

What we did with your support in 2016-2017

NAAONB Mission Statement

Everything we do is inspired by our mission to support the AONB Family in the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

As a small charity, we achieve this by being

- an influential, trusted organisation that is seen as the mouthpiece for the AONB Family,
- an organisation that encourages and harnesses the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the AONB Family,
- an organisation that brings the AONB Family together as a cohesive entity,
- an organisation that celebrates the unique identity of its individual members, and
- an organisation that works with others to achieve shared objectives.

With the help of your core funding contributions, Defra and Natural Resources Wales' continuing investment, the NAAONB and the AONB Family have had significant achievements during 2016-17.

1. What you asked us to do

Raise the level of understanding and recognition of the value of the AONB partnership model to ensure continued support and resourcing

What we achieved on your behalf

- English AONB Partnerships and Conservation Boards received a 4 year settlement with annual inflationary increment. For full settlement detail, see gov.uk/government/new...
- Welsh AONB Partnerships recognised by Government for the value they provide to the people of Wales

How we did it

- regular meetings with MPs, AMs and senior officials in Governments and Opposition parties
 - met with Andrea Leadsom, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
 - met with Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environ
 - maintained close contact and met with Defra minister, Lord Gardiner to convince him of the value and relevance of AONB partnerships.

The National Association for
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

11 High Street, Fairford
Gloucestershire, GL7 4AD
07969 888823
Jill.Smith@landscapesforlife.org.uk
Twitter @NAAONB

A company limited by guarantee no: 4729800
Charity Number: 1158871
Registered office as above

- engaged with Defra’s Terrestrial Biodiversity Group by orchestrating and compiling a collective AONB Family response to delivering on Outcome 1C of Biodiversity 2020 (a self-assessment on the ability of AONB partnerships to deliver and ecosystems services approach.
- met with Defra senior official, Tom Surrey, and his successor, Jenny Marresh, Defra on a number of occasions to discuss, amongst other subjects, AONB funding.
- met with Lucy Stone and Henrietta Neirkirk to discuss policy on Connecting People as part of Defra’s 25 Year Plan
- produced an [Annual Report](#) on AONB Family work
- continued work with Welsh Government on the Future Landscapes programme.
- Chairman, Philip Hygate, met NRW Chairman, Diane McCrea at a meeting hosted by Wye Valley AONB Partnership.
- maintained and developed close and trusted working relationships through regular tripartite meetings to discuss delivery of shared objectives and strategic direction with Defra and Natural England
- met with Liz Newton, Director of Landscape, Access and Geodiversity at Natural England to
 - discuss shared interest and opportunities for better working at a national level
 - give support to NE’s Conservation Strategy 21
 - provide support and advice to senior managers around achieving the behavioural change needed to deliver their new approach
- maintained a close and supportive working relationship with Local Authorities and started to work with the Association of Directors for Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT).

2. What you asked us to do

Foster a good understanding and support for what the AONB Family does

What we achieved on your behalf

- influenced Protected Landscape policy
- provided technical support to government agencies

How we did it

Built and maintained alliances with other organisations

- investigated the development of professional accreditation for staff working in AONBs in association with the Landscape Institute
- developed a relationship with academic partners to demonstrate technical rigour and seek new funding opportunities
 - lecture given to University of Winchester (UniW) students
 - developed research projects for final year Geography UniW undergraduates
 - ran a joint UniW workshop entitled “Making nexus thinking practical: participatory research on making sense of place” at RGS International Conference
 - started to develop a bid with AONBs and NPs to the Research Councils working to develop a methodology for determining sense of place
 - collaborated with Swansea University to develop and support an application for funding for a PhD looking at devolution and landscape designations in Wales
 - worked with UniW to develop a programme of work between the Business School and the AONB Family including taking part in their annual Research and Knowledge Exchange Conference, and their involvement in Landscapes for Life Conference 2017
- Chair level bilateral with Tim Parker, Chairman of The National Trust to discuss shared objectives
 - met with Peter Nixon, Director of Conservation, to advance work around shared objectives around health and wellbeing
 - engaged with the National Trust on their publication [AONBs and Development](#) and associated document [NT Tests for AONB Settings](#)
- developed relationships with NGOs in the health sector through a collaborative approach with NPE and the National Trust, and engagement with MIND at the Landscapes for Life Conference 2016
- built on our relationship with the Royal Geographical Society
- investigated development of a joint project with NHS England on Natural Beauty and benefits to NHS staff – “AONBs in Hospitals” is currently going through the process of being agreed by the NHS Sustainable Development Unit
- explored the possibility of becoming more engaged with WCPA in order to ensure AONBs retain a place in the world family of protected areas. This is being progressed with IUCN.
- hosted a visit of the German Federation of Nature Parks and outlined the way the AONB Family and NAAONB operate which resulted in inclusion for the AONB Family in the book “Nature Parks in Europe” which will be launched at the European Parliament in May.

- Chair level bilateral with NPE to discuss joint Accord, further joint working and the NP 8 point plan
- Agreement with Lead Officers on development of Key Performance Indicators for AONB Teams.
- maintained close relationship with CPRE with monthly meetings to provide/receive intelligence and agree action
 - liaised with CPRE to produce new light pollution maps (partly crowd-funded by the AONB Family) resulting in 2016 launch of [Night Blight](#) campaign
 - Joint project scoped around the issue of 5 year housing supply in AONBs and a crowd funded joint report planned for 2017
- reviewed Accord with Historic England and agreed a redraft to take into account changes in English Heritage/Historic England and investigate extension to include CADW.
- maintained close relationship with CNP with monthly meetings to provide/receive intelligence and agree action
 - attended CNP AGM
- coordinated the wide range of expertise within the AONB Family to prepare responses to relevant public consultations and shared via Basecamp with AONB partnerships to assist in their individual responses
- met and liaised with the LEPs' network coordinator to develop a document for the LEP Blog on *Why AONBs are important to the LEPs*
<http://www.lepnetwork.net/blog/why-aonbs-are-important-to-the-leps/>
- met with VisitEngland on several occasions to share information and intelligence. NAAONB is one of the Partners to the National Coastal Tourism Academy's successful bid to discover England Fund to promote tourism along the East Coast www.coastalpass.com
- became a delivery partner for £1.15m Plunkett Foundation-led Big Lottery funded [Making Local Woods Work](#)
- developed and improved communication with external audiences with attendance at events
 - CLA Game Fair
 - Royal Welsh Agricultural Show
- Working with Welsh Government and NRW delivered and evaluated the Future Landscape Wales programme which brought Government, Agency and the Designated Landscapes together and has led to a significant change in working in Wales.

3. What you asked us to do

Lead on collaboration and communications as an AONB Family

What we achieved on your behalf

- created opportunities for the AONB Family to come together to share good practice and key messages
- maintained and developed a public profile through a presence at targeted national events and in the media

How we did it

- promoted and encourage use Communications Strategy and visual identity
 - ongoing through fortnightly organised drop in telecons
 - biannual face to face meetings (July and December)
- produced and adopted brand values and Brand Strategy
- reviewed the Communications Strategy to realign it with the Strategic Plan (ongoing)
- produced and disseminated AONB Family [Annual Report](#)
- produced and promoted infographics for England and Wales (bilingual and relating to health and wellbeing agenda)
- organised a training day on communications. 24 delegates attended to build on collaboration and communicating as an AONB Family with a collective voice and set up a sub group to input to the review of the Communications Action Plan
- created [Library](#) on Basecamp for sharing of best practice and other useful documents
- created [resources area](#) on www.landscapesforife.org.uk to share AONB work to a wide audience – this is linked to the [Annual Report](#)
- met with the National Trust to discuss cross organisation promotion which resulted in an invitation by the National Trust for AONBs to make individual contact to appear on their new welcome/introduction boards
- supported Countryside is Great Campaign through social media engagement by @NAAONB and @AONBFamily with AONB-related #OMGB tweets
- produced a national **Landscapes for Life Conference**
 - over 130 delegates attended, with subsidised places for staff and members, and the Minister, unable to attend due to post-election Parliamentary commitments, sent a DVD message of praise and support for the work of both the NAAONB and the AONB Family

- co-ordinated the production and promotion of the AONB Family's second [Outstanding Week 2016](#) which had 34 AONBs collaborating and speaking with a collective voice to produce over 100 events highlighting the value and relevance of AONBs to both the UK's economy, and the nation's health and wellbeing.
- organised the national AONB and National Park Chairmen's Conference with a theme of 'Protected Landscapes: post Brexit
- developed and improved communications and collaborative working between the staff and members of the AONB Family and a wider audience with promotion of events and joint working opportunities via
 - "Do 5 things" templates for each marketing opportunity
 - the AONB Family intranet "Basecamp" (internal audience only)
 - LSLI – An AONB Family Update (formerly AONB News) - disseminated by NAAONB and AONB partnership communications officers
 - Briefing Notes
 - Press Releases
 - the AONB Family website www.landscapesforlife.org.uk
 - the AONB Family Blog www.landscapesforlifeevents.org.uk
 - bi-monthly "Sharing, Learning, Inspiring" Comms virtual Drop In sessions with case study presentations
 - social media
- used social media to promote NAAONB and AONB Family activity - @NAAONB and @AONBFamily #outstanding #landscapesforlife
 - #OutstandingHour every Wednesday at 1pm
 - Profile raising imaged-based with key messages - January
 - Walking for Health month – May
 - #OutstandingWeek - September
- provided information to the AONB Family to encourage their MPs to speak up on their behalf in a HoC debate on the economic value of Outdoor Recreation - a great opportunity to highlight AONBs as dynamic living landscapes that underpin the economy and the health and wellbeing of society. See <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CDP-2015-0082>