

Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership

Annual Review 2021-22



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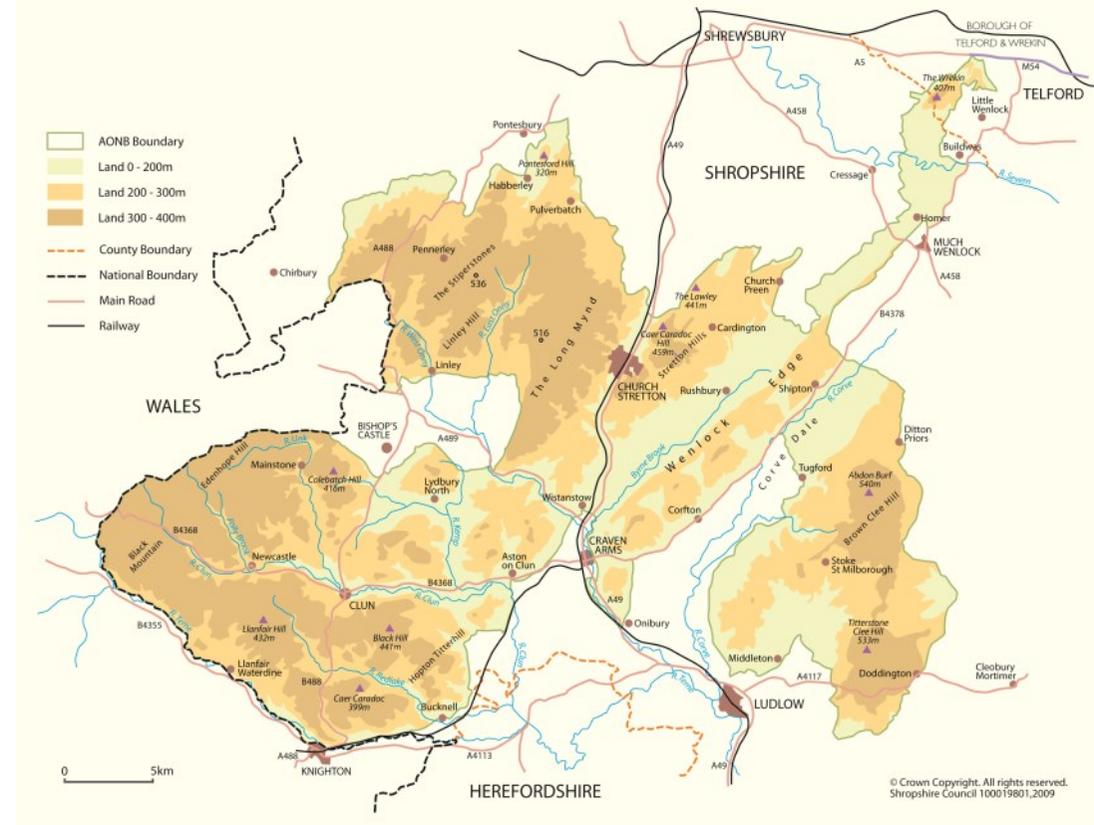
About the Shropshire Hills AONB

The Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers almost a quarter of Shropshire. The Long Mynd, the Wrekin, Stiperstones, Clee Hills and others are treasured by residents and visitors alike.

The Shropshire Hills have evolved through people and nature interacting over a long time, and the health of the land supports human life and ecosystems. Some activities enhance the landscape, while others can harm it.

Special places give us a sense of belonging, and contact with nature is good for our health. An outstanding landscape is good for our wellbeing and quality of life, provides a sense of identity, and attracts business investment. The landscape underpins the economy - food production needs soils and water, while our hills and woods help to manage flood risk.

To do all this, the Shropshire Hills AONB needs careful looking after by both land managers and those who use and enjoy it, paying particular attention to the qualities that make it special. This means sharing ideas and knowledge, and working together.



The AONB designation recognises this landscape as nationally important, but the vast majority of it is privately owned and managed.

With the designation there come legal duties on local authorities, and a Management Plan setting out policies and actions.

A broad Partnership structure supports all this and makes sure that local people and organisations are involved and have a sense of ownership. The Partnership encourages collaboration and mutual understanding among different interest groups.

A small team of now 10 staff support the work of the Partnership, both through taking action and delivering projects directly, and through influencing, advising, supporting and facilitating.

Alongside the Partnership and staff team is a charity, the Shropshire Hills AONB Trust, which raises and distributes money in support of conserving and enhancing the AONB.

The Annual Review gives an update on this range of activity over 2021-22.

Foreword by the AONB Partnership Chair

I am very pleased to welcome you to our 2021-2022 Annual Review which provides an overview of the wide variety of activities we have undertaken in the last twelve months and also sets out some of the broader context in which we operate.

Of particular note, in January 2022 the Government published its response to Julian Glover's Landscapes Review completed in 2019. This included launching a consultation process on a number of proposed actions including updating the legal purposes of designated landscapes and a strengthened role for protected landscape bodies and further details are included elsewhere in this report. We have had extensive positive discussions with Defra as members of the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) on how to bring together improvements to governance, resources, purposes and powers and combined with the proposed renaming of AONBs to 'National Landscapes' it is a significant step forward in ensuring our protected landscapes are fit for the future.

Land use policy continues to undergo significant change as the Agricultural Transition Plan is implemented, phasing out the area-based Basic Payment Scheme and introducing a range of new funding streams for sustainable farming, nature and landscape recovery and a number of productivity and innovation packages. The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme has been introduced to support standalone projects that benefit nature, climate, people and place. The three-year programme is available to farmers and land managers in protected landscapes throughout England and we have received £1.9m in total funding to support activities in the Shropshire Hills AONB. Funding priorities are set nationally and locally and I would encourage potential applicants to visit our website or contact the team to explore how FiPL may benefit them and the wider AONB area.

Our work on climate action continues at pace locally and nationally. Through the NAAONB we have been instrumental in developing a Statement of Commitment from Chairs for AONBs across the UK that places climate action at the centre of Partnership working through stimulating debate, generating engagement, empowering stakeholders and developing our own climate action plan to deliver tangible outcomes. Team members have led nationally on topic groups focused on developing nature-based solutions and sustainable tourism and transport. Agriculture, buildings and development and renewable energy comprise the other three thematic areas also examined to facilitate the production of a holistic action framework for use by AONB teams and partnerships. We remain closely engaged with local climate action groups and work with all AONB stakeholders to help identify future challenges and opportunities.

I should like to thank the AONB staff team for their ongoing hard work in delivering the Management Plan and programmes highlighted in this Review, whilst also providing a significant contribution to national projects on the future of protected landscapes and climate action.

The AONB Partnership is core in helping shape strategic direction across a broad range of issues, engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders and fostering relationships across our landscape and I should like to thank all Partnership members for their continued enthusiasm, help and support.

Alex Carson-Taylor
Chair of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership



Wider context for our work

Landscapes Review implementation

In January 2022 the Government published its response to the 2019 Landscapes Review led by Julian Glover, with a consultation seeking views on some of the major proposed actions:

- updating the legal purposes of designated landscapes with greater focus on nature recovery and health and wellbeing for all, and strengthening the duty of regard on public bodies
- a strengthened role for protected landscape bodies to support the shift in agriculture to new policies and land management schemes, and a greater influence in planning decisions as statutory consultees.

We supported the proposals, and have been closely involved in discussions with the both National Association for AONBs and Defra. Improvements to purposes, powers, resources and governance all need to be linked together, along with the proposed renaming as 'National Landscapes'.

The main area not addressed adequately by the government response is core resourcing, and there is a risk that the other changes taken forward will raise expectations even higher and will leave small AONB teams more thinly spread. The AONB Partnership response can be read [here](#).

"AONBs collectively are the most extensive of the designated landscapes family, covering 15% of the land area of England and set to increase in the near future with two new areas and extensions to two existing areas being considered. They are important areas for wildlife: holding 25% of England's SSSIs, 24% of England's most important wildlife habitats, 20% of England's total woodland cover and 30% of England's Ancient Woodlands. They include important areas of upland peatlands and lowland wetlands, which in addition to their biological richness have a critical role in carbon sequestration and water management."

From the NAAONB National Landscapes prospectus

Climate and Ecological Emergency

As world leaders gathered for the COP 26 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021, protected areas globally signed up to a commitment to act on climate change. This has been followed in 2022 by a Statement of Commitment from AONB Chairs.

We have continued to play a key role in the NAAONB collaboration programme on climate change, members of our team leading topic groups on Nature-based Solutions and on Sustainable Tourism and Transport. We gave presentations on these topics at the national staff webinar in March 2022, and supported a workshop at the national conference. Phil Holden helped to manage the contract with Cranfield University for a carbon audit of land and habitats in all English AONBs.

The collaborative programme also looked at Agriculture, Buildings and Development, and Renewable Energy. A toolkit for staff was developed and AONB position narratives for all the topics. The national collaboration programme continues, sharing good practice and ideas on how action on climate is being taken by AONB teams and partnerships across a range of topics, and encouraging upscaling of activity.

Local Climate groups

We have remained closely involved in Shropshire Climate Action Partnership especially through the Land and Biodiversity group, and with South Shropshire Climate Action. The South Shropshire Action Plan to reach Net Zero by 2030 was launched at an online conference in May 2021 and we facilitated one of the break-out sessions, focusing on nature, water, nature recovery networks and peatlands.



AONB Management Plan progress 2021-22



The Plan sets out actions for the area by many organisations and partners under three priorities. Some highlights of recent progress are shown here:

Land Management Supporting Landscape and Natural Beauty

- **Farming in Protected Landscapes** launched with priorities of climate, nature, people and place
- Tests/trials for **Environmental Land Management**
- **'Our Upland Commons'** project started delivery
- **Stepping Stones** project work with Upper Onny Farmers Group and community groups
- **Clun Unmuddying the Waters** project completed, **Clun Protected Sites Strategy** process launched
- **Water Environment Grant** projects completed
- AONB **Peatlands project** developed to bid stage
- **Ancient Woodlands project** secured funding
- CPRE Shropshire **Hedgerows project** delivering
- **Clee View farmers group** formed
- **'Opening the Ark'** project on churchyards launched by Caring for God's Acre
- **Offa's Dyke conservation project** under way

Priority next steps:

Councils to prepare **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** working with partners

Continue preparation for ELM roll-out

Wide scale improvements in **carbon storage in soils** including **peatlands** and in agriculture

Scale up activity on **expanding tree cover** in nature-friendly ways

Planning for a Sustainable Economy and Communities

- Valuable recognition of natural beauty and healthy environment in the new **Shropshire Plan**
- **South Shropshire Climate Action Plan** launched and new project staff employed
- **Zero Carbon Shropshire** active on many fronts
- **NAAONB Climate Change collaboration** programme developed toolkit and topic guidance
- Study of **renewable energy** potential in Shropshire completed
- **Shropshire Local Plan** with new AONB policy reached Examination stage
- **Shropshire Good Food Partnership** launched Charter

Priority next steps:

Complete **AONB Climate Action Plan** and support activities leading to net zero in a nature-positive way

More capacity in AONB team for **planning** work and continue to seek **statutory consultee** status

Better policy and guidance on **renewable energy**

Support for more **sustainable travel and transport**

Mainstreaming **broader economic goal** focused on meeting human needs within planetary boundaries

Develop work on **natural capital** to support new channels of investment

People Enjoying and Caring About the Landscape

- **Young Rangers** project and **John Muir Award** engaging young people with the landscape
- **Shropshire Destination Management Plan** prepared, with high profile for sustainability
- AONB and responsible tourism prominently promoted in **Shropshire Welcomes** campaign
- **Shropshire Hills Shuttles** bus service continuing despite economic challenges
- **AONB Conservation Fund** grants continue, and AONB Trust launches **Business Supporters Scheme**
- **'Fix the Fort'** project fully funded and initiated
- **Shropshire Hills Tourism Expo** successfully restored
- **Shropshire Love Nature Festival** created
- New **traffic management** scheme at the Wrekin
- Middle Marches Community Land Trust purchased part of **Norbury Hill**

Priority next steps:

Action to encourage **under-represented groups**

Maintain commitment to **sustainable tourism**

Enhanced investment in **walking and cycling**

Manage pressured honeypot sites and continue to encourage **dispersal of visitors**

Support voluntary groups caring for landscape

Land management supporting landscape & natural beauty

Farming in Protected Landscapes

In July 2021, Defra launched a 3 year funding programme for farmers and land managers in England's Protected Landscapes. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership was allocated £1.9 million over the 3 year period to support one-off farming projects that provide benefits to climate, nature, people and place.

To deliver the programme, we recruited Alison Jones as full-time Farming in Protected Landscapes Adviser to support applicants. Joy Howells manages the programme and Alison Kay leads on Admin, while other members of the team also assist with advising applicants, and developing applications.

A Shropshire Hills AONB Grant Awards Panel was set up involving local farmers and land managers, alongside representatives of organisations with relevant interests and experience. Decisions on projects under £5,000 are made by a senior AONB staff member.

Between July 2021 and March 2022, 15 projects delivered a range of activity, with total grant support of almost £102,000. 7 of these projects were completed by the end of March 2022.

We promoted the programme locally through:

- our website and social media
- our farmer database and other email networks
- two webinars in August
- press release and articles into parish newsletters
- attending a local agricultural show and other community events
- distributing flyers and posters locally

Summaries of approved projects can be read [here](#).



Between July 2021 – March 2022, 15 farming projects awarded grants delivered:

Climate

- 0.5 ha of woodland creation
- 82 ha of land being managed with regenerative farming techniques
- 1 project to improve the soil quality
- 3 projects helping to reduce flood risk
- 1 project giving land managers improved understanding and knowledge about what habitats and land uses can deliver for carbon storage & reduced carbon emissions

Nature

- 609 metres of hedgerows planted
- 969 metres of hedgerows restored
- 2 projects which support better management of Local Wildlife Sites
- 16.6 ha of habitat improvement for biodiversity
- 1 ha new habitat created
- 1 ha of improved habitat connectivity
- 815 metres of river protected/enhanced
- 43 hedgerow trees and 8 in-field trees planted
- 15 wildlife boxes installed

People & Place

- 1 project delivering educational benefits
- 2 projects to support greater public engagement



Land management supporting landscape & natural beauty

Our Upland Commons

This is a three year, £3 million project helping to secure the future of upland commons in Dartmoor, the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Shropshire Hills. It is led by the Foundation for Common Land and involves 25 partners. We co-chair the area group and sit on the national project board.

Area Project Officer, Renée Wallace, is delivering activity on three commons in the Shropshire Hills; the Long Mynd, Stiperstones and Clee Liberty.

Project activity up to the end of March 2022 has included:

- Whinchat nest finding and chick ringing; 40 nests found, 76 nest site habitats surveyed, 131 whinchats colour ringed and 416 hours of volunteer time given as part of this work
- Habitat and species surveys for butterflies on all three commons; 4 butterfly/moth events were held where a total of 29 volunteers helped survey for upland species and learned new identification skills
- Habitat and species surveys for birds on Long Mynd and Clee Liberty; >500 hours by 10 volunteers mapping several upland species.
- Purchase of equipment to assist commoners with management of the common and their stock
- Six events and training sessions connecting the public with the historic environment on commons, a total of 122 ppl participated
- 17 volunteers gave a total of 51 task days to repair the ramparts of an iron age hill fort on Clee Liberty
- Shepherding trial on the Stiperstones common



Stepping Stones

A partnership project led by the National Trust to restore habitat networks around the Long Mynd and Stiperstones.

In 2021-22, Cath Landles continued to support the Upper Onny Farmers Group (19 farmers) to develop and test Whole Farm Plans for Defra's Environmental Land Management schemes.

Funding was secured to incorporate the historic environment into Whole Farm Plans, and a grant from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund supported a series of events and demonstrations for the farmers to share knowledge and experiences, including:

- Hosting a visit by Hilary McGrady, Chief Exec of the National Trust to talk about the current challenges facing farmers in the project area.
- Hay meadow events at Brow Farm and Stitt Farm to showcase what three members of the Farmer Group are doing with Severn Trent Boost for Biodiversity funding.
- Habitat opportunity mapping workshop to identify the opportunities on each farm in the project area.
- Helping to incorporate the historic environment into 5 existing Whole Farm Plans, and produce 5 new Whole Farm Plans.



Land management supporting landscape & natural beauty

Improving the condition of the River Teme SSSI and River Clun Special Area of Conservation

The two year 'Springs of Rivers' Water Environment Grant project in partnership with Severn Rivers Trust ended in September 2021. The project engaged with 152 farmers and land managers in the Teme, Onny and Clun catchments. Measures were proposed in farm level Feasibility Studies to address any negative impacts identified, and the farmers are better placed to take up fundable activities in current and future farming schemes.



The project delivered:

- 152 Farm Water Environment Feasibility Studies
- 143 soil condition assessments
- aerated 24.94 hectares of compacted grassland
- 7 community events

Tree Health Pilot Grant

In response to increasing threats from tree pathogens, Defra launched the Tree Health Pilot Grant in March 2022. The Shropshire Hills is one of four protected landscapes where the pilot is being run and Mike Kelly helped to deliver this locally.

The grant provides additional support for landowners where the public might be at risk from disease affected trees and woodlands, targeting diseased Ash, Larch and Sweet Chestnut. Interest in and uptake of the grant has been slow despite local promotion through parish newsletters, press release, farmer/landowner mailing list and partnership networks.

Partnership projects in development:

Peatland Restoration in the Clun uplands. We were unsuccessful in our bid to Defra's Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme to support a Peatland Project Officer to consult with landowners about potential projects, and fund hydrological and ecological surveys necessary to deliver peatland restoration.

The project remains an aspiration and we are working with landowners, including Shropshire Wildlife Trust, to apply to Farming in Protected Landscapes to support a local peatland project.

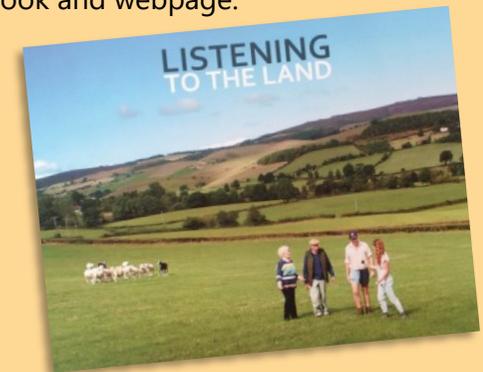
Ancient Woodland Restoration Project in development with Woodland Trust. This will engage woodland owners within and surrounding the AONB and develop the work necessary to get woods actively restored - including condition assessments, woodland management and restoration plans / costings.

The project's target is to get 100 hectares of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) ready for restoration works to commence.



Listening to the Land

This arts initiative is part of the National Trust led Stepping Stones project. It aimed to capture different people's connections and thoughts about the landscape. We supported by arranging people for the artist Faye Claridge to talk with, including landowners, commoners, farmers, small business owners, residents and visitors of all ages. This material, along with photographs, is being brought together in a Listening to the Land book and webpage.



Tree planting advice

Tree planting is an important tool in fighting climate change and can be beneficial for wildlife but it is essential this is done in appropriate ways. This is especially important in the Shropshire Hills with its diverse topology and geology. We have developed guidance about woodland types in the AONB and opportunities for new planting, click below:

[Shropshire Hills Tree Planting advice webpage](#)

Planning for a sustainable economy and communities

Planning and the AONB

The legal duty to have regard to the purposes of the AONB designation sits with the local authorities and this is the main regulatory 'teeth' of the designation. The AONB Partnership is a consultee in planning but is not resourced to comment in detail on a large number of planning applications.

We made a representation to Shropshire Council regarding the Examination of the Shropshire Draft Local Plan and implications of the 2021 revision to the National Planning Policy Framework. This included additional new wording regarding development within the 'setting' of an AONB, and supported the earlier representations we had made to include words on setting in the Local Plan policy on the AONB. Unfortunately no modification to the Plan was taken forward.

We looked in detail or commented on a number of planning applications, including:

- Agricultural building and access track above Upper Stitt Farm
- Tadymoor Farm milking parlour
- Upper Netchwood poultry sheds
- Brook Vessons replacement dwelling
- Wrekin Donkey Field car park
- Wild Rose Cottage, Gravelsbank
- Burnt House Farm solar farm, Greete (Landscape & Visual Impact Assessments viewpoints)



Comments are made by the AONB Partnership in relation to the special qualities of the AONB including landscape and visual aspects, historic environment, biodiversity and ecological implications, recreation and tourism, and tranquillity. We also draw on policies and material within the AONB Management Plan, which is a material consideration in planning.

We provided input to NAAONB discussions with Defra regarding the potential for AONB organisations to become statutory consultees in planning, and how this might work. This, along with improved funding, would make an important difference to our influence in planning.

Other strategic work

We provided input to strategies, plans and documents including:

- Shropshire Destination Management Plan
- Shropshire Welcomes Campaign
- Local Transport Plan Environment & Climate Change workshop
- University of Plymouth Landscape monitoring survey
- NAAONB National Landscapes rebrand workshop
- Renewable energy in Shropshire study webinar
- House of Lords Select Committee enquiry on Nature-Based Solutions (for NAAONB)
- AONB Management Plan guidance consultation

We also commented on:

- Felling licence applications
- Woodland design plans and tree planting proposals
- Ordinary Watercourse Consents
- Agricultural EIAs – ploughing of permanent grassland
- Casework on Vic Brittain motocross event (concluding that no action seemed possible)
- Airband new broadband provision proposals in the south-west part of the AONB

People enjoying and caring about the landscape

Young Rangers

This is a 3-year partnership project to help young people aged 12-16 to connect with and care for the Shropshire Hills landscape. Initially affected by Covid restrictions, the project has gathered momentum, and has now run over 100 activity sessions involving 130 young people.

It is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and employs two part-time officers. Joe Penfold as part of the AONB team runs Young Rangers in Clun/Bishop's Castle and Pontesbury, and Rich Morley from South Shropshire Youth Forum runs groups in the Clee Hill area and around Church Stretton/ Craven Arms.

Young Ranger activity sessions are delivered at a range of locations in and near to the AONB and include practical conservation, bushcraft, climbing and canoeing, wildlife surveys and woodland craft. We have also delivered enrichment activities for statemented pupils at a local secondary school. All sessions are designed so that participants can gain AQA certificates, John Muir Award, and/or Duke of Edinburgh Award if they wish.



The parallel 'Green Leaders' group is a conservation, campaigning and leadership forum for 17 to 21 year olds. This has proved challenging to get going in the rural area of the Shropshire Hills. We are working with Ludlow College of Further Education. Sessions with geography students about the Shropshire Hills, its management and issues will be followed by work with Environmental Science students on the climate emergency, nature recovery and environmental leadership. We hope this forum will provide a voice and representation for young people in the AONB Partnership's work.

Reaching out to Primary Schools

We continue to use the John Muir Award to help connect children and teachers in the Shropshire Hills landscape on their doorstep. During the Autumn Term 2021, we delivered 3 activity sessions to school children from the Blue Hills Federation, which included 'Farming Through Time' at Bury Ditches and conservation tasks at Clunton Coppice.

We also teamed up with CPRE Shropshire (The Countryside Charity) to design a Hedgerow Kitbag for schools as part of their local Hedgerow Project. The 'kitbag' includes resources to support activities to help children gain an understanding of the importance of hedgerows in our local landscape. They were distributed to 21 local schools in March 2022.



"I've loved learning about the pied flycatcher and finding some old nests and even some eggs in the nest boxes!"



"He isn't always confident with meeting new people – but he obviously felt very happy and relaxed. He loved learning the new practical skills and it does wonders for his self-confidence – a big thank you."

(parent comment)

"Because I feel I can do it. It's satisfying, and I can show others how to do it."



"I liked going into the mine, the history aspect, the being underground, it was amazing."



"I really enjoyed the practical work. It was drilling and stuff."



People enjoying and caring about the landscape

Shuttle Buses 2021

Over 2,000 passengers (1,200 fare payers and 804 concessionary tickets) travelled on board the Shuttle Buses in 2021. The service ran at weekends between July and September (27 day running days) and was operated by local bus company, Boulton's Coaches.

We trialed a shortened route, running the buses more frequently between visitor hot-spots of the Stiperstones National Nature Reserve, the Bog and Bridges. This helped to reduce some of the visitor pressure on the roads and car parks, making it easier to move around these locations without a car.

Funding came from Shropshire Council, Church Stretton Town Council and the National Trust. Donations are also kindly received through our Shuttle Supporters Scheme and other passengers to help fund the service.

Through the winter months we put out a tender to bus companies to run the service in 2022.

We supported local tourism groups to ensure the Shropshire Hills Sustainable Tourism Strategy underpins tourism activity in and around the AONB:

Visit Shropshire Hills

Visit Shropshire

Ludlow Destination Partnership

Much Wenlock tourism representatives

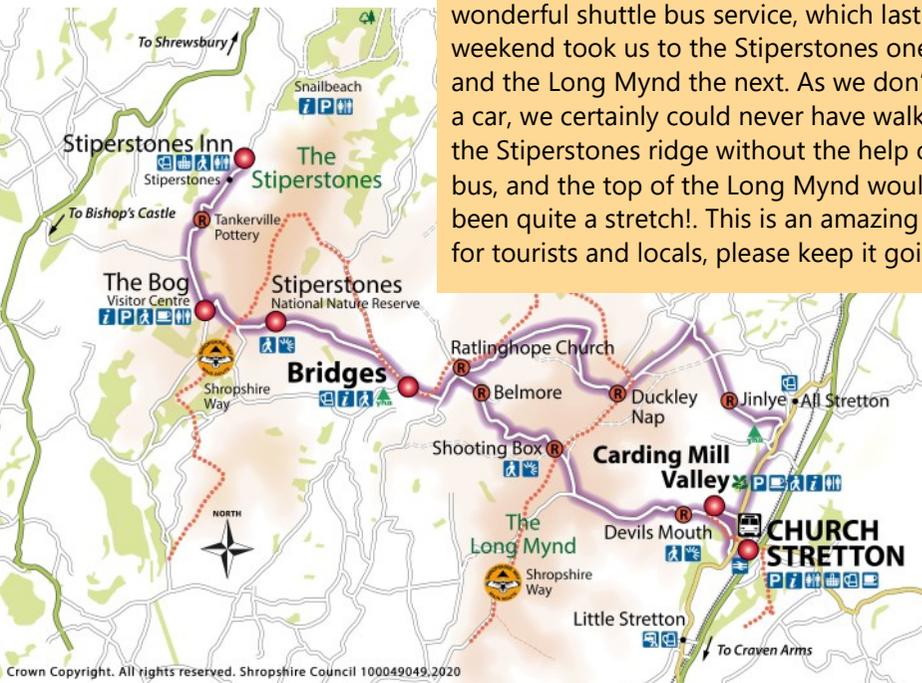
Bishop's Castle & Clun Tourism Group



The Shropshire Hills Hay Meadow Festival made a return in July 2021, at the Discovery Centre in Craven Arms. The event is a partnership effort and around 500 people attended.

We sent out four e-newsletters to our mailing list of over 3,000, and posted regularly onto our social media accounts; Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

"I just wanted to say thank you for the wonderful shuttle bus service, which last weekend took us to the Stiperstones one day and the Long Mynd the next. As we don't have a car, we certainly could never have walked on the Stiperstones ridge without the help of the bus, and the top of the Long Mynd would have been quite a stretch!. This is an amazing service for tourists and locals, please keep it going."



Tourism Business Expo

In March 2022, we held the Shropshire Hills Tourism Expo at the Discovery Centre in Craven Arms. Invitees included local accommodation providers, and other tourism-related businesses including visitor information. Around 120 people attended and were able to collect visitor leaflets, join a social media workshop and hear about the Shropshire Welcomes Campaign, a collaboration between Shropshire Council and Visit Shropshire, and funded by the council's COVID-19 recovery grant of £180,000.

Shropshire Welcomes Campaign

Nigel McDonald provided strong input into this county-wide promotional campaign as part of Covid economic recovery, with an emphasis on sustainable tourism messages.

"Post-pandemic, destinations like Shropshire offer much of what many consumers are now looking for – clean air, unspoilt landscapes, undiscovered towns and villages, simple pleasures, absorbing stories and traditions, local food with low food miles, wellbeing, outdoor animation and the social life that everyone has so missed."

Cllr Lezley Picton, Leader of Shropshire Council

The Shropshire Hills AONB Trust

As a charity, the AONB Trust works closely with the AONB Partnership to enhance the Shropshire Hills. Their Conservation Fund is a small grant pot to support practical initiatives that make a real difference to local habitats, landscapes and communities. Stephanie Hayes provides support to applicants.

8 projects received a Conservation Fund grant in 2021-22:

Lower Bush Farm CIC, grant £2,000 Creating a pollinator garden at a not-for-profit care farm involving adults with learning disabilities, teenagers with mental health difficulties and children and young people with a variety of special educational needs and disabilities.

Branching Out, Toni Pettitt, grant £1,780 Delivering affordable outdoor education and awareness-raising activities for 6-11 years olds relating to the Shropshire Hills, and its conservation.

Middle Marches Community Land Trust grant, £1,500 Supporting an ecological survey and report to guide management on Norbury Hill, an important conservation 'stepping stone' between the Long Mynd and Stiperstones.

Hopton Castle Preservation Trust, grant £816.89 Enabling the local community to replant trees in the grounds of the castle which were lost in recent storms and sow wildflowers to enhance biodiversity.

Shropshire Ornithological Society, grant £1,000 A joint project with the Stretton Community Wildlife Group to improve local Curlew breeding success by protecting nests and monitoring chicks to find out how they use the landscape.

Knighton Community Woodland Group, grant £1,293.75 Supporting the purchase of a charcoal retort to make and sell sustainably produced charcoal, using small timber and brash coppiced from local woodlands.

Bushmoor Verges Group, grant £627 Bringing together residents to restore local roadside verges to encourage wildflowers and create wildlife corridors which involved plant surveys, ground works and planting/seeding.

Lightfoot Enterprises, grant £2,000 Delivering outdoor activities to secondary school pupils at Bishop's Castle Community College to learn about biodiversity and its value in woodlands, wild places and the local environment.



"We would like to thank you for the support in making this project go ahead. The success was overwhelming, with the uptake of the sessions, the uptake of the volunteer opportunities, and the generosity of time offered by professionals and their resources, all exceeding our expectations. It was an incredibly enjoyable and satisfying project for the team to deliver, and we are very appreciative of the opportunity to execute such a successful project to our local community."

Antonia Pettit, Company Director, Branching Out



The Conservation Fund is made up with donations from the Millichope Foundation, Friends of the Shropshire Hills and Moonshine and Fuggles of Ironbridge.

Moonshine and Fuggles, an independent spirits and ales retail specialist, support local causes and approached the AONB Trust in 2021. A donation of £3 is made from every sale of their Wrekin Alpine Gin, which goes directly into the Conservation Fund.

Thank you to all for your much valued support and involvement.

Partnerships and wider networks

AONB Partnership meetings during the year discussed:

- Farming in Protected Landscapes programme
- Government response to the Glover Review
- Shropshire Hills AONB draft Nature Recovery Plan
- Links with Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board
- South Shropshire Climate Action Plan
- Peatlands proposed project work
- Induction briefing for new members
- Updates on partner activity
- Shropshire Hills Young Rangers and Green Leaders
- National Association for AONBs update and Historic Environment Statement
- AONB team work programme updates
- Shropshire Local Plan Examination
- Shropshire Good Food Charter
- Ash dieback position statement
- Shropshire draft Destination Management Plan 2022-25
- Shropshire Hills AONB Trust fundraising

The list of Partnership members is available [here](#).

Wider networks

We participated in the National Association for AONBs Lead Officers and Chairs meetings and in the on-line conference, as well as extensively in the Climate Change Collaboration programme.



We continue to belong to the Europarc Federation and its Atlantic Isles section and have taken part in some training and networking events.



Other partnerships and groups we were involved with included:

- Clun Catchment Partnership
- Water Environment Grant project steering group
- Shropshire Council Climate Officer group
- Rea Brook working group
- Clun Technical Steering Group
- River Severn basin catchment partnership
- Shropshire Climate Action Land & Biodiversity group
- Carbon accounting on land in Shropshire group
- Teme Partnership Steering Group
- Shropshire Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative Steering Group

Other projects we supported included:

- CPRE Shropshire Hedgerows project
- John Muir Award with Blue Hills Federation schools
- Middle Marches Community Land Trust Regenerative Farming conference
- WSP Clun Flood Alleviation project
- Clun Castle habitat management (English Heritage)
- Wrekin summit jubilee artwork project (TWC)
- Doddington Church lottery project
- Bishop's Castle town square project
- Bishop's Castle Walking Festival
- Shropshire 'Love Nature' Festival
- Shropshire Good Food Partnership
- Offa's Dyke project

A selection of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Key Performance Indicator returns for 2021-22:

- 18.4 ha of habitat conserved or enhanced for biodiversity
- 52 volunteers engaged
- £7,329 worth of volunteer time generated
- 3,170 people engaged with promotional publications
- 250 young people engaged in activities
- 101 farmers and land managers engaged
- 27 partnerships where the AONB Team is part of the project/ team/ steering group lead
- 27 partnerships as a supporting partner
- 8 strategies and plans appraised
- 38 land management schemes appraised



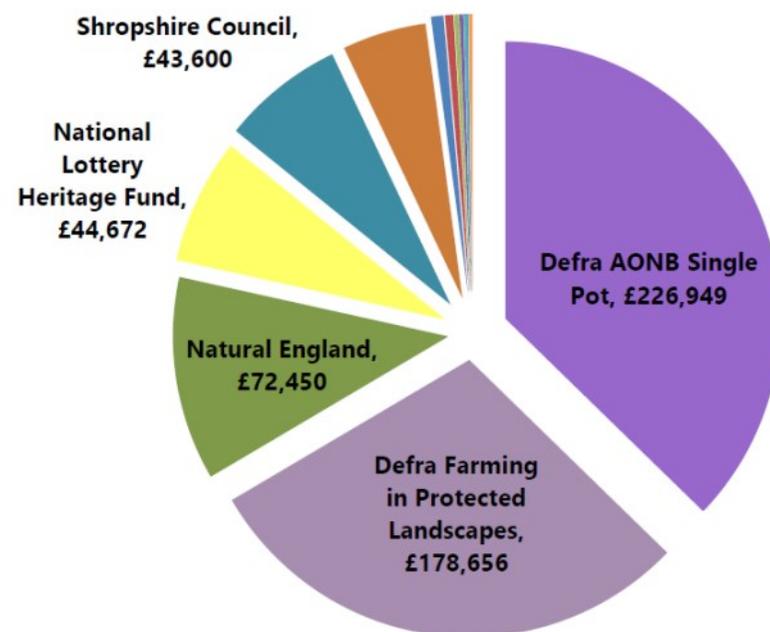
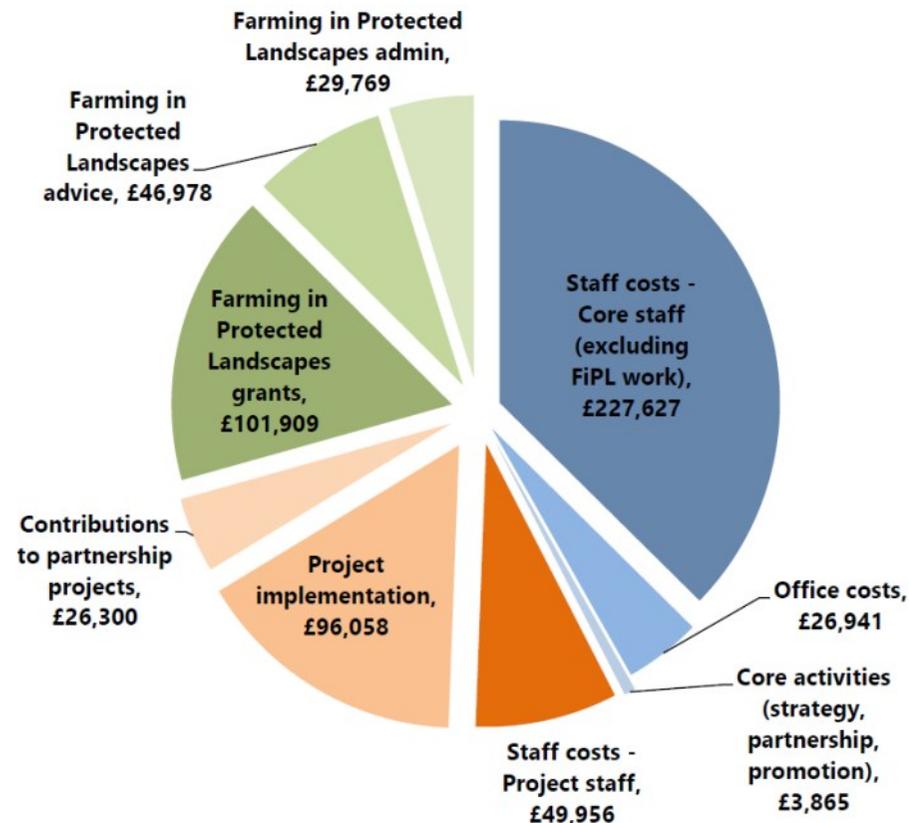
Financial Summary 2021-22

Expenditure

Staff costs - Core staff (excluding FiPL work)	£227,627
Office costs	£26,941
Core activities (strategy, partnership, promotion)	£3,865
Staff costs - Project staff	£49,956
Project implementation	£96,058
Contributions to partnership projects	£26,300
Farming in Protected Landscapes grants	£101,909
Farming in Protected Landscapes advice	£46,978
Farming in Protected Landscapes admin	£29,769
Total	£609,403

Income

Defra AONB Single Pot	£226,949
Defra Farming in Protected Landscapes	£178,656
Natural England	£72,450
National Lottery Heritage Fund	£44,672
Shropshire Council (net of support services charge)	£43,600
Earned income	£29,996
Shuttles ticket and concessions income	£4,380
Telford & Wrekin Council	£3,000
Church Stretton Town Council	£1,500
National Trust	£1,500
Brought forward	£1,450
Other donations	£1,250
Total	£609,403



**Shropshire Hills AONB
Partnership staff team at
April 2022**

Stephanie Hayes
Promotions Officer

Phil Holden
AONB Partnership Manager

Joy Howells
Funding & Programmes
Officer

Alison Jones
Farming in Protected
Landscapes Adviser

Alison Kay
Administrator

Mike Kelly
Natural Environment Officer

Cath Landles
Community & Landscapes
Officer

Nigel McDonald
Sustainable Tourism Officer

Joe Penfold
Young Rangers Officer

In spring 2021 we hosted
Dan Wren on a placement
from Chester University



The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership is hosted by Shropshire Council,
and funded in addition by Defra, Telford & Wrekin Council and project funders

We work to help conserve and enhance the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
01743 254740 / shropshirehillsaonb@shropshire.gov.uk / www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk