

Howardian  
Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Annual Report

2016/17

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HOWARDIAN  
HILLS  
One of the  
AONB family

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

**I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the 2016/17 Review of the work of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee.**

It's been another busy year following our office move in late 2015, the re-structure of the AONB Staff Unit and several major new projects coming on-stream.

Long-serving Assistant Maggie Cochrane left in May 2016 and we welcomed Francesca Pert and Frances Standen on temporary contracts. They helped the remaining Team members Liz and Paul with a wide range of publicity and countryside management projects, and Francesca has now been retained for a further year.

Their arrival was timely as 2016/17 saw some of our major initiatives take on a new lease of life. The Ryevitalise project covering the River Rye from Bilsdale to Nunnington has received a major boost from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with the award of funding that could potentially top £2m. A 2-year project will enable the partnership to develop the main 5-year programme of work on water level management, improving water quality and restoring the Rye's habitats and wildlife.

The Monument Management Scheme started work on 38 Scheduled Monuments, which is an excellent achievement, and the foundations have been laid for a new partnership to tackle issues on the Public Rights of Way network in the AONB.

Schemes submitted in 2015/16 for undergrounding overhead electricity lines in AONB villages have also progressed well, with Crambe and Cawton being completed.

I handed over Chairmanship to Cllr Robert Wainwright at the end of the year, and I wish him and the new Vice-Chairman Sir William Worsley every success in what will be a challenging period as the country moves towards Brexit and a time of uncertainty for rural support funding.

*C. S. Cookman*

**Cllr Christine Cookman**  
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 Partners Group consists of representatives of the 4 main organisations (see list below). 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 2016/17, the members of the JAC were as follows:

#### North Yorkshire County Council –

Cllrs Caroline Patmore & Clare Wood

#### Ryedale District Council –

Cllrs Robert Wainwright & Fiona Farnell

#### Hambleton District Council –

Cllr Christine Cookman

#### Natural England –

Ailsa Kirkup

Parish Councils (Ryedale) – Sally Brown

Parish Councils (Hambleton) – Chris Stratton

Country Land and Business Association – Sir William Worsley

National Farmers Union – Rob Hicks

Ramblers – Philip Catterall

Forestry Commission – Jim Smith

The JAC met twice in 2016/17:

**10th November 2016:** North York Moors National Park offices. Unfortunately the meeting was inquorate so no elections could be held. Christine Cookman therefore continued as the JAC Chairman. Members discussed the proposed 2017/18 JAC budget, particularly noting the improved stability offered by the 4-year Defra settlement. There was also a 'virtual tour' of the work carried out by the Staff Unit during 2017/18.

**13th April 2017:** Hovingham Village Hall. Robert Wainwright was elected as Chairman of the JAC and Sir William Worsley as Vice-Chairman. Members discussed the work achieved in 2016/17 and approved the Business Plan and Action Programme for 2017/18. They also received feedback and evaluation of new ways of working following the re-organisation of the AONB Staff Unit structure.

### Officer Steering Groups

The Core Partners Group convened on its regular quarterly cycle.

## The AONB Unit

In 2016/17 the Unit comprised:

AONB Manager . . . . .	Paul Jackson (1 FTE)
AONB Officer. . . . .	Liz Bassindale (4 days/wk) (1.2 FTE)      Francesca Pert (1 day/wk, Sept '16 – Mar '17) Francesca Standen (1 day/wk, Sept '16 – Dec '16)
AONB Assistant. . . . .	Maggie Cochrane (Apr '16) (0.5 FTE)                                      Post made redundant

## 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. The Plan must be reviewed every 5 years, by law.

### In 2016/17 we:

- Continued with delivery of the 2014-19 Management Plan

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2016/17

Income	£	Expenditure	£
<b>Defra</b>	<b>118,106</b>	Staffing	96,103
<b>North Yorkshire CC</b>	<b>32,135</b>	Office costs	6,305
<b>Ryedale DC</b>	<b>5,066</b>	Partnership running costs	3,766
<b>Hambleton DC</b>	<b>5,800</b>	Publicity/Research	3,888
Historic England	0	Management Plan	0
Donations	30	Natural Environment projects	19,306
		Historic Environment projects	32,032
		Sustainable Development & Rural Economy	15,681
		Young People (JRC, etc)	581
<b>In-year</b>	<b>£161,137</b>	<b>In-year</b>	<b>£177,662</b>
Brought forward – General Fund	(76,761)	Carried forward – General Fund	(66,868)
Brought forward – Historic England	(10,838)	Carried forward – Historic England	(4,206)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£248,736</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£248,736</b>
		(Resources from grant recipients, volunteers, etc)	72,290
		<b>Total Value of AONB Unit Activity in 2016/17</b>	<b>£249,952</b>

# CONSERVING AND ENHANCING NATURAL BEAUTY

This is the primary objective of AONB designation and 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 2016/17 included:

- 1,785m of hedge planting/gapping-up
- 1 copse and 17 in-field or boundary trees planted/replaced
- Continued control of Himalayan balsam at Fairy Dell, Jeffrey Bog and Mugdale/Barker Woods SINCs; also at Crambeck in the River Derwent SSSI and along Wath Beck
- Continued control of rhododendron at Grimston Moor SINC; scrub management at Terrington Carr SINC
- Conservation grazing of 6 SINC or other important sites by Exmoor ponies
- Management of species/vegetation on or affecting 7 other SINCs or SSSIs (by volunteers or contractors)
- Management works on 45 Special Interest Road Verges
- Continuing involvement with the North Yorkshire Local Geological Sites Partnership, encouraging progress to survey and map the AONB's most important geodiversity sites. Survey element of an HLF bid was rejected so new proposals formulated
- Monitoring the incidence and spread of tree diseases in the AONB, particularly *Phytophthora ramorum* following an outbreak at Gilling in 2015
- Entering work carried out in the AONB in 2015/16 into the Government's Biodiversity Action Recording System, prior to its closedown
- Continuing the targeted programme of survey and management work on Scheduled Monuments, particularly those on the At Risk Register, using volunteers where possible. Four-year funding received from Historic England. Monument Management Scheme Year 2: Detailed surveys carried out on 2 SMs; Management Plans prepared for 7 SMs; bracken sprayed on 23 SMs; bramble/brush/scrub cleared on 27 SMs; water trough and feeder removed from 1 SM. Management initiated on 38 SMs in aggregate
- Re-gravelling the City of Troy turf maze
- Restoring 9 traditional village name signs and casting 6 replicas to replace modern signs, in 8 villages
- Repair of 1 traditional direction sign following damage by a vehicle
- Continuing liaison with Northern Powergrid on overhead electricity cable undergrounding. Village schemes fully completed at Cawton and Crambe; partially completed at Nunnington and Ganthorpe. Significantly improved liaison established with BT on associated rationalisation of their overhead line network
- Participation in survey of the western fringe of the AONB and National Park area, to scope for a National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative bid

In addition to initiating and grant aiding work itself, the AONB Unit also gives advice to applicants and/or comments on applications submitted for agri-environment scheme funding and woodland management licensing:

- 16 Felling Licence Applications and 3 Woodland Management Plans appraised for impact on the AONB



Hedge planting, Coneysthorpe



Undergrounding overhead electricity lines, Crambe (during)



Undergrounding overhead electricity lines, Crambe (after)

## Planning Issues

The Joint Advisory Committee is consulted by the Local Planning Authorities on certain developments in the AONB, in line with an agreed protocol. The AONB Manager also monitors the Weekly Lists 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 in certain circumstances.

Larger/more significant applications examined in 2016/17 included: the siting of a proposed agricultural building at Broughton; a replacement dwelling in open countryside near Hovingham; new gates and piers at a redevelopment at Ampleforth; 3 proposed new dwellings near Brandsby; a large 2-storey garage and store at Sackleton; conversion of barns at Coulton and Terrington; and a replacement dwelling in Brandsby. There were also a significant number of applications for new or replacement mobile phone masts, generally 15m in height.

### During 2016/17:

- 81 applications were determined by the Local Planning Authorities in the calendar year 2016. 90% of these were approved
- 110 applications were scrutinised in detail by the AONB Manager in 2016/17
- Comments were submitted on 39 schemes, where a conflict with AONB Objectives was identified, improvements could be made or support was given
- Objections or Strong Reservations were lodged in 16 of those responses (relating to 13 cases); The Local Planning Authority: Approved 2 schemes; Approved 13 schemes following re-submission/amendment to address the AONB Manager's/LPA's concerns
- 6 schemes were amended in response to less significant comments
- 2 consultations on other development (primarily within roads or verges) were also scrutinised – comments submitted on 2 schemes

In other planning-related issues we:

- Commented on national policy consultation documents by submitting local evidence/perspective to the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) as necessary
- Submitted comments on the Ryedale Local Plan VIUA consultation; the North Yorkshire Minerals & Waste Joint Plan and Economic Growth Plan; the Hambleton Local Plan Preferred Options and Easingwold Area Plan; and the North York Moors National Park Local Plan and Management Plan
- Liaised with NYCC Highways Asset Management on road verge management, kerbing works and best practice guidance for works within the AONB

## ENJOYING THE AONB

The Public Rights of Way network continues to be managed to a generally good standard, although the age of some of the infrastructure means that continual maintenance/improvement works are required over the whole network. More complex path routing issues are being resolved gradually, depending on their complexity, whilst volunteers are still making a significant contribution to path management.

### In 2016/17 work included:

- Contracting iFootpath to carry out the preparation of 6 Easy Countryside Trail route descriptions
- Submitting comments to North Yorkshire County Council's consultation on Public Rights of Way maintenance prioritisation
- Progressing a new project to assist NYCC with resolving Public Rights of Way issues in the AONB. Four target Parishes selected and recorded Issues re-surveyed by volunteers
- Identifying 24 missing/broken roadside Public Rights of Way fingerposts and ordering replacements
- Implementing phase 3 of an initiative with Visit York, via Ryedale DC and Welcome to Yorkshire, with the preparation of 7 'Theme/Route itineraries'
- Removing litter from at least 10 sites in the AONB, on a regular basis throughout the summer

**EASY COUNTRYSIDE TRAIL: HOVINGHAM AND CAWTON**

Howardian Hills  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Easy Terrain

3.5 Miles  
1.5 hours

210317

Hovingham Easy Countryside Trail leaflet

# COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

Our Junior Ranger Club continued, with 4 activity sessions held during the school half-terms and holidays.

## In 2016/17 the programme consisted of:

### Junior Ranger Club (May)

- Island Explorers – 31 children

### Junior Ranger Club (October)

- Amazing Autumn – 27 children

### Junior Ranger Club (December)

- Wonderful Winter – 26 children

### Junior Ranger Club (February)

- Winter Fun – 20 children

## Communities:

- Continued liaison with the principal organisations involved in community work in the AONB, via the regular Community Development Officers' meetings
- Participated in the new project linking communities within the Amotherby Ward in Ryedale



Learning orienteering at a Junior Ranger Club day, Yorkshire Arboretum



Terrington Hall School Environment Week, led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust trainees

# PUBLICITY

Promotion of the AONB has continued via our Newsletter, Annual Report and attendance at the local agricultural show. Increasingly our profile is being raised via the leaflets and publicity being produced in partnership with other organisations, as detailed in the 'Enjoying the AONB' section.

## In 2016/17 we:

- Maintained the 14 AONB Gateway Signs
- Re-designed 7 new display banners
- Published and distributed our annual Newsletter (AONB News) in October 2016
- Published our 2015/16 Annual Report in September 2016
- Managed and developed the new AONB website
- Maintained a presence on Twitter - issuing information, publicising the practical work being carried out in the AONB and re-Tweeting as appropriate
- Attended the Ryedale Show
- Gave presentations to the NYCC Hambleton and Ryedale Area Committees and Marton Gardening Club

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We distributed £6,900 to Sustainable Development projects, assisting a variety of schemes addressing environmental, social and economic objectives.

## Sustainable Development projects assisted in 2016/17 included:

- Continuation of a Sustainable Rural Communities project run by Rural Action Yorkshire, assisting with community planning
- Support for the Slingsby May Day fair and maypole refurbishment
- Creation of a Forest Schools area at Howsham Mill, to assist on school visit days



New 'Forest Schools' area, Howsham Mill

## 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 2016/17 we:

- Continued to participate in the Biodiversity Action Partnership for Ryedale, Scarborough and the AONB
- Participated in the re-invigorated North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Partnership, following the appointment of a part-time co-ordinator
- Participated in the North York Moors Native Woodland Partnership
- Participated in a successful Local Growth Fund bid for development of the Tourism Business Network in the wider North York Moors area
- Continued to participate in the partnership focussing on the River Rye, to develop a project to tackle Himalayan balsam, river quality, water level management and sedimentation on a catchment scale. Application for a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership project received Stage 1 pass in September 2016. Stage 2 application will be submitted after the 2-year Development phase
- Arranged for Volunteers to help us with 27 projects or tasks, equating to over 182 person/days of assistance worth £10,200
- Completed a Unit re-structure, which came into effect on 1st May 2016
- Developed a 'Reserves Policy' and reduced the balance during 2016/17 by funding more projects
- Successfully out-sourced work to: prepare Easy Access routes; prepare site management plans for Scheduled Monuments
- Worked jointly with the North York Moors National Park on: scoping study of NP/AONB western fringe for National Grid LEI funding; development of funding bids for the Turtle Doves and Cornfield Flowers projects; Dark Skies Week; developing the RYEvitalise project for Stage 1 HLF Landscape Partnership funding; technical help with the AONB Monument Management Scheme; article in National Park Out & About Guide



Heritage Lottery Fund visit to evaluate the RYEvitalise project bid, Nunnington

## 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 2016/17 we:

- Attended the national AONB Forum in July
- Attended the national Chairmen's meeting/ NAAONB AGM in November
- Attended 2 Northern AONB Group meetings
- Commented or shared good practice in many national internet forum discussions on AONB projects/management



Volunteers clearing scrub from a Scheduled Monument, Hovingham



# HOWARDIAN HILLS AONB FACT FILE

# AONB CONTACTS

## AONB Manager

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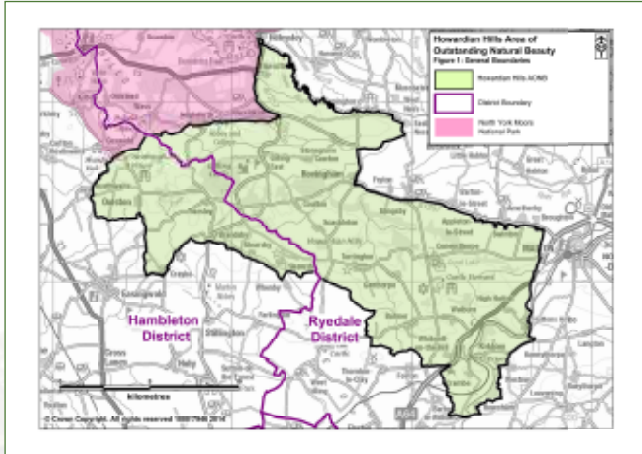
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• **The Howardian Hills covers 204 sq. km (79 sq. miles)**



• **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**

Photos: ©AONB Unit, unless stated otherwise