

Howardian Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Annual Report 2009/10

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the 2009/10 Review of the work of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

This year saw the printing and distribution of the updated Management Plan, following the process of review and approval the previous year. The new Objectives flow seamlessly from those of the old Plan, but with important additions in the areas of climate change and geodiversity.

A major new initiative on planting in-field and hedgerow trees was rather thwarted by the prolonged and severe winter weather. We have however got a number of schemes ready for planting this coming winter, and the snow provided many opportunities to add to our photo library!

The Christmas sessions of the Junior Ranger Club suffered due to the snow, but the others were as popular as ever. We're planning to continue with these, despite the Heritage Lottery Fund programme having come to an end, because of their popularity and the way they introduce youngsters to nature.

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 efficiently and accessing both money and assistance from others.



Cllr Robert Wainwright
Chairman, Joint Advisory Committee



Launch of revised AONB Management Plan, Hovingham
(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 2009/10, 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 & Justine Clark

Parish Councils (Ryedale) – Ian Read

Parish Councils (Hambleton) – Dr Tony Cowan

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 2009/10:

5th November 2009: Hovingham Village Hall. Robert Wainwright was re-elected as the JAC Chairman and Clare Wood as the Vice-Chairman. Members discussed the proposed 2010/11 JAC budget and the progress with the LEADER and CAN DO Lime and Ice initiatives. A presentation on the Historic Landscape Characterisation project in North Yorkshire was also shown. A photocall outside Hovingham Hall was used to launch the new AONB Management Plan.

1st April 2010: Oswaldkirk Village Hall. Members discussed the work achieved in 2009/10 and approved the Business Plan and Action Programme for 2010/11. They also received information on current National Association for AONBs initiatives and the statistics on planning applications for the previous year.

The JAC carried out its tour of works completed in 2008/09 on 17th July 2009, visiting Grimston Moor and projects in the Hambleton area of the AONB.

Officer Steering Groups

The Core Funders Group convened on its regular quarterly cycle, although the June 2009 meeting was subsequently cancelled. The AONB Partnership Group met in April 2010 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 2009/10 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 2009/10:

- 2009-2014 Plan formally adopted by the Local Authorities in May 2009
- Plan printed and circulated to partner organisations, landowners and managers, Parish Councils, etc in October 2009
- Plan Objectives promoted in Ryedale DC Local Development Framework
- 16 other strategies scrutinised for opportunities or threats

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 2009/10 included new agricultural buildings at Coulton, Gilling and Brandsby, an 18m wind turbine at Yearsley and a 15m turbine at Ampleforth.

During 2009/10:

- 79 applications were determined by the Local Planning Authorities. 95% of these were approved
- 37 of the applications were scrutinised in detail by the AONB Manager
- Comments were submitted on 21 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
- 27 consultations on other development (primarily within roads or verges) were also scrutinised

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2009/10

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Natural England	157,666	Staffing	93,692
North Yorkshire CC	39,140	Office costs	15,913
Ryedale DC	5,684	Partnership running costs	1,838
Hambleton DC	5,800	Publicity / Research	7,992
Heritage Lottery Fund (balance in-hand)	2,297	Management Plan	6,669
CAN DO Partnership	9,000	Sustainable Development Fund	49,089
FEP preparation	715	Natural Environment projects	23,086
Donations	50	Historic Environment projects	14,399
		Enjoying the AONB	9,079
		Discovery Project (HLF)	1,799
<i>Brought forward</i>	<i>39,015</i>	<i>Carried forward</i>	<i>35,811</i>
	£259,367		£259,367
		(Resources from grant recipients)	519,660
		Total Value of AONB Unit Activity	£779,027



Volunteers removing invading conifers, Yearsley

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 now making a significant contribution to path maintenance.

In 2009/10 work included:

- Fingerpost signs, gates and bridges were installed/maintained at various locations throughout the AONB, continuing the improvement programme
- 5 guided walks/talks were organised, attended by 101 people
- A walks leaflet for Nunnington was prepared
- Discussions were held with the Parish Council about upgrading the Kirkham Priory car park
- A team of up to 4 volunteers worked on path maintenance in the AONB at least every other week
- A series of circular mountain biking routes were appraised
- Significant progress was made with negotiating an upgrade to bridleway status of the path between Gilling and Ampleforth Station
- 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 second year



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 2009/10 included:

- 1.74km of new hedge planting and gapping-up
- Restoration of 145m of historic Park Wall
- Developing 8 schemes to plant 63 new individual field/hedgerow trees and 5 copes (planting delayed due to severe winter weather)
- Detailed survey of 1 SINC
- Conservation grazing of 6 SINC's or other important sites by Exmoor ponies
- Control of Himalayan balsam along 5.8km of Wath Beck
- Clearance of 10ha of rhododendron on Piper Hill SINC
- Management of species/vegetation on or affecting 13 other SINC's or SSSIs (by volunteers or contractors)
- Conservation work in 2 churchyards
- Management works on 44 Special Interest Road Verges
- Maintenance of the City of Troy turf maze
- Re-casting/restoration of 3 mileposts
- Re-casting/restoration of 5 historic village name signs
- Overhead electricity lines undergrounded at Ampleforth and Dalby

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
- 1 Higher Level Stewardship Farm Environment Plan prepared
- 4 farmers/land managers advised about English Woodland Grant Scheme
- 6 English Woodland Grant Scheme application consultations appraised for impact on the AONB; only minor comments submitted

New roadside hedge, Yearsley

COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

Following the end of the AONB Discovery Project in early 2009, a new project was developed to twin primary schools in the AONB and Hull/York. Funding bids were submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and LEADER in April 2010. We decided to continue the Junior Ranger Club, and 16 JRC sessions were held during the school half-terms and holidays.

In 2009/10 the programme consisted of:

Junior Ranger Club (Spring)

- Treasures, Tombs and De-composers – 25 children
- Take it or Leaf it! – 17 children
- Behind the scenes (Nunnington Hall) – 25 children
- High Flying – 23 children
- Rocking with Geology – 26 children
- Marvellous Maps (how not to get lost!) – 21 children
- Spring has Sprung – 20 children
- Wet and Wild – 30 children

Junior Ranger Club (Autumn)

- Amazing Apples – 25 children
- Pulpitations (paper-making) – 25 children
- Tremendous Trees – 24 children
- Autumn Pottery – 26 children

Junior Ranger Club (Christmas)

- Festive Fun (animal tracks) – 6 children (24 unable to attend due to snow)
- Festive Fun (bird feeders & Yule logs) – 6 children (24 unable to attend due to snow)

Junior Ranger Club (February)

- Winter Wildlife – 26 children
- How things Grow – 26 children

Communities:

- Assisted with the preparation of 6 Parish Plans and advised on 3 more
- 5 funding advice or other village workshops held



Junior Ranger Club day at Nunnington – Autumn Pottery

NATIONAL ACTIVITY

The Howardian Hills AONB is part of the national 'family' of 47 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 2009/10:

- Paul Jackson continued on the Management Board of the NAAONB (being re-elected Vice-Chairman in July 2009) and attended all 4 Board meetings
- Paul Jackson also attended 1 Chairman's Review Group meeting and played an active role in the recruitment and induction of the new CEO of the NAAONB
- He also attended a Chair's level meeting with Natural England in London
- AONB Unit staff attended 2 Northern AONB Group meetings, at the Solway Coast and Nidderdale AONBs
- AONB Unit staff attended 2 NAAONB seminars/training events, including the NAAONB Conference
- 2 articles were contributed to the NAAONB magazine 'Outstanding'
- The Northern Group of AONBs produced a 2010 calendar to showcase our landscapes, wildlife, local produce and recreational opportunities
- A joint beacon event was held with the North York Moors National Park in December 2009, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act

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 2009/10:

- 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 'Yearsley through the Ages'
- We worked with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to develop the Schools Twinning project, seeking HLF and LEADER funding
- Volunteers helped us with at least 22 projects or tasks, equating to over 265 person/days of assistance worth £16,950

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Sustainable Development Fund distributed £48,100 to projects, 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 2009/10 the Sustainable Development Fund assisted:

- Year One of an orchards development and community apple processing project at Hushwaite
- Repairs to Appleton-le-Street Parish Hall
- The installation of a ground source heating system at Gilling Village Hall
- Interpretation panels and educational access for the new ground source heating system at Castle Howard
- The first full-year phase of Rural Action Yorkshire's Community Planning, Engagement and Development project
- Erection of bird and bat boxes around Hovingham village

PUBLICITY

Stories achieving coverage in print in 2009/10 included the Lime & Ice Yearsley project, the new mobility scooter for the Arboretum and the launch of the new AONB Management Plan. An article on the AONB also appeared in Geographical magazine.

In 2009/10 we:

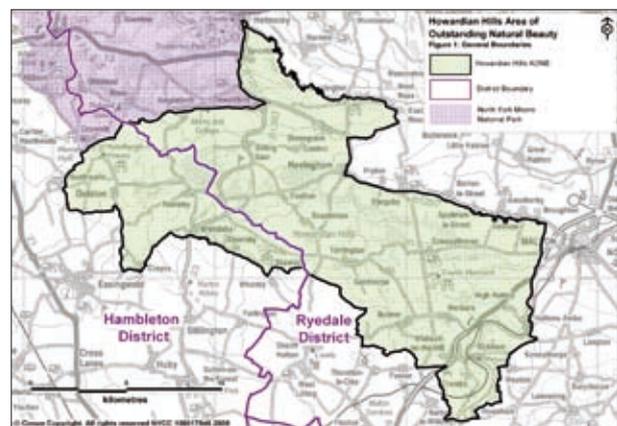
- Maintained the 14 AONB Gateway Signs
- Obtained at least 28 known press mentions for projects/AONB, equivalent to at least £18,000 of advertising space
- Used the AONB display boards at 4 consultations/ events
- Maintained stocks of the AONB general information leaflet at Tourist Information Centres and other outlets
- Published and distributed our annual Newsletter (AONB News) in September 2009
- Published and distributed our 2008/09 Annual Report in October 2009
- Continued to manage the AONB website, which received 75,000 visits during 2009/10
- Attended the Ryedale Show, running a quiz on the locations of the other AONBs in the country, to mark the 60th anniversary of the designation



New ground source heating system at Castle Howard (Hon. S Howard)

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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Printed on paper from sustainably-managed forests
Photos: AONB Unit, unless stated otherwise