



**Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee
Minutes of the meeting at Ubley Parish Hall
21st March 2019**

Present:

Partnership Committee

Cllr Liz Richardson (Vice Chair)
Jim Hardcastle
Cllr Mike Adams
Tom Lane
Cllr Ann Harley
Ian Clemmett
Richard Frost
Pippa Rayner
Steve Dury
Cllr Roger Dollins
Becky Collier

Bath & North East Somerset Council
AONB Manager
North Somerset Parish Representative
Natural England
North Somerset Council
National Trust
Mendip Society
Somerset Wildlife Trust
Somerset County Council Officer
Somerset Parishes Representative
CPRE

Other attendees

Tim Haselden
Sarah Catling
Pete Douglas

AONB Project Development Officer
AONB Support & Communications Officer
Somerset Wildlife Trust

Apologies

Di Sheppard
Chris Lewis
Cllr Nigel Taylor (Chair)
Tim Curley
Cllr E Brimmell
Julie Cooper
John Flannigan
Cllr Tom Killen
Rachel Tadman
Andy Wear

Bath & North East Somerset Council Officer
CPRE
Somerset County Council
Avon Wildlife Trust
Bath & North East Somerset Council Parish Reps
Sedgemoor District Council Officer
North Somerset Council Officer
Mendip District Council
Mendip District Council Officer
National Farmers Union

Summary of Actions

Item	Item	Notes	Action
1	Declaration of Interest	No declarations	
2	Notes of Previous Meeting	Accepted as a true and accurate record Proposer RD Seconder MA Apologies as stated. Tim Curley will now be representing Avon Wildlife Trust on the Partnership.	
3	Paper A - OSG Report	Additional points to note, RP is no longer the Mendip District Council Officer, Rachel Tadman has been appointed with immediate effect. Point 3 - Finance underspend resulting from the delayed delivery of the new vehicle has now been allocated to partnership working with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust on The Chew Headwaters Assessment Project and QGIS mapping. This will enable the Unit to draw down the full Defra grant for 2018/19. Report noted. Proposer TL Seconder JH	
4	Partnership Updates	<u>TL Natural England</u> – Work continues on agri-environment engagement, its importance underlined by the increasing allocation of time from NE. The Partnership raised the state of the current payment scheme JH advising that a major land owner on the high level scheme has not been paid for 3 years. NE extremely disappointed but unable to do anything, RPA continue to be the payment body with a separate body responsible for setting up agreements. All agreements are now currently with the Secretary of State. AH worried that if the Partnership does not voice concerns then there is a suggestion that we are condoning it. Suggestion therefore that this should be an item on a future agenda with an approach made to the relevant body for a summary statement. Richard Penny is monitoring stewardship agreements in the AONB. RP to be invited to present at the next Partnership meeting. NE have been working on providing supplementary advice on European Designated Sites in the AONB, this information is now available on the NE website and should help inform planners moving forward. The information is more comprehensive than previously available. <u>IC National Trust</u> – NT continue with scrub management work. Recently collated records of the sheep and goat numbers in Cheddar Gorge, latest count indicates goat numbers have dropped by half this year. Discussions have been held with the new owner of Ebbor Grove Farm around land management of the area to buffer the farmland and adjacent NNR.	JH JH

		Continue to prioritise habitat surveys and mapping of NT land assessing how improvements can be made on nature conservation, this information forms the update for the Property Business Plan. Bat surveys with SWT and advice from Somerset Botany Group also inform their work. Landscape scale, NT continue with 'bigger and better working on a bigger and larger scale', with scoping work currently being carried out. Cultural heritage work on Scheduled Monuments; Shute Shelve Hill a Saxon Way has seen scrub clearance as well as work following advice from University of Bristol on cave management. Recreation and Access, the second TOTG festival will take place 14-16 June. Currently working with Cheddar Walking who are funding work to manage paths and general access along the Gorge walks. New interpretation panels due to go in at Cheddar Gorge and Crook Peak. Rock safety work continues on a rolling programme. Community and partnership engagement is on-going; work to stop anti-social vehicles in cheddar gorge, NT also represented on Cheddar Vision Forum, Mendip Hills Facilitation Fund, inform Habitat Regulations Assessment of flooding down the Gorge as well as providing commentary on the North Somerset Plan. Attended careers fair at Churchill. RD requested an update on Cox's Mill; site is owned by Longleat; initial plans are proposed removal and construction of a further car park, whilst the hotel is not listed it is sat on a listed building. It is understood that future development is as yet undecided. Current delay on the road repairs through the Gorge is due to a disagreement with Highways on responsibility for maintenance. Longleat are leading on this; currently no update. PR advised that SWT would be happy to support NT work on habitat mapping. <u>SD Somerset County Council</u> – European INTERREG has recently funded an £8m project on flood management in Somerset. This fund is Brexit proof with one further call for bids due, SD will advise if there are any further opportunities that could be of interest to the AONB. <u>BC CPRE</u> – CPRE Somerset are currently advertising for a planner, this is a part-time role offered on a freelance basis, closing date is 12 April, details are on the CPRE Somerset website. CPRE coordinated the recent Star Count involving members of the public over a 3 week period in February. The count is an annual process and the new map will be produced in the next month, this will provide a measure	
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		of dark skies in the AONB. It will also be a useful tool to support comments on planning applications. State of brown field report has been carried out; with the press release due out next week. Somerset currently has 260 hectares that could supply housing. <u>RF Mendip Society</u> – The Society events programme for Mar-Jul is available. Membership to the Society continues to increase and they continue to receive great support from the AONB Unit. Mendip Rocks! will go ahead again this year. JH gave a brief update on the Unit's recent visit to the Wye Valley AONB who run a very successful Arts Festival. Current format for MR is the most we can achieve given current resources. The plan is to appoint an outreach post tapping into STEM for 19/20 to move this project forward. <u>AH North Somerset Council</u> – Highlighted the good work being done by Mendip Outdoor Pursuits on their 250 acre site, this is great asset for the AONB. They have submitted planning permission having found gaps in some of the historic planning currently held. The AONB Unit will continue to liaise with them and will keep an eye on future development. <u>PR Somerset Wildlife Trust</u> – Facilitation Fund has been a slow process but the benefits are now being seen. Pete Douglas has been appointed the Facilitation Coordinator to cover Ellie Higginson's maternity leave. There are now 19 members with 4 new members joining since the last meeting. Two further stewardship applications are due to be submitted during this window. Adder surveying training session was held on 9 March. Surveying will continue in the AONB between now and the end of May. The Partnership continues to support the Facilitation Fund which is a great way of establishing links with landowners. Chris Eyles is now in post as the Senior West Mendip Reserves Coordinator and has worked with the AONB Volunteers installing new gates at Bubwith Acres. Making Space for Butterflies in Mendip project is running and involves woodland management work at Cheddar Wood and grassland and hedgerow restoration in East Mendip to improve habitat for Mendip butterflies. Wild Paths Trainee Project continues, funded by HLF, trainees gain skills in practical reserves management and community engagement. The funding covers a 9 month period for 3 years, SWT will be recruiting in April for the next trainees, there will be 2 posts; Mendip and South Somerset. Initial results of the dormice survey have been received identifying that Somerset has a unique genetic sub species and good connectivity between populations with	
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		good flow and dispersal. Surveys help inform how the AONB is coping and help inform future programmes of work. <u>LR B&NES</u> – Management plan was adopted on 27 February and is effective from 7 March. Chew Valley lake railings are now being painting following advice from the AONB Unit. Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail has now been identified as a 2 phase project, with phase 2 needing a lot of work. The funding application for phase 1 will be submitted before the end of the month.	
5	Adoption of Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024	Formal consultation of the Draft Management Plan took place during December. Following the consultation period no material change was identified, the plan is now with the Local Authorities for adoption. Updates so far: B&NES – Adopted SCC – Due for adoption next week NSC – Awaiting final signature SDC – No concerns, but unlikely it will be adopted before the end of the financial year MDC – No update	JC RT
6	Paper B – Delivery Plan for the Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024	The new Draft Delivery Plan is a strategic document for the AONB Partnership not just the AONB Unit and will be a live document for the whole period. The plan reflects the key activities and projects taking place across the AONB over the next 5 years. TH is aware that there are currently some gaps relating to what partners are delivering or planning to deliver that will be key in helping to achieve the AONB Management Plan, and therefore that should be captured in the AONB Delivery Plan. TH has put together a project mandate form for Partners to complete with any relevant activities or projects that are being planned for delivery over the next 5 years that are not currently referenced. Please return all completed mandates to TH as soon as possible. LR confirmed that approval is needed on the Plan in its current format; this will enable the AONB Unit to begin submitting funding bids. As this is a live document it will be expected that the Delivery Plan will be presented to the Partnership at one meeting a year for review. The Partnership felt that the Draft Delivery Plan provides an extremely strong evidence base with strengths and weaknesses easy to identify. The Delivery Plan was approved as a live document subject to annual reviews and with further partner additions to be made.	ALL
7	Paper C – AONB Unit Update	The AONB Unit has now recruited a new full time Ranger Volunteer Coordinator, Sammy Fraser will take up the role at the end of April.	

		Volunteer hours continue to rise year on year, hours are currently 4060 for 18/19 an increase of 360 on last year. A range of core competencies have now been introduced for Volunteer Rangers including Navigation, Outdoor First Aid Training, Interpreting the Landscape and Emergency Situations. Walk Leaders successfully ran 2 Christmas Walks; the Unit is keen to promote these as experiences rather than simply a guided walk. Enquiries have already come in for Easter Walks. Success of the Young Rangers programme continues with 2 Rangers having been accepted onto the Europarc Camp in the summer. Planning continues to be extremely busy. CC and our Planning Volunteer are at UWE today, sharing information with MSc students on the AONB. Mendip Hills Fund panel distributed £11k in November on a good spread of projects from Forest Schools to Mendip Mountain Bikers who are improving trail signage. Cheddar Ales are the latest business to support the MHF, donations will come from a percentage of the profit from sales of their Hardrock Ale. We are currently communicating the AONB Special Qualities through a series of monthly blogs, March is #mendiparchaeology month. Information is available on the Special Qualities page of the website and guides our Social Media content.	
8	Paper D – NAAONB Update	Glover review continues. The NAAONB have helped coordinate some of the AONB bids to the new Environmental Land Management Schemes.	
9	AOB	Rachel Thompson MBE has been invited to join the Partnership to represent access. She is from the Trails Trust and is an access campaigner for Mendip with vast experience of common law dedicated access. Proposer – NT Seconder – LR The Partnership felt that Rachel's knowledge and experience would be a great asset. Voted in favour. The new Farm Payment Scheme has notable gaps with regards to access, Defra have asked Rachel Thompson to write a bid which needs to be submitted by the end of next week. Any comments that may support this should be shared asap.	ALL
10	Date of Next Meeting	21 November 2019	

Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	21 st March 2019	Paper: A
Title:	Mendip Hills AONB Officer Support Group (OSG)	
Presented by:	Julie Cooper, Sedgemoor District Council	
To be noted.		

1.0 The AONB Unit

Tim Haselden, the Unit's Project Development Officer has settled in well 5 months into the role. His priority task was to create the Partnership's Delivery Plan to support the AONB Management Plan. This plan is being presented at this meeting. Tim has ably adopted the ethos of the unit; to convene and work in partnership, in the production of the plan. He established two new working groups to share projects and identify joint working opportunities.

The role of Ranger Volunteer Coordinator, taking the existing post from part-time to full-time, was advertised at the start of the year. At the time of writing the interviews had taken place but a decision has not been made.

2.0 Management Plan and Delivery Plan

The draft plan was approved for adoption on behalf of the Partnership at the January 22nd OSG meeting by Vice-chair Cllr Liz Richardson. The plan is now going through the adoption process in each of the local authorities. An update will be provided at the Partnership meeting by each of the local authority representatives.

The OSG has had two opportunities to shape the Delivery Plan. At the January 22nd meeting the OSG helped prioritise the long list of projects and at the March 4th OSG the draft delivery plan was reviewed and amended prior to being included in the papers for this Partnership meeting.

3.0 Budget Update

The AONB Unit was on track to draw down the full Defra grant this year, however a last minute delay in the delivery of the new team vehicle has meant the £4.6k allocated from this year's budget can not be spent. The Unit is working hard to look at other allocations that mean the complete Defra grant can be claimed.

PAPER B - Mendip Hills AONB Partnership 5 Year Strategic Delivery Plan 2019-2024 DRAFT – for approval



Ref.	Programme Theme	High-Level Actions / Projects	Delivery Partners	Delivery Years	AONB 5 Year Man Plan Objectives	AONB Special Qualities	Ecosystem Services	Defra 25 Year Environmental Goals	Outcomes / KPIs (measured by)
Management Plan Theme 1 - Landscape Quality									
1.1	Communicating our Special Qualities	Comms to general public, planning officers and decision makers on special qualities	AONB Unit	1-5	L3, L4, P3	All	c, g, h	F	Delivery of photo competition and a range of new promotional materials for specific audiences (AONB Unit)
1.2	Environment Centre	New AONB Visitor Centre and office base at Burrington Combe with focus on engaging interpretation about the AONB, appropriate and accessible for a wide audience	AONB Unit Holt Farms	1-5	L3, L4, P3	All	c, d, g, h	E, F, H	Completion of Visitor Centre (AONB Unit) Increase in no. of engagements, hits, followers, downloads, feedback (AONB Unit)
Management Plan Theme 2 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity									
2.1	Surveying	Creation and coordination of an inter-organisational survey group of volunteers and specialists, as well as coordination of survey data from various sources	AONB Unit	1-5	BG1, BG3	i	a	C, D, F	Increased % of land managed under higher level agri-environment schemes and uptake of Environmental Stewardship options (NE)
2.2	Joined up land management	Focus on enhancing linear networks such as hedgerows and dry stone walls and wildflower strips on farmland and road verges	AONB Unit (Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission)	1-5	BG2, BG4, D2	viii, ix, xi	a, e, f	A, C, F, G	Increased % of area that is tranquil (CPRE)
		Making Space for Butterflies	Somerset Wildlife Trust	1-5	BG1, BG2	ii, iv, x, xi	a	C, F, G	Increased % of SSSIs and geological SSSIs in favourable/ recovering condition (NE)
		Management of WT reserves and SSSIs to create bigger, better, more joined up habitats in priority Living Landscape areas	Somerset Wildlife Trust and Avon Wildlife Trust	1-5	BG1, BG2, BG4,	ii, viii, x	a, g	C, F, G, J	Improved in condition of priority habitats and populations of priority species diversity (NE / WT)
		Restoration of Dew Ponds	Somerset Reptile and Amphibian Group	2-3	BG1, BG3, BG5	iv, xii	a, b, g, h	B, C, E, F, G, G, J	
		Local Pollinator Strategy	Somerset Wildlife Trust	1-5	BG1, BG2, BG3	i, ii, iv, v, vii, viii, x, xi	a, d	A, B, C, D, E, G, I	
2.3	Promoting geology to public	Build on Discovering Black Down project to interpret geology through an engaging, innovative approach	AONB Unit	2-3	BG5, BG6	ii, iv, v, vi, viii, xi, xii, xiii	a, g, h	F	
Management Plan Theme 3 - Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage									
3.1	Historic Environment	Promoting rural and traditional skills and traditions with a focus on the mapping and repair of 'vulnerable' dry stone walls and training of local people in these skills	AONB Unit	1-5	H1, H3	iv, v, ix, xii	a, c, g, h	E, F	Increased % of Scheduled Monuments in favourable condition (EH)
3.2	Cultural Heritage	GIS mapping of people's views, priorities and memories of the landscape	AONB Unit	1-2	H1, H2	i, iii, xiii	a, c, g, h	F	Reduced number of listed and unlisted buildings and meterage of dry stone walls at risk / vulnerable (EH / AONB Unit)
		Deliver mini projects focussed on storytelling, historic tales, research of local history and land management over time, including interpretation of archaeology	AONB Unit	3-4	H1, H2	i, iv, v, vi, vii, xi, xii, xiii	c, g, h	F	Quantitative and qualitative data providing an understanding of cultural heritage through local people's views and visitor perception,(AONB Unit)
Management Plan Theme 4 - Recreation, Access & Tourism									
4.1	Promoting Responsible Recreation	Updating trail guides and re-publishing the Mendip Way book - promoting responsible recreation and balancing with conserving the landscape, through joined-up initiatives	AONB Unit (User/volunteer groups, Council RoW Teams, Cheddar Walking Group)	1-3	R1, R4	i, iii, iv, x, xiii	c	F, J	% employed in tourism (Defra) % of AONB accessible (NE)
		Develop the Walkers are Welcome scheme for Wells and support Cheddar Walking group with Cheddar scheme	AONB Unit (Cheddar Walking, Cheddar Parish Council, Wells City Council)	2-4	R2, R3, R4	xiii	c, h	F, J	Increase in length of Public Rights of Way and bridleways promoted and enhanced (NE / AONB Unit)
		Overarching audit of the current and potential future recreational pressures and opportunities within AONB	AONB Unit (consultant)	1-2	R2, R3, L1, BG4, D5	All	c, e, f, h	D, F, G	Walkers are Welcome scheme established in Wells and continuing in Cheddar (AONB Unit)
4.2	Access infrastructure improvements	Access and interpretation enhancements on the Mendip Way and Limestone Link. Supporting RoW teams with 'Adopt a Path' and 'Strimmer Scheme' and promoting responsible recreation through joined-up initiatives across sites	AONB Unit (Rambling groups, North Somerset Council, Somerset County Council, BANES Council)	1-5	R1, R4	xiii	c, h	E, F, J	Access and recreation audit produced (AONB Unit) Joined up signage and interpretation across the AONB (Various partners, AONB Unit)
		Chew Valley Lake Access Recreational Trail	BANES Council, Sustrans (Bristol Water, AONB Unit)	1-2	R1, R3, R4	vii, xiii	c, h	B, F	Consistent and reliable data on visitor numbers and hot spots in AONB (AONB Unit)
		Develop reliable and coordinated programme for recording est. numbers of visitors through annual counts and counters to establish a baseline / change	AONB Unit (landowner / managers)	1-5	R2, R3	i, iv, xiii	a, c, f, h	A, C, F, H, I, J	
		Dolberrow to Blackdown bridleway improvements	North Somerset Council	4-5	R1, R3, R4	xiii	c	F	

		Links to England Coast Path and Cotswold Way (via Mendip Way and Limestone Link)	North Somerset Council, BANES Council (AONB Unit)	1-5	R1, R2	ii, iii. xiii	c	F	
4.3	Destination Development	Update AONB brand and develop consistent signage and AONB branding on sites and village welcome road signs and at key AONB entrance points and gateways	AONB Unit (Parish, District, Unitary and Council Councils, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts)	2-4	R2, R4	xiii	c, d, h	F	
		Somerset as a destination, not a journey - Somerset AONBs working together to jointly promote the beauty and landscape of Somerset	AONB Units: Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, Blackdown Hills	1-2	R2	All	c, g, h	F, G	
Management Plan Theme 5 - Natural Resources									
5.1	Natural Capital	Audit and develop how the AONB Partnership records and monitors Natural Capital	AONB Unit (AONB partners)	1	N1	All	All	D, E, F, G	Increase in % area mapped and understanding of Natural Capital assets and ecosystem service flows (AONB Unit)
5.2	Water Catchment Based Approach	Work with Natural Processes to improve water quality and reduce flood risk (NFM) by assessing watercourses and adjacent land use and tackle failures under Water Framework Directive (with focus on Chew Valley)	Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust (AONB Unit, Environment Agency, West of England Rural Network, Bristol Water)	1-5	N1, N2, N3	vii, viii	a, b, e	B, D, E, G, I, J	Quantifying ecosystem services in £ economic terms and better understanding of natural capital within society Improvement in WFD indicators on tributaries within AONB
Management Plan Theme 6 - Land Management									
6.1	Promoting joined-up land management	Facilitation Fund and establishment of a joint grazing initiative	Somerset Wildlife Trust (AONB Unit, The National Trust, Longleat)	1-5	LM1, LM2	i, ii, iv, ix, xii	a, b, d, e,	B, C, D, E, G, I, J	Increase in % of woodland managed (Forestry Commission)
		Supporting Countryside Stewardship [NE]	Natural England (AONB partners)	1-5	LM1, LM2	i, ii, iv, ix, xii	a, b, d, e	A, C, D, E, G, I, J	Increase in suitable area of new woodland (Forestry Commission)
		Strengthen link and funding streams with the Local Nature Partnerships and Local Enterprise Partnerships	AONB Unit and partners	1-5	LM2, LM3, LM4	All	All	All	Management Plans created and followed for 3 important sites (AONB Unit, NE)
6.2	Habitat management with volunteers	Support practical habitat management through the development, training and support of volunteers	AONB Unit and partners	1-5	LM2, P1, BG3	ii, ix, xi, xiii	a, c, h	C, E, F, J	Number of farmers working with AONB partnership increased (AONB Unit, NE)
6.3	Improving management of key sites	Bringing Deer Leap, Blackmoor SSSI nature reserves and Burrington Commons into better and more sustainable management	AONB Unit (South West Heritage Trust, Sir David Wills, Natural England)	1-5	LM2, BG1	i, ii, iii, iv, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii	a, c, e, g, h	C, E, F, G, J	Increase in the number of practical conservation volunteer activities undertaken in the AONB (AONB Unit)
		Rock safety and stabilisation along Cheddar Gorge	Longleat	1	R2	ii, v, vi, viii, xiii	c, h	D, G, H, J	Improved management for visitor safety and aesthetics in Cheddar Gorge (Longleat, NT)
		Land acquisition and car park improvements near Crook Peak to reduce anti-social behaviour, improve land management and visitor facilities	The National Trust (AONB Unit)	3-4	LM2, R2	iii, viii, xiii	a, b, c, h	C, D, F, I	
Management Plan Theme 7 - Development & Transport									
7.1	Planning guidance to support conservation and enhancement	1. Development of paid service for Pre-application advice from the AONB Unit in conjunction with Local Planning Authorities. 2. Develop AONB planning guidance notes and Supplementary Planning Documents, including Landscape Character Assessment guidance / training	AONB Unit (Local Planning Authorities, Parish Councils)	1-2	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5	All	All	All	Increase in % of the AONB that is relatively tranquil and reduction in inappropriate number of planning applications (CPRE, NE) Protocol, suite of information and pre-app advice programme in place for planning advice and guidance (AONB Unit)
7.2	Responding to Planning Applications and Plans	1.Creation of a Planning Protocol. 2.Develop AONB Unit planning resource to enable wider coverage and response to planning applications within and in setting of the AONB	AONB Unit	2-4	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5,	All	All	All	Sustainable transport initiative(s) in place (AONB Unit / Local Authorities)
7.3	Sustainable Transport	Encouragement of sustainable transport options, enhancing Rights of Ways and cycle lanes, and reduction in traffic speeds and congestion of quieter routes, linking in with awareness campaign	AONB Unit (District, Unitary and County Councils and AONB partners)	2-5	D3, L1, R3	i, iv, xiii	b, c, e, f	A, D, E, G, H, I	
Management Plan Theme 8 - Participation									
8.1	Volunteer Development	Development of the AONB’s Volunteer Rangers, Young Rangers and Practical Volunteer Programme	AONB Unit (Somerset County Council)	1-5	P1	All	a, c, h	C, E, F, J	Increase in number of volunteer hours and number of Volunteer Rangers and Young Rangers (AONB Unit)
8.2	Nature and Wellbeing	Work with groups and individuals with mental health conditions and special educational needs to deliver activities focussed on improving people’s health and wellbeing through contact with nature / landscape	AONB Units: Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, Blackdown Hills (local groups, Public Health)	1-5	P1, P2	All	c, h	F	Increase in number of practical tasks and events delivered, with no reduction in quality (AONB Unit)
8.3	Public Events and Activities	Develop annual Mendip Rocks! festival for school groups, families and experts – showcasing geology in a diverse, engaging and innovative way	AONB Unit, Earth Science Centre and The Mendip Society	2-5	P2, P3	v, vi, ix, xiii	a, c, g, h	F	Increase in diversity / demographics of AONB volunteers and members of the public engaged (AONB Unit)
		Develop a programme of education / training sessions for a range of ages and abilities on special qualities	AONB Unit and partners	1-5	P2, P3	Various	c, g, h	F	Safe volunteer practices and procedures (AONB Unit)

8.4	Mendip Hills Fund	Secure further funding for the Mendip Hills Fund and support of local community groups through this mechanism to conserve and enhance the AONB				AONB Unit and Somerset Community Foundation			1-5	P2 <i>et al.</i>		Various	Various	Various		
8 x AONB 5 Year Management Plan Themes																
Theme	Landscape Quality	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Historic Environment & Cultural Heritage	Recreation, Access & Tourism	Natural Resources	Land Management	Development & Transport	Participation								
Key	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
10 x Defra 25 Year Environment Plan Goals / Benefits																
Goal	Clean Air	Clean & Plentiful Water	Thriving plants & wildlife	Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards	Using resources from nature more sustainably & efficiently	Enhancing beauty, heritage & engagement with the natural environment	Mitigating & adapting to climate change	Minimising waste	Managing exposure to chemicals	Enhancing biosecurity						
Key	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J						
Ecosystem Services / Natural Capital Benefits																
Service	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Water quality, quantity and flow	Physical and mental health, wellbeing and enjoyment	High quality food / products	Climate regulation incl. carbon and soil health	Air quality	Sense of history and culture	Sense of place and community								
Key	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h								
13 x AONB Special Qualities																
Quality	Dark skies, tranquillity, sense of remoteness, naturalness	Distinctive limestone ridges and scarp slopes	Views towards the hills and panoramic views out	Sparsely populated plateau	Diverse and visible geology	Caves	Cheddar, Chew Valley & Blagdon Lakes	The Chew Valley & Yeo Valley	Dry stone walls	Steep south-facing slopes	Ancient woodland combes	Evidence of human settlement across the years	Landscape enjoyed by large numbers of people			
Key	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x	xi	xii	xiii			
11 x AONB Unit Core Functions																
Function	Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the AONB Management Plan	Raising awareness of the AONB, and promoting the AONB vision and the management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside	Advising upon, facilitating and coordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan	Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service to attain the highest possible standards in countryside management	Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets	Monitoring AONB landscape condition	Accessing resources for management activities	Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities. Participating in and promoting joint working between AONBs and across protected landscapes family	Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level	Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB	Providing landscape related planning advice					

AONB 5 Year Management Plan (2019-2024)	
Theme	Objective
Landscape Quality	<i>L1 Promote appropriate management to ensure that the distinctive Mendip Hills AONB landscape is conserved and enhanced.</i>
	<i>L2 Provide opportunities to acquire and develop skills required to care for and promote the landscape and its special qualities.</i>
	<i>L3 Increase awareness and appreciation of the purposes of designation and the special qualities of the AONB.</i>
	<i>L4 Increase awareness of the benefits of supporting local products and services that help conserve and enhance the landscape.</i>
Biodiversity & Geodiversity	<i>BG1 Ensure that there is no net loss of characteristic habitats and species.</i>
	<i>BG2 Promote a landscape scale approach to the conservation and enhancement of ecological networks within and adjoining the AONB.</i>
	<i>BG3 Increase monitoring and awareness of the biodiversity resource of the Mendip Hills AONB so that it is sufficiently understood to continue to guide the successful conservation of the characteristic habitats and species.</i>
	<i>BG4 Promote a holistic approach to implementing AONB Management Plan objectives and National Character Area Statements of Opportunity.</i>
	<i>BG5 Recognise and celebrate geological sites and features of the Mendip Hills AONB to ensure the successful conservation both of the geology and wildlife habitat they provide.</i>
	<i>BG6 Increase awareness of the Mendip Hills geology, particularly cave systems in relation to the importance they play in water management and water supply.</i>
Historic Env & Cultural Heritage	<i>H1 Improve the recording, interpretation and understanding of all aspects of the AONBs historic environment to ensure local communities and visitors enjoy a rich experience of the sense of place.</i>
	<i>H2 Increase awareness and communicate the significance of the high quality historic environment of the Mendip Hills AONB.</i>
	<i>H3 Promote appropriate management of sites, structures and landscapes designated for their international, national, regional or local importance in the historic environment to ensure no further loss of heritage assets.</i>
Recreation, Access & Tourism	<i>R1 Maintain, improve and promote public access and quiet recreational activities with measures to ensure access for all in accordance with the purposes of AONB designation.</i>
	<i>R2 Support the development of tourism that benefits the local economy, conserves and enhances the landscape and improves understanding of the Mendip Hills.</i>
	<i>R3 Develop and promote more sustainable methods of travel to and around the AONB for enjoyment and recreation.</i>
	<i>R4 Support healthy lifestyles by encouraging more people to use the Mendip Hills for sustainable outdoor activities.</i>
Natural Resources	<i>N1 Recognize and promote the benefits and relevance of the AONB as a valuable source of ecosystem services, economic and health benefits.</i>
	<i>N2 Promote conservation of water resources and enhance their quality taking measures to reduce low flows and flooding by appropriate management and use.</i>
	<i>N3 Promote sustainable management of soils in accordance with best practice to minimise erosion and water pollution and maximise resilience to drought.</i>
Land Management	<i>LM1 Support and promote viable farming to ensure it remains as the principle land use and contributes to maintaining the special qualities of the AONB.</i>
	<i>LM2 Support and promote rural land management that conserves and enhances natural resources, including biodiversity special to the Mendip Hills, landscape character the historic environment and aids public awareness and enjoyment of the Mendip Hills.</i>
	<i>LM3 Support and promote a sustainable woodland economy that enhances the Mendip Hills AONB woodlands & wider landscape with targeted woodland management & creation in appropriate locations supporting wood fuel & local community opportunities.</i>
	<i>LM4 Influence the use, restoration and after use of all quarries to minimise the impact on the landscape and to be compatible with the purposes of designation.</i>
Development & Transport	<i>D1 Working with the local planning authorities, ensure that development in the AONB and its setting is of a nature, scale, location and design that meets community need without compromising the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB.</i>
	<i>D2 Working with the local highways authorities, ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are fully respected in the planning, design, provision and management of all types of transport and associated infrastructure.</i>
	<i>D3 Encourage reduction in carbon emissions within the AONB through reducing energy consumption, applying energy conservation measures, encouraging more sustainable patterns of development, and utilising renewable energy generation technologies that are of an appropriate type and scale for their siting.</i>
	<i>D4 Ensure issues of importance for the management of the AONB landscape are fully reflected in strategies and plans produced by other agencies and local communities.</i>
	<i>D5 The impact of development on the protected landscape and the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB would need to be carefully considered, and where supported would require appropriate and acceptable mitigation measures.</i>
Participation	<i>P1 Increase the opportunities for volunteering and the range of people participating, to benefit the environment, people's health and wellbeing and local communities in and around the AONB.</i>
	<i>P2 Encourage the involvement of local people and the wider community in the management of the AONB.</i>
	<i>P3 Promote the Mendip Hills as an educational resource for all ages and encourage sharing of research and learning tools.</i>

Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	21 st March 2019	Paper: C
Title:	AONB Unit Activity Update	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle, AONB Manager	
To be noted. The		



Mendip Hills AONB Unit

Activity Plan 2018-19

NAAONB Key Performance Indicators

- Landscapes for Wildlife (nature)** Hectares of land enhanced for nature through the work of AONB teams.
- Landscapes for People (wellbeing)** Number of people engaged through the work of AONB teams.
- Landscapes for Culture (history)** Number of Scheduled Monuments that have been protected through the work of the AONB team.

1. Conserve & Enhance: Project Development						
Work Area	Action	Lead	MGT Plan Obj.	NAAONB KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Blackmoor Reserve and Deer Leap	Produce management plans and instigate	TH	L1, L2, R1,	1, 2, 3	OSG request for cost/benefit analysis and liabilities outlined. UPDATE no	Green

	works that conserve and enhance these sites, based around existing countryside stewardship schemes. Develop Access and Interpretation Project Plans and work with SWHT HLF Project to deliver improvements. Develop bids to fund additional works outside the HLF project.		LM2, P1, P2, P3		liabilities to be incurred as SWHT still leaseholder, AONB Unit to deliver Countryside Stewardship and take payment for this. • Tesco Bags of Help funding bid submitted for £4K focussed on improving management at Blackmoor. • TH site visit with Richard Penny, NE on 13/11/18. Useful documents sent over by Richard in January. TH to work with Bob and Jan to pull a usable Man Plan for both sites together. • Meeting held with SWHT on 12/02/19 to discuss management plan, ASB requirements (i.e. signage and boulders) and agreement. • JH completed paperwork, sent to SWHT 18/12/18. • Discussed capital items and process for receiving payments with NE / SW Heritage Trust. Need to finalise arrangements for this before taking over management. Bob to look into previous RPA payments to SCC for 5 years' worth of HLS and whether any capital items have been/can be claimed. • Scrub removal taken place at Blackmoor and fallen tree removed at car park in Deer Leap by Andy Stevens, SWHT. Some repairs to barn roof tiles at Deer Leap by SWHT.	
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					SWHT to clean inside and repair doors. Funding provided to SWHT by AONB Unit to install new stock proof fencing at both sites. SWHT to lead on fencing. Waiting to hear from Jan re. boulders at Blackmoor and then hopefully AONB Unit to lead on this and new signage.	
Chew Valley Access Trail	Assist the steering group (B&NES Council, Sustrans, Bristol Water) with the feasibility study and resulting bids.	JH	R1, R2, R3, R4	2	- Provided £1500 support to feasibility study, attending steering group. - Attended steering group meeting on 05/11/18 – Sustrans overbudget but plan to amend planning application for north part ASAP. - Planning revision submitted by Sustrans to improve road safety – there are issues with the application.	Amber
Mendip Way	Work with Mendip Society, Ramblers, Rotary and Parish/Town Councils to fund the development and installation of interpretation boards for key gateway sites: Uphill Cheddar Wells Frome	TH	R1, R2, R3, R4, P1, P2	2	- Opportunity arisen for NSC s106 money to improve Uphill starting point. Arien & Callow Rock provided costs: See file: Access Projects/Mendip Way/ Signage Improvements. Contact John Flannigan, North Somerset Council john.flannigan@n-somerset.gov.uk - TH re-waymarked Cufic Lane. Cheddar Walking want finger post here – TH has contacted Chris East (SCC RoW) but he is unwilling to install due to previous traffic damage. TH attended Cheddar Walking meeting in Feb'19 with action to try and bring	Amber

					parties together to find a solution for better signage. • TH met with Andy Carroll (12/11/18) and Andy Eddy and Les Davies (04/02/19) to find a way forward with welcome signage that keeps everyone happy and incorporates new interpretation with old plaque and oak posts and that reflects new national branding of 'The Mendip Way' and history of the west and east routes. • Draft design for panel sent to NSC late Dec'18 – planned completion by March/April19. • TH and AC discussed way forward 28/01/19 – TH to supply text for interpretation panel (with AE help). AC to use NSC designers to create panel and map of route. • NSC will organise and pay for the design, production of panel and installation of structure, as well as new finger post from road signing The Mendip Way and public footpath. • AONB Unit to organise and pay for the oak frame for the panel – using Les Davies West Mendip Way routed oak posts as the legs. • The panel will refer to West and East Mendip Way and talk about the history, but under the banner of The Mendip Way, promoting the whole route, but	
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					focussing on the west more, with the reverse taking place in Wells, but using the same panel and map design to keep consistent (future project). • Aim to redo Mendip Way guide next financial year • Meet Chamber of Commerce in Wells • TH looking at simple signage directing people onto The Mendip Way at key gateways, e.g. King's Wood, Cheddar, Wells (in addition to start/end at Uphill). • Access focus group delivered on 15th Jan'19 with 13 attendees – there was a desire for this to become a quarterly / biannual working group. • Original project partners for the new waymarking and route guides: • Mendip Society, Richard Frost r.e.frost100@btinternet.com • Mendip Ramblers, Mike Plaskitt mikeplaskitt@blueyonder.co.uk • Rotary, John Hinton john.fhinton@btinternet.com	
Limestone Link	Work with B&NES and North Somerset PROW and Ramblers groups to fund and implement route improvements using data from surveys. Upgrade access furniture (replace stiles	TH	R1, R2, R3, R4, P1, P2	2	• Survey took place 5-9 March 2018. CAMS data has been provided to B&NES and NSC RoW teams. • Limestone Link guide now online 15/6/18. Survey data in the Limestone Link folder on the P Drive.	Amber

	with gates or upgrade to high specification 2 step stiles with dog access) Install additional signage (e.g. along road and urban sections not covered by Rights of Way waymarkers)				• Next phase is to identify and programme improvements in the following order: -Replace any remaining stiles with gates. -Install new waymarker posts on road sections. -Steps or surfacing upgrades where needed. =Focus on Prospect Stile, Blackdown and Shipham. TH to work with Ian King (vol) and contact PCs in Jan/Feb'19. • TH met with Liz Brimmell and has emailed and spoken on the phone with Sheila Petherbridge. Liz was keen to see improvements at Prospect Stile, but Sheila doesn't want to see the suggested improvements (installation of steps) take place due to potential future maintenance issues. Sheila said that the route was fine and maintained by the ramblers. I asked her to let me know if she had any other suggestions or areas she'd like to see improved. Need to re-think plan. Contacts: Liz Brimmell – PC Rep. North Somerset Council PROW, Andy Carroll andrew.carroll@n-somerset.gov.uk Bathnes Council PROW, Sheila Petherbridge Sheila_Petherbridge@bathnes.gov.uk Bath Ramblers, Marilyn Wright wright_marilyn@hotmail.com	
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Kings Wood Access Project	Implement the Kings Wood Family Explorer Trail in partnership with the National Trust, Mendip Society and North Somerset Council to include: 0.5 mile easy access circular route. 2 interpretation boards. 3 outdoor natural play structures. Downloadable walk guide.	TH	R1, R2, R3, R4, P1, P2	N/A	PRIORITY Stage 1 Leader Application approved Feb 2018, Stage 2 application to be developed and submitted. North Somerset Council re Interpretation board, Gareth Withers Gareth.Withers@n-somerset.gov.uk • Next step is to confirm permitted rights for installing a panel as an advertisement. Gareth can advise on this which will determine the size and design to go for costings. • Decision has been made with Ian Clemmett to not submit second round application to LEADER due to time constraints as planning permission is required and project has not been progressed far enough. Also NT's priority for a LEADER application is not this project. It has been agreed to look (as a low priority) for other funding for footpath improvements to the Strawberry Line and for better linking signage between this and The Mendip Way (KPI now to be picked up under The Mendip Way deliverable). • NT will also install a new welcome interp panel in car park – TH has requested that the Mendip Hills AONB branding is incorporated onto this.	LEADER bid stopped
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					National Trust – Ian Clemmett and Helen Sharp Ian.Clemmett@nationaltrust.org.uk helen.sharp@nationaltrust.org.uk	
Community Hubs	Secure 2 new Parishes signed up to access projects. Implement programmes of improvement works (e.g replacing stiles with gates)		P1, P2	2	PROPOSAL: Reassess, to form part of 5 year Delivery Plan	
Mendip Environment Centre	Work with Yeo Valley and other stakeholders to create a 'Mendip Environment Centre' in Burrington Combe.	JH	R2	NA	Initial planning meeting held with Yeo Valley/Holt Farms. AONB Unit to contact Yeo Valley/Holt Farms to discuss layout of centre including office/store space, interpretation area and changing places toilets/facilities.	Amber
Burrington Commons	Work with Langford Ct Estate and NE to identify management solutions, create and instigate an action plan	JH	L1, BG1, BG2, LM2	1, 2, 3	Progressing with Natural England. Cotoneaster control test sites in place. Aerial spraying of bracken took place 30-31/7. Unit led on local awareness with minimal negative feedback.	Amber
Visitor Counters	Instigate a programme of regularly downloading visitor counter data, fund and install new counters, seek data from other sources.	TH	P3	NA	- New volunteer in place to look at broad question of 'How many people visit the AONB?' Creating a methodology for a volunteer survey in late summer. Methodology in place. Suggested date for 'The Big Count' is Sat 11th May ('Somerset Day'). - PRIORITY VISITOR COUNTERS Volunteer Ranger Malcolm Parsons	Amber

					has expressed interest in taking this on. • Found visitor counter info in toolstore and met with Kelly Davies on 07/02/19 to discuss The Big Count and visitor counters locations, logistics. • The Big Count to be held on 04/05/19 at 16 locations across AONB with help of Volunteer Rangers and others. • Kelly and TH have been out and located many of the old electronic counters at Blackdown – looking at a project to fund new ones and download the old data / check if the old ones still work.	
2. Raise Awareness						
Work Area	Action	Lead		NAAON B KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Mendip Rocks!	Work with SESC & Mendip Society to organise a programme of events aimed at family groups and people with geological interests during August and September, seeking additional funding.	JH	BG5, BG6, P3	N/A	• SC representing AONB Unit this year on the working group. • Programme agreed with 30 events across 3months. • 1246 people engaged through this prog. • De-brief meeting held on 28th November and initial planning meeting for 2019 held on 31/01/19. Actions to be circulated.	Green

					Produce glossy report as sales document and letter template to send to potential funders.	
	Promote the programme to achieve more visitors and more income than 2017. Numbers were slightly higher (1,037 in 2016, 1,100 in 2017). Donation takings also increased from £1450.53 in 2016 to £1,587 in 2017. N.B. 30 events in 2016 and 28 in 2017 and the large Ebbor Gorge event was cancelled (previously attended by more than 200 people)	SC	BG5, BG6, P3	2	4 family events as a priority for AONB Unit publicity: 7/7 Launch at Burrington 4/8 It's a Blast at Westbury Quarry 29/8 Family Fossil And Rock Funday 21/10 Explore Ebbor Gorge All events on eventbrite and AONB website Ticket 'sales' on track.	Green
Top of the Gorge Festival 22-24 June	Represent the AONB Unit on the steering group run by the National Trust and support the publicity of the event	JH	R2, R4	N/A	Attended 6 steering group meetings. AONB sponsoring speakers tent alongside information tent and leading guided walks. 2000 attended the event. Date confirmed for 2019 as 14-16 June. Cheddar Walking are planning walks and would like to share the AONB marquee.	Green
	Organise more local children from more schools to sample climbing and caving in the gorge.	JH	R2, R4	2	4 schools and 48 children attending Gorge Championship event	Green

	(90 pupils visited the gorge and site on 8/9/17)					
MHAONB Website	Increase visitor traffic from 40474 Users & 52575 sessions to 45000 Users & 60000 sessions on AONB website. Begin monitoring of Learning Zone and Discovering Black Down sites.	SC	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	N/A	Main Website April – Users 3,486/Sessions 4,324 May – Users 3,654/Sessions 4,545 June – Users 3,912/Sessions 4,791 July – Users 3,517/Sessions 4,308 Aug – Users 3,687/Sessions 4,499 Sept – Users 2,817/Sessions 3,571 Oct – Users 3,014/Sessions 2,794 Nov – Users 2,204/Sessions 2,805 Dec – Users 2,207/Sessions 2,747 Jan – Users 3,146/Sessions 4,026 Feb – Users 3,783/Sessions 4,696 Total: Users 35,427/Sessions 43,106 Black Down April – Users 74/Sessions 79 May – Users 72/Sessions 83 June – Users 150/Sessions 156 July – Users 127/Sessions 139 Aug – Users 155/Sessions 174 Sept – Users 70/Sessions 68 Oct – Users 286/Sessions 285 Nov – Users 95/Sessions 107 Dec – Users 145/Sessions 155 Jan – Users 133/Sessions 151 Feb – Users 83/Sessions 98 Total: Users 1,390/Sessions 1,495 Learning Zone	Amber

					April – Users 189/Sessions 206 May – Users 284/Sessions 283 June – Users 301/Sessions 305 July – Users 251/Sessions 260 Aug – Users 257/Sessions 261 Sept – Users 213/Sessions 220 Oct – Users 206/Sessions 202 Nov – Users 130/Sessions 133 Dec – Users 78/Sessions 83 Jan – Users 93/Sessions 97 Feb – Users 104/Sessions 110 Total: Users 2,106/Sessions 2,160	
Social media	Achieve 3000 followers on Twitter	ALL	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	N/A	April – 2,304 (+48) May – 2,337 (+33) June – 2,370 (+33) July – 2,412 (+42) Aug – 2,443 (+31) Sept – 2,488 (+45) Oct – 2,505 (+17) Nov – 2,534 (+29) Dec – 2,556 (+22) Jan – 2,599 (+43) Feb – 2,624(+25)	Amber
	Achieve 2000 likes on Facebook	ALL	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	N/A	April – 1,801 (+95) May – 1,839 (+38) June – 1,864 (+25) July – 1,902 (+38) Aug – 1,958 (+56) Sept – 1,982 (+24) Oct – 2,007 (+25) Nov – 2,066 (+59)	Green

					Dec – 2,073 (+7) Jan – 2,115 (+42) Feb – 2,156 (+41)	
	Achieve 3500 views on YouTube channel	ALL	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	N/A	April – 3,406 (+513) May – 3,688 (+282) June – 3,922 (+234) July – 4,024 (+102) Aug – 4,239 (+215) Sept – 4,435 (+196) Oct – 4,631 (+196) Nov – 4,779 (+148) Dec – 4,894 (+115) Jan – 5,099 (+205) Feb – 5,319 (+220)	Green
	Achieve 350 followers on Instagram Revised target of 800	ALL	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	N/A	April – 350 (+62) May – 410 (+60) June – 451 (+41) July – 492 (+41) Aug – 527 (+35) Sept – 575 (+48) Oct – 632 (+57) Nov – 693 (+61) Dec – 735 (+42) Jan – 800 (+65) Feb – 848 (+48)	Green
Enewsletters	Distribute a minimum of 24 enewsletters (12 to the public list, 12 to the Partnership list)	JH	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	2	April – 1 May – 1 / Partnership – 2 June – 1/ Partnership – 1 July – 2/ Partnership – 1 Aug – 1/ Partnership – 1/ MHF – 1 Sept – 2/ Partnership – 1 Oct – 1/Partnership – 1	Green

					Nov – 1 Dec – 2/Partnership – 1 Jan – 0/Partnership – 1 Feb – 1/Partnership – 0 Mar – 1/Partnership - 1	
	Achieve 800 on the enewsletter database	ALL	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	N/A	Due to GDPR related cleansing, database reduced from 540 to 300. May – 307 (-233) June – 329 (+22) July – 359 (+30) Aug – 370 (+11) Sept – 402 (+32) Oct – 436 (+34) Nov – 447 (+11) Dec – 456 (+9) Jan – 478 (+22) Feb – 491 (+13)	Amber
Talks & other opportunities	Deliver talks & attend relevant events	JH	L3, H2, R2, N1, P3	2	Winscombe Probus x30 11/6/18 Blagdon WI x18 12/6/18 Georgian Students x22 9/7/18 WI Cross 15/10/18 Bath NHS 25/2/19 SWT Wells local group 26/02/19 (approx. 50)	Green
3. Landscape Planning						
Work Area	Action	Lead		NAAON B KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Planning liaison	Liaison with LPAs and other consultees on	CC	D1, D4	N/A	There is on-going liaison with all the LPAs on a range of planning applications and	Green

	development management and policy (strategies and plans).				policy/strategy documents to ensure that the purpose of the AONBs is a consideration. Planning meeting with representatives from the LPAs to inform the review of the AONB Management Plan. Liaison with consultees has included discussions with NE, WECA, Mendip Society and CPRE.	
Landscape Planning Guidance	Prepare, produce and distribute a planning guidance document.	CC	D1, D4	N/A	Volunteer planning officer is working on a document that will help to enable a wider understanding of the Mendip Hills AONB LCA and how to sustain rural character. Management Plan to include potential revisions to support planning and other local authority officers in the duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty within the Mendip Hills AONB.	Green
Applications	Comment on applications as and when necessary.	CC	D1	N/A	2018 to date: Policy - 20 DM - 58 Review all applications that come in. 14 full partnership comments and a range of other support to officers/develops through e-mails, telephone discussions etc.	Green
Regional	Liaise with other AONB planners and partner organisations.	CC	D1, D4	2	On-going liaison with AONB planners. In June met with Quantock Hills and Exmoor National Park Landscape Planning Officers. On-going liaison with a range of other AONB Planners. Attended training at Cranborne Chase AONB and liaison with several AONB officers. On-going liaison with NE, CPRE and Mendip Society.	Green

Training	Develop a training programme for planners and parish councillors.	CC	D4, P2	N/A	Planning and tourism related training to be put on by Somerset AONBs although this has been pushed back due to Management Plan priorities and awaiting appointment of Quantock Hills AONB Planning Officer. Held Planning Officer group to feed into the review of the Management Plan and opportunity for officers to liaise and upskill on the AONB.	Amber
4. Involve the Community						
Work Area	Action	Lead		NAAON B KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Volunteer Rangers	Create and instigate a development plan to enhance numbers, kit/equipment, communication and involvement in AONB work. Submit funding bids and seek sponsorship to enable this.	TH	P1, P2	2	- Briefing of new Development Officer has taken place. Key part of 5 year Delivery Plan. - Drafting new strategic Delivery Plan document with volunteer development included and input from partners and focus groups (access and land management meetings held in Jan'19). Ideas currently being brainstormed for development of volunteers and improvements of systems. - Medical cards and lanyards have been distributed to Volunteer Rangers. - Toolstore audit taken place in Dec'18 and systems improved. New COSHH cupboard and key tools to be purchased in Feb'19. COSHH	Red

					datasheets printed and in toolstore. Also see Vol Procedure Policy below. Volunteer Rangers equipped with new waterproof logoed coats and high vis, as well as gloves. Meeting in Feb discussed change to a better online communication system and delivered training on Lone Working. A different aspect of H&S and relevant RAs will be delivered at each Vol Ranger meeting.	
	Maintain the rota of site visits, meetings and social gatherings	TH	P1, P2, R4	2	Vol Ranger meetings organised 4/9, 16/10, 27/11, 8/1/19, 19/2/19	Green
Volunteers	Create a walks programme, >4 walks, delivered by volunteers.	JH	P1, P2, R4	2	Walks delivered: 1 x Easter Walk 1 x Cavefest 2 x Cheddar Gorge Wild Week 3 x Gorge festival 2 x Christmas Walks 2 new walk leaders recruited and starting induction	Green
	Identify new training and volunteering opportunities	ALL	P1, P3	2	- Discovery Group: 5 vols x 5hrs 17/5, 3/5, 19/4, 5/4 - Bourne Leisure: 16 vols x 4hrs on 16/5/18 - Osprey: 12 vols x 5hrs 17/4/18, 8 individuals x 5hrs 8/5/18 - Westhaven DofE group our weekly from Dec'18 – Mar'19. - Kelly Davies - volunteer researcher	Amber

					- Judith Chubb-Whittle – volunteer planning officer. - Training and competency log for volunteers created as part of volunteer development plan. Volunteer roles are being updated to ensure they reflect roles and competencies required.	
Produce volunteer procedure policy	Volunteer handbook	TH	P1, P2, P3		- TH has met with SCC Volunteer Coordinator on 28/01/19 and will look at using SCC systems for recording and storing vol data and training information. - TH & SF creating new Vol Handbook to include key policies, info and guidelines for vols. Need to link with SCC info. SCC Vol Policies document discovered so no need to create our own – will use this to help produce into Vol Handbook and Vol Development Plan. - H&S info being reviewed and TH and SF to ensure latest versions of SCC Risk Assessments are being used and that First Aid Kits are complete and that there is a system in place to audit these – to be completed by end of Feb'19.	
Practical Task Volunteers	Maintain a programme of fortnightly tasks focussed around the special qualities. Start weekly sessions	SF	P1, P2, L2	1, 2	4063 volunteer hours (includes volunteer rangers, practical tasks and specials) 35 task days	Green

	including weekend tasks.					
Rural skills	Develop and instigate a rural skills programme, that involves AONB volunteers and the community, in the special qualities.	TH	P1, P2, L2	2	PROPOSAL Reassess, to form part of 5 year Delivery Plan	On hold
Young Rangers & Advanced	Maintain and promote the 2017-19 Young Ranger programme with activities aimed at creating environmental decision makers of the future	SF	P1, P2, L2	2	AYRs need a programme post July – mirror task programme plus involve them with YRs. SF to look at a developing YR and Advanced YR programme as part of Volunteer Development Plan / new 5 Year Delivery Plan.	Green
Mendip Hills Fund	Achieve and allocate >£10000 of grants	JH	P2, P3	1, 2, 3	£13,000 (including £3002 donation from Butcombe Trail Ultramarathon) allocated in Dec 18 Fund to be opened Sept- Oct 19 for applications. Talking to Cheddar Ales re. funding. Panel supportive.	Green
	Promote the fund regularly via social media and other outlets Achieve 200 likes on Facebook. Create and distribute targeted material to sign up 3 x events and 5 x business supporters.	SC	P2, P3	NA	New owl badge commissioned & delivered New awareness document created to send to prospective event organisers and businesses Facebook likes: April – 160 May – 169 (+9) June – 171 (+2) July – 175 (+4)	Amber

					Aug – 179 (+4) Sep – 182 (+3) Oct – 188 (+6) Nov – 193 (+5) Dec – 196 (+3) Jan – 205 (+9) Feb – 207 (+2) Explore wooden collection pots for use at events and shops as an alternative to badge boxes	
	Administer the panel to meet in November and March	JH	P2, P3	2	Panel met in March	Amber
5. Partnership, Management, Regional & National Work						
Work Area	Action	Lead		NAAON B KPI	Progress report	RAG (Red, Amber, Green)
Partnership	Administer 2 x meetings per year minimum.	JH	ALL	N/A	Extra meeting organised on June 13 th 2018	Green
Management Plan	Undertake the review and and successful adoption of the 2019-24 management plan.	JH	ALL	N/A	Planners workshop organised for 4/6/18 Public consultation in Sept Delivery Plan, TH organise brain storm in Dec for team. Late Jan ideas deadline. Two focus groups on access and land management delivered (13 and 7 attendees respectively) in mid Jan'18 with members of public and partners to feed ideas into Delivery Plan.	Amber

					Skeleton draft of Delivery Plan has been produced with ideas so far included. TH to make this more strategic and grouped in themes, with more detail included in the annual activity plans. Delivery Plan to be fully drafted for review at partnership meeting in March'19.	
OSG	Administer 4 x meetings per year minimum	JH	ALL	N/A	Organised	Green
Regional representation	Attend SWPLF and Somerset AONB meetings	ALL	ALL	N/A	Training delivered for South Somerset DC staff on social media SW AONB mini-conference on 4/9/18 Unit attending & JH leading a workshop	Green
National representation	Attend NAAONB meetings, contribute to responses, forums and communications	ALL	ALL	N/A	JH and Chair attended conference in July JH part of Taking the Lead lottery funded personal development programme via the NAAONB to ensure staff are resilient.	Green
AONB Unit	Create activity plan for Unit and individuals	ALL	ALL	N/A		Green
AONB Unit project management	All to be using Basecamp project management system.	ALL	ALL	N/A		Green

Management Plan Review – Objectives/Policies

Landscape Quality Objectives:

- L1 Promote appropriate management to ensure that the distinctive Mendip Hills AONB landscape is maintained and enhanced
- L2 Provide opportunities to acquire and develop skills required to care for and promote the landscape and its special qualities.
- L3 Increase awareness and appreciation of the purposes of designation and the special qualities of the AONB
- L4 Increase awareness of the benefits of supporting local products and services that help conserve and enhance the landscape.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity Objectives:

BG1 Ensure that there is no net loss of characteristic habitats and species.

BG2 Promote a landscape scale approach to the conservation and expansion of coherent and resilient ecological networks within and adjoining the AONB.

BG3 Increase monitoring and awareness of the biodiversity resource of the Mendip Hills AONB so that it is sufficiently understood to continue to guide the successful conservation of the characteristic habitats and species.

BG4 Promote a holistic approach to implementing AONB Management Plan objectives, National Character Area Statements of Opportunity and a locally designated Nature Improvement Area's objectives

BG5 Recognise and celebrate geological sites and features of the Mendip Hills AONB to ensure the successful conservation both of the geology and wildlife habitat they provide.

BG6 Increase awareness of the Mendip Hills geology, particularly cave systems in relation to the importance they play in water management and water supply.

Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage objectives;

H1 Improve the recording, interpretation and understanding of all aspects of the AONBs historic environment to ensure local communities and visitors enjoy a rich experience of the sense of place.

H2 Increase awareness and communicate the significance of the high quality historic environment of the Mendip Hills AONB

H3 Promote appropriate management of sites, structures and landscapes designated for their international, national, regional or local importance in the historic environment to ensure no further loss of heritage assets.

Recreation, Access and Tourism objectives:

R1 Maintain, improve and promote public access and quiet recreational activities with measures to ensure access for all in accordance with the purposes of AONB designation.

R2 Support the development of tourism and day visits that benefits the local economy, conserves and enhances the landscape and improves understanding of the Mendip Hills.

R3 Develop and promote more sustainable methods of travel to and around the AONB for enjoyment and recreation.

R4 Support healthy lifestyles by encouraging more people to use the Mendip Hills for sustainable outdoor activities.

Natural Resources objectives:

N1 Recognise and promote the benefits and relevance of the AONB as a valuable source of ecosystem services, economic and health benefits.

N2 Promote conservation of water resources and enhance their quality taking measures to reduce low flows and flooding by appropriate management and use.

N3 Promote sustainable management of soils in accordance with best practice to minimise erosion and water pollution and maximise resilience to drought.

Land Management objectives:

LMI Support sustainable farming to ensure it remains as the principle land use and contributes to maintaining the special qualities of the AONB.

LM2 Support and promote rural land management that conserves and enhances natural resources, including biodiversity, landscape character the historic environment and aids public awareness and enjoyment of the Mendip Hills AONB.

LM3 Promote a sustainable woodland economy that enhances the Mendip Hills AONB woodlands and wider landscape with targeted woodland management and creation in appropriate locations supporting wood fuel and local community opportunities.

LM4 Influence the use, restoration and after use of all quarries to minimise the impact on the landscape and to be compatible with the purposes of designation.

Development and Transport Objectives:

D1 Working with the local planning authorities, ensure that development in the AONB and its setting is of a nature, scale, location and design that meets community need without compromising the special qualities of the Mendip Hills AONB.

D2 Working with the local highways authorities, ensure that the special qualities of the AONB are fully respected in the planning, design, provision and management of all types of transport and associated infrastructure.

D3 Encourage reduction in Carbon emissions within the AONB through reducing energy consumption, applying energy conservation measures, encouraging more sustainable patterns of development, and utilising renewable energy generation technologies that are of an appropriate type and scale for their siting.

D4 Ensure issues of importance for the management of the AONB landscape are fully reflected in strategies and plans produced by other agencies and local communities.

Participation objectives:

P1 Increase the opportunities for volunteering and the range of people participating, to benefit the environment, peoples health and well being and local communities in and around the AONB.

P2 Encourage the involvement of local people and the wider community in the management of the AONB

P3 Promote the Mendip Hills as an educational resource for all ages and encourage sharing of research and learning tools.

Budget	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
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EXPENDITURE

Staff Costs

	£	£	£
Sub Total	150,952.00	143,929.00	149,669.00
Training	£ 200.00	£ 500.00	£ 505.00
Car allowances	£ 1,500.00	£ 1,550.00	£ 1,565.00
Travel costs	£ 750.00	£ 950.00	£ 960.00
Subsistence	£ 200.00	£ 250.00	£ 253.00
Recruitment	£ 1,202.00		

	Sub Total	£	3,852.00	£	3,250.00	£	3,283.00
Total Staff Costs		£	154,804.00	£	147,179.00	£	152,952.00

Accommodation, Maintenance & Cleaning

Charterhouse rental & rates	£	7,533.00	£	7,780.00	£	7,936.00
Office Cleaning	£	1,125.00	£	1,200.00	£	1,212.00
Communication - IT & Phones	£	5,670.00	£	4,000.00	£	4,080.00
SCC Host fee	£	7,983.00	£	8,250.00	£	8,415.00
Insurance	£	400.00	£	400.00	£	408.00
Stationery	£	2,500.00	£	1,500.00	£	1,530.00
Postage	£	100.00	£	100.00	£	102.00
Sub Total	£	25,311.00	£	23,230.00	£	23,683.00

Activities & Publicity

Digital	£	750.00	£	1,200.00	£	1,212.00
Photocopying & Printing			£	900.00	£	909.00
Vehicle R&M	£	2,200.00	£	4,600.00	£	4,646.00
Vehicle fuel /tax/insurance costs	£	750.00	£	1,500.00	£	1,515.00
Volunteer costs	£	2,500.00	£	3,500.00	£	3,535.00
Tools & Equipment	£	450.00	£	650.00	£	657.00
Clothing & Uniform	£	300.00	£	600.00	£	606.00
Sub Total	£	6,950.00	£	12,950.00	£	13,080.00

Partnership running costs

Subscriptions (NAAONB)	£	2,550.00	£	2,600.00	£	2,626.00
Officer Meetings	£	1,300.00	£	1,300.00	£	1,313.00
Meeting Costs (external)	£	400.00	£	350.00	£	354.00

Supplies & Services	£	400.00	£	672.00	£	379.00
Management Plan review	£	4,000.00				
Sub Total	£	8,650.00	£	4,922.00	£	4,672.00
Total Other Core Costs	£	40,911.00	£	41,102.00	£	41,435.00
Core costs (Defra criteria)	£	195,715.00	£	188,281.00	£	194,387.00

Projects

Mendip Rocks	£	2,700.00	£	2,700.00	£	2,700.00
Young Rangers	£	2,500.00	£	3,000.00	£	5,000.00
Community Events	£	1,000.00	£	1,000.00	£	1,000.00
Top of the Gorge	£	2,500.00	£	2,500.00	£	2,500.00
Natural Flood Management			£	1,000.00		
Special Qualities Monitoring			£	2,000.00	£	1,000.00
Regional Trail Development			£	4,000.00		
Volunteer Development			£	3,000.00	£	4,000.00
Destination Development			£	1,500.00		
Community Access	£	6,000.00				
Other Projects	£	2,000.00				
Visitor Centre					£	6,000.00
Sub Total	£	16,700.00	£	20,700.00	£	22,200.00
Joint Health & Well Being project	£	8,600.00		-		-
Mendip Hills Fund	£	1,500.00	£	1,500.00	£	1,500.00
Mendip Hills Fund Donations	£	10,900.00	£	11,700.00	£	13,500.00
Total Projects	£	37,700.00	£	33,900.00	£	37,200.00

Total Expenditure	£	233,415.00	£	222,181.00	£	231,587.00
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INCOME

	£		£		£	
DEFRA	156,147.00		158,832.00		158,832.00	
Somerset County Council	£	16,150.00	£	16,150.00	£	16,150.00
Bath and North East Somerset Council	£	8,500.00	£	5,000.00	£	5,000.00
Sedgemoor District Council	£	8,001.00	£	8,001.00	£	8,001.00
Mendip District Council	£	8,017.00	£	8,017.00	£	8,017.00
North Somerset	£	3,000.00	£	3,000.00	£	3,000.00
Total LA contribution	£	43,668.00	£	40,168.00	£	40,168.00
Core Funding Total	£	199,815.00	£	199,000.00	£	199,000.00
LA contribution required to draw full Defra Grant down Defra Grant	£	39,036.75	£	39,708.00	£	39,708.00

Other Income

Young Rangers			£	1,500.00	£	1,500.00
SCC Public Health	£	8,600.00		-		-
Land Management			£	5,000.00	£	1,800.00
Staff	£	1,500.00	£	2,000.00	£	3,000.00
Volunteers	£	800.00	£	800.00	£	1,200.00
Grant applications	£	9,300.00	£	10,000.00	£	20,000.00
Sale of Merchandise			£	500.00	£	750.00
Mendip Rocks	£	2,500.00	£	2,500.00	£	2,500.00
Mendip Hills Fund Fundraising	£	10,900.00	£	11,700.00	£	13,500.00
Mendip Hills Fund Management Fee			£	1,300.00	£	1,500.00
Sub Total	£	33,600.00	£	35,300.00	£	45,750.00

Total Income	£	233,415.00	£	234,300.00	£	244,750.00
Budget Surplus/Deficit	£	-	£	12,119.00	£	13,163.00
Contingency B/fwd from previous year	£	65,078.00	£	65,078.00	£	77,197.00
Redundancy	£	8,000.00	£	8,000.00	£	8,000.00
Vehicle	£	16,000.00	£	16,000.00	£	16,000.00
Reserves	£	39,078.00	£	41,078.00	£	51,447.00
National Trust	£	2,000.00				

Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Committee		
Committee meeting date:	21 st November 2019	Paper: D
Title:	National Association for AONB (NAAONB) Update	
Presented by:	Jim Hardcastle, Mendip Hills AONB Unit	
To be noted.		

1.0 Glover Review

- 1.1 Staff from the NAAONB continue to work hard with Defra and the Glover Review panel to organise the consultation structure and then help the AONB family to formulate responses.
- 1.2 The review has focused on visiting these places and talking to people that visit, live or work in and care for them. Between them, the panel have already visited many National Parks and AONBs and plan to continue this into 2019. No formal visit to the Mendip Hills has been requested. We expect to publish the report making recommendations to government in Autumn 2019.
- 1.3 A recent call for 8 years worth of financial evidence has caused some concern coming at the end of the financial year but we will endeavour to supply this in a timely manner.
- 1.4 Clarification on a new funding agreement for AONBs with Defra will not be issued until after the next comprehensive spending review, expected in 2019.

2.0 Taking the Lead

- 2.1 The NAAONB were awarded money from the Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage fund to support the Future Landscapes Project. The project will explore how the AONB Family and its national charity can become more resilient and better prepared to address strategic challenges. For staff members there is a personal development programme for 40 people, Jim Hardcastle is one who will receive personality profiling, this has shown him to be predominantly 'People Focused' and 'Inspiration Driven'! Jim has attended 3 national meetings. Topic working groups have now been established from these staff members to address complex problems facing the AONBs. Jim sits on the Communications group.