

The logo for Howardian Hills, featuring the name in a blue serif font with a green swoosh underline.

Howardian
Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The title 'Annual Report 2010-2011' in white sans-serif font, overlaid on a photograph of a lake with autumn trees and a bird in flight.

Annual Report
2010-2011

The logo for Landscapes for life, with the text in a black sans-serif font and the website address below.

Landscapes
for life
.org.uk

The Howardian Hills logo, featuring a green bracket shape to the left of the text.

HOWARDIAN
HILLS
One of the
AONB family

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the 2010/11 Review of the work of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

2010/11 must surely have been one of the most turbulent in recent years, with so much uncertainty over what level of funding the AONB Partnership would receive in the future. Although the 10/11 funding was largely unaffected, the key task was to prepare for future years, with reduced contributions from Government and the Local Authorities.

A number of developments subsequently left us in a much better position than we could have predicted. A move in 'sponsorship' arrangements from Natural England to Defra will give us a 21% cut over the next 4 years, rather than the immediate severe cut that we had feared. Likewise, the Local Authorities were subsequently able to indicate that their contributions would initially remain largely intact.

Despite these challenges we again managed to complete a significant number of projects. Major restoration works were completed on a limekiln at Gilling; the popular car park at Kirkham Priory was rationalised and re-surfaced; and the eight tree planting projects delayed by the snow in early 2010 were successfully completed this time.

I'm also particularly pleased to report the start of our new schools twinning project. This is a 4-year programme of visits between AONB primary schools and schools in Hull and York. It has been made possible by significant grant resources offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the LEADER Programme.

A tough financial climate lies ahead, but we're confident we can continue to deliver on our wide range of objectives, using our own resources even more efficiently and accessing both money and assistance from others.



Cllr Clare Wood

Chairman, Joint Advisory Committee

ADMINISTRATION

Local Authorities are responsible for the management arrangements in 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 2010/11, 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 – Claire Storey & Justine Clark

Parish Councils (Ryedale) – Ian Read

Parish Councils (Hambleton) – David Pontefract

Country Land and Business Association – Dorothy Fairburn

National Farmers Union – Stephen Prest & Ken Harrison

Ramblers Association – Dr Geoff Eastwood

Forestry Commission – Vince Carter

The JAC met twice in 2010/11:

5th November 2010: Hovingham Village Hall. Clare Wood was elected as the JAC Chairman and Christine Cookman as the Vice-Chairman. Members discussed the proposed 2011/12 JAC budget and the potential implications arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review. A report detailing the baseline figures for the AONB Condition Indicators was also considered.

31st March 2011: Brandsby Village Hall. Members discussed the work achieved in 2010/11 and approved the Business Plan and Action Programme for 2011/12. They also received information on current National Association for AONBs initiatives and the statistics on planning applications for the previous year. Throughout the meeting the content and format of the reports was evaluated, to ensure that the level of detail and coverage remains appropriate.

The JAC carried out its tour of works completed in 2009/10 on **23rd July 2010**, visiting the new ground source heating system at Castle Howard and projects principally in the Hambleton area of the AONB.

Officer Steering Groups

The Core Funders Group convened on its regular quarterly cycle. The AONB Partnership Group met in April 2011 to review progress made with implementing the Objectives of the AONB Management Plan over the previous year. This meeting was held in the early evening and Parish Council representatives were again invited.

The AONB Unit

In 2010/11 the Unit comprised:

AONB Manager Paul Jackson

AONB Officer Liz Bassindale

AONB Assistant (18.5 hrs/wk) Maggie Cochrane

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 2010/11 AONB staff engaged with the strategies of many organisations, including:

- Ryedale DC Local Development Framework Core Strategy
- North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 3
- North Yorkshire Minerals & Waste Local Development Framework Core Strategy
- North Yorkshire & York Landscape Character Assessment

NATIONAL ACTIVITY

The Howardian Hills AONB is part of the national 'family' of 46 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 2010/11:

- Paul Jackson continued on the Management Board of the NAAONB and attended all 5 Board meetings
- He also attended an All Party Parliamentary Group meeting in London
- The Vice-Chairman and AONB Manager attended a Northern Chairmen's meeting in York
- The AONB Manager attended a national Lead Officers' meeting in Birmingham
- AONB Unit staff attended 2 Northern AONB Group meetings, at the Forest of Bowland and Northumberland Coast AONBs
- AONB Unit staff attended 3 NAAONB seminars/training events, including the NAAONB Conference in Kent
- 1 article was contributed to the NAAONB magazine 'Outstanding'

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2010/11

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Natural England	149,783	Staffing	94,471
North Yorkshire CC	42,690	Office costs	16,498
Ryedale DC	5,684	Partnership running costs	2,306
Hambleton DC	5,800	Publicity / Research	7,766
Heritage Lottery Fund (balance in-hand)	22,750	Management Plan	0
LEADER	908	Sustainable Development Fund	46,447
CAN DO Partnership	11,500	Natural Environment projects	19,711
Forestry Commission	5,000	Historic Environment projects	38,306
English Heritage	5,000	Enjoying the AONB	6,866
FEP preparation	8,035	Young People (JRC, etc.)	289
Donations	40	Young People (Schools Twinning)	1,649
<i>Brought forward</i>	<i>36,871</i>	<i>Carried forward</i>	<i>59,752</i>
	£294,061		£294,061
		(Resources from grant recipients)	310,957
		Total Value of AONB Unit Activity	£545,266

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 2010/11 included:

- 200m of hedge gapping-up
- Restoration of 275m of historic Park Wall
- 91 new in-field/hedgerow trees and 3 copses (277 trees) planted.
- Digitisation of the Phase 1 habitat survey maps of the AONB
- Conservation grazing of 7 SINC's or other important sites by Exmoor ponies
- Control of Himalayan balsam along 5.8km of Wath Beck
- Clearance of Western hemlock on Grimston Moor SINC
- Management of species/vegetation on or affecting 4 other SINC's or SSSI's (by volunteers or contractors)
- Conservation work in 2 churchyards
- Management works on 44 Special Interest Road Verges
- Completion of a Conservation Management Plan for the Gilling Castle Registered Park & Garden
- Maintenance of the City of Troy turf maze
- Advice on the management of 10 Scheduled Monuments
- Major restoration works to a 3-pot limekiln at Gilling
- Restoration of a limekiln at Cawton and 7 mileposts, funded by the Ryedale DC LEADER scheme
- Removal of trees from a Listed Building at Risk at Crambe
- Overhead electricity lines undergrounded at Nunnington



New in-field tree, Stittenham (NYMNP)

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:

- 2 farmers/land managers advised about Entry Level or Higher Level Stewardship
- 6 Higher Level Stewardship Farm Environment Plans prepared
- 3 farmers/land managers advised about English Woodland Grant Scheme
- 2 Felling Licence and 1 English Woodland Grant Scheme applications submitted
- 5 English Woodland Grant Scheme application consultations appraised for impact on the AONB; only minor comments submitted



A snowy Junior Ranger Club day at Castle Howard Arboretum

COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

A new project was launched, to twin primary schools in the AONB with ones in Hull/York. Successful funding bids were submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and LEADER. The Junior Ranger Club continued, and 6 JRC sessions were held during the school half-terms and holidays.

In 2010/11 the programme consisted of:

Junior Ranger Club (Summer – ½ days)

- 'Composting Creatures' – 5 children
- Wet and Wild – 5 children

Junior Ranger Club (Autumn – full day)

- Amazing Autumn – 20 children

Junior Ranger Club (Christmas – full day)

- Festive Fun (ice art, animal tracks) – 18 children

Communities:

- RAY Project Officer (SDF-funded) assisted with 3 major community projects
- 6 funding advice or other village workshops held

ENJOYING THE AONB

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

In 2010/11 work included:

- Fingerpost signs, gates and bridges were installed/maintained at various locations throughout the AONB, continuing the maintenance/improvement programme
- 6 guided walks/talks were organised, attended by 156 people
- A walks leaflet for Nunnington/Caulkleys Bank was printed and distributed
- 4 walks leaflets were developed for Terrington and published on the AONB website
- A major scheme to upgrade the Kirkham Priory car park was implemented
- A team of up to 4 volunteers worked on path maintenance in the AONB at least every other week
- Draft leaflets for circular mountain biking routes were developed
- Litter was removed from at least 12 sites in the AONB, on a regular basis throughout the summer
- The CAN DO Lime & Ice Project continued into its third year
- A Condition Survey of all Public Rights of Way in the AONB was started, using volunteers to survey 2 parishes
- A ceramic plaque was created by Slingsby School, depicting life in their village



The Slingsby School plaque

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/more contentious applications examined in 2010/11 included a new agricultural building at Dalby, a new farmhouse at Oswaldkirk, a campsite at Skewsby and an 18m wind turbine at Hushwaite.

During 2010/11:

- 92 applications were determined by the Local Planning Authorities. 91% of these were approved
- 48 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 5 of those responses; the District or County Council followed the JAC's recommendation of refusal, or the applicants submitted more acceptable proposals, in 4 of the cases where a decision was required
- 15 consultations on other development (primarily within roads or verges) were also scrutinised

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Sustainable Development Fund distributed £43,447 to projects, assisting a variety of schemes addressing environmental, social and economic objectives. This continues to be 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 2010/11 the Sustainable Development Fund assisted:

- Year Two of an orchards development and community apple processing project at Hushwaite
- The Discovery Zone at the Wild about Wood Festival at the Castle Howard Arboretum
- The creation of new allotments at Slingsby
- Year Two of Rural Action Yorkshire's Community Planning, Engagement and Development project
- A second outdoor classroom at the Castle Howard Arboretum
- Establishment of a village newsletter for Swinton

PUBLICITY

Stories achieving coverage in print in 2010/11 included the Lime & Ice Yearsley Moor community archaeology project, Sustainable Development Fund projects and information from the 2009/10 Annual Report.

In 2010/11 we:

- Maintained the 14 AONB Gateway Signs
- Obtained at least 16 known press mentions for projects/AONB, equivalent to at least £15,000 of advertising space
- Hosted BBC Countryfile, filming the Exmoor pony grazing project and at Castle Howard
- Gave 6 interviews to BBC Radio York
- Used the AONB display boards at 6 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 2010
- Published and distributed our 2009/10 Annual Report in September 2010
- Continued to manage the AONB website, which received 75,000 visits during 2010/11
- Attended the Ryedale Show, running a quiz on habitats within the AONB (to link to the International Year of Biodiversity)

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 2010/11:

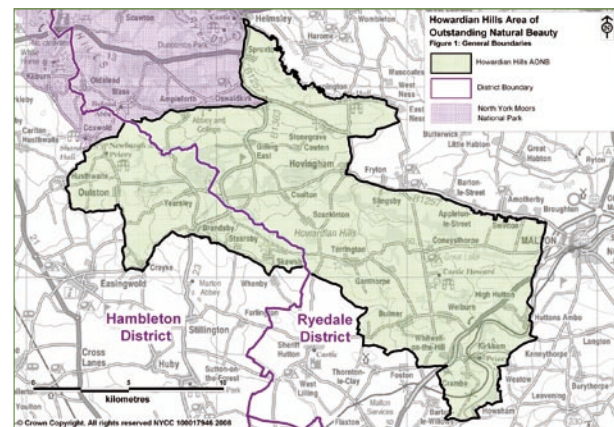
- We contributed to the national process of transferring AONB 'sponsorship' from Natural England to Defra
- We continued to contract the North York Moors National Park to help deliver our Sustainable Development Fund
- The Native Woodland Development Officer continued to work across the National Park and AONB areas
- We continued our active involvement in the CAN DO partnership, including the HLF-funded Lime & Ice Project 'Yearsley through the Ages'
- We worked with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to launch the Schools Twinning project, using HLF and LEADER funding
- We accessed significant additional funding for projects from the CAN DO Partnership, English Heritage and Forestry Commission
- Volunteers helped us with at least 17 projects or tasks, equating to over 200 person/days of assistance worth £11,000



BBC Countryfile filming near Terrington

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



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