

Howardian Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Annual Report 2008/09

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the 2008/09 Review of the work of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

It has been a particularly busy year, with the Partnership both delivering work against the Objectives of the AONB Management Plan and also reviewing and updating the Plan itself. We again completed a substantial amount of work on our primary aim – conserving and enhancing the AONB landscape, using our funds in the most efficient way and completing some major projects. The AONB Discovery Project also went out on a high, holding twice the normal number of activity sessions in its final year.

We were pleased to host a visit by Helen Phillips (CEO, Natural England) at the end of March and were heartened by her encouragement for the work we do and what we have achieved. She was particularly impressed by the Howsham Mill restoration project, with its hydro-power installations and high levels of volunteer activity.



Cllr Robert Wainwright
Chairman, Joint Advisory Committee



Helen Phillips visiting Howsham Mill (R Wainwright)

ADMINISTRATION

Local Authorities are responsible for the management arrangements within the AONB, which falls within the County of North Yorkshire and the Districts of Ryedale and Hambleton. AONB policy and programmes of work are overseen by a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), supported by Officer groups. The Core Funders Group consists of representatives of the 4 main funding bodies (see Financial Statement). The AONB Partnership Group takes in a wider range of organisations and interests and helps with developing ideas/projects.

The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

During 2008/09, the members of the JAC were as follows:

North Yorkshire County Council –

Cllrs Caroline Patmore & Clare Wood

Ryedale District Council –

Cllrs Robert Wainwright & Jim Bailey

Hambleton District Council –

Cllrs Percy Featherstone & Christine Cookman

Natural England – Brian Davies/Colin Holm & Justine Clark

Parish Councils (Ryedale) – Ian Read

Parish Councils (Hambleton) – Dr Tony Cowan

Country Land and Business Association – William Worsley

National Farmers Union – Stephen Prest & Ken Harrison

Ramblers Association – Dr Geoff Eastwood

Forestry Commission – Crispin Thorn/Vince Carter

The JAC met twice in 2008/09:

30th October 2008: Hovingham Village Hall. Robert Wainwright was re-elected as the JAC Chairman and Clare Wood as the Vice-Chairman. Members discussed the proposed 2009/10 JAC budget and the progress with the review of the AONB Management Plan. The Indicators for measuring the condition of the AONB were also discussed, for inclusion in the new Management Plan.

2nd April 2009: Brandsby Village Hall. Members discussed the work achieved in 2008/09 and approved the Business Plan and Action Programme for 2009/10. They also received information on current National Association for AONBs initiatives and the final steps in the Management Plan review process.

The JAC carried out its tour of works completed in 2007/08 on 18th July 2008, visiting projects in the Hambleton area of the AONB.

Officer Steering Groups

The Core Funders Group convened on its regular quarterly cycle, although the March meeting was brought forward slightly in order to discuss the responses to the draft Management Plan. The AONB Partnership Group met in early April 2009 to review progress made with implementing the Objectives of the AONB Management Plan over the last year. This meeting was held in the evening and Parish Council representatives were again invited.

The AONB Unit

In 2008/09 the Unit comprised:

AONB Manager	Paul Jackson
AONB Officer	Liz Bassindale
AONB Assistant.	Sue Wright (18.5 hrs/wk) (– May '08)
	Maggie Cochrane (July '08 –)

- Draft Plan launched for 6-week public consultation in November
- Comments collated and assessed
- Plan amended and published in March 2009
- (Plan adopted by Local Authorities in May)

AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Management Plan is the key document setting out specific objectives for the sustainable management of the Howardian Hills AONB. Engaging in the strategic plans and actions of other organisations, to promote the Objectives contained in the Management Plan, is an important role for the AONB Unit.

In 2008/09 we completed a full review of the AONB Management Plan:

- 8 Topic Group meetings held in May/June 2008
- 4 parish planning events held in May/June
- Strategic Environmental Assessment completed
- Farmers and land managers event held in November

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING NATURAL BEAUTY

This is the primary objective of AONB designation and much time and effort is spent on working towards this aim. The JAC attaches great importance to carrying out work on the ground in the AONB, working in partnership with local farmers, landowners and communities.

Work funded or facilitated by the JAC in 2008/09 included:

- 1.5km of new hedge planting and gapping-up
- Restoration of 330m of historic Park Wall
- Planting 45 new individual field/hedgerow trees and 2 groups of shrubs
- Planting 640 trees in 2 woodland belts

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2008/09

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Natural England	153,930	Staffing	92,094
North Yorkshire CC	47,090	Office costs	15,238
Ryedale DC	6,795	Partnership running costs	1,475
Hambleton DC	6,800	Publicity	5,137
Heritage Lottery Fund (balance in-hand)	7,452	Management Plan	8,359
CAN DO Partnership	5,031	Sustainable Development Fund	59,703
FEP preparation	1,337	Landscape Enhancement	12,894
		Historic Features	4,992
		Enjoying the AONB	2,908
		Discovery Project (HLF)	6,047
<i>Brought forward</i>	<i>19,587</i>	<i>Carried forward</i>	<i>37,770</i>
		<i>Carried forward (HLF)</i>	<i>1,405</i>
	£248,022		£248,022
		(Resources from grant recipients)	75,976
		Total Value of AONB Unit Activity	£323,998

- 6 black poplar cuttings planted-out and further cuttings taken for propagation
- Detailed surveys of 5 SINC's or other important sites
- Conservation grazing of 8 SINC's or other important sites by Exmoor ponies
- Scrub clearance and installation of water supply on SINC at Terrington, to allow grazing by Exmoor ponies
- Control of Himalayan balsam along 3.5km of Wath Beck
- Management of scrub/vegetation on or affecting 4 SINC's
- Management works on 43 Special Interest Road Verges
- Maintenance of the City of Troy turf maze
- Restoration of 3 historic village name signs

In addition to initiating and grant aiding work itself, the AONB Unit also gives advice to applicants and/or comments on applications submitted to the two main national grant schemes:

- 5 farmers/land managers advised about Entry Level or Higher Level Stewardship
- 6 English Woodland Grant Scheme application consultations appraised for impact on the AONB; only minor comments submitted

Planning Issues

The Joint Advisory Committee is consulted by the Local Planning Authorities on major developments in the AONB, in line with an agreed protocol. The AONB Manager also monitors the Weekly List of planning applications and calls-up details of any smaller schemes which might potentially have an impact on the AONB. Consultation responses are dealt with by the AONB Manager, in consultation with the JAC and Chairman for more contentious proposals.

Larger applications examined in 2008/09 included new agricultural buildings at Oswaldkirk, Cawton and Terrington, extensions to the goat-milking shed at Scackleton and feed mill at Coulton, major developments at a racehorse training yard at Musley Bank and the erection of affordable housing units and a new doctor's surgery at Ampleforth.

During 2008/09:

- 154 applications were determined by the Local Planning Authorities. 86% of these were approved
- 41 of the applications were scrutinised in detail by the AONB Manager
- Comments were submitted on 25 schemes, where a conflict with AONB Objectives was identified, improvements could be made or support was given

- Objections or Strong Reservations were lodged in 1 of those responses; the District or County Council followed the JAC's recommendation of refusal, or the applicants submitted more acceptable proposals, in 0 of the cases where a decision was required
- 11 consultations on other development (primarily within roads or verges) were also scrutinised



Restored section of Park wall and tree belt, Wiganthorpe

ENJOYING THE AONB

The Public Rights of Way network continues to be managed to a high standard, although minor improvement works have continued over the whole network. More complex path routing issues continue to be resolved at a gradual rate, depending on their complexity, whilst volunteers are now making a significant contribution to path condition surveying.

In 2008/09:

- New fingerpost signs, gates and bridges were installed at various locations throughout the AONB, continuing the improvement programme
- 3 guided walks/talks were organised, attended by 120 people
- Condition surveying of selected Rights of Way was carried out by volunteers, to check for seasonal upgrowth problems
- Litter was removed from at least 12 sites in the AONB, on a regular basis throughout the summer
- The CAN DO Lime & Ice Project was launched

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

2008/09 was the final year of our AONB Discovery Project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was a 5-year programme of educational work with local primary schools. Each year 6 schools spend a day learning about the AONB, both in the classroom and out on-site. A Junior Ranger Club in the school holidays shows children features of the natural world and local culture that can be found all around them. 14 Ranger Club sessions were held, during the half-terms and holidays.

In 2008/09 the programme consisted of:

Discovery Days

- Crayke – 33 pupils
- Hovingham – 20 pupils
- Sheriff Hutton – 36 pupils
- Ampleforth St Hilda's – 16 pupils
- Amotherby – 28 pupils
- Terrington – 26 pupils

Welburn/Hull Twinning

- Welburn & Neasden Schools – 67 pupils

Junior Ranger Club (Spring)

- Gales & Gliders – 19 children
- Bugs: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly – 22 children
- Predators & Prey – 22 children
- Wet & Wild – 30 children

Summer Fun (August)

- Filey (rock pools, fossils, beach art) – 12 children
- Hovingham (fossils) – 20 children

Junior Ranger Club (Autumn)

- Nature Detectives – 25 children
- Creature Comforts – 16 children
- Fantastic Fungi – 28 children
- Howardian Halloween – 35 children

Junior Ranger Club (Winter)

- Feed the birds – 14 children
- Snowflakes & Icicles – 13 children
- Star Trekking – 18 children
- Festive Fun – 28 children



Spiders and bugs made during a Junior Ranger Club day at Husthwaite

PUBLICITY

Stories achieving coverage in print in 2008/09 included our parish planning events, the launch of the CAN DO Lime & Ice Project, the Local Information and Walks leaflet based on Welburn village and the Junior Ranger Club activities.

In 2008/09 we:

- Maintained the 14 AONB Gateway Signs
- Obtained at least 27 known press mentions for projects/AONB, equivalent to at least £21,100 of advertising space
- Used the AONB display boards at 7 consultations/ events
- Maintained stocks of the AONB general information leaflet at Tourist Information Centres and other outlets
- Published and distributed our annual Newsletter (AONB News) in October 2008
- Published and distributed our 2007/08 Annual Report in July 2008
- Continued to manage the new AONB website, which received nearly 70,000 visits during 2008/09
- Attended the Ryedale Show, running a quiz on animal homes, collective names, terms for young, etc

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Sustainable Development Fund was again available in 2008/09. £53,700 was distributed to projects in the Howardian Hills, assisting a variety of schemes addressing environmental, social and economic objectives. This is an important grant fund, which allows us to support a wide range of projects that benefit the AONB and its communities, complementing the work we carry out on enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB landscape.

In 2008/09 the Sustainable Development Fund assisted:

- An orchards heritage day at Ampleforth Abbey
- The production of 10 Whole Farm Energy & Carbon Audits for AONB farms
- An eco-renovation audit for 1 village hall
- The coppicing of riverside alders on the River Rye SINC, to improve invertebrate populations
- The installation of a solar hot water system, connection of waterwheel to generator and building consolidation works at Howsham Mill
- An apple recipe book

- The provision of a mobility vehicle for use by disabled visitors to the Castle Howard Arboretum, together with a storage shed
- The first phase of Rural Action Yorkshire's Community Planning, Engagement and Development project
- An advisory visit to Hushwaite by an orchards specialist
- The restoration of a Listed threshing barn at Hovingham, using traditional skills and local materials
- The restoration of 4 traditional direction signs

- AONB Unit staff attended 3 NAAONB seminars/ training events, including the NAAONB Conference and 1 national Communications meeting
- 2 articles were contributed to the NAAONB magazine 'Outstanding'
- The Northern Group of AONBs produced a 2009 calendar to showcase our landscapes, wildlife, local produce and recreational opportunities

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The AONB Management Plan is delivered via the policies and actions of many partner organisations, but we also make use of a number of sources of specialist help and assistance.

In 2008/09:

- We continued to contract the North York Moors National Park to help deliver our Sustainable Development Fund
- The Native Woodland Development Officer continued to work across the National Park and AONB areas
- We continued our active involvement in the CAN DO partnership, including the start of the HLF-funded Lime & Ice Project
- Volunteers helped us with at least 13 projects or tasks, equating to over 97 person/days of assistance

NATIONAL ACTIVITY

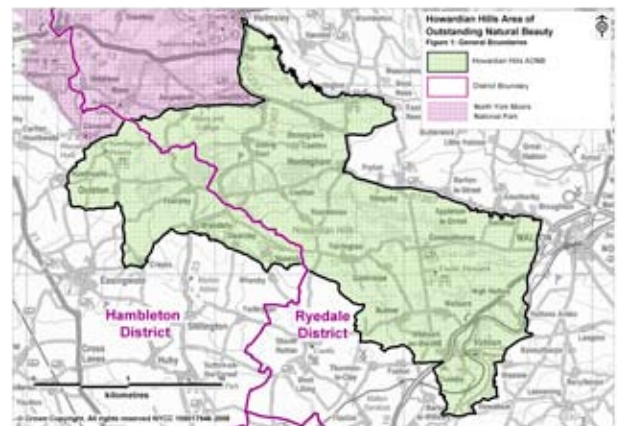
The Howardian Hills AONB is part of the national 'family' of 49 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is an important umbrella body that co-ordinates lobbying on behalf of all AONBs, responds to national consultations and organises training events. Support and participation in NAAONB activities brings many benefits for the Howardian Hills and is important for staff development.

In 2008/09:

- Paul Jackson continued on the Management Board of the NAAONB (being re-elected Vice-Chairman in July 2008) and attended all 4 Board meetings
- Paul Jackson also attended 2 Chairman's Review Group meetings and played an active role in succession planning for the NAAONB CEO
- The Chairman and AONB Manager attended a Regional Chairmen's meeting held in York
- AONB Unit staff attended 1 Northern AONB Group meeting, at the Arnsdale / Silverdale AONB

HOWARDIAN HILLS AONB FACT FILE

- The Howardian Hills covers 204 sq. km (79 sq. miles)
- The area was confirmed as an AONB in 1987
- About 9,300 people live in or immediately adjacent to the area
- Around 18% of the area is wooded



Map of AONB boundaries

AONB CONTACTS

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