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North Wessex Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Annual Review 2021-2022



ENHANCING & SUSTAINING

FARMING & LAND MANAGEMENT

MAKING CONNECTIONS

PROTECTING



*Looking towards the Lansdowne Monument from Morgans Hill.
Credit: Ann Shepley*

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the Annual Review of the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership for 2021-2022. It has been a busy year!

In this, my first full year as Chair, I have been actively engaged in meeting local politicians and MPs, council leaders and senior local authority staff to discuss the challenges we face in our efforts to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of this protected landscape – from development pressures to communication issues. These meetings have proved fruitful with offers of support and have strengthened our links with our advocates and funders.



The past year has been one of the busiest on record for the AONB Partnership team and you will see, summarised in this review, that we have achieved great things over the twelve months: preparation for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme followed by initiation and management once the funding had been confirmed; delivery of the Dark Skies Festival in partnership with Marlborough Town Council and Marlborough College; management, administration and monitoring of our Sparkling Streams partnership project; and commissioning a new website. These are all large projects which have achieved positive outcomes - including effective partnership working.

Despite the continuing difficulties wrought by the pandemic we believe we have connected with more people than ever before through volunteer activities as part of the Sparkling Streams project, audiences at the Dark Skies Festival and increased reach achieved through our digital communications channels.

We have been actively engaged in discussions with DEFRA, led by the National Association for AONBs, about the Government's response to the Landscapes Review led by Julian Glover and published in 2019.

In 1972 - 50 years ago - the North Wessex Downs was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and protected in law for the nation. The Council of Partners was created in 2002 and then, as now, the Partnership aimed to tackle the challenges to the beauty, heritage and biodiversity of the North Wessex Downs landscape through collaboration, partnership and communication. The last financial year has seen that approach in action throughout, to very positive effect.

We are grateful to our funding partners, volunteers and like-minded organisations for their continued support. Thank you.

Sarah Nichols, Chair of the Council of Partners

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SPARKLING STREAMS

Our Sparkling Streams project was in full swing by April 2021 and ran until March 2022. Funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, the project aimed to improve the condition of the River Kennet and its tributaries, increase wildlife and connect people with nature. Together with our partners - the Town & Manor of Hungerford, Action for the River Kennet (ARK) and the Southern Streams Farmers Group - we successfully completed the project on time and within budget.

The project methodology was to use a catchment-based approach which delivered work ranging from large-scale river restoration on the Kennet to a wealth of small-scale works along the Dun and Shalbourne tributaries whilst engaging farmers, local communities and school children.

There were challenges! The project partners were unable to hold steering group meetings in person due to the pandemic, staff were off ill at times, and we experienced difficulties with supply of materials and availability of contract staff. However, the combined skills and resources of partners, the successful recruitment of two ideal project team members, the buy-in of farmers and enthusiasm of local people ensured that we met our aims, kept within our budget and delivered more activities than originally planned.

Achievements included:

- 1,100 metres of new or enhanced chalk stream and a fish pass created at Eddington Mill
- Three kilometres of enhanced in-river and riparian habitat work carried out on eight sites along the Dun and Shalbourne tributaries
- Over 5,000 hedge plants and 3,400 trees planted across six sites
- Over 60 volunteer events took place organised by ARK. 145 people gave over 1,600 hours of their time and 94 people were new volunteers to ARK
- Creation of a rain garden at Shalbourne Primary School: 381 adults and 60 children attended activities associated with its design and construction

Many thanks indeed to you and your team for the work around the river. You all did a fantastic job, and you can really see the improvement.

Participating Local Farmer

The Sparkling Streams Project has resulted in a range of nature recovery and nature-based solutions that will, over time, help to increase chalk stream water flows, improve water quality, fish passage and migration, slow overland flows, reduce soil erosion, increase biodiversity in the rivers and across the catchment, and mitigate against climate change.

cont/d overleaf...



Eddington Mill. Credit: Ann Shepley

The project also leaves a legacy of adults and children who have come away from their involvement with us with more understanding of, and care for, chalk streams and their wildlife. Furthermore, farmers are now feeling encouraged to reduce farm pollutants reaching chalk streams and we have the basis for future funding for river habitat restoration and nature-based solutions.

The younger children are developing a love of nature but also an extended vocabulary around outdoors and all things garden-based.

Shalbourne School Head Teacher

The partnership strengthened during the project and we are continuing to discuss future partnership opportunities. Project team members have gained skills and knowledge about chalk stream management, funding, project management and partnership working.

More information can be found on our website including a link to a story map of information and photos of the project activities. A full evaluation report is available from any of the partner organisations.

A chance to be involved in meaningful projects, meet likeminded people, contribute to the community and produce tangible results in areas that I am interested in.

Project Volunteer



Vole survey at Chisbury Manor

Green Recovery Challenge Fund



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

During 2021/22 we embarked on a review of how the AONB's SDF programme is run. Inevitably this meant we had to close the Fund to applications for a period of time and this, combined with reduced interest due to the pandemic, resulted in a reduction in applications and grants paid during the year. The SDF continues to be managed on our behalf by the North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust and the unused fund has been rolled over to the next financial year.



AVEBURY COMMUNITY ORCHARD GROUP

The group wanted to extend its small orchard into an adjoining area made available since the removal of the old cricket pavilion from the recreation ground. Established to mark the Jubilee in 2012, the orchard comprises a number of local Wiltshire apple varieties and has been the focus for training and community events such as apple days. Funding was required for new heritage fruit trees, stakes and ties.

WILSFORD WILDFLOWER VERGES RESTORATION

In consultation with CPRE and with the approval of Wiltshire Highways, the local parish council and the landowner, the village of Wilsford embarked on a project to restore the biodiversity of road verges. Local botanists have surveyed the verges and actions have been taken, including sowing yellow rattle, to reduce the fertility of the grass and enable wildflowers to become more dominant. Once established, flower-rich verges should become self-maintaining.

MEND THE GAP

Mend the Gap is a collaborative programme between the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership, the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Railway Action Group. Funded by Network Rail, it aims to heal and soften the scars left by the electrification of the Great Western main line between Reading and Didcot. The route passes along the Thames Valley through the famous Goring Gap.



Credit: Jacky Akam

We worked to develop a partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) SE to support delivery of mitigation tree and hedge planting on target sites. To ensure the maximum landscape and biodiversity benefits from this and other planting we commissioned tree planting species guidance from Jonathan Spencer. This identifies 'signature species' such as wild pear and black poplar that will contribute to the programme's long-term landscape legacy.

After the inevitable impact of the pandemic, this year saw the completion of the first Mend the Gap mitigation and enhancement projects. Habitat and nature conservation projects included pond and woodland creation at Copyhold Farm, construction of an artificial otter holt at Gatehampton and works to enable access to Cleeve Meadow beside the Thames Path for willow scrub and grassland management. Tourism objectives were supported by provision of experiential tourism training for local businesses designed to respond to heightened demand for more off-the-beaten-track experiences that connect visitors to locals and the landscape.

We also supported the establishment and development of a new Goring Gap Environmental Organisation that will support and co-ordinate local action for environmental enhancement during the life of the Mend the Gap programme and beyond.



NATURE RECOVERY NETWORKS: THE RIDGEWAY

As part of our work to map opportunities for nature recovery in the AONB, and together with the Ridgeway Partnership, we engaged the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to survey 44 miles of the Ridgeway National Trail where it runs through the North Wessex Downs. The survey provides us with baseline habitat data for the Avebury to Streatley section of the Ridgeway - a key spine of the nature recovery network across and beyond the North Wessex Downs AONB.

The Ridgeway is an example of a historic route through farmed countryside that retains semi-natural habitat for native species of chalk grassland plants and invertebrates. One legacy of its past as a drove road is that the Trail, and its grassland corridor, can be very wide - up to 40m in some places. In recent decades management of the Trail has not been designed with nature conservation in mind and there is much scope to improve its ecological interest.

Over 300 species of plant were recorded within the boundary of the Trail - among them kidney vetch, common twayblade, wild carrot and common milkwort. The survey has identified 28 locations covering 10.5ha where there is priority grassland habitat that it would be valuable to maintain and



115 locations for potential restoration through additional management. Of these, 53 are considered to be high priority and 62 of medium priority. One area identified will be put forward for Local Wildlife Site designation.

The National Trail corridor is part of a farmland habitat mosaic supporting wildlife that includes brown hare and nationally important populations of farmland birds such as corn bunting and grey partridge. By linking work within the Trail itself with conservation initiatives by neighbouring farmer-led groups along its length, there is exciting scope to realise its wider potential as a habitat corridor that enables nature recovery on a landscape scale beyond its boundaries.



FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

In the summer DEFRA announced the innovative Farming in Protected Landscapes programme which provides support to farmers and land managers and, uniquely, is being managed locally by AONBs and National Parks. It provides grants under four themes of Nature, Climate, People and Place for activities which address the biodiversity crisis, tackle climate issues, improve access to and enhance the landscape, restore the historic environment and support nature-friendly sustainable farm businesses.

Crucially, it includes funding for dedicated staff to direct the programme working with farmers and other land managers. This means that projects can be developed which contribute both to the national aims and the objectives in the local landscape management plan. The scheme is due to run for three years to March 2024.

PREPARING THE GROUND

On 1st July 2021 DEFRA announced that the North Wessex Downs would be allocated £1.7M to be distributed over the three years to March 2024, with over £300,000 to be allocated before the end of January 2022. Our preparations for the announcement had begun early in the year. Initial work included publicising the programme to local audiences including farmer groups and their facilitators (using contacts generated by our series of farming webinars continued from last year), developing the North Wessex Downs AONB programme guidance and forms, attending DEFRA and National Association for AONBs training sessions, responding to enquiries and holding initial site visits. We also began recruitment of the Local Assessment Panel and two new staff to administer and manage the programme.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Our Farming in Protected Landscapes staff, Rob West and Katharine Cook, have overseen a hugely successful first year of the programme.

We have worked hard to promote the programme with local stakeholders, presenting to almost 30 meetings with local NGOs and farmer clusters as well as attending farming events. These efforts resulted in almost 120 expressions of interest, 72 site visits and 36 applications.

In year one we have awarded over £290,000 to 28 projects encompassing a diverse range of activities. These include planting hedges and trees, pond restoration and creation, the purchase of innovative drilling equipment to enable a shift to regenerative farming methods, and carbon assessments to increase knowledge around soil health. Other grants awarded are supporting local food production businesses, young entrants in farming, education and access projects, local wildlife trusts and Action for the River Kennet. Landholdings associated with supported projects cover over 62,000 hectares in total.

The 12-strong Local Assessment Panel plays a very important role, by both making decisions on applications over £5,000 and providing strategic guidance to programme staff to support project identification and development. Panel members include farmers and experts in wildlife, agriculture and the historic environment. They know the area well and understand the issues facing farmers and the landscape.

We have worked closely with applicants to tailor projects that support the farm or business as well as meet the objectives of the programme and of the North Wessex Downs Management Plan. Each project is shepherded from enquiry to completion ensuring impact is maximised and they are efficiently and effectively delivered..



Tidcombe ponds reinstatement at Manor Farm



Kissing gate on West Kennett Meadows at Tan Hill Farm

THE IMPACTS OF THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

FOR CLIMATE

- Over 2,180 ha of land being managed with regenerative farming techniques
- Over 10,060 ha of land in projects to improve soil quality
- Over 120 trees planted
- 2,400m of new fencing protecting water courses and reducing flood risk
- 2 projects to improve runoff and reduce mains water reliance

FOR NATURE

- Over 4,600 metres of new hedgerow
- Over 200 barn owl and bird boxes installed
- 35 disease-resistant elm trees planted
- Restoration of two dew ponds
- Over 90 ha of SSSI under improved management
- 1,837m of fencing installed protecting environmental features
- 1 fish pass created

FOR PEOPLE

- 1 project to support a young shepherd
- 4 interpretation panels
- 2 projects delivering educational visits
- 1 project to make the landscape more inclusive for visitors
- 3 projects to support greater public engagement in land management
- 35,900 ha of land in farmer-led groups supported

FOR PLACE

- 1 parkland restoration project
- 2 historic structures and features conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- 5 stock management facilities

MEET THE FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES TEAM!

Rob West joined us in September as Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer. His role is to deliver the programme for the AONB. He oversees the programme, advises applicants and works with farmers and land managers to develop their applications in line with the AONB Management Plan. Rob joined us from Natural England.

Katharine Cook is the Business Support Officer for the programme. She manages the finances, supports applicants with their grants and works with the grant-making Local Assessment Panel.



CASE STUDY:

KINGSLERE ESTATE – PASTURE CROPPING TRIAL TO ASSESS LANDSCAPE SCALE FARMING SYSTEM CHANGE

Tim May runs an organic farm that is built around regenerative practices, focussing not just on an agroecological approach to soils but also integrated economic and social sustainability. He is helping to push the boundaries of how farming is practised, integrated into the local rural economy and understood by the public.

This project is focussed on an approach known as pasture cropping. This system employs strips of permanent pasture inter-sown with strips of heritage grains. Tim will gradually introduce this system across the farm as he works through his crop rotation and is delivering significant research and development as he goes. We supported the purchase of bespoke equipment needed to deliver this approach. It offers significant public benefits for water quality, soil health, carbon sequestration and biodiversity. Tim will also be working in partnership with local farmers and further afield to help engage, inform and enable others to take this system forward on their own farms by testing its feasibility at scale, refining processes and machinery and demonstrating to others why and how it is achievable. Further details about this project are on our website.



Strip till at Kingsclere Farm



Farmer Tim May explaining the strip till system on his Kingsclere Farm to members of the visiting DEFRA team



SUPPORTING FARMER-LED CONSERVATION

We are committed to enabling and supporting the farming and land management community within and beyond the AONB boundary to collaborate on conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape and delivering the objectives of the AONB Management Plan. This work is led by the farmers themselves through groups often referred to as farmer clusters.

RIDGEWAY

In 2018-19 we supported seven local farmers to form the Ridgeway Farmer Group. Together they manage 5,838 hectares on the Berkshire/Oxfordshire borders along the Ridgeway National Trail. Shortly after the Group secured three years' funding from DEFRA's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund (CSFF) Covid intervened, curtailing all training and events while the facilitator was furloughed. This year we have taken over hosting of the CSFF agreement and the Group has resumed its activities led by Sarah Wright as facilitator.

LOWER PANG AND KENNET FARMER GROUP

Chalk rivers are a main focus for landscape-scale collaboration in the North Wessex Downs. With existing and emerging farmer-led groups already covering substantial parts of the catchments of the Avon, Dun, Shalbourne, Kennet and Lambourn, the Pang has been identified for some time as a priority for AONB engagement with land managers.

This year we have continued to support work by Alison Cross of Wessex Farm Wildlife to develop collaboration on conservation among farmers and land managers in the lower Pang and Kennet valleys. The group now boasts 20 members covering 5,200 hectares. In an important first for us, this cluster does not stop at the AONB boundary. By linking land within the designated landscape with substantial areas of the Kennet valley beyond, the Group is responding to the functional shape of the river catchment and helping to realise our ambition for the AONB to form part of a wider nature recovery network.

FUNDING FOR GROUP PROJECTS

The advent of the DEFRA-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has dramatically increased our ability to offer advice and financial support to new and existing farmer clusters in support of AONB Management Plan objectives. Projects by farmer-led groups we have supported include:

- Re-establishment and development of the Wessex Farm Conservation Group in North Hampshire. We funded a facilitator to map habitats across the cluster and convene several group meetings as well as install 30 barn owl and kestrel boxes with the Hawk Conservancy Trust.
- The Generating a Buzz project by the Pewsey Downs Farmer Group, 20 farmers who work collaboratively across more than 10,000 hectares in the south-west of the North Wessex Downs to enhance the landscape for wildlife. This included mapping key pollinator habitats and identifying gaps in habitat availability. Pollinator surveys were undertaken and farmers trained in species identification. The group also ran community engagement events to increase local awareness and knowledge of the AONB and biodiversity in the farmed environment. The results of the project will help the group to plan interventions to increase habitat connectivity, quality and extent.
- Habitat mapping including environmental schemes across the area of the Southern Streams farmer group, a large cluster on the Wiltshire/Berkshire border established with AONB support in 2018-19. The group is using this information to identify nature recovery opportunities and plan for greater habitat connectivity.
- Enabling the long-established Marlborough Downs Space for Nature farmer group to host an events manager who is tasked with organising and running community engagement events.



MARLBOROUGH DARK SKIES FESTIVAL OCTOBER 25TH – 31ST 2021

Museum of the Moon by Luke Jerram hanging in Marlborough College Chapel. Credit: Ann Shepley

With over 30 events and a **total attendance of more than 4,500** our Dark Skies Festival, presented and produced in partnership with Marlborough Town Council and Marlborough College, was a huge success. Two years in the making and delayed a year by Covid, the festival combined art and science in a celebration of the dark skies of the North Wessex Downs.

Dark skies add to the beauty, tranquillity and sense of remoteness of a place - qualities which contribute to the character of the North Wessex Downs and the reasons why the landscape is protected in law. 15% of the skies here are as dark as any in the country and an additional 58% are significantly dark. But light pollution increasingly erodes the darkness.

*So important to preserve our dark skies.
Will certainly look up more now in wonder....*

Our aim was to inspire, amaze, and engage new audiences with the night sky, especially young people, and to set them on a journey of discovery and future action to preserve dark skies and reduce light pollution.

*Thank you so much. I'm a teacher
and it's ignited so much in me to pass on.*

Headlining the festival was the incredible seven-metre inflated Museum of the Moon, by UK artist Luke Jerram, hung in the stunning location of Marlborough College Chapel. Over 3000 people came to see this awe-inspiring piece, including local school groups.

*We are a family of 5 and there was such a diverse
programme available that we all found something
to spark our interest. It's been exceptionally well
organised and informative.*

An additional 34 arts and science events took place during the main festival weekend in and around Marlborough and included workshops, talks, performances and exhibitions.

On behalf of all the festival partners, the AONB would like to thank everyone who made the festival possible, including funders, volunteers, contributors and everyone who attended and now cares more about protecting the dark skies of the North Wessex Downs.

Really good timing - not only for stargazing but re climate change conference! As many issues re problems with light pollution were highlighted. Very informative. We learnt a lot!

- Over 70% of attendees lived within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 60% of those completing a feedback survey said they cared 'a lot' more about protecting dark skies after attending the festival.
- 52% said they were 'very likely to' or 'definitely will' take action to minimise light pollution after attending the festival.
- Over half of all bookings included someone under the age of 19.
- Over 230 school children and 1000 Marlborough College students got involved.
- Social media content about the festival reached almost 50,000 people.



Talk: On the ISS. Credit: Susie Price



Space Detectives. Credit: Jacky Akam

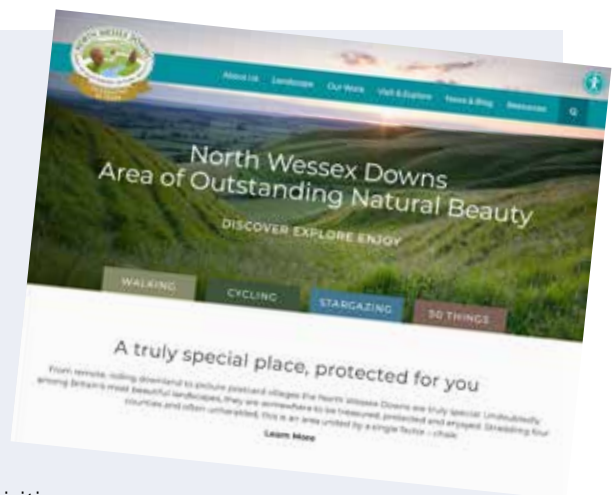
OUR NEW WEBSITE WENT LIVE ON 13TH JANUARY 2022!

Having experienced technical issues with our website in 2020, resulting from the increased traffic generated by the lifting of 'lockdown', we embarked on the process of commissioning a new website.

We aimed to improve the user experience, increase accessibility and showcase the beauty of the landscape by making the website more visually appealing. In particular, we wanted to increase the information about walking and visiting the landscape as user statistics demonstrated very clearly that this was the most significant reason for using the site. It was also important to improve our ability to manage the website by changing our content management system.

We have expanded content relating to our work and projects, the landscape, governance, planning and development, and visiting information. The website now includes a searchable walks database as well as an improved interactive map plus our resources section has been revamped and reorganised.

For the period from launch to the end of the financial year website users had increased year-on-year by nearly 35%, page views by a whopping 74% and pages per session by over 28%. Newsletter signups had also increased with 34 subscribing between 13th January and 6th April compared to just five for the same period in the previous year.





Ramsbury Credit: Rowan Whimster

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

A new focus on the environment came to the fore and both South Oxfordshire and Basingstoke & Deane local authorities declared an ecological emergency and recognised the need to invest in habitat creation and biodiversity.

During 2021/22 there was a 5% decline in planning applications nationally, however the AONB saw a slight increase on the previous year and received over 1,100 planning application consultations. We responded to just under 400 of these and we were able to respond to seven of the eight planning policy consultation requests we received. Furthermore, we commented on all 12 of the pre-application consultations we received. We commented on seven Neighbourhood Plans (Regulation 14 and 16 consultations) and provided pre submission advice for two Neighbourhood Plan areas. In addition, we received 12 appeal notifications and made 8 representations to the Planning Inspectorate in response, which also included attending a Public Inquiry.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- A lunch time training session with Swindon Borough Council on the new dark skies position statement and good lighting guide (May 2021) was met positively and resulted in the inclusion of a lighting/dark skies policy within the latest version of the Local Plan review.
- A longstanding application within the setting of the AONB for a science park on the edge of Swindon went to a three-week public inquiry during summer 2021, originally having been refused by the local planning authority. The AONB worked closely with the LPA to provide a strong front in defence of the local landscape. The Planning Inspectorate to the delight of the AONB and local residents dismissed the appeal from the developer. The Inspector's findings considered that the site, which is within the setting of the AONB, was more than 'mere countryside' and that it played an important transitional role between the north slope of the AONB and the lower vale surrounding Swindon and Wanborough. In his balancing exercise the Inspector concluded that the economic gain was not worth the environmental cost to landscape and heritage assets.
- We were invited to a working group for the Transport for Southeast Joint Area Study and worked with other stakeholders to address areas of concern, including the dominance of car travel and impact of new roads and/or widening of existing routes within the AONB, lack of affordable travel and services within public transport, as well addressing potential opportunities for improved green infrastructure and access.
- The North Wessex Downs, Cotswolds and Cranborne Chase AONBs worked together in response to Wiltshire Council's consultation to inform the Local Plan. The Plan included proposals for the scale and distribution of housing and employment growth across Wiltshire. We also liaised with Natural England on some of the sites. In January 2022, our concerns resulted in the AONBs being invited to present to local councillors on AONBs, planning and the pressures faced.



DISAPPOINTMENTS

- A landowner constructed a gallop at a different location to that permitted by West Berkshire Council which resulted in the deforestation of more than 30% of Lynch Wood in Upper Lambourn. The local planning authority and Forestry Commission both sought enforcement action which resulted in a new planning application. We strongly opposed this due to the loss of trees within a woodland that has stood for over 100 years and plays an important role to the Lambourn SSSI. At time of going to press this is still waiting to go to committee.
- After months of consideration of unauthorised works at Wroughton airfield, Earthline chose to withdraw two planning applications in response to the case officer's recommendation to refuse and continued to operate without planning consent.
- A number of applications are still being received and assessed by local planning authorities without any consultation with the AONB.

AT NATIONAL LEVEL

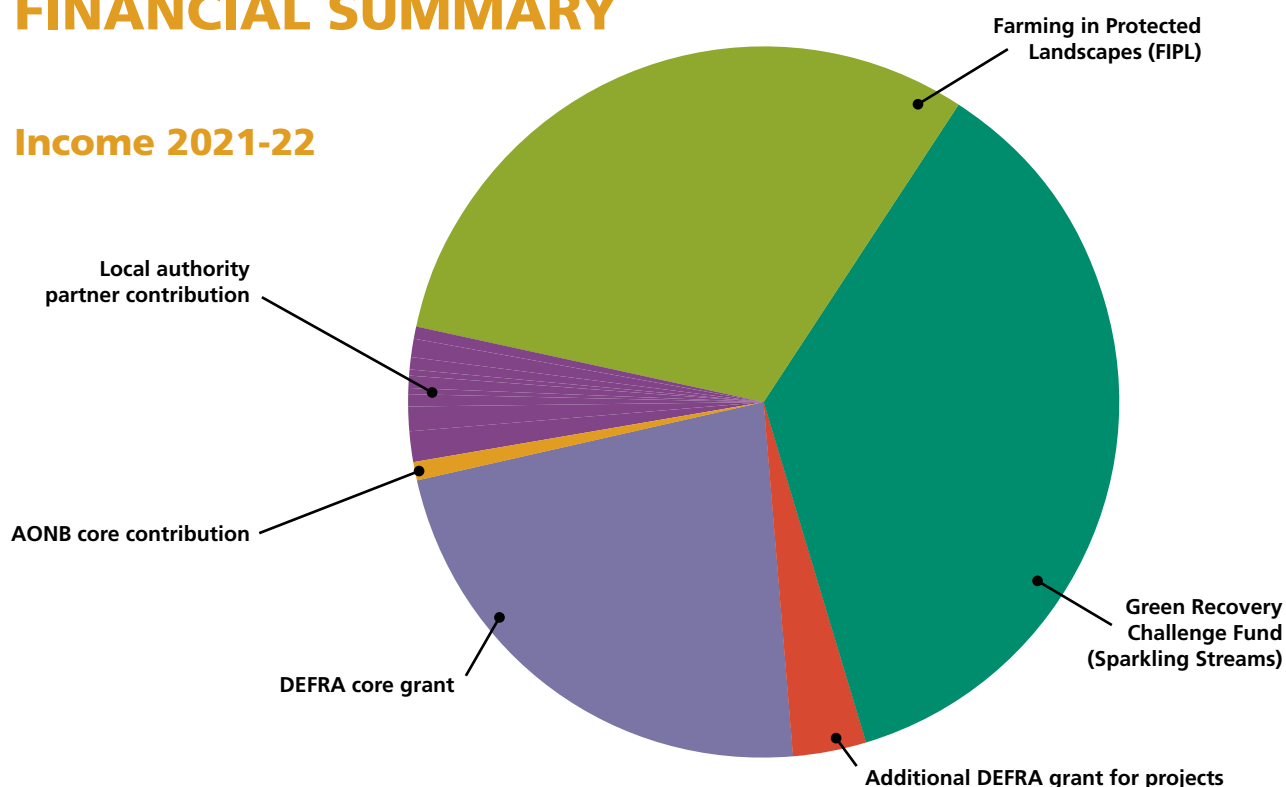
- The Government Planning White Paper, which received significant opposition from the AONB family and within parliament, was withdrawn.
- We commented on the Government's long-awaited response to the Landscapes Review led by Julian Glover. The Review recommended that AONBs and their partnerships be strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, including AONB units becoming a statutory consultee in planning. AONBs collectively welcomed these proposals as important steps towards reinforcing the designation. While recognising the value of the Review, the Government response was disappointing in its limited ambition for protected landscapes and in most cases only sought further views on potential changes.



Our new website includes a wealth of planning information and advice including a library of downloadable resources and information about our pre-application service.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Income 2021-22



Income 2021-22

DEFRA Core grant.....	252,166
Additional DEFRA grant for projects	35,992
Green Recovery Challenge Fund (Sparkling Streams)	398,326
Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL)	341,197
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.....	3,939
Hampshire County Council	8,855
Oxfordshire County Council	7,299
South Oxfordshire District Council.....	3,939
Swindon Borough Council	5,121
Test Valley Borough Council	3,939
Vale of White Horse District Council.....	3,939
West Berkshire Council	13,211
Wiltshire Council.....	16,322
AONB core contribution.....	6,944
Total Income	1,101,188

Expenditure 2021-2022

Salaries	210,183
Travel & subsistence	582
Recruitment & relocation	663
Accommodation: rent.....	18,000
Accommodation: rates.....	7,610
Accommodation: utilities and ancillary	8,380
IT	4,916
Partnership & national working	4,142
Events & publicity.....	2,020
Website hosting & maintenance.....	130
Other general office costs	396
Projects.....	80,761
Biodiversity Action Fund.....	11,700
Sparkling Streams	398,326
FIPL: Advice & Guidance.....	29,979
FIPL: Admin.....	20,473
FIPL: Projects	290,745
SDF grant	11,000
Total Expenditure.....	1,101,188

Adding Value

In 2021-2022 every £1 contributed by our local authority partners delivered £16.81 in benefits to the AONB. For every £1 awarded by the SDF, a further £1.39 has been contributed by partner organisations towards projects in the AONB during 2021-2022.

ABOUT THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the third largest of Britain's 46 AONBs and received its status as a protected landscape in 1972.

The AONB forms the cornerstone of the chalk band which stretches across England from Lincolnshire to Kent. It covers 668 square miles (1,730 square km), taking in 173 parishes including the market towns of Hungerford and Marlborough, and reaching into four counties – Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.

The rolling chalk hills with their thin, well-drained soils, provide the ideal conditions for chalk grassland with chalk-loving flowers, insects and rare butterflies. They also give rise to internationally-rare chalk streams that support some of the UK's most threatened and fragile plants and animals as well as sustaining the beautiful valleys of this landscape.



ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF PARTNERS

Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs is the statutory responsibility of nine local authorities in Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. They come together with community, farming, nature conservation, recreation, tourism and heritage representatives to make up the governing Council of Partners. The Council of Partners meets three times a year and the smaller Management Working Group, which guides the work of the AONB staff unit, four times a year.

King Alfred Way Uffington Hillfort Credit: Robert Spanning

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*Cherhill Hill &
White Horse.
Credit: David Hall*



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