

# Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**Annual Review 2016/17** 

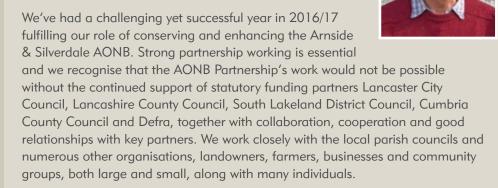




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### Chairman's Foreword



I'd like to pay particular tribute to the people who volunteer and give their very considerable time and energies to looking after this special place in a whole host of different ways, from practical conservation work such as cutting scrub and managing woodland to surveying for wildlife and running events and guided walks. A huge thank you to the many people who are part of looking after this outstanding landscape.

There are many changes and challenges that lie ahead as we enter uncertain times in terms of protecting the environment. Alongside our colleagues in the AONB Family we are working hard through the National Association for AONBs to influence the debate about the future.

We will also continue to work hard at a local level to care for and connect people to this outstanding landscape.

B. C. Medin

Cllr Brian Meakin

AONB Partnership Chairman



Arnside & Silverdale AONB is a unique landscape of national importance. It was designated in 1972 and covers an area of approximately 75 km<sup>2</sup>.

The AONB is recognised for its distinctive limestone landscape and extraordinary diversity of habitats, and of plants, birds and butterflies. The stunning limestone pavements, ancient woodlands, intimate orchards and meadows, and impressive coastline as well as an intriguing history, make this area one of England's finest landscapes and the special qualities of the AONB provide a wide range of benefits to society.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Recreation and sustainable social and economic development should also be encouraged in a way that supports the primary purpose.

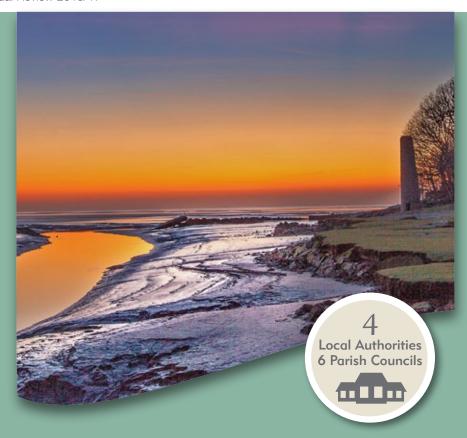
The four responsible local authorities – Cumbria County Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council – deliver their duties and obligations arising from Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in relation to the AONB through the operation and management of the AONB Partnership and the publishing, reviewing, monitoring and implementation of the statutory AONB Management Plan.

The Plan sets out a shared vision for the next 20 years. It describes the broad range of issues we face in this area and how we will manage them to conserve and enhance the area for future generations. The partnership structure enables communication and understanding between many different stakeholders and the delivery of shared sustainable solutions.









### Annual Review 2016/17

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the work of the AONB Team and to record our achievements in the 12 month period up to March 2017.

Dynamic and successful partnership working is critical to enable delivery of the AONB Management Plan and to create a strong and resilient AONB Partnership. The AONB Team plays an essential role in this process: providing management and leadership; making things happen on the ground, translating vision and national policy into local action; stimulating collaboration and delivering results; and providing value for money by accessing funding and resources.





### The Team has 5 members of staff

• AONB Manager: Lucy Barron

AONB Officer: Sue Hunter

AONB Countryside Officer: Tony Riden

AONB Communications & Funding Officers:
 Barbara Henneberry (0.6FTE) and Ruth Ainsworth (0.4FTE)



Left to right: Ruth Ainsworth, Lucy Barron, Sue Hunter, Barbara Henneberry, and Tony Riden



## Making a real difference

Throughout our work we are aiming for four key outcomes:

- An outstanding landscape rich in wildlife and cultural heritage
- A thriving sustainable economy and vibrant communities
- A strong connection between people and the landscape
- A dynamic and successful AONB Partnership













An outstanding landscape rich in wildlife and cultural heritage

Our priorities are to deliver projects to conserve and enhance the area's landscape and seascape, wildlife, geology and historic features; provide high quality advice and support to landowners and managers; and influence development management and other policies to enable positive outcomes for landscape quality.



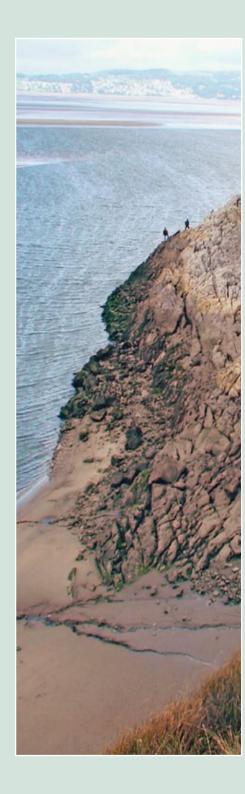


- extensive practical habitat management at 12 key sites within the AONB (in particular, Trowbarrow and Warton Crag Local Nature Reserves) to enhance, restore and connect priority habitats and benefit key priority species through the volunteer programme, contractor works and other mechanisms.
- restoring, conserving and enhancing a wide range of features that make a special contribution to the culture and historic heritage of the area through the volunteer programme e.g. rebuilding drystone walls, maintenance of wells and restoring part of an historic designed landscape.
- ongoing support and advice provided to landowners, encouraging conservation of the AONB's special qualities and uptake of the new Countryside Stewardship grant scheme. The Morecambe Bay Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Scheme now includes 18 AONB landowners and has delivered a comprehensive programme of training and events.
- carrying out further research and condition monitoring of Local Wildlife Sites – 64 sites surveyed.

- working closely with, and providing support and advice to, the Headlands to Headspace (HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme led by Morecambe Bay Partnership) natural heritage and cultural heritage officers to help deliver projects within the AONB, in particular the work undertaken on Warton Crag Iron Age hillfort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The aim is to understand what remains on the site and help to develop appropriate land management which balances the needs of the archaeology of the site with the natural heritage and environmental importance of the site.
- continuing to run a very successful volunteer programme offering over 50 opportunities to carry out practical conservation work throughout the AONB but in particular at the two Local Nature Reserves - Warton Crag and Trowbarrow. Both sites are managed for their special limestone habitats, plants and wildlife. An incredible 3338 hours of volunteer time was recorded.









 assessing 203 planning applications relevant to the AONB according to the planning protocol and submitting 70 formal responses providing landscape-related advice to the local authorities.





- working with Electricity North West on the Undergrounding for Visual Amenity programme – we were unable to progress our preferred option, but a second line at Storth has now been identified and is currently being assessed by ENW.
- providing formal responses to consultations to ensure that the national importance of the AONB landscape is recognised and that policies to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the area are included in new and reviewed plans and strategies relevant to the area e.g. North West Coast Connections; South Lakeland Draft Development Management Policies; AONB DPD Draft Plan Document; AONB DPD Sustainability Appraisal Report; Lancaster City Council Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and Lancaster City Council Development Management DPD.
- gathering information to help us understand the wide range of benefits provided to society by the special landscape of the AONB through an online survey Mapping Valued Places and a Natural Capital and Resilient Landscape workshop.
- supporting Lancaster City Council with the preparation of a list of local heritage assets covering the parishes of Silverdale, Warton, Yealand Conyers and Yealand Redmayne.



### Working for wildlife on Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve

Countryside Stewardship (CS) provides financial incentives for land managers to look after their environment through activities such as:

- conserving and restoring wildlife habitats
- flood risk management
- woodland creation and management
- reducing widespread water pollution from agriculture
- keeping the character of the countryside
- preserving features important to the history of the rural landscape
- encouraging educational access

The Higher Tier element of Countryside Stewardship covers the most environmentally significant sites, commons and woodlands and this is the funding which has been secured for Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve, owned by Lancaster City Council but managed on their behalf by the AONB Team.

The site contains calcareous grassland, limestone pavement, ash woodland and is home to some of our rarest butterflies – the High Brown and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. Led by the AONB Countryside Officer, the AONB volunteers carry out practical conservation management tasks in accordance with the scheme, such as scrub-cutting to maintain the important limestone grassland habitat and bracken control that will benefit the target butterfly species. Some of the more demanding woodland management work to improve the biodiversity of the site is carried out by local contractors. The site is regularly used by school groups and local groups interested in natural history.







educational

visits hosted at

## A Development Plan Document for Arnside & Silverdale AONB

Over the last two years, the AONB Team has been working closely with South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council on the preparation of a dedicated Development Plan Document (DPD) for the whole of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB. The DPD will form part of both authorities' Local Plans. It will properly reflect the purposes of AONB designation and fulfil the obligations relating to AONBs as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will identify sites for new housing and employment to meet local needs and will set out planning policies to ensure that development reflects the AONB designation.

Following on from a Housing Needs Survey in 2014 and consultation on the Issues & Options and suggested sites in 2015/16, the Councils prepared a Draft Plan.

Consultation on the Draft Plan set out to involve as many local people as possible. Officers from the two Councils, assisted by colleagues from the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Team, held six drop-in consultation events, attended by around 250 people. 114 responses were received by the end of the consultation. The majority of responses received were made by members of the community, organisations, interest groups, representatives of the development industry and parish councils.

The Plan is due to be published and submitted to the Secretary of State and an independent inspector in the autumn of 2017. Upon publication, there will be a further opportunity to make representations. After the Inspector's report is received, the Councils will jointly consider adopting the plan, subject to any recommended changes and we expect that the Arnside & Silverdale AONB DPD will be completed ("adopted") by March 2018.







### Natural capital and resilient landscapes

The value of nature to people has long been recognised and the special qualities of Arnside & Silverdale AONB provide a wide range of benefits to society. These benefits are often described as 'ecosystem services'.

Ecosystem services may be sub-divided and categorised as:

- · Provisioning services provided by natural resources such as food, water and fuel
- Regulating services provided by natural systems including climate regulation, water purification and flood protection
- Cultural services including recreation, cultural heritage, spiritual and aesthetic values, inspiration and education
- Supporting services providing the basic infrastructure of life including soil
  formation, the cycling of water and nutrients, fixation of carbon by plants and the
  ecosystems themselves. All other ecosystem services ultimately depend on
  these supporting services.

Some products like food and timber have a known financial value, but in other cases, we are only just beginning to fully understand the benefits and value that are provided, such as the role of bees in pollinating crops or the storage of carbon in woodland and wetlands.

Understanding the wide range of benefits provided to society by the special landscape of the AONB and their value both in monetary and non-monetary terms can help us design, plan and prioritise appropriate management activity to ensure that our natural resources and systems are more effectively recognised, supported and valued in the future.

To help better understand the natural capital of the AONB and the benefits it provides to people through its cultural ecosystem services, with funding from Natural England, ADAS were commissioned in Autumn 2016 to pilot an approach to mapping valued landscapes across the AONB. People who live or work in the AONB, or enjoy visiting it were asked to map the places that they valued, and to identify what they valued them for. 95 participants took part in the pilot, with 399 pins being placed at different locations around the AONB. When identifying a valued location, participants were asked to select why they thought a place was important to them using 7 options – recreation, local history, learning, tranquillity, views, beauty and wildlife. This study has provided invaluable information about why people value the area and what 'cultural' public benefits it provides.

A workshop for key partners was also held in March to look at the ecosystems services that the natural capital of the AONB provides; to explore the linkages between habitats and landscape character and the key cultural ecosystem services; to identify key issues/drivers of change affecting provision of the key ecosystem services; and to identify the current and future land management actions that could secure and enhance the provision of these ecosystem services, delivering multiple benefits and creating a resilient landscape.













# A thriving sustainable economy and vibrant communities

Our priorities are to manage the area as a sustainable tourism destination where visitors can have a high quality experience of nature, culture and quiet recreation; support sustainable rural growth and livelihoods by working with local services and businesses, and by providing rural skills training; and foster community vibrancy linked to the AONB's strong sense of place.



- in partnership with local wildlife organisations and businesses, organising a "Taste of the Landscape" festival a series of over 25 different events held to celebrate the fantastic range of locally made produce and help support the local economy.
- continuing to support the Silverdale District Woodbank a community group that
  is carrying out woodland management, producing woodfuel and helping people
  in fuel poverty.
- supporting the traditional rural skills of hedgelaying and drystone walling by organising and hosting two training events and a grand prix competition in which 18 competitors took part.
- working jointly with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust to offer an AONB Grants Fund to support local projects that directly conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area, facilitate quiet enjoyment and/or connect people to the landscape. Four projects have been supported this year.



- with the National Trust, co-hosting a Seasonal Ranger post, enabling a young person to gain valuable experience in countryside management in the area.
- providing advice and support to 'B4YS' a group working to bring hyperfast broadband to the Yealands, Silverdale and Storth.
- working closely with the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company and supporting their Community Renewables Project which is now looking to help schools improve their energy efficiency by installing LED lighting.
- cooperating with partner organisations around Morecambe Bay to begin
  implementation of a Morecambe Bay destination brand and supporting the creation
  of a Coastal Communities Team and preparation of a Morecambe Bay economic plan.









## Grants for local projects

The Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Grants Fund is run by Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership and the Arnside/ Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, working together.

Grants of up to £2500 are available to enable projects which conserve and enhance the AONB or connect people with the landscape. A total of £5000 was available in 2016/17, £2500 contributed by the Arnside/Silverdale Landscape Trust and £2500 by Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership.

Four grants were awarded in 2016/17.

The first recipient was Jane Lambert of Bottoms Farm in Silverdale, for renovation of a 160 year-old field barn known as The Row Hulls, which stands in the field between The Row and Park Road in Silverdale. 70% of all English Field Barns have now disappeared and are very unusual in this area. This was a good opportunity to conserve an historical building and maintain the character of the local settlement and sense of history. Renovation included new guttering, repairs to the roof and windows and a tie to strengthen the wall of the barn. £790 was granted and work was completed at the end of August.









The second recipient was the Westmorland Red Squirrel Society (WRSS) who received £1000 to support the restoration of a red squirrel population in Arnside & Silverdale AONB. Red squirrels are now an endangered species but at one time they could be found all over the UK. The WRSS aims to ensure red squirrels remain an intrinsic and valued part of our landscape, enhancing biodiversity and sustaining our cultural heritage.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT) was also successful in their bid for funding towards a project targeting two key butterfly species – the High Brown and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. New habitat will be created and work will also be done to link areas of existing habitat on Warton Craq, one of the key sites within the Morecambe Bay Limestones complex. The network of new rides will allow movement between areas of high quality habitat both within the LWT reserve and on the adjoining nature reserves. The Trust received £1494.90

£1500 was awarded to Arnside Sailing Club towards the purchase of a new children's sailing dinghy to enable more children to take part in the Club's very successful Cadet programme. Sailing is very much part of the area's cultural heritage with a history of boat building and Victorian regattas and this project will provide a series of opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about and celebrate the AONB's special qualities in a sustainable way.



## A strong connection between people and the landscape

Our priorities are to produce high quality information and about and take action to conserve the AONB's special qualities; recreation for a diverse range of people.



- working hard on implementing our Communications Strategy, delivering our key messages whenever possible. Continually aiming to reach new audiences using various media, we now have over 2000 followers on Twitter. post regular updates on Facebook and have over 1000 subscribers to our e-newsletters
- regularly updating and adding new content to the AONB website, our principal communications tool.
- running a successful AONB Festival 'A Taste of the Landscape' celebrating the diversity of local food, drink and other products, such as timber, fuel and coppice products, created in the AONB. More than 25 events were held over a 2 week period in May/June.
- working with Arnside Parish Council on the design and production of new information panels for the village which will enhance the visitor experience to the area.
- supporting the work of the Arnside/ Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charity with over 1000 members, which runs a very popular annual

- events programme including lectures, guided walks and study days.
- receiving excellent media coverage for AONB events and news with a series of articles appearing in the local papers and interviews given on local radio stations.
- continuing to run a very successful Volunteer Programme, providing numerous opportunities to engage in practical conservation management tasks, monitoring, administration and event support. Training courses for the volunteers in drystone walling, hedgelaying and First Aid have also taken place.
- providing a range of environmental education opportunities - hosting 22 educational visits at Warton Craa Local Nature Reserve, offering a work placement via Carnforth High School, and giving 5 talks to local and national groups about the area and our work.
- supporting Natural England with delivery of the section of the England Coast Path which will pass through the AONB.





## The AONB Festival – A Taste of the Landscape

The AONB Partnership is keen to share with others what makes this place so special and each year runs a festival of events celebrating a particular aspect of the landscape. For the second year, we celebrated the diversity of local food, drink and other products inspired by, and created in, this stunning area.

Through a series of events, local residents and visitors were encouraged to try their hand at woodland crafts; taste our local bread and honey; find out about our ancient orchards; identify and taste wild herbs and other seasonal edibles; visit a working farm; and just to explore and enjoy the area, finishing off with a drink and a piece of cake in one of the AONB's fabulous cafes or even sampling a pint of our special 'High Brown Fritillary' locally-brewed bitter.





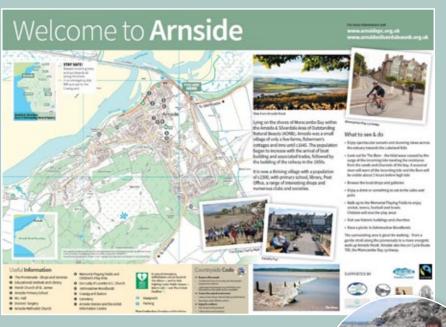
### Welcome to Arnside

Arnside is a popular Victorian seaside resort but currently has very little information for visitors. Working with Arnside Parish Council, the AONB Team commissioned a designer to produce an interpretation panel which would reflect the Area's special qualities and would add to the public's enjoyment of the village and the surrounding area.

The Arnside panel is now ready for installation at four key locations, including Arnside Station.

The design is a 'transferable template' so that the project can easily be extended to other villages in the AONB and we are now pleased to be working with Beetham Parish Council on their information panel.

We are grateful to the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company and local Councillors Ian Stewart and Pete McSweeney for their financial support for this project.







There are many ways in which the local community can get involved with conserving and enhancing the AONB.

The AONB team has been co-ordinating a weekly volunteer programme for many years and the scale and ambition of the work carried out is remarkable. Each year our volunteers donate their time and skills to help conserve and enhance this special landscape. It is a great way to make friends, learn new skills and get fit while making a real difference on the ground.

The AONB team organises and leads a programme of weekly practical tasks and there are also many other opportunities for involvement from machinery repairs to butterfly surveys; helping at events to office administration; putting up nestboxes to leaflet distribution. We have over 70 registered volunteers.

Through the practical task programme this year, we have

- carried out woodland management at 7 sites
- undertaken grassland management at 7 sites
- installed 2 new kissing gates
- improved access to Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserve to enable the use of Trampers (all terrain mobility scooters) on site
- restored heritage features eg: 50 metres of drystone wall
- Installed 4 new fingerposts to help visitors navigate the intricate network of footpaths across the intimate landscape of the AONB
- collected and recycled where possible 75 bin bags of litter from around the lanes of the AONB.



A dynamic and successful **AONB** Partnership

Our priorities are to develop strong and resilient partnerships that enable effective delivery and monitoring of the Management Plan; and achieve excellence in the governance and management of the AONB Partnership, the AONB Team and their resources.



- continuing to manage strong internal partnerships such as the AONB Executive Committee and Technical Officers Group along with smaller working groups which help with certain areas of our work such as Planning.
- working as a key partner in the Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership (LNP), aiming to create a bright future for the area by significantly improving the quality of the natural environment and connecting up nature. businesses and communities. The LNP is an influential aroup of key organisations working together in a collaborative way. For more information, visit www.morecambebaynature.org.uk
- · being an active member of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB). As one of the AONB family of 46 AONBs in Britain, we value the work and support of the NAAONB and the associated opportunities for networking, sharing best practice, learning and inspiring. We actively supported the national initiatives of 'Outstanding Week' and #outstandinghour; attended Lead Officers meetings and the Landscapes for Life Conference; and were delighted that two of our supporters received 'Landscapes for Life' awards in recognition of their outstanding

- service to AONBs. The AONB Manager is now a co-opted Trustee on the NAAONB Board.
- in partnership with the National Trust, being able to offer a fixed term contract for a Seasonal Ranger, working 4 days a week directly with the National Trust team based in Silverdale and 1 day a week working with the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Team.
- supporting the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charitable body which supports the purposes of the AONB.
- benefiting from the continued support of our four local authorities - South Lakeland District Council, Lancaster City Council, Cumbria County Council and Lancashire County Council - as key members of the AONB Partnership, including financial contributions which secure monies from Defra, enabling our work to take place.
- organising and hosting a very successful conference attended by over 70 delegates in February, entitled "Our Local Heritage", welcoming Caron Newman of Newcastle University as our keynote speaker, along with local resident Jane Lambert and Megan Atkinson of Lancaster City Council. The Bittern Award was presented to Rob Petley-Jones of Natural England.



### The AONB Annual Conference

Once again the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Conference was fully booked well in advance. It was fantastic to see old friends and new faces enjoying finding out more about Our Local Heritage. The keynote speaker, Caron Newman of Newcastle University, gave a fascinating talk on how the landscape of our area has been shaped since medieval times. Jane Lambert of Bottoms Farm in Silverdale talked about her own experience of conserving a heritage barn with the help of a grant from the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Grants Fund. Megan Atkinson of Lancaster City Council gave us useful information about protecting local heritage assets through the planning system.

Feedback from the attendees was very positive, one attendee wrote: 'A HUGE thank you to all who helped organise the event; it is SO uplifting to see the work that is done, to protect and enhance the area. The enthusiasm with which the event is held is a joy! Always good speakers, interesting local knowledge... Made it a very Enjoyable Day.'



### The Bittern award

Each year at our Conference we present the Bittern Award to a group, organisation or individual who has made an 'outstanding contribution' to the Arnside & Silverdale AONB. The AONB Partnership was delighted to announce that this year's award would go to Rob Petley-Jones of Natural England.

Rob has managed Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve since 1992 and will be retiring in July 2017. In that time, he has developed, then shared his considerable habitat expertise, particularly around coppice management and butterfly conservation, to ensure that this special limestone landscape is managed in a way that conserves its iconic habitats and species.

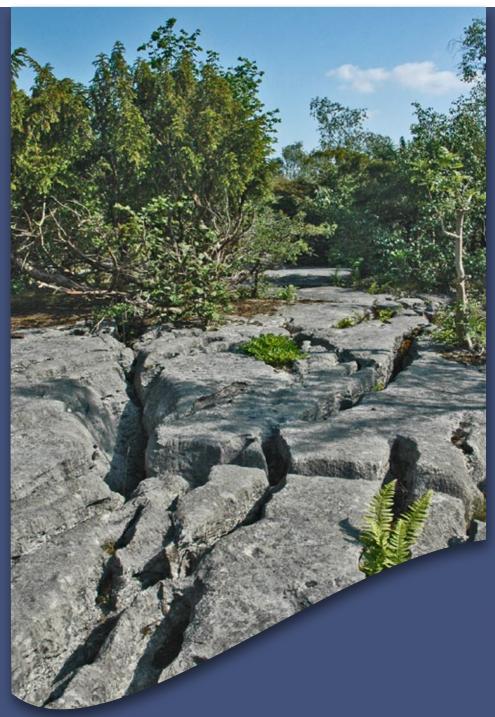
Working with Kew Gardens, Rob has been instrumental in the success of the species recovery programme for the Lady's-slipper Orchid including enabling the public to see and experience these rare and beautiful flowers. He has also developed a successful volunteer programme which has enabled the local community to be involved with looking after and monitoring the reserve.











# Thank you and looking forward



Many passionate and committed people work together to conserve and enhance this area throughout the year. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this ongoing success. The area simply would not be the same without this collective action and partnership working.

This year we have seen a number of significant projects move forward including the production of the draft AONB Development Plan Document, scoping the route for the England Coast Path, delivering new Countryside Stewardship agreements on key sites and continuing research into Warton Crag hill fort and Jenny Brown's point chimney through the Headlands to Headspace Heritage Lottery Fund programme.

However, we are working in a time of great challenge and potential change and risk to our environment. It is more important than ever that we cooperate and work together at all levels to ensure conservation and sustainable management of our special places.

Looking ahead our priorities remain to foster collaboration, secure protection and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB and to encourage people to enjoy and connect with the area. We will be reviewing the AONB Management Plan over the next 18 months and have ambitious plans to develop and deliver further project work across the area.

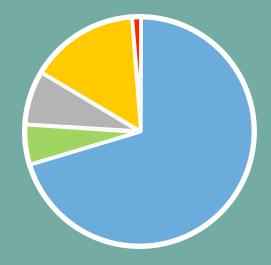
I look forward to working with you to address the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead.

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Lucy Barron AONB Manager

## Financial Summary

Arnside & Silverdale AONB Expenditure 2016/17



Staff costs Ocore accommodation costs Management Plan delivery

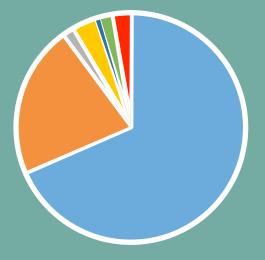
Core Partnership running costs Ocontribution to reserve

Staff costs	£139,242
Core accommodation costs	£11,064
Management Plan Delivery	£14,879
Core partnership running costs	£30,045
Contribution to reserve	£2,500

Total £197,730

**Public spending** on AONBs is less than 20p per person per year

### Arnside & Silverdale AONB Income 2016/17



Local Authorities

Parish Councils

Contracting & donations

Other grants

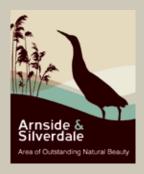
Feed-in tariff

Host Authority in-kind contribution

Defra £13	35,490
Local Authorities £4	2,212
Parish Councils £	23,175
Contracting income and donations	26,897
Feed-in tariff	£607
Other grants	24,000
Host Authority in kind contribution	25,349

Total £197,730

Balance as at 31st March 2017 £17,557



Arnside & Silverdale AONB Old Station Building, Arnside, Carnforth LA5 0HG

T: 01524 761034

**E:** info@arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk

**Photos by:** Ella Riden, Art-image, Adam Donaldson, John Reaney, David Morris, David Toft, AONB-images, Adrian Almond, Adam Donaldson, Paul Glading, Barry Stacey, Rob Petley-Jones, Phillip Tomkinson, Cliff Raby LDBWS, Steve Birtwhistle, Ben Lenton, Mike Warren, Tim Hunter, Charlie Hedley, Cheryl Ashton, Sam Ansell, SLDC.

Design: Capra Design.

