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Howardian Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AONB NEWS

Issue 15

October 2015

Moorswork in the Howardian Hills



▲ *Clearing Himalayan balsam*

Moorswork is a Social Enterprise undertaking conservation work in the eastern part of North Yorkshire. The group currently operates two days per week from a workshop in Dalby Forest. Funding to establish the Social Enterprise came from the North York Moors National Park Innovation Fund in 2013.

Moorswork are already carrying out work for the National Park, Forestry Commission, the AONB, Buglife, several churches and a Housing Association. They are available for hire either on a regular contract or for one-off jobs. Equipment they have available includes handtools, mowers, strimmers and rakes. Alongside conservation work the team can also help with tasks such as painting in village halls and maintenance of village green spaces. Their leader, Peter Scott, can be contacted at themohairfarm@yahoo.co.uk or on 01759 380308.



▲ *Conservation grassland management at Appleton-le-Street*

Over the course of the last few months the Howardian Hills (North Yorkshire County Council) Volunteers have teamed up with Moorswork to deliver conservation work in the AONB. The summer months have seen the combined group clearing Himalayan balsam from Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and cutting and raking the botanically rich churchyard at Appleton-le-Street. We are planning fortnightly tasks from the start of October to the end of March. If you are interested in joining the Volunteers please contact Sheila Laking, NYCC Countryside Volunteer Coordinator (01609 532435 or Countryside.Volunteers@northyorks.gov.uk).

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Page 5 (top right) - North York Moors National Park Authority

Page 6 - Liz Bassindale

Annual Report April 2014 – March 2015

In this regular feature we tell you about some of the work that the AONB Unit funded or facilitated during the last financial year.

Landscape

- 449m of hedge planting/gapping-up and 37 new in-field/hedgerow trees
- 265m of wall restoration
- Completion of undergrounding of electricity wires in Bulmer and continuing development of future undergrounding programme

Biodiversity

- Control of Himalayan balsam along 5.8km of Wath Beck and at Jeffry Bog and Fairy Dell SINC
- Clearance of rhododendron in and adjacent to Yearsley Moor Woodlands SINC
- Conservation grazing of 7 SINC or other important sites by Exmoor ponies
- Management of species/vegetation on or affecting 5 other SINC
- Improved management of 6 SINC via Higher Level Stewardship or English Woodland Grant Scheme agreements
- Support for 2 village wildlife projects
- Management works on 45 Special Interest Road Verges

Historic environment

- Prepared and submitted a grant application for our Monument Management Scheme
- Carried out bracken and rhododendron control on Scheduled Monuments at Hovingham and Newburgh
- Restoration of 4 traditional direction signs
- Work on 6 other important historic features including a Listed field barn

Planning

- Carried out site visits with the contractors during the seismic survey, to understand the process
- Attended meetings and debates to learn more about fracking
- Supported new phone masts proposed as part of the Government's initiative to tackle not-spots
- Participated in NYCC/RDC study to identify improvements to the A64

Enjoying the AONB

- Published "Bike Rides and Rambles in the Howardian Hills" leaflet with support from Castle Howard Estate, Ryedale District Council, the Yorkshire Arboretum and National Trust (Nunnington Hall)

- Developed and implemented an initiative with Visit York, via Ryedale DC and Welcome to Yorkshire, to encourage visitors to experience the Howardian Hills area
- Continued to negotiate a package of improvements in PRow routing on the Castle Howard Estate
- Ran the first Howardian Hills Photography Competition and prize-giving event, principally organised by RAY
- A team of 2 volunteers worked on path maintenance in the AONB during the first half of the year
- Removed litter from at least 10 sites in the AONB on a regular basis

Communities, Schools & Education

- Completed our 4-year project with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to twin primary schools in the AONB with schools in Hull and York
- 4 Junior Rangers activity sessions held during the school half-terms and holidays
- Projects funded in 2 villages, including 1 Village Hall project

Publicity

- Maintained the 14 AONB Gateway Signs
- Mounted a display about the AONB at 2 events
- Gave evening talks to 2 local groups
- Published our 2014 Annual Report
- Continued to manage the AONB website (88,200 page views by 13,700 users) and scoped options for a low cost re-refresh
- Attended the Ryedale Show
- Completed installation of the final three 25th Anniversary log seats

Sustainable Development

Our Sustainable Development Fund provided support towards:

- Year 2 of a Sustainable Rural Communities Project run by Rural Action Yorkshire
- Refurbishment of Coneythorpe Village Hall
- Enhancement of the outdoor areas at Terrington Village Hall, to create artwork, play space and an environmental education and growing area

Financial Statement 2014/15

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Defra	116,109	Staffing	91,585
North Yorkshire CC	43,566	Office costs	20,308
Ryedale DC	5,066	Partnership running costs	3,557
Hambleton DC	5,800	Publicity/Research	4,188
Heritage Lottery Fund	6,600	Management Plan	3,008
Environment Agency	1,500	Sustainable Development Fund	14,455
National Centre for the Uplands	1,250	Natural Environment projects	12,434
Donations	25	Historic Environment projects	11,601
		Enjoying the AONB	6,165
		Young People (JRC, etc)	157
		Young People (Schools Twinning)	4,637
	£179,916		£172,095
Brought forward	(45,689)	Carried forward	(53,510)
	£225,605		£225,605
		(Resources from grant recipients, volunteers, etc)	77,696
Total Value of AONB Unit Activity in 2014/15			£249,791

England's most iconic landscapes – a hidden economic powerhouse

Far from being sleepy backwaters, England's finest landscapes contribute more than £20bn each year to the economy – similar to that of Birmingham.

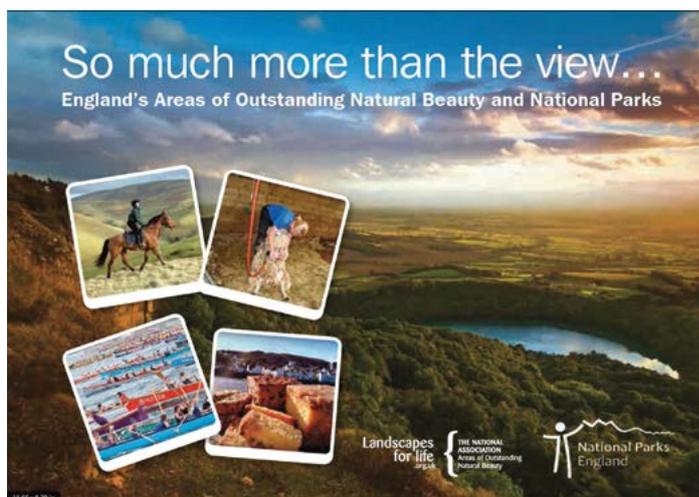
'So much more than the view...' from England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Parks, highlights the wide range of benefits these iconic areas provide to society.

Covering a quarter of England, National Parks and AONBs are our most beautiful and cherished landscapes, with iconic archaeological and historical sites and valuable wildlife habitats. But they provide so much more to society than a beautiful view.

Rightly regarded as a treasured national resource and internationally recognised for their special qualities, they provide a base for businesses that rely on a high quality environment; creative and sporting inspiration; homes for people and wildlife; food and drink; and life enhancing experiences for millions of visitors of all ages.

Receiving the report, Environment Minister Rory Stewart said:

"Our British landscapes are among the most beautiful and precious in the world. And such land remains central to the British imagination, to our souls and to our identity. We would miss such landscapes profoundly if they were gone. We have a deep obligation to protect this land, its farms and its communities."



This report also reminds us that safeguarding our countryside can also generate economic value, how our protected landscapes are increasingly rare in a rapidly developing world and just how precious they are to visitors and residents. However, while we celebrate the fact that they have also the potential to bring prosperity, we must never reduce such places simply to their economic value – they are so much more than that."

The report can be downloaded at http://www.landscapesforliferesources.org.uk/images/uploads/pdf/So_much_more_than_the_view.pdf

Monument Management Scheme



▲ MMS survey training

The Monument Management Scheme (MMS) is an exciting new project in the Howardian Hills aiming to survey and care for the historic monuments in the area. Funded by Historic England and with technical assistance from the

North York Moors National Park we are aiming, over a four year period, to reduce the national risk status of the monuments in the AONB.

This summer the volunteers have surveyed 65 of the 80 monuments in the Howardian Hills, assessing their current condition. They recorded issues such as scrub growth, animal burrows, bracken and vehicle damage. The majority of the other monuments, those which were obscured from view by crops or dense undergrowth, will be surveyed this autumn and winter once they become more visible.

The survey results will be used to draw up a schedule of work for up to 34 of

the monuments. Some of the work will be carried out by our volunteer team alongside Moorswork and some of it by contractors. Proposed work includes scrub removal, bracken control and reseedling to establish benign grass-based vegetation.

At the end of the four years a follow-up survey of the monuments will be carried out by the volunteers to assess the impact of the work.

If you would be interested in volunteering to help with practical work on the monuments please contact the AONB Team by email info@howardianhills.org.uk or phone 0845 0349495.

Ryedale Carers Support – could you give a small amount of time?

Ryedale Carers Support is a local charity that provides practical and emotional help for carers, the people they care for and older people living on their own in Ryedale. They run a free sitting service for unpaid carers to enable them to have a break from their caring responsibilities. The service is provided by dedicated volunteers who can visit weekly, fortnightly or monthly for a couple of hours or so. They also run a visiting service for elderly people living alone who would enjoy some extra company. One of the carers supported by the charity said, “Being a carer is a real challenge, nothing can prepare you for the intense and

relentless exhausting daily routine which is why I value the volunteer sitting service so much. It gives me some precious time to relax and switch off for a couple of hours.”

The charity are asking if anyone can spare just a small amount of time each week or fortnight to allow a carer to have some much needed time for themselves or bring companionship to an older person living alone. Volunteers are not asked to do any lifting, or provide any medical or personal care. They will simply provide friendly and supportive company to people often overlooked in the busy day-to-day lives of rural communities.



If you would like to talk through the possibilities of becoming a volunteer with Ryedale Carers Support, or would like to have a chat about the services they provide, please call 01751 432288, email enquiries@ryedalecarers.org.uk or visit their website www.ryedalecarers.org.uk

Stronger Communities



▲ *Thixendale Lunch Club trying traditional crafts*

An ambitious new programme by North Yorkshire County Council to support communities to play a greater role in the delivery of services in the county is starting to make progress. The council is developing its Stronger Communities programme to support communities to help themselves and create local solutions to services at a time of significant financial challenge for the authority.

Many communities within North Yorkshire, and certainly within this AONB, have vibrant groups and active volunteers who work innovatively and collectively to add to the richness of local life and to help more vulnerable people. Working with communities already takes place with community involvement in libraries, rights of way, school governors, local befriending services, and volunteer community drivers. Building on this experience the programme will work with local communities and offer opportunities to design and develop services to meet local needs.

Recent decisions mean changes to NYCC Library services around this area – Malton Library will remain a ‘core’ district library, whilst Helmsley will have the opportunity to become a community-led and managed facility. The models offer

both challenges and opportunities; success will depend on new ways of partnering with local communities and will need volunteer effort.

The Stronger Communities programme is focused on the health and wellbeing of residents and communities, and should anyone in the AONB wish to further explore an opportunity to get support for new activities then please contact your local Delivery Manager. Recent projects supported have included a Lunch Club for older residents and a Farmer’s Breakfast for retired farmers and land workers.

Stronger Communities Delivery Managers: Ryedale – Sarah Robinson, sarah.robinson@northyorks.gov.uk 01609 532265
Hambleton – Adele Wilson, adele.wilson@northyorks.gov.uk 01609 532223

Rides and Rambles in the Howardian Hills

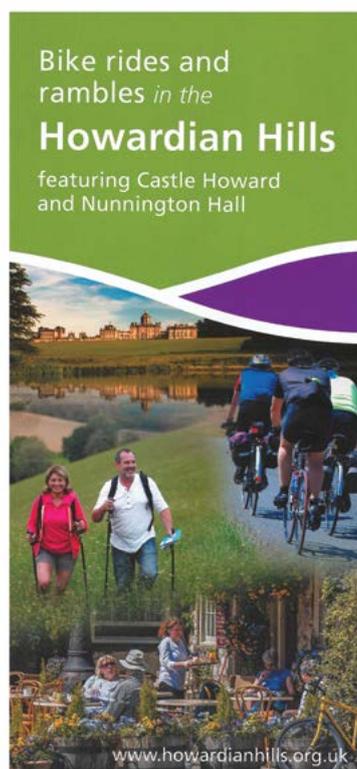
A new leaflet promoting the best routes for rides and rambles in the Howardian Hills has been launched by the Howardian Hills AONB in partnership with Ryedale District Council, Castle Howard, Nunnington Hall and the Yorkshire Arboretum.

The circular routes highlighted in *Bike rides and rambles in the Howardian Hills* are the perfect way to explore this part of North Yorkshire, a hidden gem nestled between the North York Moors and York. The rolling wooded hills, picturesque river valleys and historic estates of the Howardian Hills together create a unique landscape perfect for exploring on foot or by bike. This new leaflet brings together 20 rides and rambles including leisurely afternoon strolls, longer walks, road cycling routes and off-road mountain bike circuits. A host of pretty villages provide ample opportunities to stop for tea and cake whichever route you take, whilst larger market towns are the perfect hubs to begin or end a day of discovery.

Stunning scenery and a huge range of flora and fauna make the rides and rambles the perfect way to explore at any time of year; from the beautiful

bluebell woods in spring and dappled shade on meandering riverside paths in the summer, to autumn amber hues, crisp frosts and vast winter skies. *Bike rides and rambles in the Howardian Hills* is available from Castle Howard, The Yorkshire Arboretum, Nunnington Hall and regional visitor information points; it can also be downloaded from the AONB website. The full route details and maps are available to download and print from www.howardianhills.org.uk

▼ [Rides and Rambles Guide](#)



We're moving!



▲ [The Old Vicarage](#)

On 1st December this year, after 12 years at Hovingham, the AONB Team office will be moving to Helmsley. Our phone number and email address stay the same but our new address will be:

Howardian Hills AONB, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York. YO62 5BP

This is the North York Moors National Park office but it doesn't mean that any of our administrative arrangements have changed, and we're not becoming 'part of the National Park'. In the face of continued public spending cuts, the move means we can reduce our baseline fixed costs significantly and therefore keep providing grants for practical projects in the AONB. We'll also have more access to technical specialists, as well as options to buy-in administrative services, etc.

You can still drop in and see us after 1st December – simply come to the Reception Desk at the Old Vicarage and ask, although it's always best to ring first to check that someone's in the office that day.

Our new website, and Twitter

Please visit www.howardianhills.org.uk to have a look round our new website, which is much more accessible via smartphones, tablets and computers. It contains information for visitors, residents, grant applicants and people searching for background information about the AONB.

We also now have a Twitter account! Follow us on **@Howardian_Hills** to get information about events, news and what we're working on at the minute. We'll also be re-tweeting news and events from partner organisations, local businesses and other AONBs.

The new Countryside Stewardship Scheme



The new Countryside Stewardship Scheme replaces Environmental Stewardship, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the English Woodland Grant Scheme. It's open to all eligible farmers and woodland/other land managers. The main priority for Countryside Stewardship is to protect and enhance the natural environment, in particular biodiversity and water quality. Other outcomes include flood management; the historic environment; landscape character; genetic conservation; and educational access.

Unlike previous schemes, applications for most elements of Countryside Stewardship are competitive. Applications will be scored against criteria and not everyone who applies will be successful. The targeting

and scoring are designed to help achieve the main environmental priorities for the Howardian Hills. The scheme is run jointly by Natural England, Forestry Commission England and the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on behalf of Defra.

There are three main elements within Countryside Stewardship:

- Mid Tier: multi-year agreements for environmental improvements in the wider countryside, including multi-year management options and capital grants.
- Higher Tier: multi-year agreements for environmentally significant sites and woodlands where more complex management requires support from Natural England

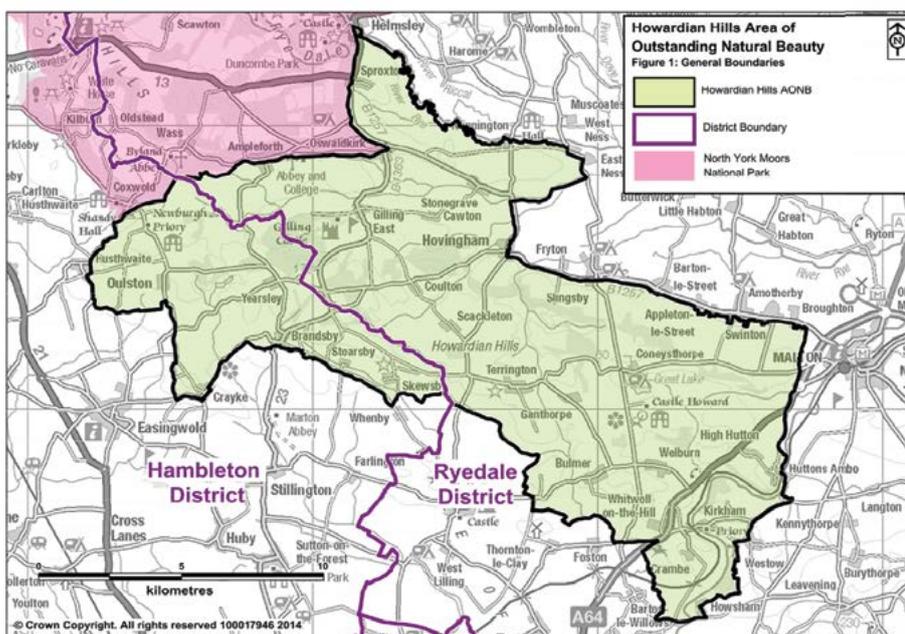
or the Forestry Commission, including management options and capital grants.

- Capital grants: a range of 1- and 2-year grants for hedge and wall restoration, improving water quality, developing implementation plans, feasibility studies, woodland creation, woodland improvement and tree health.

The scheme also provides support for organic conversion and management, and there is a facilitation fund available for groups of farmers who want to work collectively.

All supporting scheme guidance material can be found on GOV.UK by searching 'Countryside Stewardship'.

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

Landscapes for life .org.uk

HOWARDIAN HILLS
One of the AONB family

This Newsletter has been produced by the Howardian Hills AONB JAC