walking** opportunities
- **'Fix the Fort'** appeal raising funds for Caer Caradoc
- New members and raised income from **Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB**
- Successful new **Sustainable Tourism Expo** event
- Support to **Duke of Edinburgh Award** and **John Muir Award** providers
- Scoping **diversity and health** work with partners

Priority next steps:

Public information to encourage **dispersal of visitors**

Greater **connection of businesses to the AONB** landscape and its value

Support to businesses on **sustainability**

Enhanced investment in **walking and cycling infrastructure**

The evolving context for our work

Environment & Climate Emergency

The urgency of concerted action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero has become a top issue globally. The connected issues of ecological and nature decline receive rather less political attention.

Natural beauty is about functioning ecosystems as well as pretty views. These issues are central to the purpose of the AONB, and protected landscape areas worldwide have a major contribution to play in tackling global heating and nature decline.

The National Association for AONBs launched in July the Colchester Declaration. This acknowledges that nature has intrinsic value and huge value to people, that nature recovery needs to be given a higher priority alongside climate change, and that the network of AONBs, their teams, partnerships, authorities and stakeholders are a valuable tool for tackling environmental challenges.

The Colchester declaration pledges that we will:

- support more opportunities for people to connect with nature,
- prepare a Nature Recovery Plan for the AONB,
- embed an ecosystems services approach into our plans,
- work with our partners towards Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030,
- ensure favourable condition of more wildlife habitats and create new woodland.

Click [here](#) to view the Colchester Declaration.



Glover Review report

The review of England's National Landscapes was published in October 2019 and will shape our work for years to come. The report acknowledges that AONB organisations achieve much with their limited resources, but also challenges us to do more. Priorities include more attention to:

- nature recovery,
- working with land managers and communities,
- actively involving broader sections of society,
- better national co-ordination.

Lezley Picton Shropshire Council Cabinet member for culture, leisure, waste and communications, said:

"We are hugely proud of the Shropshire Hills AONB and it is wonderful to see people celebrating this. The Glover Review recognises the importance of what we have here in the county and sets out a path for how the landscape can become even better and deliver even more benefits to people."

A selection of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Key Performance Indicator returns for 2019-20:

- 14.4 hectares of habitat conserved or enhanced for biodiversity
- 1,700m of overhead power line undergrounded
- 161 volunteers engaged
- £16,500 worth of volunteer time generated
- 815 attendances and events convened
- 88 young people engaged in activities
- 269 farmers and land managers engaged
- 29 partnerships where the AONB Team is part of the project/team/ steering group lead
- 55 partnerships as a supporting partner
- 17 strategies and plans appraised
- 31 land management schemes appraised

AONB Partnership team roles

The rest of this Review focuses on activity of the AONB Partnership and its staff team, but virtually all of this work is carried out with our partners - thank you to all of them!

Our work falls into these connected areas:

TAKING ACTION - on the ground and in our communities - to conserve and enhance natural beauty and to promote enjoyment and understanding.

INFLUENCING OTHERS - lead and champion the delivery of public benefits from the AONB, working strategically and collaboratively from policy to grassroots level.

MANAGING OUR BUSINESS - develop a robust, effective and financially sustainable AONB organisation.

Land management supporting landscape & natural beauty

Nature Recovery Plan

Initial research and scoping was undertaken for the AONB Nature Recovery Plan and some overall principles formulated:

- managing core habitat areas optimally,
- better habitats on the margins of rougher hill land, including mosaics of 'ffridd' and scrub,
- re-wetting catchment headwaters, including our shallow and pockety peatlands,
- expanding tree and woodland cover,
- re-naturalising river and stream corridors,
- re-creating wildflower meadows and species-rich grasslands,
- regenerative farming, restoring soil health, and
- managing invasive non-native species.

We have chosen a range of emblematic species, whose ecological needs each help to illustrate the changes needed across our landscape for nature recovery.



Our AONB Partnership Tour on 11th June 2019 focussed on public goods and benefits from the landscape. We looked at the natural capital assets of the Shropshire Hills (soils, rivers, farmland, woods, biodiversity etc) and how these deliver services such as food, timber, water supplies and flood regulation, carbon storage, pollination, inspiration and wellbeing.

Stepping Stones project

We are a key partner in this major landscape scale initiative led by the National Trust. The project area centres on the Long Mynd and Stiperstones, and aims to restore a resilient ecological network, alongside thriving farming and public enjoyment. We have taken a lead role in engagement with farmers and with local community groups, as detailed on later pages.

Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons

The 1½ year development phase was completed with the Stage 2 bid to NLHF in November. Visions for the Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty commons were developed with stakeholders. Projects were prepared under the four main themes of Collaboration, Resilience, Commons for All and Commons for Tomorrow.

Natural capital in the AONB

Diverse geology including minerals and soils (including stored carbon)

Farmed land - grazing and arable

Rivers and streams, and clean air

Upper catchment areas providing natural flood management, supporting water supply and river base flow

Woodlands providing timber and storing carbon

Biodiversity, including important habitats and species

A beautiful and accessible place for recreation, relaxation and learning

Rich cultural-historic landscape

We would like to thank all those who took part in the development phase.

The project is led by the Foundation for Common Land, with support from the National Trust.



Mountain pansy



Small pearl-bordered fritillary



Sphagnum moss

Land management supporting landscape & natural beauty

'Unmuddying the Waters' project

We have continued to work farmers and landowners in the Clun catchment, to progress practical projects on several holdings. These all contribute to reducing impacts on water quality and improving the conservation status of the River Clun Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The main focus in 2019 was two major projects: the installation of a bridge across Clunton Brook and the diversion of a highway drain at Broadward, adjacent to the Clun SAC. Due to prolonged periods of rain and repeated flooding through the winter, ground conditions for working and access to sites were problematic.



- 0.75ha mixed broadleaved woodland created
- 0.2ha wetland protected
- 2.7km fencing along the river
- 0.45ha riparian woodland created
- 1,720 trees planted along the river bank

Click [here](#) to read the Project Activity Report

Clun Crayfish Project

The River Clun is home to a regionally important population of white-clawed crayfish, which are an important component of the functioning ecology of the river.

With further Natural England funding we have continued to engage volunteer surveyors and to employ a licenced specialist to lead the surveys.

We now have a comprehensive understanding of the status of crayfish in the catchment with previously unrecorded crayfish streams identified. Some streams known to support crayfish showed declines, the cause of which is not known, but none of the invasive signal crayfish were recorded in the waters surveyed.

An ark site has also been identified which will act as a refuge in the event of an outbreak of crayfish plague or should signal crayfish find their way to Clun waters. The Environment Agency are taking the lead and are hoping under licence to translocate a number of Clun crayfish to the ark site.



Water Environment Grant Teme - Onny - Clun Project

We received a two-year grant award (2019-2021) from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to deliver Defra's Water Environment Grant (WEG) in the Teme Catchment.

This is a partnership project with the Severn Rivers Trust, and employs 3 Advisors - for the Upper Teme, Onny and Clun Catchments. They make farm visits and develop Farm Water Environment Plans supported with erosion risk mapping to address water quality issues affecting the status of protected waters (River Teme SSSI and Clun SAC). The plans will help farmers engaged in the project to secure agri-environment support now and/or in the future.

Farm visits are also supported by soil assessments. Across the farm soil pits are dug in representative fields and assessments of soil structure, earthworm counts, and subsequent analysis by UKAS accredited laboratory of soil carbon, phosphate, potassium and magnesium are undertaken.

The farm plans are supported by a series of best practice events for farmers focusing on the water environment.



Land management supporting landscape and natural beauty



Helping to shape future farming in the Shropshire Hills

We have supported the Stepping Stones Test & Trial for the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS). Five farmers from the Upper Onny Farmers Group participated in the trial to integrate environmental and business advice within Whole Farm Plans. The Phase 1 report was submitted to Defra in April 2020.

We also convened a meeting between hill farmers and Dr Nigel Stone from the Uplands Alliance & Defra representatives. 11 farmers shared their views on how best to adapt their businesses to the changes as we leave the EU. This was one of a series of regional meetings to help the Uplands Alliance and its partner organisations develop understanding of the risks and opportunities for upland farming businesses to influence future policy and help create a brighter future for England's uplands.

Tree planting in the AONB

We continue to work in partnership with the Woodland Trust to deliver the MOREwoods and MOREhedges schemes in the Shropshire Hills.

We are referred applications made to the Trust and also receive enquiries directly via our active promotion of the schemes.

We make site visits to assess the proposals and make recommendations where appropriate. 24 schemes were assessed during the year and where considered suitable, forwarded to Woodland Trust for processing.

Trees for large scale planting in the Shropshire Hills

The Shropshire Hills AONB is working in partnership with the Woodland Trust to plant more trees.

By planting small woodlands and hedgerows in the Shropshire Hills you can help to conserve soils, improve water infiltration and help in building a joined-up network of habitats that allow wildlife and people to thrive.

We can offer you:

- Tailored advice
- Grants and funding
- Trees and protection



- on farms
- along riverbanks
- in the hills, valleys and dingles
- in parks



Whether you want to plant a shelterbelt or harvest your own wood fuel, we'll visit your site to take a look at where you want to plant trees. We can help you design the woodland and select the most appropriate species mix. If you plant the trees yourself or use a contractor, the Woodland Trust will contribute to the costs of your project.

Partnerships and Steering Groups

The Clun Catchment Partnership includes farmers, statutory agencies, environmental bodies and volunteers. It meets three times a year and acts as a forum for discussion of relevant topics, to co-ordinate project delivery, and inform partners of activity, funding opportunities, etc.

The Clun Freshwater Pearl Mussel Technical/Steering Group works at a strategic level to implement initiatives and the latest science from statutory bodies and national leads. The group also works to develop/influence policy related to pearl mussel e.g. conservation strategies.

The Clun Field Officers Group shares good practice and coordinates on the ground activity in the Clun Catchment. Membership of the group has recently expanded to include Shropshire Wildlife Trust who are delivering Natural Flood Management activity and Severn Rivers Trust who are partners in the TOC project (see page 7).

We also represent the AONB Partnership on the

- Teme Partnership
- Corve Catchment Partnership
- Teme - Onny - Clun WEG Steering Group
- Marches Crayfish Partnership

Planning for a sustainable economy and communities

Environment & Climate Emergency

Following the October Partnership meeting, the AONB Partnership made a series of recommendations to the two Councils to give priority to nature recovery alongside climate change.

An event for community groups on the Environment and Climate Emergency was held in February 2020 attended by around 100 people. 11 community groups presented on their work, followed by 7 presentations and 5 workshops.

Click [here](#) to see resources from the event.

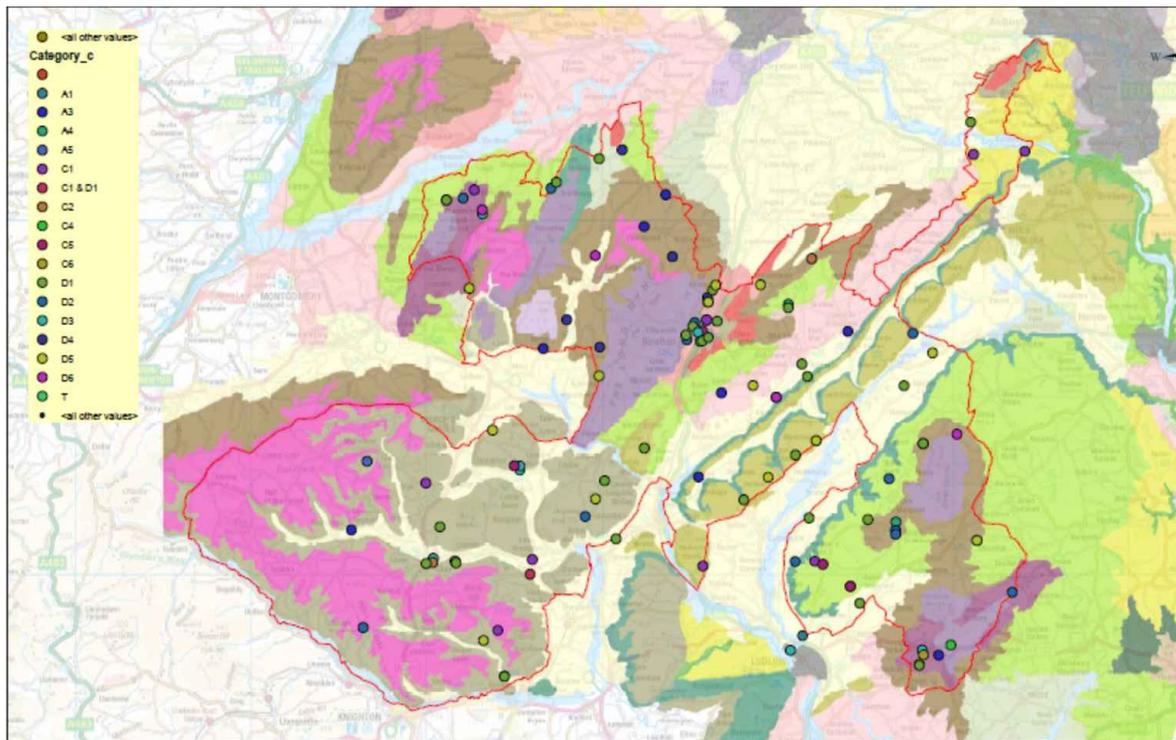


Planning

We made a detailed response to the applications for proposed redevelopment of the Ironbridge Power Station site, with the support of specialist landscape advice commissioned from Carly Tinkler.

We also commented on planning appeals for pheasant rearing operation at Newcastle Court and motocross at Thornacre.

We have undertaken monitoring and mapping of planning applications in the AONB. On 5th March, we gave a detailed AONB briefing for Planning Committee members and officers.



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Kilomet

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Unit 9, Drovers House
The Auction Yard
Craven Arms
SY7 9BZ

Other strategic work

We provided input to the following strategies, plans and documents:

- Marches Visitor Economy Strategy
- SC Outdoor Recreation survey
- Harworth Ironbridge Masterplan
- SC Local Transport Plan
- SC Active Travel Plan
- SC Cultural Strategy
- SC Cultural Peer Review
- Environment Audit Committee Sustainable Tourism Inquiry
- SC Green Infrastructure strategy development
- SC Climate Emergency declaration
- SC Strategic Sites allocation
- NAAONB Induction presentation
- NAAONB Art in the Landscape proposal
- Trees & Woodland expansion in the AONB
- Marches Nature Partnership Environment Strategy

(SC = Shropshire Council)

People enjoying and caring about the landscape

"Absolutely fantastic service on the Shuttle buses from Church Stretton. Great stops at Stiperstones etc – knowledgeable and friendly drivers. Well done!!! A very happy day for us."

Passenger feedback, 2019

Shropshire Hills Shuttles 2019

We ran a successful service with passenger numbers consistent with previous years. In the last five years the Shuttle buses have carried thousands of passengers helping to maintain the air quality, reduce congestion by providing a green alternative to exploring the Long Mynd and Stiperstones area by car.

At the request of business owners in the village we included a link to the Bottle & Glass pub in Picklescott. Unfortunately this was not as successful as we had hoped.

The Shuttle bus however currently services a number of other pubs and many more businesses including the Bog Visitor Centre.

Looking ahead, it is likely that the service will have to change to accommodate increased running costs and reduced budgets.



Visitor Economy Study

With sustainable tourism expert Alison Caffyn, we researched farm tourism in the Stepping Stones area on behalf of the National Trust.

The study involved face to face and phone interviews with farmers and landowners who have diversified into tourism.

The study made recommendations on the development of farm tourism which benefits the wildlife and landscape of the Stepping Stones area, whilst benefiting farm incomes.



Marches Visitor Economy Strategy

We worked closely with Destination Ludlow Partnership and Visit Shropshire Hills to ensure that the wider area visitor economy strategy had a strong focus on sustainable tourism development.

The strategy, launched in February 2020, will provide access to future investment in the area through the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership. Click [here](#) to see the Strategy.



We worked with Visit Shropshire Hills to set up **The Great Shropshire Hills Cream Tea Trail** promoting local food, tea rooms and cafes.

The trail promoted 13 businesses all offering an authentic Shropshire Hills Cream Tea, i.e. that included Shropshire Damson Jam on a fresh home-baked scone.

The Trail was launched at the 2019 Shropshire Hills Tourism Expo and sponsored by Ludlow Farm Shop.

Over 350 visitors voted online for their favourite cream tea, and the title of best cream tea in the Shropshire Hills went to Jemima's Kitchen in Church Stretton.

Shropshire Hills Expo 2020

We spent the first part of 2020 working with Visit Shropshire Hills to arrange the Tourism Expo to be held in April at Ludlow Castle. Unfortunately the event was cancelled due to Covid-19.

However, the systems developed by Abigail Dakin of Dakin Events, on behalf of the Visit Shropshire Hills will significantly benefit future event organisation.

We are hoping to hold a mid-season event once restrictions have been lifted, to help support local tourism businesses.



People enjoying and caring about the landscape

Stepping Stones community consultation

We held a series of public meetings at Pontesbury, Norbury and Church Stretton to introduce Stepping Stones and see how they can be involved. 160 people attended these events, helping to shape the project. The meetings generated much enthusiasm around verge restoration, meadow creation, hedgerow management and species recording.

A number of field trips were planned in the spring to help people explore the Stepping Stones area, but only one of these was able to go ahead.

Click [here](#) to read the Consultation Report



Photograph by Ben Osborne

A national moment for AONBs

Over 100 people gathered in Cardingmill Valley on 21st September to form a choir and perform songs written about the Shropshire Hills. A symbolic heart was created to highlight the value of AONBs as our 'natural health service'.

This event celebrated the 70th anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, which paved the way for the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Similar events happened in AONBs across the country and were shared on social media.

On the same day, the Glover Review report was published, recommending the need to recapture the zeal and vision which created our national landscapes 70 years ago (see [page 5](#)).

www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk has been restructured and the content refreshed to create an inspiring and informative website, which is responsive on all devices.

E-newsletters and social media posts help us to share news and stories from the Shropshire Hills with a wide audience.

A better understanding of commons

We continued to engage young people through the John Muir Award, supporting over 50 children and teachers from the Shropshire Hills Federation to make four visits to the Long Mynd common. These trips involved farm visits to meet the commoners, footpath repair, and learning more about the wildlife, archaeology and visitor pressures on the common.

"What a fantastic day years 4, 5 and 6 from all three schools had yesterday on The Long Mynd. We were so lucky to have the opportunity to work with a professional archaeologist and then we worked with the National Trust to repair a very muddy path at Boiling Well. We had so many positive comments about children's efforts and behaviour, from walkers as they passed by; I was a very proud headteacher! Thank you to all our children."

Les Ball, Headteacher.

In Spring / Summer 2019 we organised a series of walks, talks and training activities to help people understand more about the heritage of upland commons, the wildlife they support and the practice of commoning. Around 200 people took part in butterfly walks, plant identification and scything sessions.



Shropshire Hills AONB Trust and AONB Partnership joint work



Through £15,158 of grants from its Conservation Fund, the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust supported 11 projects in 2019-20 to deliver practical conservation and awareness raising activities in the Shropshire Hills.

Brynmawr Farm Summer Club

Antonia Pettitt, £1,490. An environmental summer club for young people on Brynmawr Organic Farm.

Sowing the Seed of God's Acre

Caring for God's Acre, £1,500. Surveying burial grounds in the AONB where little is known about the flora and fauna. Grassland management training to share best practice.

Hills Stories 2019

Nick Fogg & Mike Smart, £1,500. Offering young people the chance to explore and engage with the landscape, wildlife, and heritage using digital technology.

Upper Onny Balsam Bashing

Upper Onny Wildlife Group, £1,500. Continuing surveys along the river and clearing the Himalayan balsam with help from volunteer work parties.

Shropshire Favourite Bird Sites booklet

RSPB South Shropshire Group, £500. A new guide for beginners highlighting local wildlife sites which are good for bird watching.

Halfway House on the Wrekin

Jenny Joy, £1,283. Project to create a pollinator garden at the café on the Wrekin, and run a series of awareness raising events.

A taste for adventure

South Shropshire Youth Forum, £1,500. Project to deliver six sessions for ten young people referred onto the programme by Church Stretton Secondary School.

People and Plants

Upper Onny Wildlife Group, £500. Eight training sessions (walks, surveys & workshops) for people interested in plants. The aim was to encourage new people to get involved in active conservation.

Whinchat conservation on the Long Mynd

National Trust, £2,500. A pilot project to find a sample of whinchat nests (which are wholly restricted to bracken habitats), monitor them with trail cameras, and colour-ring the chicks.

Youth in Woods

Lightfoot, £1,500. Introducing pupils from Bishop's Castle Community College to the diversity of woodlands, demonstrating how they can be managed for enjoyment, wildlife and wood-fuel.

Shropshire Barytes Industry

Shropshire Caving & Mining Club, £1,000. Practical work at Cothercott and the Bog Mine to discover more about the historic local barytes industry.



Friends subscriptions go entirely into the Conservation Fund. In 2019-20, this amounted to over £5,000. The Friends scheme is run jointly with the AONB Trust.

Capacity Building

A two year Capacity Building Project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Resilient Heritage programme has supported the AONB Trust and AONB Partnership to develop collaborative working to help us meet the challenges faced by our special landscape.

Activities included preparation of Business Plans, training and development for key staff and volunteers, and a programme of income-generation activities and project development through new staffing capacity, supported by communications work.

The project also enabled us to work with professional fundraisers, Tarnside Consulting, to make applications for additional funding for the Conservation Fund. This has been completed alongside development of our visitor-giving scheme for 'Fix the Fort' Caer Caradoc.

The **Fix the Fort** charity appeal raised £2,500 towards the cost of repairing Caer Caradoc's eroded ramparts and footpaths.

We have been working with Shropshire Council, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and National Trust to plan the first repair works.



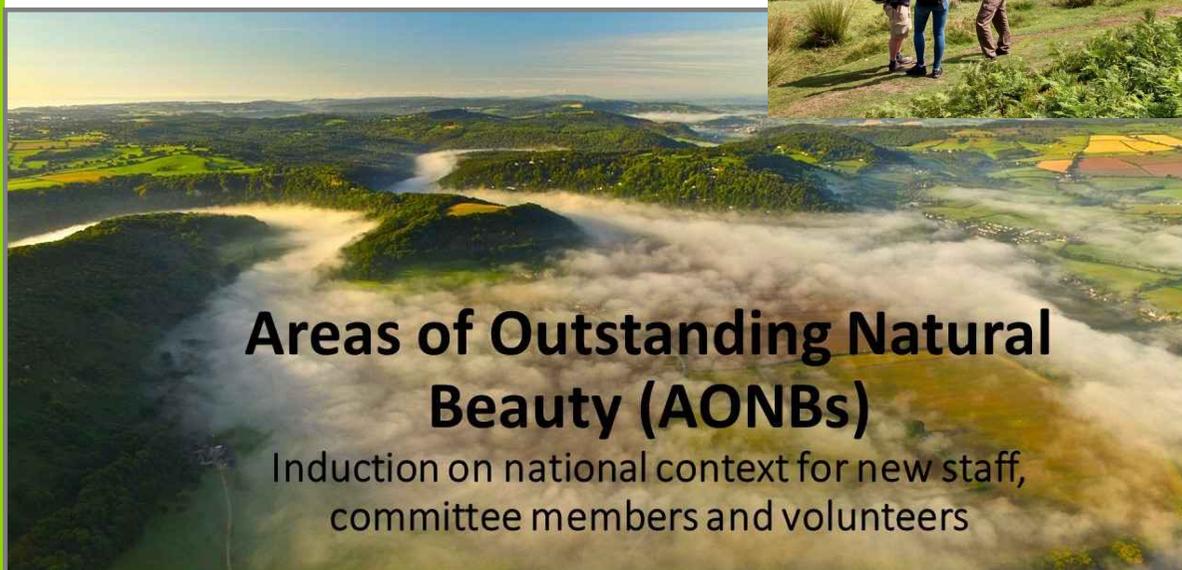
Wider networks

National Association for AONBs

We play an active role in the NAAONB in a number of different ways. Phil and James attended the Chairs' Conference in London in November and Phil attended the Lead Officers meeting in Birmingham in February.

Team members regularly contribute to discussions on the on-line forum threads, and James our Chair sits on the NAAONB Board.

Phil took part in the year long 'Taking the Lead' programme of development and collaboration, which was completed with a final event in November. The Staff Development Topic Working Group within this programme prepared and launched a national induction pack for new AONB staff and committee members and volunteers.



Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

Induction on national context for new staff, committee members and volunteers

Links with other AONBs

In October through our lottery funded Capacity Building project, the whole team made an overnight visit to the Dorset AONB. We met most of the Dorset AONB team and talked through many topics in common.

In January we held a team development day jointly with the Wye Valley AONB team. NAAONB staff guided us through use of the Lumina Spark profiling tool, which people found interesting and helpful.

Europarc Federation

We hosted a study visit from a representative of the Lithuanian state conservation service as part of the Alfred Toepfer scholarship scheme.

Phil presented the new Sustainable Tourism Charter business awards in December as chair of the judging panel.



Financial summary 2019-20

Expenditure

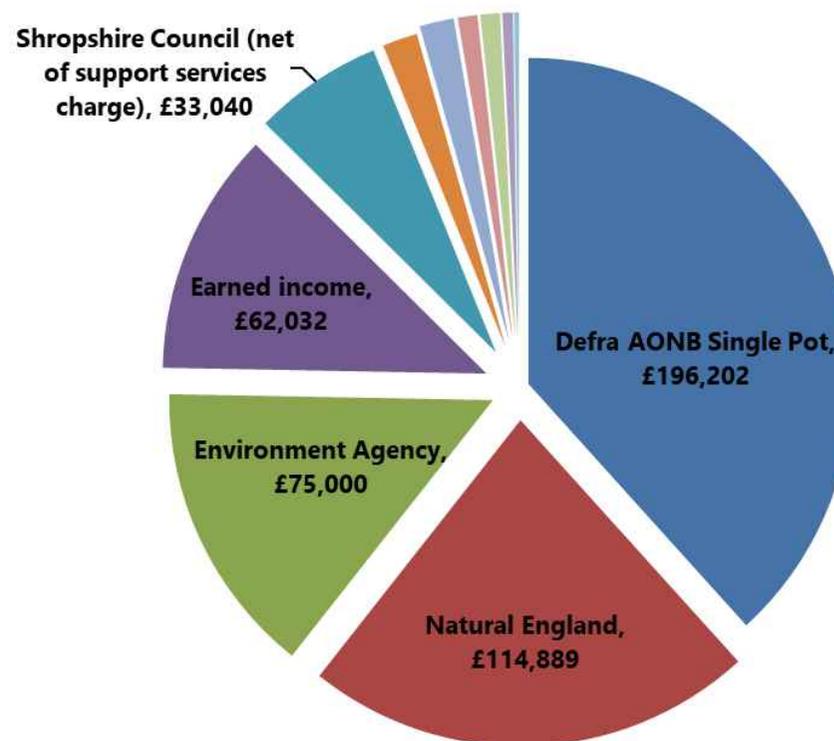
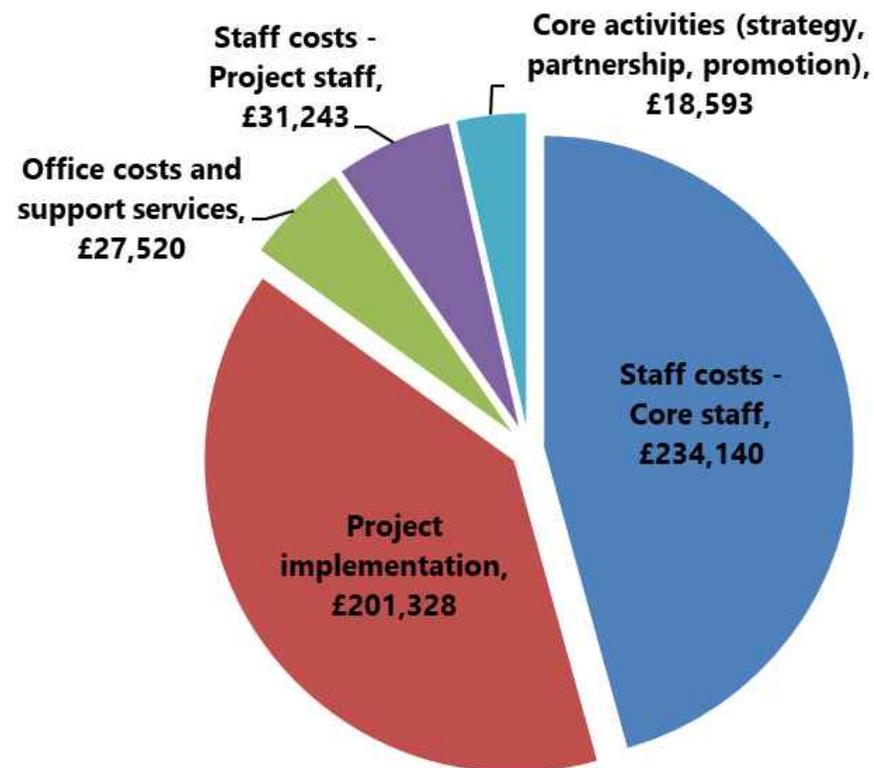
Staff costs - Core staff	£234,140
Project implementation	£201,328
Office costs and support services	£27,520
Staff costs - Project staff	£31,243
Core activities (strategy, partnership, promotion)	£18,593

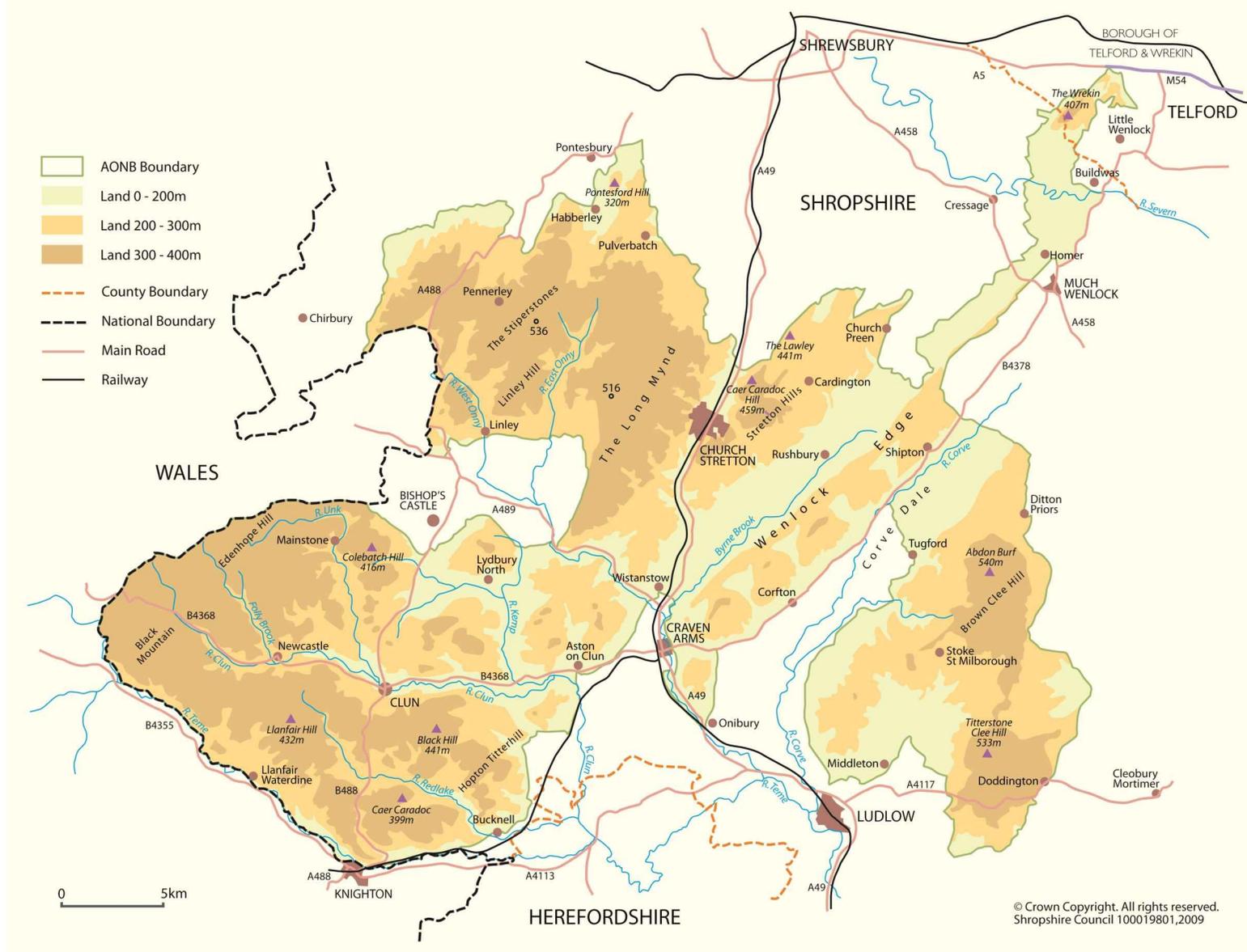
Total **£512,824**

Income

Defra AONB Single Pot	£196,202
Natural England	£114,889
Environment Agency	£75,000
Earned income	£62,032
Shropshire Council (net of support services charge)	£33,040
Shuttles ticket and concessions income	£8,969
Brought forward	£8,767
Woodland Trust	£5,000
National Trust	£5,000
Telford & Wrekin Council	£2,694
Other donations	£1,231

Total **£512,824**





The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is hosted by Shropshire Council, and funded in addition by Defra, Telford & Wrekin Council and project funders

We work to help conserve and enhance the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
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