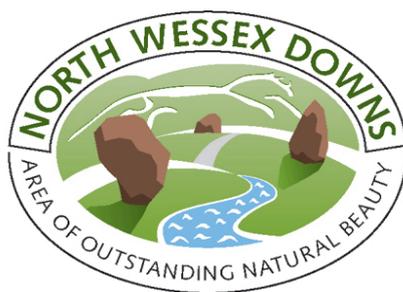


North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Annual Review 2005-2006



October 2006
Prepared on behalf of the Council of Partners

Chairman's Foreword



Last year I ended my Foreword by thanking all those who had been instrumental in making the North Wessex Downs AONB's first fully operational year a success. This year I think it only right to begin by thanking them for another year of notable progress.

Once again, our management team of only five people, led by Richard Clarke, has worked extraordinarily hard. They have been most ably supported by the Council of Partners and the Executive Committee as well as numerous officers in the local authorities who help to fund us. I am very grateful to them all.

As is described later in this Review, great strides have been taken in delivering many of the actions of our Management Plan, although that is a task which by its nature can never be completed. We have also been closely involved in numerous regional and local planning issues, where our views are regarded as important even though we have no specific powers. Meanwhile, the first full year of the Sustainable Development Fund (see page 10) was very successful in encouraging projects which furthered the aims of our Management Plan and raised the profile of the North Wessex Downs.

Public awareness of AONBs remains at a regrettably low level, but at least they are becoming a force to be reckoned with in the related worlds of conservation and development, following the CRoW Act of 2000 and subsequent guidance notes, which require all public sector bodies to have due regard to the purpose of designated landscapes such as the North Wessex Downs.

During the year under review, our mentor and major paymaster was the Countryside Agency, but as from October 1st 2006 we are responsible to a new body, Natural England, which has absorbed much of the Countryside Agency, as well as English Nature and the Rural Development Service. We look forward to working with Natural England, which unfortunately has come into being at a time of severe financial pressure. It remains to be seen what that will mean to us, but we will do our best to make it clear that we provide remarkable value for money and a highly effective system for helping to deliver Natural England's aims. The Sustainable Development Fund is particularly good at drawing outside resources into worthwhile projects, and the funding available to it should be increased, not reduced.

Against this busy and successful background, it is sad to have to report that Richard Clarke has decided to leave us at the end of 2006 to become Chief Executive of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. Much of the credit for the success is due to him and he leaves with our best wishes and our thanks for everything he has done for the North Wessex Downs since 2002; the search for his successor is under way as I write. Also in at the very beginning was Andrew Davis, who subsequently became Chairman of the Executive Committee from August 2004 until his retirement in July 2006. We are very grateful to him for his notable contribution, and we welcome David Carman as his successor. In July 2005, Alex Green became Vice-Chairman of the Council of Partners, but the uncertainties of local authority politics meant that he had to resign after only ten months, and in May 2006 Andrew Bennett kindly agreed to take his place.

The year 2006/2007 is already half gone. Much continues to be achieved, and although the challenges ahead look as formidable as ever, I am confident that our Partners and our management team will tackle them with a will.

Sir Charles Nunneley
Chairman of the Council of Partners

Management Plan Delivery

The following Management Plan actions have been either wholly or partly delivered this year by the Partnership:

- A4: Historic Landscape Characterisation – delivered by West Berkshire Council
- A7: Woodland archaeological survey – project initiated towards the end of this year
- A12: Completion of a Landscape Sensitivity Study into wind turbines
- A15: Condition of non-statutory nature conservation sites – survey of County Wildlife Sites in Wiltshire part of the North Wessex Downs
- A17: Publication of the North Wessex Downs chalk grassland strategy
- A18: Publication of the North Wessex Downs woodland strategy
- A33: Updating and publication of the directory of land based products
- A40: Access for all to the North Wessex Downs GIS information system – pilot project initiated to develop and test a web based spatial management plan
- A53: Agri-environment approaches – North Wessex Downs target areas for chalk grassland restoration and re-creation identified and agreed as part of the grassland strategy
- A55: Identification and agreement of specific objectives and targets for woodland expansion in the North Wessex Downs
- A57:
 - a) Three flagship environmental enhancement projects established, centred on the chalk grassland target areas.
 - b) Veteran Tree project focused upon Ashampstead Common.
 - c) Rehabilitation of a stretch of the River Kennet near Marlborough by ARK
 - d) Completion of a scoping study for Bourne Valley Linear Park
- A58: The completion of the Joint Venture Project, centred on the Ridgeway corridor
- A60: A survey of chalk grassland sites in Wiltshire to assess their suitability for seed harvesting
- A61: The completion of the Urban Fringe Action Plan for the southern fringes of Swindon
- A63: Funding provided for the development of the SheepKeep website, promoting co-ordination between graziers and land managers
- A72: Development of a draft protocol for partnership working between conservation advisers in the Downland Heritage Initiative target area
- A75:
 - a) Production of two technical advice notes giving guidance on the processes and costs involved in arable reversion and growing wild bird seed mix.
 - b) Production by Friends of Pang, Kennet & Lambourn Valleys of a leaflet about veteran trees
- A77: Completion of Stage I of a project to develop and demonstrate an integrated approach to management of Walbury Hill/Combe Gibbet
- A90: Review published of current training provision in land-based skills for the AONB

Project Achievements

The projects implemented this year would not have been possible without the financial support of the Countryside Agency and a range of other funding bodies including our constituent local authorities. By working together our partners have been able to make most effective use of those resources through economies of scale, efficiency and integrated working.

The projects featured below focus solely on those initiated with assistance from the AONB team. However, managing the North Wessex Downs is not just about work undertaken by the AONB team or the Council of Partners, it is about all those individuals and organisations that have an interest or involvement in the area being aware that they have a part to play and making a contribution. The box opposite illustrates the breadth of activity undertaken by the Partnership during the reporting period.



Managing our chalk grasslands

A strategy for chalk grasslands across the AONB was published in May 2005. Produced by Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre, the strategy brought together a wide range of organisations to develop an agreed approach to the management of this key priority habitat.

The research found that the North Wessex Downs has 7-9% of the UK chalk grassland resource. Using GIS mapping, the strategy identified four target areas where chalk grassland management and restoration would not only benefit biodiversity, but also the landscape character and the archaeological resources in each area.

Downland restoration

Three project partnerships were established and tasked with achieving the enhancement and landscape scale restoration of three of the chalk downland target areas, their natural and cultural heritage. The partnerships are led by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Oxfordshire and Hampshire County Councils, and include representatives from public sector agencies, private and charitable organisations and the landowning community.

To date, the groups focused upon getting support for the projects, particularly from local farmers and landowners and their advisers, ensuring that they understand farmer aspirations in each area, and researching the opportunities, costs and barriers to chalk downland restoration.



As a result of that work, simple cost guidance sheets were published, demonstrating the business case for downland restoration, and an agreement was drafted in one of the target areas to try to ensure more co-ordinated partnership working between conservation advisers. A survey of chalk grassland sites was undertaken to identify the potential of each for seed harvesting and further work is planned for next year on developing a seed harvesting network or directory.

With support from the Sustainable Development Fund (see page 11), a refrigerated seed store was purchased, and the Local Action Fund (see page 7) provided a grant to a farmer in one of the target areas to develop a grazing website, promoting co-ordination between graziers and land managers (www.sheepkeep.co.uk).

A Joint Venture

In the North Wessex Downs, important wildlife habitats and archaeology often coincide. With funding support from English Heritage and English Nature a small group of archaeologists and ecologists commissioned the development of an integrated management tool aimed at land managers and their advisers. It was tested in the development of twelve Entry and Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme applications along the Ridgeway corridor.



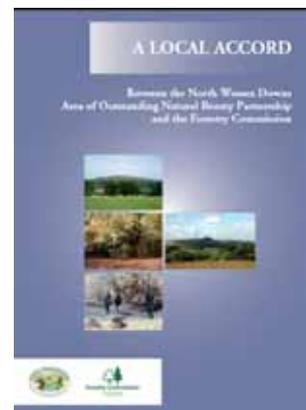
Historic Landscape Characterisation

The research on the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) drew to a close and a draft map and database was circulated to project partners in July 2006 for testing. This study is led by West Berkshire Council and funded by English Heritage and local authority partners. Once complete, it will characterise the distinctive, historic dimension of the North Wessex Downs landscape, provide a tool for managing the historic environment and raise awareness and understanding of the special cultural heritage of the area.

Woodland Research

The woodland research programme is a three year funding programme supported by the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission. In this second year we published a strategy for woodlands in the North Wessex Downs. The development of the strategy involved forestry, landscape, ecological and archaeological specialists, woodland owners and managers operating across the area.

Another outcome of the woodland research programme was the development of a Local Accord between the Forestry Commission and the North Wessex Downs Partnership, highlighting new opportunities for the two organisations to work together on an agreed list of shared priority woodland issues in the area.



An Urban Fringe Action Plan for Southern Swindon

Following the Fringe Benefits Workshop last year, a group of authorities, agencies and local representatives worked hard on the development of an action plan for the southern fringes of Swindon. The plan focuses on the future of the countryside and communities along the fringes of the North Wessex Downs AONB and Swindon, and looks at the pressures placed upon that area. It also highlights the opportunities presented by the area's proximity to both a nationally important landscape and a major urban centre. The Urban Fringe Action Plan suggests additions to local policy (for example in new Local Development Frameworks, Local Transport Plans and Rights of Way Improvement Plans) to support the Plan's objectives.

Supporting Local Action: the Local Action Fund



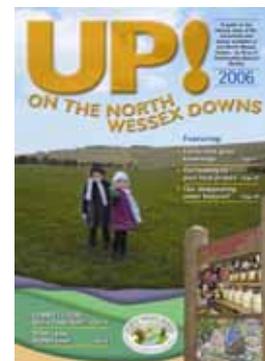
The North Wessex Downs Local Action Fund supported four projects: the SheepKeep website, a rehabilitation project along the River Kennet, a scoping study for the Upper Bourne Linear Park and a veteran trees project centred upon Ashampstead Common. The River Kennet project involved the restoration of a more natural channel, habitat enhancement and access improvements. The veteran trees project involved identifying and recording veteran trees on the Common, targeted management and the development of both a leaflet and a very successful workshop on veteran trees.

Green Tourism Event

In partnership with Tourism South East and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the North Wessex Downs hosted a Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) seminar in November to encourage tourism businesses to improve their working and energy efficiency, and reduce waste. Several tourism and hospitality businesses signed up to the GTBS accreditation scheme.

Up! on the North Wessex Downs

The third edition of the North Wessex Downs annual Newsguide **Up! On the North Wessex Downs** was published in March 2006. The guide features the work of the partnership, local attractions and a local products directory. 20,000 copies were distributed throughout the AONB.



Planning Progress

The South East Plan

In April 2005, the Council of Partners held a Single Item meeting to consider our response to the South East Plan Draft for Public Consultation. We responded on a wide range of issues of relevance to the North Wessex Downs, and we also contributed strongly to a collective response on behalf of all of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in South East England.

The South East Regional Assembly modified the South East Plan to take account of the representations made (the consultation attracted more than 78,000 responses), and republished it in March 2006 as the Draft Plan for submission to Government.

We had a number of key successes where the Plan was modified to incorporate our suggested changes, including:

- Greater recognition of the contribution which AONBs (which comprise 35% of the land area) make to the distinctiveness of the South East region, and the greater emphasis on the role of landscapes in underpinning the quality of life in the region and the success of the economy.
- The policy for the region's AONBs, taken on its own, was much improved. Nearly all of the policy changes we suggested were incorporated into the revised wording. In particular, the importance of the setting of AONBs was recognised.

However, objection still needed to be made to the South East Plan on a number of grounds, not least of which was that the policy for AONBs, in combination with the policy for National Parks, gave a misleading impression that National Parks had a higher status than AONBs in planning terms.

The South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

The First Draft RSS for the South West was the subject of limited stakeholder consultation by the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA). It was particularly encouraging that Assembly officers, in preparing environmental policies, involved the South West Protected Landscape Forum's Planning Group as a sounding board. The North Wessex Downs Planning Policy Advisor, as a member of this Group, has been involved in drafting some changes to policies, many of which were accepted.

The Draft RSS acknowledged the contribution made by national designations, such as AONBs, to the distinctiveness of the Region and the key role they played in helping to support and sustain the existing high quality of life. Furthermore, the Assembly suggested a combined policy to cover both National Parks and AONBs in recognition of their equal importance in terms of planning status and landscape quality.

County, Unitary and District level

Our Planning Policy Advisor was involved in a wide range of work at the local level including:

- Discussing future joint working to prepare generic policies for the North Wessex Downs and possible Supplementary Planning Documents for inclusion in new Local Development Frameworks.

- Meetings with development control managers at county, unitary, district and borough councils to consider how best the North Wessex Downs can support their statutory planning functions.
- Responding to consultations on planning applications including major development proposals within or adjoining the North Wessex Downs.
- Working with landowners and estates, including the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI) at Wroughton Airfield and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, to seek to achieve partnership objectives.

Landscape Sensitivity Study for Wind Turbines

A North Wessex Downs wide landscape sensitivity study into the effects of siting wind energy developments in the designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs was completed on behalf of the Council of Partners. It concluded that, rather than identifying locations where turbines could be accommodated, it would be more appropriate to identify landscape constraints to wind turbine development, which would have to be met before development proposals could be considered.

The AONB Planning Officers Working Group (POWG) considered the Study to be a useful tool in the development of planning policies and guidance and also in development control and planning appeal situations. The POWG provided helpful advice on consultation arrangements for the Study, which took place in the winter of 2005/2006.

The Study, which was adopted by the Council of Partners on 31st March 2006, demonstrated that all of the North Wessex Downs landscape is constrained to turbine development to some extent: four of the nine landscape types were judged to be “highly constrained” to wind turbines and the other five landscape types were “moderately to highly constrained”.

The Sheepdrove Organic Farm Renewable Energy Case Study

Sheepdrove Organic Farm received funding under the North Wessex Downs Sustainable Development Fund to pursue the aim of demonstrating best practice for renewable energy in the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Planning Policy Advisor worked with Sheepdrove on this project, which involved consultants running a series of workshops on the farm with local people and stakeholders to explore the potential for a mix of renewable energy including small scale wind power, biogas, bio-diesel, heat recovery and solar panels.



Solar Heating panels used in Sheepdrove Organic Farm Offices and Conference Centre

The lessons learnt from this case study could be developed into good practice advice to help guide other landowners and communities in the North Wessex Downs in terms of the process to be followed.

Sustainable Development Fund

The North Wessex Downs AONB successfully bid for £100,000 in Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) grant from the Countryside Agency. The Countryside Agency later offered an additional sum of up to £5,000 so that further grants could be made of which we drew down £1,100. A total of 17 projects received grants to the value of £91,699, with the costs of administration taking up the balance.

The SDF scheme was the first public grant scheme the North Wessex Downs AONB had run. It provided a direct route from the Management Plan to delivering projects on the ground. It encouraged partner organisations such as the 11 local authorities and Wildlife Trusts to develop projects to deliver Management Plan actions.

This funding stream gave inspiration and project coherence to several organisations that were unaware of the North Wessex Downs AONB, and the potential role they could take in delivering the Management Plan, especially raising awareness of the AONB and improving understanding of the significance of this nationally-important protected landscape.

The Grant Panel members were drawn from the Council of Partners and the Executive Committee: Sir Charles Nunneley, Henry Wilson, Brian Langer, and Alistair Cunningham, providing particular experience in land management, community development and grant administration.

The Projects

All Cannings Community Store received £6,290 grant to develop and promote the new Community Shop in the Wiltshire village.

BTCV Wiltshire received £7,360 grant to run a project at Oxenwood Field Study Centre. This enabled disadvantaged young people from urban areas around the AONB to gain skills by learning about the environment and landscape.

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) received £9,714 grant for conservation and training projects at Hungerford Marsh, Kintbury Newt Ponds, Inkpen Common and Inkpen Crocus Field in West Berkshire. The four sites, all of them Nature Reserves open to the public, represent distinctive and characteristic habitats within the North Wessex Downs. All are rare or rapidly declining and this project was essential to the survival of wildlife dependent on them.

The project:

- preserved the diversity of landscapes within the marshland area to support wetland birds and meadow plant species
- protected the reed bed and unimproved grassland as great crested newt habitats
- maintained ancient heathland as habitat for rare plants, birds and reptiles
- maintained rare unimproved neutral grassland for 380,000 spring crocuses that flower during February/March



All Cannings Community Store



Crocus Fields at Inkpen

Blewbury Village Society working in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District Council received £2,710 grant to assess the carbon footprint of residential and community buildings in the south Oxfordshire village, suggest measures to improve energy efficiency, and research views on the adoption of appropriate renewable energy systems.

Flower Farms, Shalbourne received £1,306 grant for a chiller room to enable the storage of wild-flower seed by community and voluntary groups from across the AONB. High quality storage facilities are now available free of charge to community groups and others.

Great Western Community Forest received £6,250 grant for a Green Infrastructure project on the urban fringes of Swindon. This was for the first phase of a Green Infrastructure plan for the southern fringes of Swindon town and into the North Wessex Downs landscape.

Hampshire Country Learning, part of the Countryside Foundation for Education received £7,500 grant to identify host farms for educational visits, and work with farmers and teachers to promote greater knowledge of food, farming and the countryside.

Hampshire County Council received £2,000 grant contribution to the Rural Pathfinder project researching the different sources of information that land managers in the AONB use.



Hampshire Country Learning at West Woodhay Estate

Kennet & Avon Canal Rural Transport Partnership received £3,300 grant for the development of a new set of three Wigglywalks between Great Bedwyn, Wiltshire and Hungerford, Berkshire.

Lambourn Parish Council received £750 grant to help with the publication and distribution of the Parish Plan for Lambourn. The Plan was published in September 2005 and sets out a vision for Lambourn for the future with specific objectives for the next five years.

Northmoor Trust, Oxfordshire received £6,060 grant for interpretation and publicity at Neptune Wood, one of 27 sites across the UK where oak trees were planted to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar

Oxfordshire Geology Trust received £8,295 grant for a project to encourage people to learn about the geodiversity on the Ridgeway. The project provided exciting and innovative ways for people to learn about the rich and varied Earth Heritage on both sides of The Ridgeway in the North Wessex Downs.

Through geological specimens displayed at the information centre in the Ridgeway Youth Hostel, Court Hill, Wantage, and interpretation boards in both Streatley and Ridgeway Hostels, people can now find out what makes our local Earth Heritage in this area so important, how and why our Earth Heritage contributes to the landscape, and how to care for this valuable resource in future. The education programme involved local children and others visiting the Ridgeway Hostel where the information centre is open to the public, and the café is often used by local community groups as a meeting place.

Pewsey Area Community Trust (PACT), Wiltshire received £4,800 grant for a project to take forward The King Alfred easy access trail, which will allow more people to enjoy the footpaths and landscapes of the Pewsey Vale.

The grant funded the consultative process involving the wider community as well as landowners to create a 14km circular walk built to high accessibility standards.

The trail around the Vale of Pewsey will include riverside and canal areas, open farmland, small villages with interesting buildings and Pewsey itself. The underlying aims of the project include regeneration of the local economy through increased tourism, improved access to heritage landscape, and new educational resources. PACT is creating a partnership of organisations supporting this project. Feasibility studies show that the benefits to the community are very positive. The next phase of work will build on business and financial planning, and move forward with community consultation and negotiations with landowners. Access audits already carried out identify targets within the villages and countryside that need priority attention for the trail to be developed successfully.



Pewsey Vale

Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Berkshire received £9,750 grant to develop a Best Practice case study on the use of farm-scale renewable energy resources looking at all energy uses on site, focusing on efficiency and developing opportunities for renewable energy.

West Berkshire Council received £5,000 grant for educational materials at Snelsmore Common Nature Reserve, and to install seven new gates and stiles in the AONB to enable people in wheelchairs and families with pushchairs to access walks and trails.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust received £10,000 grant to survey County Wildlife Sites within the North Wessex Downs that had never been surveyed before. Wildlife Sites represent the best remaining fragments of wildlife habitat outside nationally designated sites. The Wildlife Trust established links with the landowners of previously unvisited sites, assessed site conditions and status, recorded information in the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre and North Wessex Downs AONB databases, and provided management recommendations.



West Berkshire Council: Gates at Bucklebury

The project provided essential basic information to inform future landscape-scale initiatives, including the Downland Heritage Initiative, and helped set priorities for landowner liaison, environmental stewardship. The methodology can be made available to other wildlife trusts within the North Wessex Downs AONB as well as local authorities, statutory agencies, Local Area Agreements and relevant strategic partnerships.

How the SDF scheme helped to deliver the Management Plan.

All the SDF projects fulfilled one or more of the objectives in Theme 13 of the Management Plan, Establishing Common Understanding.

Contribution to delivery of the Management Plan

Objectives

30-32: Theme 8 Enjoyment as an economic driver

35: Diversifying economic opportunities: to promote sustainable rural economic development, including support for local businesses, that provide employment for local people and help retain and develop the skills base of the North Wessex Downs.

Policies

Policy AW5: Encouraging understanding and appreciation of the North Wessex Downs

Policy AW6: Interpretation of the natural and cultural wealth of the North Wessex Downs

Policy AW7: Links to education establishments

Actions

A1: Celebrating local character.

A12: Community-led renewable energy schemes. Demonstration projects in renewable energy

A23: Collation of geological resources of the AONB.

A52: Encouraging the preparation of Parish Plans. Village & Town Design Statements.

A60: Network of local provenance seed banks

A61: An urban fringe project.

A69: Community-led renewable energy schemes.

A 70: Demonstration projects in renewable energy.

A72: Establishing an advisory network

Financial Statement 2005 - 2006

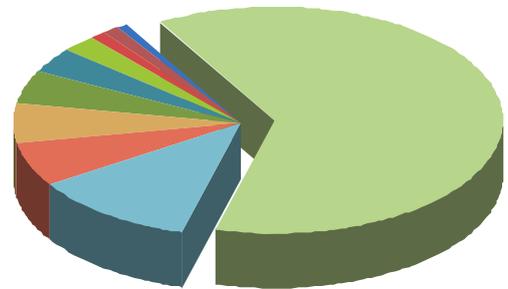
Core Budget

Income

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Countryside Agency | £196,724 |
| Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council | £3,764 |
| Hampshire County Council | £13,470 |
| Kennet District Council | £5,774 |
| North Wiltshire District Council | £3,464 |
| Oxfordshire County Council | £5,774 |
| South Oxfordshire District Council | £3,464 |
| Swindon Borough Council | £3,464 |
| Test Valley Borough Council | £3,464 |
| Vale of White Horse District Council | £3,464 |
| West Berkshire Council | £9,170 |
| Wiltshire County Council | £8,770 |
| Sheepdrove Organic Farm | £300 |
| Rural Development Agency | £700 |
| Other | £500 |
| Total Income | £262,266 |

Expenditure

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Salary and associated costs** | 62% |
| Accommodation | 11% |
| IT | 7% |
| PR, Promotion & Training | 6% |
| Newsguide | 5% |
| Recruitment | 4% |
| Service Level Agreement | |
| Partnership Costs | 2% |
| Technical Reports | 1% |
| Partnership and Research, Forum | 1% |
| Other costs | 1% |



Project Budget

Income

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Countryside Agency | £ 21,103 |
| Forestry Commission | £ 20,000 |
| English Nature | £5,662 |
| English Heritage | £500 |
| Local Action Fund | £9,976 |
| Oxfordshire County Council | £3,449 |
| Hampshire County Council | £32,827 |
| Wiltshire County Council | £5,000 |
| Sustainable Development Grant (CA) | £101,100 |
| Total Income | £199,617 |

Expenditure

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Sustainable Development Fund | 60% |
| Downland Heritage Projects | 13% |
| Local Action Fund | 12% |
| Joint Venture | 10% |
| Forest Research Project | 5% |



Who's who

Who's Who in the North Wessex Downs AONB Team, and how the AONB governance works.

The office is located at Denford Manor, Lower Denford, Hungerford, Berkshire.

The Management Team and their contact telephone numbers and e-mails are:

Richard Clarke, Director: 01488 680454; email: rclarke@northwessexdowns.org.uk

Belinda Fowler, Assistant Director 01488 680452; email: bfowler@northwessexdowns.org.uk

Huw Williams, Planning Policy Adviser: 01488 680455; email: hwilliams@northwessexdowns.org.uk

Heather White, Development Officer 01488 680450; email: hwhite@northwessexdowns.org.uk

Caroline Kaneen, Information Officer 01488 680451; email: ckaneen@northwessexdowns.org.uk

The North Wessex Downs team supports and works with the Council of Partners and the Executive Committee to:

- Provide a focus and central information base for the AONB.
- Raise awareness of and promote the unique identity of the AONB.
- Provide the strategic approach to delivering the AONB Management Plan.
- Be a catalyst for and project-manage activities to deliver the AONB Management Plan.
- Provide planning advice to add value to local authorities' planning function.

The Council of Partners includes representatives of the 11 local authorities that have administrative responsibilities for the area covered by the North Wessex Downs AONB. It also includes representatives of The Countryside Agency, community and parish councils, farming and rural business, historic environment, nature conservation, rural recreation and tourism. A list of the organisations represented on the Council of Partners is given on the back cover of this document and on www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

The Council of Partners has a responsibility to:

- Advise on and co-ordinate the work of the constituent local authorities.
- Prepare, produce and implement the AONB Management Plan.
- Promote the unique identity of the AONB.
- Secure sufficient funding for AONB activities.
- Raise the profile and increase the understanding of the AONB.

The Council of Partners met on 1 April 2005 (special meeting to discuss the South East Plan and formulate a response) 29 June 2005, 15 November 2005, and 31 March 2006,

The Executive Committee consists of individuals with a variety of skills appointed by the Council of Partners, with a responsibility to:

- Provide guidance and advice for the work of the AONB team.
- Promote liaison and co-ordinate action between organisations implementing the AONB Management Plan.
- Advise the Council of Partners on the resources required to implement the AONB Management Plan.
- Develop links with key external organisations and influential local bodies.
- Develop policy recommendations and identify management issues.

The Executive Committee met on 29 July 2005, 18 October 2005, 13 December 2005 and 28 February 2006. A list of the Executive Committee members is given on the back cover of this document.

The North Wessex Downs AONB Forum meets annually to discuss issues to be addressed through the work of the AONB. The Forum met in May 2005, at Temple Farming, Rockley, Marlborough.

The Forum comprises representatives from organisations and groups within the North Wessex Downs including farmers, land-owners, ramblers, horse-riders, parish councillors, and members of local wildlife groups, history societies, and community action and special interest groups. Forum members nominate candidates from the interest groups to serve as Advisory Members of the Council of Partners.

The Forum meeting has a dual purpose:

- To enable the AONB Management Team to give reports on activity and progress in delivering the AONB Management Plan, and to encourage feedback from Forum members.
- To enable Forum members to raise other issues which could be addressed through the work of the AONB.

To date the Forum meetings have been lively, with a high level of community engagement.

Photos copyright of Countryside Agency/Ann Seth, Hampshire Country Learning, Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Gazette and Herald, Devizes, Peter Creed, Terry Kemp and the AONB Team

Council of Partners and Executive Committee from 1st April 2005

Chairman Sir Charles Nunneley

Funding Partners

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Kennet District Council
North Wiltshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Swindon Borough Council
Test Valley Borough Council
Vale of White Horse Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
Wiltshire County Council
The Countryside Agency

Representing the interests of Community and Parish

Committee for Rural Hampshire
Community Council for Berkshire
Friends of Pang, Kennet and Lambourn Valleys (from June 2005)
Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils
Brightwalton Parish Council
Letcombe Regis Parish Council (up to June 2005)
Overton Parish Council

Representing the interests of Farming and Rural Business

Axis Farming
Country Land and Business Association
Forestry Commission (from June 2005)
Government Office for the South East
National Farmers' Union
Lockinge Estate (up to June 2005)

Representing the interests of Historic Environment
Council of British Archaeology, Wessex
English Heritage

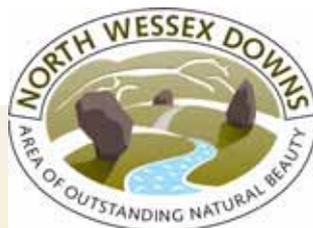
Representing the interests of Nature Conservation
English Nature
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (up to June 2005)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (from June 2005)
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Representing the interests of Recreation and Rural Tourism

Friends of the Ridgeway (from June 2005)
Ramblers' Association
Tourism South East (up to June 2005)

Executive Committee Members

Andrew Davis (Chairman)
David Carman (Vice Chairman)
Graham Bryant
Paula Amorelli (up to July 2005)
Harry Barton
Christopher Boreham (from July 2005)
Duncan Coe
Alistair Cunningham (up to Nov 2005)
Richard Clarke (ex officio)
Alex Green (from July 2005)
Garry King (from July 2005)
Sir Charles Nunneley (ex officio)
Jeremy Sandell
Julian Sayers (up to July 2005)
Sir James Scott (up to May 2005)



For more information please contact North Wessex Downs Office

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