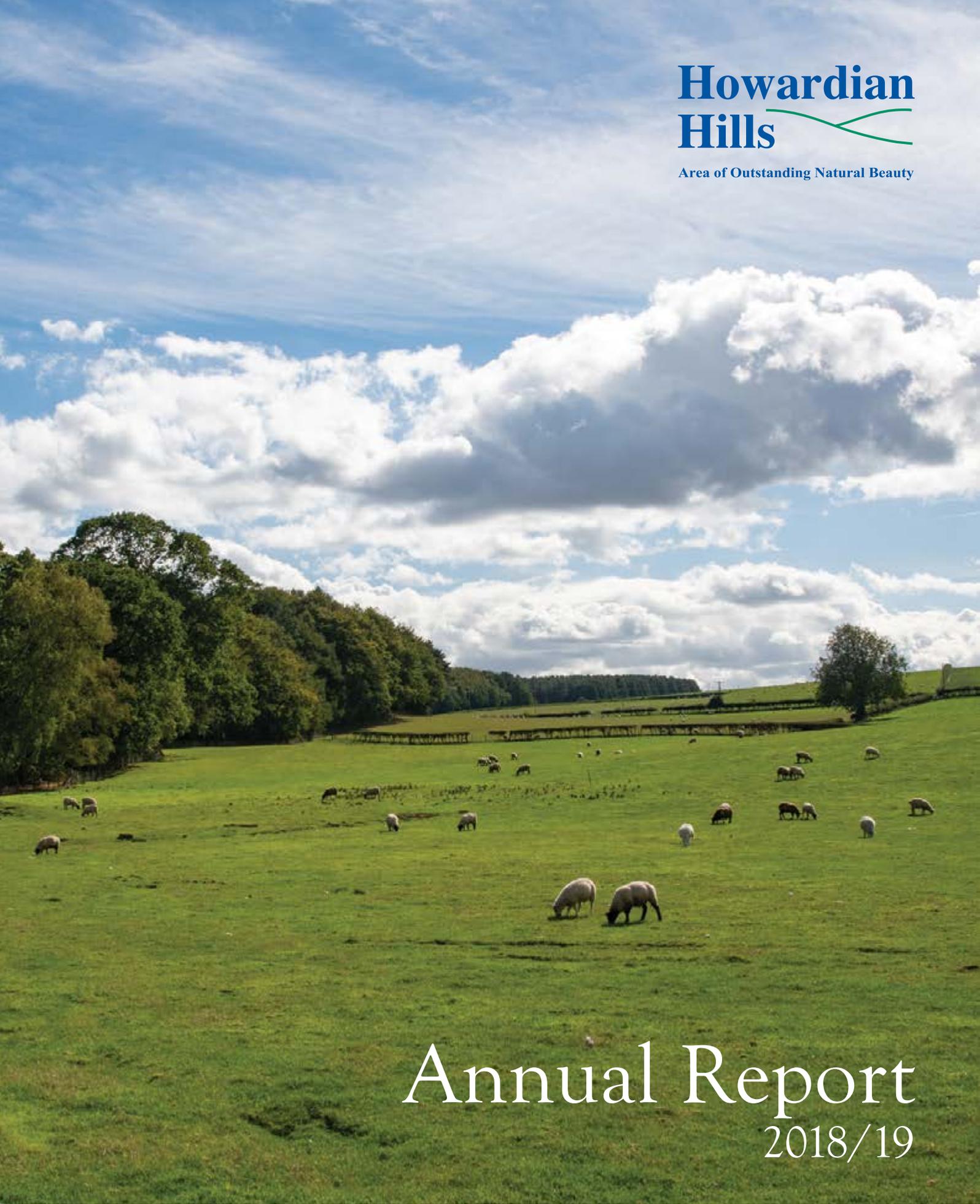


Howardian Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Annual Report

2018/19

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HOWARDIAN
HILLS
One of the
AONB family

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

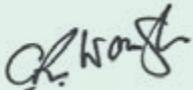
I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the 2018/19 Review of the work of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

Each year just seems to get busier and busier but 2018/19 was certainly notable for the volume and speed with which the Government issued consultations on a variety of matters relevant to the AONB. Amongst others we dealt with the consultations on Defra's 25-Year Environment Plan and Protecting and Enhancing England's Trees and Woodlands, as well as proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework.

In last year's Annual Report we mentioned an audit of potentially important geological sites within the AONB. After surveys were completed in summer 2018 the Local Geological Sites Panel ratified 16 sites as being of regional importance for their geological value and/or educational potential. We hope to start a programme of scrub management works in 2019/20 to ensure that their interest isn't damaged.

One of our biggest initiatives for many years is the Ryevitalise project, which covers the River Rye from Bilsdale to Ness. The North York Moors National Park is the lead partner, but a large part of the project area is within the AONB. Staff from both organisations worked hard commissioning surveys and discussing potential projects with landowners. We heard in late March that our bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund had been successful, with a £1.8m grant towards a project worth £3.4m in total. The 4-year programme will now deliver work on improving water quality, re-connecting people with the river, water level management and restoring the Rye's habitats and wildlife.

I stood down as a Ryedale District Councillor in May 2019 and will therefore no longer be serving on the Joint Advisory Committee. I've thoroughly enjoyed the 20 years that I've been involved with the work of the AONB, including two spells as Vice-Chairman and then Chairman. The number of projects that we have delivered has been truly impressive and both the landscape and our communities have benefitted. I wish the organisation well as it moves into an exciting new era.



Cllr Robert Wainwright

2018/19 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 four main organisations (see list below).

THE JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)

During 2018/19, the members of the JAC were as follows:

North Yorkshire County Council

Cllrs Caroline Patmore & Caroline Goodrick

Ryedale District Council

Cllrs Robert Wainwright & Fiona Farnell

Hambleton District Council

Cllr Christine Cookman

Natural England

Ailsa Kirkup

Parish Councils (Ryedale) - Sally Brown/Victoria Ellis

Parish Councils (Hambleton) - Chris Stratton/Vacant

Country Land and Business Association - Sir William Worsley

National Farmers Union - Rebecca Hesketh

Ramblers - Philip Catterall/Harry Whitehouse

Forestry Commission - Jim Smith

The JAC met twice in 2018/19:

22nd November 2018: Hovingham Village Hall. Members discussed the proposed 2019/20 JAC budget, the progress made with the 5-yearly Review of the AONB Management Plan, and the significant activity on-going at a national level (draft Agriculture Bill and Glover Review of Protected Landscapes). There was also a 'virtual tour' of the work carried out by the Staff Unit during 2017/18.

11th April 2019: Terrington Village Hall. Members discussed the work achieved in 2018/19 and approved the Business Plan and Action Programme for 2019/20. They also received information on the completion of the AONB Management Plan review and a recent visit by a member of the Glover Review panel.

Officer Steering Groups

The Core Partners Group convened on its regular quarterly cycle.

The AONB Unit

In 2018/19 the Unit comprised:

AONB Manager (1 FTE)

Paul Jackson

AONB Officer (1 FTE)

Liz Bassindale (4 days/wk)

Francesca Pert (2 days/wk) (Maternity Leave from Jul '18)

Frances Standen (2 days/wk) (Maternity Cover from Sept '18)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2018/19

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Defra	122,204	Staffing	101,677
North Yorkshire CC	34,300	Office costs	6,845
Ryedale DC	5,066	Partnership running costs	4,699
Hambleton DC	5,800	Publicity/Research	5,467
Historic England	631	Management Plan	4,525
Donations	25	Natural Environment projects	22,655
		Historic Environment projects	10,964
		Sustainable Development & Rural Economy	21,278
		Young People (JRC, etc)	677
In-year	£168,026	In-year	£178,787
<i>Brought forward – General Fund</i>	(64,727)	<i>Carried forward – General Fund</i>	(55,043)
<i>Brought forward – Historic England</i>	(1,077)		
	£233,830		£233,830
		(Resources from grant recipients, volunteers, match funding, etc.)	134,391
		Total Value of AONB Unit Activity in 2018/19	£313,178

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 2018/19 we:

- Continued with delivery of the 2014-19 Management Plan
- Reviewed and updated the AONB Management Plan text and sought initial comments from 7 Topic Groups
- Reviewed and updated the 'State of the AONB' report and the SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessments
- Ran a public consultation on the draft revised AONB Management Plan
- Evaluated the consultation responses and amended the Plan as appropriate
- Provided the final Management Plan text to the Local Authorities for Adoption, sent the Adopted Plan text to Defra and published all the new documents on the AONB website

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 2018/19 included:

- 128m of hedge planting/gapping-up
- 25m of wall restoration
- 12 in-field or boundary trees planted/replaced
- Continued control of Himalayan balsam at Fairy Dell and Mugdale/Barker Woods SINC; also at Crambeck in the River Derwent SSSI and along Wath Beck
- Carrying out scrub and tree removal/management works on Peel Wood & Grasslands SINC, Littledale SINC, Amotherby Lane SINC, River Rye SINC and Foss Spring Mire (SINC). Continuing control of rhododendron at Coulton Moor
- Conservation grazing of 6 SINC; or other important sites by Exmoor ponies
- Management works on 45 Special Interest Road Verges
- Continuing involvement with the North Yorkshire Local Geological Sites Partnership, and completing a Geodiversity Audit to survey and map the AONB's most important geodiversity sites:
 - 74 more sites surveyed
 - 16 sites identified as candidate Local Geological Sites
 - All approved by the Local Geological Sites Panel as being worthy of designation
 - Site citations prepared for the formal notification process
- Contributing significantly to the delivery of the NLHF-funded Turtle Doves Project within the AONB, with the Spring 2018 surveys completed; seeding work carried out at Coulton, Sproxtun and Terrington and a presentation given to the Northern AONBs Group meeting



Wall restoration, Grimston



Tree planting, Hovingham

- Monitoring the situation with tree diseases, particularly after some follow-up Plant Health felling at Gilling following a *Phytophthora ramorum* outbreak in 2015
- Reporting potential illegal felling activity near Whenby
- 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 now extended to 5 years. Monument Management Scheme Year 4: bracken trimmed and/or sprayed on 24 SMs; bramble/brush/scrub regrowth checked and treated on 13 SMs; 1 SM re-seeded
- Casting 7 replica traditional village name signs to replace modern signs, in 3 villages
- Continuing liaison with Northern Powergrid on overhead electricity cable undergrounding. Schemes finalised for Grimstone Top and Oswaldkirk, after complex design and wayleaves work. Partial undergrounding scheme for BT overhead lines agreed for Nunnington (West) in 2016 and now implemented. Partial undergrounding scheme at Cawton also completed
- Removal of the brown tourism signs for the now-closed Farming Flashback museum at Ampleforth

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:

- 3 Felling Licence Applications appraised for impact on the AONB



Village sign restoration

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 scrutinises 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 2018/19 included: the erection of new farm buildings at Crambe, Howsham and Crayke; the erection of large agricultural buildings utilising the new Permitted Development limit of 1,000 m² at Swinton and Crayke; the erection of new 'country house' dwellings at Musley Bank and Ampleforth; the erection of a significant extension to a very distinctive pair of cottages at High Stittenham; the erection of significant extensions to a prominent house in Skewsby; significant areas of new glazing in a converted barn at High Gaterley and a cottage in Low Hutton; Smart Meter masts for Hovingham and Ampleforth; an Appeal case for an 'alpaca farm' at Scackleton; and a dual-use application for Howsham Hall as an all-year-round wedding venue.

During 2018/19:

- 112 applications were determined by the Local Planning Authorities in the calendar year 2018. 92% of these were approved
- 126 applications were scrutinised in detail by the AONB Manager in 2018/19
- Comments were submitted on 36 schemes, where a conflict with AONB Objectives was identified, improvements could be made or support was given
- Objections or Strong Reservations were lodged in 17 of those responses. The Local Planning Authority: Approved 5 schemes; Refused 3 schemes; Approved 7 schemes following re-submission/amendment to address the AONB Manager's/LPA's concerns; 2 schemes not yet Determined
- 25 schemes were amended, or had appropriate Conditions attached, in response to less significant comments
- 1 consultation on other development (primarily within roads or verges) was also scrutinised – comments submitted on 1 scheme

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: Local Plan Sites Main Modifications; North York Moors National Park: Local Plan; Minerals & Waste Joint Plan: Call for further evidence on the Hydrocarbons policies. Also the Defra Health & Harmony and Protecting & Enhancing England's Trees and Woodlands consultations and the MHCLG revisions to the NPPF

ENJOYING THE AONB

The Public Rights of Way network continues to be managed to a generally reasonable 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.

In 2018/19 work included:

- Continuing a major project to assist NYCC with resolving Public Rights of Way issues in the AONB:
 - Installing 15 new/replacement roadside fingerposts and photographing them
 - Packages of work completed by the NYMNPA Modern Apprentices Team at Crambe/Kirkham, Hovingham and Gilling
- Removing litter from at least 10 sites in the AONB, on a regular basis throughout the summer, and monitoring/reporting fly-tipping incidents



New information board, Castle Howard



New roadside fingerpost sign

COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

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

In 2018/19 the programme consisted of:

Junior Ranger Club (Easter)

- Ryevitalise – Kick sampling in the River Rye for invertebrates – 18 children

Junior Ranger Club (May)

- Turtle Doves & Tansy Beetles – 20 children

Junior Ranger Club (October)

- Down on the Farm – 18 children

Junior Ranger Club (February)

- Dark Skies – 28 children

Communities:

- Continued liaison with the principal organisations involved in community work in the AONB, via the regular Community Development Officers' meetings
- Supported the development of a Rural Watch Initiative in the Howardian Hills, which recruited 15 Volunteer Co-ordinators and 60 members
- Provided funding for nature areas at Slingsby School and Crayke
- Provided funding for roof repairs and a defibrillator at Hovingham Village Hall
- Continued involvement in the Ward Mapping/Planning Project with the Sheriff Hutton and Ampleforth Wards



River Fly surveying Junior Ranger Club day, River Rye, Helmsley

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.

In 2018/19 we:

- Maintained the 14 AONB Gateway Signs
- Published and distributed our annual Newsletter (AONB News) in October 2018
- Published our 2017/18 Annual Report in November 2018
- Managed the AONB website
- Maintained a presence on Twitter – issuing information, publicising the practical work being carried out in the AONB and re-Tweeting as appropriate
- Input to the development of the educational strand of the Ryevitalise project by: helping deliver the Countryside Learning Day at Duncombe Park to engage with teachers; visiting Slingsby, Terrington, Hovingham & Terrington Hall Schools; holding a Taster Day at Hovingham School
- Attended the Ryedale Show
- Gave presentations to the Kirkdale Gardening Club and NYCC Growth, Planning & Trading Standards section

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We distributed almost £11,000 to Sustainable Development projects, assisting a variety of schemes addressing environmental, social and economic objectives.

Sustainable Development projects assisted in 2018/19 included:

- Continuation of a Sustainable Rural Communities project run by Community First Yorkshire, assisting with community planning and action
- Provision of wildlife information boards at Castle Howard and Terrington
- Support for sustainability sessions and a bike shelter made from recycled materials at Amotherby School
- Commissioned a STEAM Report on the visitor economy of the AONB and incorporated the data into the new Management Plan



New wildlife area, Slingsby School

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 2018/19 we:

- Assisted with development of the main Ryevitalise Project programme (ecological surveys, data mapping, LCAP, images, project summaries) and individual projects: Wooded Wonders, Education, Citizen Science, Walking routes, volunteering, Paradise Initiative, Trout in the Classroom, Audience Development Plan and interpretation strategy. Stage 2 bid submitted in Autumn 2018 and granted funding in March 2019
- Continued to participate in the Biodiversity Action Partnership for Ryedale, Scarborough and the AONB
- Participated in the North Yorkshire & York Local Nature Partnership, including providing funding for the part-time co-ordinator
- Worked with the Destination Partnerships Officer on: identifying nature-friendly & cycling-friendly businesses; installing pond-dipping platforms & information boards at Terrington, installing information boards at Castle Howard; holding Dark Skies events at the Arboretum and Castle Howard
- Successfully out-sourced work to: complete the Geodiversity Audit and compile the site citations for the ratified Local Geological Sites. Significant assistance also provided to major projects that should bring significant and widespread funding/benefits to the AONB: NLHF Turtle Doves Project and the Yorkshire Farm Flora Facilitation Fund
- Worked jointly with the North York Moors National Park on: Native Woodland Partnership; Dark Skies Week; developing the Ryevitalise project for Stage 2 NLHF Landscape Partnership funding; NLHF Turtle Doves Project; Cornfield Flowers Project; post-Brexit agri-environment scheme development
- Arranged for Volunteers to help us with 13 projects or tasks, equating to over 179 person/days of assistance worth £10,500



New pond dipping platform, Terrington



New bridge being built by National Park Modern Apprentices, Crambe



Volunteers building a bug hotel, Dutch House Café, Crayke

NATIONAL ACTIVITY

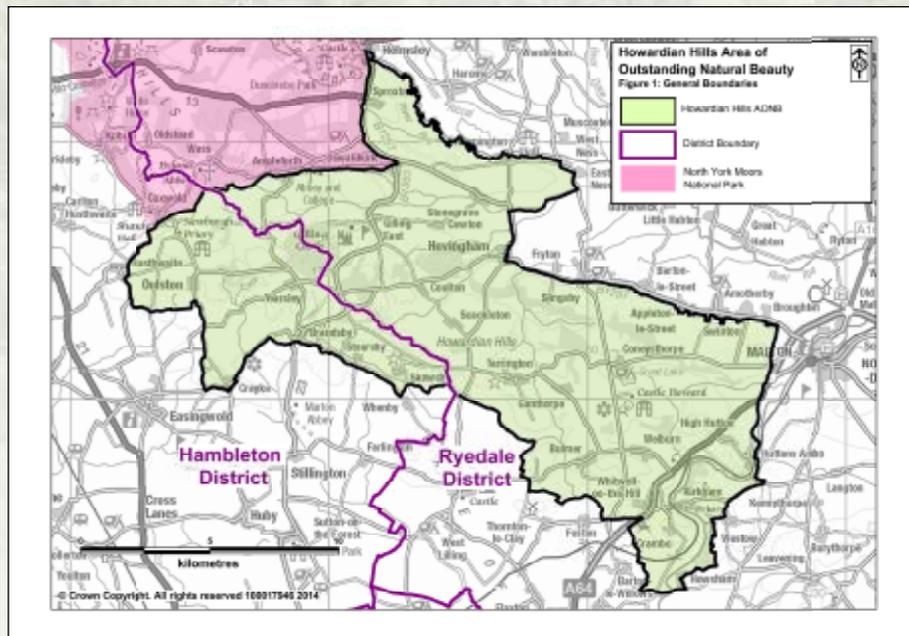
The Howardian Hills AONB is part of the national network of 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is an important umbrella body that co-ordinates lobbying on behalf of all AONBs, responds to national consultations and organises training events. Support and participation in NAAONB activities brings many benefits for the Howardian Hills and is important for staff development.

In 2018/19 we:

- Attended the national AONB Forum in July
- Attended the national Chairmen's meeting/NAAONB AGM in November
- Attended 2 Northern AONB Group meetings, including hosting the autumn event
- Input to NAAONB discussions on Brexit issues, the Agriculture Bill, Environment Bill and Glover Review of Protected Landscapes (including hosting a Review Panel visit)
- Participated in peer-to-peer and on-line collaborative working initiatives, to share and receive knowledge around the AONB Network
- Participated in specific meetings with Defra, as part of a small AONB Family Working Group, on Performance Metrics

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 9,150 people live in or immediately adjacent to the designated area
- Around 18% of the AONB is wooded



AONB CONTACTS

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Photos: AONB Unit, except: Information board (p5) -
Castle Howard; Modern Apprentices (p7) - NYCC;
Back cover - Harry Kingman