

West Penwith Environmentally Sensitive Area / Environmental Stewardship Scheme and the AONB

Cornwall AONB Unit action list (on behalf of the Partnership) with regard to the problems arising from the ending of the ESA agri-environment programme in West Penwith:

- 1 Prepare briefing material on the issue for broadcast on website / provision to interested parties.
- 2 Identify the precise concerns relating to the shortcomings of the Single Payment Scheme / Entry Level Stewardship / Organic Entry Level Stewardship / Higher Level Stewardship with regard to the ESA area.
- 3 Determine extent of agri-environment scheme coverage in the AONB.
- 4 Liaise with other AONBs / National Parks with ESAs in or close to their designated areas to identify what is being done in their area.
- 5 Work through the South West Protected Landscapes Forum to raise issues with Natural England at regional level.
- 6 Maintain a profile on the issue amongst a network of interested parties in Cornwall to try and ensure ongoing awareness and up to date monitoring of agri-environment up-take in the county.
- 7 Explore alternative approaches to ensuring that farms in the ESA are encouraged / enabled to apply and are accepted for, existing agri-environment measures.
- 8 Identify / highlight the key features that need to be conserved / enhanced in the ESA area and what scheduling might be needed. A particular concern is the lack of protection in both legislation and agri-environment measures for Cornish hedges.
- 9 Explore the opportunities presented through the England Rural Development Programme to provide targeted business support for farmers in the AONB - using the Penwith Farm Balance Sheet as a start point.
- 10 Identify and propose ways in which the existing ELS / HLS prescriptions can be improved to better conserve and enhance the AONB

Sir Martin Doughty
Chairman
Natural England
1 East Parade
Sheffield S1 2ET

31st July 2007

Dear Sir Martin

At its last meeting the Cornwall AONB Partnership was given confirmation of the continued support from Natural England for the core work of the Partnership and the AONB Unit for 2007/08. I am writing on behalf of the Partnership to express our thanks to Natural England for this support which continues to be essential to maintaining a Partnership that, although now in its fifth year, remains fragile in the face of ever increasing competition for resources.

Designated in 1959 the Cornwall AONB had, until 2003, lacked a mechanism for real joined up thinking and action to maximise the benefit of the designated landscape to Cornwall. The Cornwall AONB Partnership is now working hard to demonstrate the value of bringing together the many different organisations and interests whose actions can affect the landscape. However, it is often difficult to persuade local interests that long-term protection of the nation's prized landscape should remain a priority in the face of local pressures. That is why the continued support for the AONB and the Partnership by Natural England, in both financial and policy terms, is of such critical importance. Any suggestion that the most important landscapes are no longer a priority for the national bodies will be quickly noted by local partners seeking to prioritise their resources!

The Partnership has noted that the Natural England Corporate Plan 2007-2010 refers to the development of a "strategic partnership arrangement" and that the approach towards funding for AONBs in 2008/09 is one of the delivery activities for this current financial year. It would be of great value to the Cornwall AONB Partnership (and others of course) if the decision on core funding for 2008/09 was made as soon as possible in order to send a positive message to our local funding partners as they begin developing their own spending plans from September onwards. The need for a strong lead and engagement from Natural England on behalf of nationally important landscapes within the county beyond 2009 will also be required as the recently announced unitary authority for Cornwall replaces the existing two-tier structure of local government over the next two years.

The Cornwall AONB Partnership has also greatly appreciated the project money that has been made available to the Partnership, in particular the Sustainable Development Fund that will have amounted to £250,000 over the last three years. The SDF has proved extremely valuable in raising the profile of the AONB amongst local communities and has provided the AONB Unit with a straightforward means of supporting practical projects that are helping to deliver the actions of the Cornwall AONB Management Plan. It is disappointing that the amount of SDF available to AONBs has been reduced over the three years from its initial £100,000 to the £70,000 for 2007/08. The Partnership hopes that the ongoing review of the SDF programme by Land Use Consultants will demonstrate the value of the fund to the delivery of AONB management plans and indeed the objectives of Natural England.

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The 2000 Act did much to raise the perception of AONB's to that of National Parks and it is crucial that Natural England's emerging policy framework reinforces rather than dilutes this. Currently there is a perception that the policy making levels of Natural England are somewhat determinedly detached from grass root concerns and we look forward to reassurance emerging that the increasing recognition of the importance of AONB's which had developed since 2000, will be reaffirmed.

There are many pressing issues in AONB's, and indeed National Parks, such as the profound impact of the tapering off of ESA support on large areas of highest quality landscape and their communities, set against the realisation that Environmental Stewardship will be a very incomplete substitute. The practical engagement of Natural England policy makers with issues like this is urgently required as soon as other preoccupations permit.

I hope you will find this message from the Far West as helpful as it is intended to be!

Nothing I say above should detract from our gratitude to Natural England, and its predecessor bodies, for their support over many years - both policy and financial.

Yours sincerely

Peter Mansfield
Chair, Cornwall AONB Partnership

Sir Martin Doughty Chair

martin.doughty@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 31 August 2007
Our ref: MD/ ADA/O/MD/0808/7 4
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Dear Mr Mansfield

CORNWALL AONB

Thank you for your letter of 31 July regarding AONB funding for 2007/08.

Defra has provided Natural England with a one year budget for 2007/08. As you would appreciate, it would not therefore be financially responsible for Natural England to make financial commitments beyond this period. Defra have however, committed to providing Natural England with a three-year funding outlook from 2008/09. We are committed to providing AONBs with long term funding certainty, as soon as we are in a position to do so.

Natural England is investing very substantially in AONBs across the country. We have recently secured £2.9 bn over the next seven years for our Environmental Stewardship Programmes. A significant proportion of this funding goes to AONBs. It is important that we look at the funding for AONB co-ordinating bodies in the context if the total funding picture.

Natural England faced some hard choices in finalising the funding for AONB co-ordination 2007/08, and for the reasons outlined above, I regret that I cannot offer you an early indication of the likely future funding for 2008/09. However, I can outline our current thinking on the timing and approach we will adopt to determine future funding.

As Andrew Wood said in his address to the NAAONB on 5 July, Natural England inherited joint working arrangements with AONBs from our founding bodies. We want to establish a mature, trusting relationship, built around shared ambitions and common objectives.

To that end we have set up an AONB funding and relationship review group to look at our long term relationships with AONBs. We plan to fully consult on options before Christmas. In January, 2008, we will invite AONBs to meet with us to discuss the priorities for funding.

I warmly welcome your commitment to work with us to deliver better benefits for the natural environment for people to enjoy now and in future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "M. Doughty", written over the typed name.

Sir Martin Doughty

Cornwall AONB Partnership Annual Report 2006/07 - summary

Chairman's introduction

The Cornwall AONB Partnership, of 17 organisations working well together, is now 4 years old. This report shows how we have built on good work implementing the Management Plan. The joining of Countryside Agency, English Nature and Rural Development Service into Natural England provides challenges and hopes for future and we are looking forward to new emphasis in the year ahead – particularly on communication and planning.

Agriculture

The Partnership provided support for FWAG, enabling them to target farmers within the AONB. There were 32 applications for the new Environmental Stewardship programme - a key means of conserving the AONB landscape. A report by the Penwith Rural Business Service demonstrated that the AONB is good for business, with more farms trading profitably than in other areas. Underpinning the success of the farms has been the Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme.

The Partnership is a member of the Cornwall Agricultural Council and the SW Upland Forum, provides a platform for debate with farmers and landowners and promotes the links between farming and the conserved landscape especially at events such as the Royal Cornwall Show.

Tourism

The AONB Partnership secured funding for CoaST, encouraging and developing sustainable tourism. We are jointly developing a bid for Sustainable Tourism Charter status for the Cornwall AONB for submission to Europarc in early 2008. The Partnership played an active part in the Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Working Group, was consulted by the Cornwall Destination Management Organisation and provided financial support for the *Fal/Truro/Roseland Guide* and the *South East Cornwall Guide*.

Rural Development

The Partnership was consulted on the drafting of the Cornwall Forum Economic Strategy – *Strategy and Action* and was an active member of the Cornwall Rural Partnership.

Climate Change

With increased interest in the development of renewable energy to slow global warming, the AONB Unit developed criteria to assess applications for individual wind turbines. There was also active participation by the AONB Unit in the discussion on the Wave Hub proposal off Hayle and the National Trust property at Carleon House was refurbished as part of an AONB-funded SDF project.

Land Use planning and control of development

We prepared a report highlighting the areas in which we can have most impact on planning policy and the opportunities for enhancing the status of the AONB Management Plan in relation to the Local Development Framework. The Partnership agreed to invest resources to appoint a part time planning officer. We have continued to jointly manage, with Cornwall County Council, the Cornwall Landscape Character Project. In association with others we submitted a detailed response to the consultation on the SW Regional Strategy.

Valued Landscapes

£80,000 from the Cornwall AONB Sustainable Development Fund helped to support a number of community based projects. These included promotion of footpaths and circular walks in St Just in Roseland, events and community programmes in the Helford VMCA, a fritillary butterfly conservation project on Bodmin Moor, Cligga Head Access consultation, a communications project on Bodmin Moor and interpretation and monitoring of Penwith Ancient Sites Network.

Financial Summary

Our total expenditure for the year was £347,943.44 of which SDF supported community projects accounted for £130,456.

For the full 2006-7 annual report go to:
<http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/partnership>

Communications Plan Jun 07 – March 09 Summary

Objectives Jun 07 – March 09

- Increase awareness of the name (Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and acronym (AONB).
- Raise the profile of the AONB Partnership and Unit.
- Increase understanding of AONB designation and the specific sections of the Cornwall AONB.
- Increase understanding of the value of the AONB landscape.

The key messages

- That the AONB exists, what the acronym stands for and what that means.
- The Partnership brings together the expertise and enthusiasm of 17 different organisations. The Unit supports and administers the Partnership.
- The Cornwall AONB, while very diverse, has a similar status and protection as a National Park. Conservation is primary duty followed by enhancement.
- The landscape is a working, bio-diverse, culturally and historically important and accessible one.
- The landscape is one of the main reasons why people stay, move here, start businesses here, bring business here.
- Any development of any kind in the AONB must be sustainable.

The audience

- Our partner organisations and key people within them.
- Other departments in CCC who impact upon or are involved in any of the 12 sections of the AONB.
- Other interested groups, AONB users and 'sub-partners'.
- The wider public in Cornwall and beyond.

Challenges (to the AONB)

- Changing farming practices.
- Recreational demands.
- Tourism growth.
- Urban development.
- Traffic increase.
- Climate change.

Methods

- Work with partners to ensure AONB brand/concept is as widely used as possible.
- Improve and maintain web site and issue regular e-newsletter.
- Issue regular PR to widest possible range of publications/media.
- Word-of-mouth promotion through meetings, shows, events, talks, presentations etc.
- Explore other 'below-the-line' promotional activities, e.g. signage, leaflets.
- Measure progress through CCC forums, information published, awareness polls, website hits, publicity distribution/take up.
- Work with regional/national organisations to share ideas and best practice.

Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Meeting 27th Sept 2007

Landscapes Projects: Information Note

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Landscapes Character Study

This study aims to map and describe in detail the different landscapes of Cornwall such as Bodmin Moor and the Fal Estuary. The study is crucial to the management of the AONB as it will inform land management and planning policy and decision making and improve the quality of these decisions with respect to the landscape.

- This study, which has been ongoing since 2005, is nearing completion.
- Each Local Authority has now received digital maps of their character areas, in a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) format, and a set of draft descriptions to endorse as a final draft.
- The management group (consisting of the 3 local AONB's, CCC, The National Trust, RBC, KDC and PDC) are in the process of resolving technical snags with the consultants before the website can be launched.
- Each character area description has undergone an intensive period of editing and proofreading. The Cornwall AONB unit has checked all of the character area descriptions covering the AONB for accuracy and detail. All character area descriptions have undergone checking and additional detail from the Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service and are being checked for their biodiversity content by the Living Environment Service.
- It is expected that the website will be launched as a consultation draft before Christmas with further consultation workshops in the New Year. The management group also expect there to be a one year review and update period during which feedback on the resource will be collated and any necessary changes/improvements made via a transparent and robust process.
- The Landscape Character Assessment management group are also currently in discussions on how to progress a countywide seascapes assessment in order to inform the marine spatial planning process.

For more information on this project, please contact Colette Holden, Cornwall AONB Officer
cholden@cornwall.gov.uk, 01872 322350

The Cornwall, Tamar Valley and Isles of Scilly AONB's Landscapes Monitoring Project

A joint working project between the Cornwall, Tamar Valley and Isles of Scilly AONB's, this study aims to use the character information to derive a set of meaningful indicators of landscape change and develop a baseline of information on these indicators for future monitoring. The study should have application for the monitoring of protected landscapes countrywide and fit well into sustainability indicators/monitoring requirements of the planning system.

- A stakeholder workshop was organised by the Cornwall AONB Unit, held in March 07, to discuss approaches to monitoring in protected landscapes, facilitated by Robert Tregay of LDA design.
- A project brief has been developed between the three AONB's.
- Land Use Consultants have been appointed to take forward the project with the AONB Units.
- Information trawl and a list of key characteristics and forces for change for each AONB area (including the 12 areas of the Cornwall AONB) have been drafted.
- Monitoring units derived for the AONB areas, based on character.
- 2 core management meetings have been held.
- A wider steering group meeting is due in early Nov.
- Indicators should be finalised and out for consultation before Christmas - if you are interested in being part of this consultation please contact Colette Holden at the Cornwall AONB unit.
- Protocol for future monitoring on the indicators developed.

- Data gathering and GIS work to establish information baselines on the indicators.
- A final presentation and project report due in March/April.
- Subject to funding, stage 2 of the project would examine ways of presenting the project to other protected landscapes and working with local universities to embed the monitoring within courses.

For more information on this project, please contact Colette Holden, Cornwall AONB Officer

Guidance and training on using Landscape Character Assessment in Development Control planning

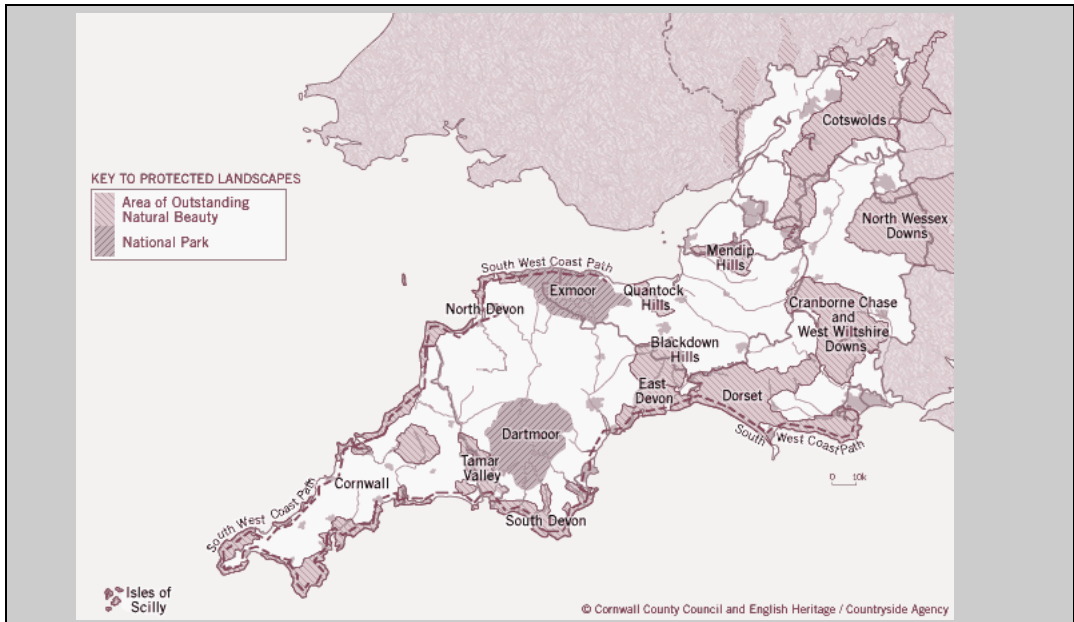
This project is being developed by AONB Officer, Colette Holden and AONB Planning Officer, June Crossland. It aims to provide nationally applicable guidance and training for development control planners in the robust use of landscape character assessment information in decision making.

- A brief for the project has been produced for consultation, setting out aims, objectives and ways of working. The work seeks to be inclusive of biodiversity and historic environment.
- Meetings and discussions have been held with planners, biodiversity and historic experts for advice on the approach.
- Using the draft character information from the merging study, a draft method on how to use the information was developed, field tested against live planning applications within the AONB and revised on this basis.
- Two pilot presentations/meetings will be held with two District Authorities in the next month.
- Training sessions with each district will be held before the Christmas break. It is expected that this will be an iterative process, used to inform planners and also further develop the methodology based on planners' expert feedback.
- Discussions with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) are taking place regarding developing the training as Continuing Professional Development.
- The method will inform the county wide Landscape Best Practice Guidance/Supplementary Planning Guidance and have applications for the use of LCA in development control, countrywide.

For more information on this project please contact June Crossland, Cornwall AONB Planning Officer – jcrossland@cornwall.gov.uk , 01872 322350

South West Protected Landscapes

Update for Cornwall AONB Partnership
Thursday 27th September 2007



Nearly 40% of the region is Designated

A case for co-ordination

Regional Co-ordination Provides:

- Better use of our limited resources through efficiency savings/ joint working,
 - Better value from our collective knowledge through shared learning,
 - A focus for and weight to our voice regionally and nationally,
 - Added strength to national support through NAAONB and EANPA
- DOING THINGS ONCE - DOING THINGS WELL
SO ALL PROTECTED LANDSCAPE CAN BENEFIT**

Example - Planning:

- Co-ordinating input to regional policy process - Joint submissions to key consultations; such as our response to RSS draft (Aug 07) and involvement in developing regional Climate Action Plan,
- Keeping AONBs/NPAs connected to and informed on regional stakeholder groups - Agri-Env/ Woodlands and Forestry/ Biodiversity/ Culture etc,
- Support to Management Plan Review - National training events/ papers on regional policy context and climate change adaptation/ mitigation.

Example - Communication:

- Published Regional Reviews of SDF spend across the region,
- Produce and distribute Protected Landscapes calendar,
- Produced a Regional Exhibition into its 5th year of touring regional venues,
- Organise communication co-ordination and training events for staff.

Future

- Working with Natural England regionally and nationally to shape a 'mature relationship' with AONBs/NPAs around funding, shared agenda and the future role of designations,
- Recruiting a regional 'champion' for landscapes - to promote AONBs/NPAs, oversee European Landscape Convention delivery as we move toward a single regional strategy and enhanced role for the RDA,
- Helping AONBs with new areas of work - Promoting sustainable living, climate change responses and the diversity agenda,
- Building stronger nationally level support - a vision for AONBs and greater clarity around what best delivered nationally/ regionally and locally.

Co-ordinator Contributions - Budget 2007/08

	Core	Project
Blackdown Hills	1250	606
Cornwall	1000	606
Cranbourne		606
Cotswolds		606
Dorset		606
East Devon	1000	606
Mendips	1250	606
Quantocks	1250	606
North Devon	1250	606
South Devon	1250	606
Tamar	1250	606
Scillies		333
North Wessex		333
Exmoor	2000	200
Dartmoor	2000	200