

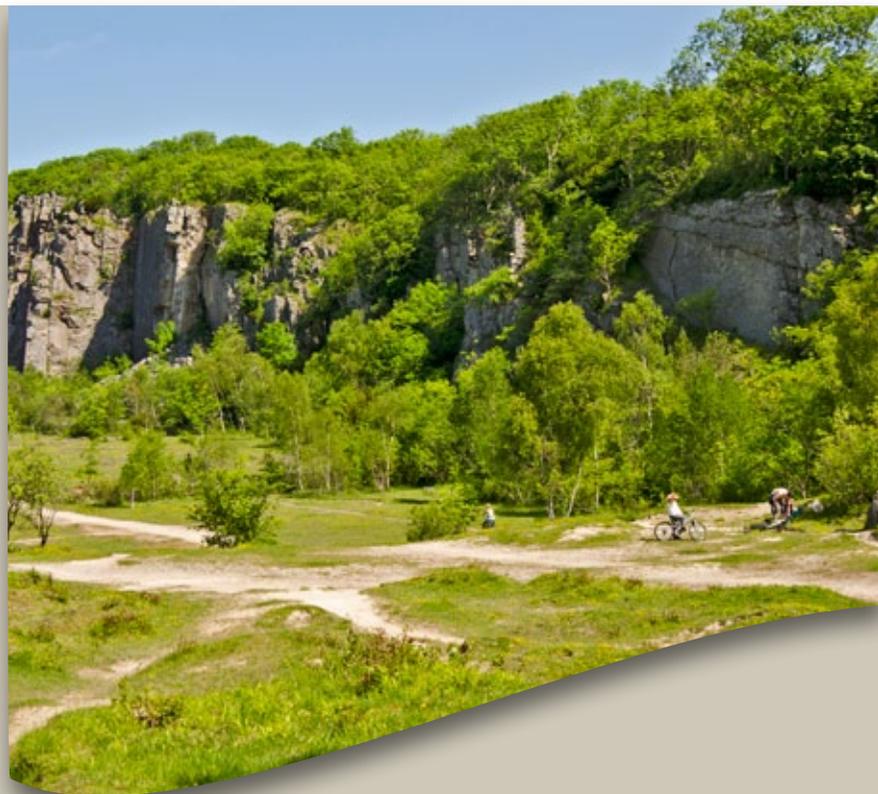


Arnside & Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Annual Review 2015/16

An extraordinary place



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Chairman's Foreword



We have had another busy and successful year in 2015/16 with many achievements large and small, all helping to enhance the AONB and encourage people to get involved with looking after this special place.

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a truly wonderful place, which genuinely inspires people and we are very lucky to have such a large number of people who are passionate about the area and want to work together to protect it.

Volunteers make a huge contribution. Wherever you go in the area, it isn't long before you come across a site that has been managed, a feature restored or a footpath sign installed, all by volunteers.

Partnership working is vital. We are very grateful for the continued financial support of statutory partners Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and Defra together with our key partners the local parish councils and numerous other organisations, landowners, farmers, businesses and community groups, both large and small.

A real highlight of this year for me was the AONB Conference where Mark Sears from the Wild Network inspired us to encourage children to play outdoors and connect with nature. The AONB Partnership is planning a range of events in 2017 to entice families outside to enjoy and discover the AONB and improve the health and wellbeing of the next generation.

Cllr Brian Meakin
AONB Partnership Chairman



54%
of the AONB is covered by national Site of Special Scientific (SSSI) designations

Introduction

Arnside & Silverdale AONB is a unique landscape of national importance. It was designated in 1972 and covers an area of approximately 75 km².

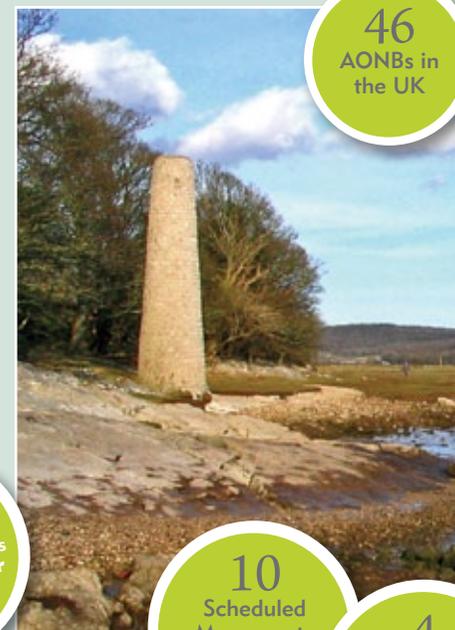
Recognised as one of England's finest landscapes, the AONB is especially celebrated for its wealth of plants, birds and butterflies. The area boasts an extraordinary range of diverse habitats, and the mosaic of stunning limestone pavements, low limestone hills, ancient woodlands, mosses, orchards and meadows, along with an impressive coastal setting affording magnificent views over Morecambe Bay, make this a truly special place.

The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

The Arnside & Silverdale AONB Management Plan 2014-19 is a statutory document which 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. A 5 year programme of actions to help guide the work of the AONB partner organisations is set out in the Delivery Plan.



Internationally significant numbers of **Oystercatcher** in the autumn



46
AONBs in the UK

10
Scheduled Monuments

4
Local Authorities
6 Parish Councils



33%
of the AONB is under woodland cover



OVER 110km
of Public Rights of Way



The Team is made up of four FTE members of staff

- AONB Manager: Lucy Barron
- AONB Officer: Sue Hunter
- AONB Countryside Officer: Tony Riden
- AONB Communications & Funding Officer: Barbara Henneberry (0.6FTE) and Ruth Ainsworth (0.4FTE)



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

Annual Review 2015/16

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of our work and to record our achievements in the 12 month period up to March 2016.

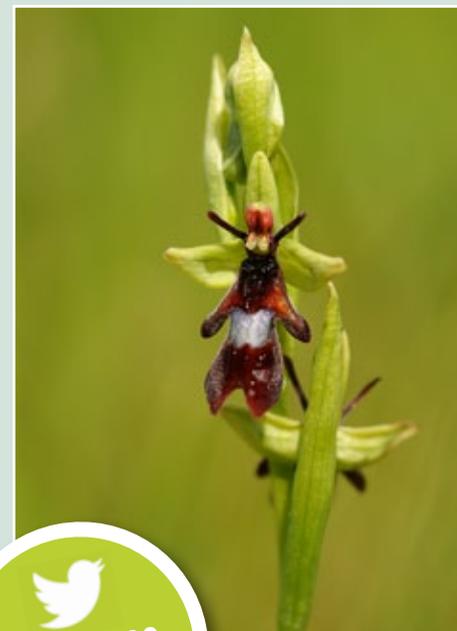
Dynamic and successful partnership working is critical to enable delivery of the AONB Management Plan and to create a strong and resilient AONB Partnership. The AONB Team plays an essential role in this process: providing management and leadership; making things happen on the ground, translating vision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



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, 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.



The Pepperpot

In 2015/16 our achievements included:

- extensive practical habitat management at 11 key sites within the AONB (in particular, Trowbarrow & 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.
- carrying out a series of small-scale conservation/restoration projects that conserve and enhance features that make a special contribution to the culture and historic heritage of the area through the volunteer programme eg: rebuilding drystone walls, maintenance of wells and working on an historic designed landscape.
- completing the research project on three Historic Designed Landscapes in the AONB.
- ongoing support and advice provided to 24 landowners, encouraging conservation of the AONB's special qualities and uptake of the new Countryside Stewardship grant scheme.
- carrying out further research and condition monitoring of Local Wildlife Sites.
- 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.
- 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. These tasks alone represented an incredible 3,200 hours of volunteer effort.
- working closely with South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council on a Joint Development Plan Document for the AONB - a first of its kind in the country. The plan will be extremely important as it will identify sites for new housing and employment development to meet local needs and also set out planning policies to ensure that any development is in keeping with the AONB designation. Consultation events held in each of the 6 parishes.
- assessing 155 planning applications relevant to the AONB according to the planning protocol and submitting 48 formal responses.
- working with Electricity North West on the Undergrounding for Visual Amenity programme – 3 possible undergrounding projects identified and provisional assessments completed.
- 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. Eg the North West River Basin Management Plan, the Planning & Housing Bill, the North West Coast Connections EIA Scoping Report, Cumbria Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Marine Management Organisation Plan review.

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Historic Designed Landscapes research project

Following on from the research into the historic designed landscapes of the Area carried out by Ed Bennis, a landscape architect and researcher, and Ruth Thurnhill, in 2014, the AONB Partnership commissioned a more detailed study of 3 of the most important sites designed by Lancastrian Thomas Mawson and Ralph Hancock, perhaps best known for designing the roof gardens at the Rockefeller Center in New York.

The final report, which will inform the conservation, restoration, enhancement and management of these features, is available for use by partners, stakeholders and communities and is available to download from our website.

Restoration work has already started at one of the sites.



A Development Plan Document for Arnside & Silverdale AONB

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, the Councils invited members of the public to put forward proposals for any sites in the AONB they believed to be suitable for housing, affordable housing, employment, community use or other development, or for locally important open space. Altogether 133 site suggestions were put forward. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the DPD was prepared by Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd to help the Councils assess whether, and to what extent, emerging policies and proposals within the DPD will impact upon environmental, social and economic conditions in the AONB area.

Consultation events on the Issues that the DPD will need to address and the Options for doing so, were held in the six main communities in the AONB in December. The 2 Councils have now begun reviewing information collected, including landscape, biological and viability information on the potential development sites and a Draft Plan is due to be prepared and published for public consultation in the autumn of 2016.





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 2015/16 our achievements included:

- developing a new section of the website to raise the profile of the fantastic range of locally made produce and help support the local economy – 8 producer profiles completed.
- continuing to support the Silverdale and District Woodbank – a community group that is carrying out woodland management, producing woodfuel and helping people in fuel poverty.
- continuing to work closely with the Forestry Commission and local coppice workers to develop a sustainable woodland management initiative.
- supporting the traditional rural skills of hedgelaying and drystone walling by organising and hosting 2 training events and a grand prix competition.
- working with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust to establish a small grants fund to support local projects that directly conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area and/or facilitate quiet enjoyment. The Fund was officially launched at the AONB Annual Conference in January and the first grants will be available from April 2016.
- promoting the Morecambe Bay area as a great place to visit to see wildlife to a huge audience via initiatives such as the launch of the Morecambe Bay Cycle Way.
- successfully installing solar panels at the AONB office, acting as an exemplar for local groups/projects wanting to take action to shift to low carbon and more sustainable living.

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Supporting rural skills

The AONB Partnership is committed to offering an annual programme of training and events to support and promote traditional rural skills, to ensure traditional field boundaries are maintained and remain part of our landscape far into the future.

In October we organised and hosted the AONB Hedgelaying Competition, the first of the Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association Grand Prix events for 2015/16. A well-laid hedge will make the field stock-proof for the farmer and regenerate the hedge with new growth providing a wonderful haven for wildlife and a valuable wildlife corridor. 16 competitors took part, laying between 6 and 8 metres each in the traditional Westmorland style. We were particularly delighted to have 4 teenagers competing in the Junior Class this year. Peter Gibson won the Championship Class; Craig Proctor, the Open Class; and Karl Bell, the Novice Class. The Junior Class was won by Aiden Handley. Best hedge of the day went to Peter Gibson.

Drystone walling and brushcutter training took place in December giving 10 volunteers and 2 local land managers the opportunity to learn new and/or improve skills.



16
competitors in the
AONB Hedgelaying
Competition

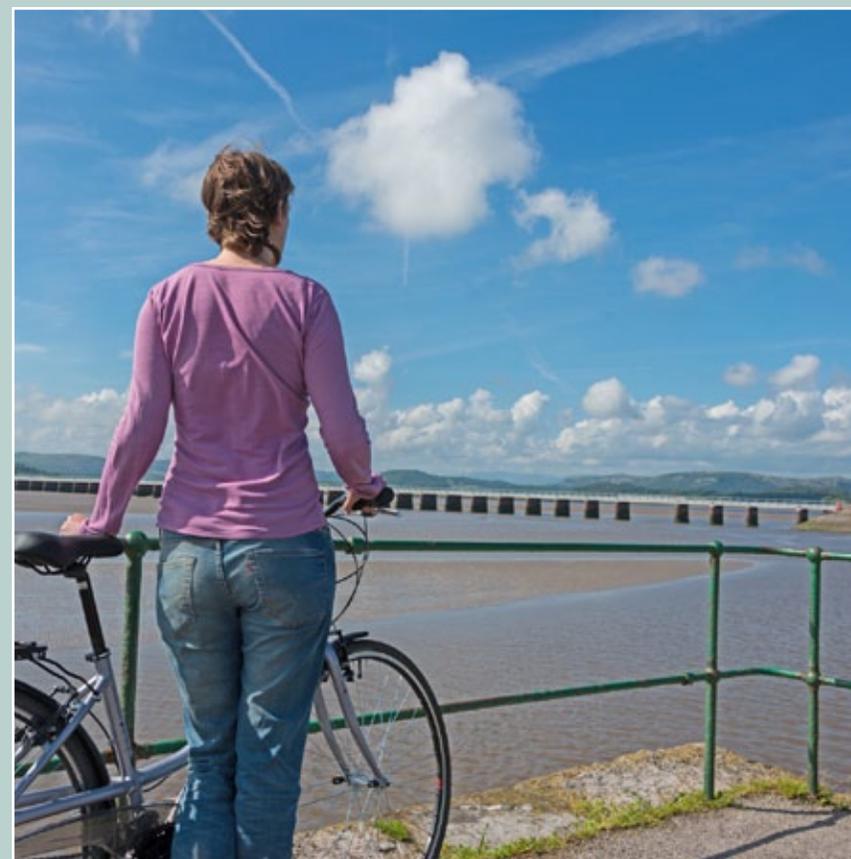
12
people trained
in rural skills



Cycling under big skies

National Cycle Network Route 700 was launched in June. It is a family-friendly, long distance route, suitable for entry-level touring cyclists, covering 81 miles in total from Walney Island, near Barrow, passing through Arnside & Silverdale AONB and onwards to Glasson Dock, near Lancaster. The fairly flat route hugs the spectacular coastline of Morecambe Bay along quiet roads, greenways, canal towpaths and promenades, offering lots of opportunities to stop along the way.

The creation of the Bay Cycle Way was inspired by Morecambe Bay Partnership's vision for accessing the stunning heritage, coastline, villages and towns around Morecambe Bay, in a family-friendly, accessible and sustainable way, that would inspire local communities and visitors to explore the area, support local businesses and spread the word about what a fabulous place the Bay is. The project won the "Best Visitor Experience 2015" award at the Lancashire Tourism awards.





34 species of butterfly
including the nationally rare High Brown Fritillary

A strong connection between people and the landscape

Our priorities are to produce high quality information and communications; provide opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about and take action to conserve the AONB's special qualities; and improve and promote safe and responsible access and recreation for a diverse range of people.



24 educational visits hosted

In 2015/16 our achievements included :

- working hard on implementing our Communications Strategy, delivering our key messages whenever possible. We are continually aiming to reach new audiences and with this in mind, now post regular updates on Facebook and Twitter (over 1,400 followers) and our e-newsletters are proving to be very popular, with the number of subscribers now standing at over 1,000.
- 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. 16 events held over a 2 week period in July.
- organising a successful AONB Apple Day – attracting over 1,000 visitors, including many young families, to come and discover the orchards of the AONB, learn all about the wildlife which feed and make their homes there and sample delicious orchard produce.
- working closely with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charity with over 1,000 members, which supports the work of the AONB Partnership and runs a very popular annual events programme including lectures, guided walks and study days.
- receiving excellent media coverage for AONB events and news with several 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.
- running a successful education programme - hosting 24 educational visits at Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve; working with local schoolchildren on a project celebrating the orchards of the AONB ; hosting a graduate volunteer placement; and giving 5 talks to both local and national groups about the area and our work.

OVER 1,000 visitors to the AONB Apple Day

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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.

This year the focus was local food and produce. The AONB is a small area, at just 75km², but its unique landscape fosters the perfect conditions for the creation of a wealth of different products; from honey to apples; salt-marsh lamb to vegetables; beef to berries (and lots of non-food products which were celebrated at the festival too). The area is also home to some fantastic makers: brewers, bakers, millers, chefs and craftspeople.



The Arnside & Silverdale AONB Apple Day

The Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership held its 6th Apple Day on Saturday 3 October at Orchard Barn, Briery Bank, Arnside to celebrate the value of our orchards in the landscape, as an important habitat and for their contribution to the local economy. This was a great family event with lots of traditional orchard-themed games and activities. Visitors were able to join in the fun, make their own hedgehogit, magic potion or even their own broomstick! Several of our partner organisations were there to talk about bees, birds and insects that live and feed in our orchards.

Guided walks were led around the 250 year old traditional Westmorland orchard to help visitors learn about the work that goes into maintaining it and for those visitors unsure of the variety growing in their garden, the identification experts were on hand. There were demonstrations of wood-turning, traditional blacksmithing, drystone walling and woodland crafts and lots of delicious orchard produce to taste and buy.



Artist in residence

As part of our wider work celebrating the orchards of the AONB, we were delighted to be able to fund local artist, Imogen Bone, to spend a day in the classroom with local primary school children from Arnside and Silverdale on an orchard-themed art project. The children learned all about the wildlife that can be found in an orchard habitat, then chose their own animal, bird or insect to draw. The individual paintings were then transferred on to silk flags which made a wonderful, colourful display.





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.



In 2015/16 our achievements included:

- 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 group of key organisations working together in a collaborative way. For more information, visit www.morecambebaynature.org.uk
- working closely with 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.
- working closely with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charitable body which supports the purposes of the AONB.
- continuing to receive the 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 lever additional monies from Defra, enabling our work to take place.
- organising and hosting a very successful conference attended by over 70 delegates in January, entitled "Working together", welcoming Mark Sears of the Wild Network as our keynote speaker, along with local farmer Johnny Bland, Louise Martin from Morecambe Bay Partnership and Jarrod Sneyd from RSPB.

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The Bittern Award was presented to Peter Standing of the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust.



The AONB Annual Conference

27 January saw the Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Annual Conference.

Mark Sears, Chief Wild Officer of the Wild Network was the keynote speaker and received a very positive reaction to his mission to 'Rewild Childhood'. We are planning to work closely with the Wild Network to become one of the pilot sites for their new 'Wild Local' programme. This will see local networks of organisations, schools and families working together to reduce the barriers to 'wildtime' and get more children enjoying the outdoors. For further information, visit www.thewildnetwork.com.

Local farmer Johnny Bland was another very popular speaker at the conference. He shared his positive approach to conservation and animal welfare, and plans for the future. We're very pleased that Johnny will be holding a farm open day within our 2016 Food and Local Produce Festival.

Louise Martin of Morecambe Bay Partnership summarised the fascinating work happening in archaeological sites in the AONB. Local people have been actively involved in research at Jenny Brown's Point, and a detailed LiDAR survey to find out more about the Iron Age Hillfort on Warton Crag has been carried out.

Jarrod Sneyd, the manager of RSPB Leighton Moss gave a rousing presentation on working together to protect our local and global environment.

And winner of the 2015 Bittern Award (see opposite), Peter Standing, gave us a sneak preview of the wide range of events planned for 2016 to celebrate the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust's 30th anniversary.

Feedback from attendees was very positive.



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 Peter Standing.

Peter has managed the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust's annual event programme since 2010, attracting, entertaining and informing many local people and visitors to the area. Since taking on the role, Peter has introduced a popular and well attended annual weekend series of lectures, field trips and exhibitions. He also launched a 'Meet the Villages' weekend rotating around local venues with 'Meet the Yealands' (2012), 'Welcome to Warton' (2013), 'Story of Storth' (2014), 'Beetham and Hale' (2015) and 'All about Arnside' (2016). Silverdale in 2017 will complete the cycle.

During 2015 the Landscape Trust mounted a total of 15 lectures, 32 field trips, 4 tours, 7 exhibitions, 2 socials, one children's event and one play 'the Life and Times of William Hutton'. These events attracted cumulative attendance figures of over 4,500.

Speaking about the Bittern Award Peter said 'I am honoured but surprised to receive this award. I see it very much as recognition of the importance of the Landscape Trust, and I must stress that I am only one of a team of hard working Trust officers.

My post as events organiser is a great job which has given me the opportunity to meet and learn from an amazing variety of experts on every imaginable aspect of the AONB. Organising events and new projects provides me with an exciting and ongoing landscape education course and it has been a pleasure to meet the wonderful people who attend events and make up the membership of the Landscape Trust'.

Peter is also involved in writing a series of geotrails set in the AONB and other nearby limestone landscapes.





Thank you and looking forward



Warton Crag is a very special place. Its limestone grassland is of outstanding quality and richness, full of wildflowers and insects. The display of Early Purple Orchids this year was the best I've ever seen and rare High Brown Fritillary butterflies are in residence. The secrets of the Iron Age hill fort are being revealed through research and survey work. What's more it is open and free to access and explore. The site needs careful management to balance all these interests, which is achieved through collaboration and cooperation between a wide range of bodies and individuals, from the landowners, managing organisations, habitat and historic environment experts and the grazier, to users of the site and volunteers who help to monitor and look after it.

This kind of collaboration is happening on both a large and small scale right across the AONB and is vital for its future. Many passionate and committed people work together to conserve and enhance the area throughout the year. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this success!

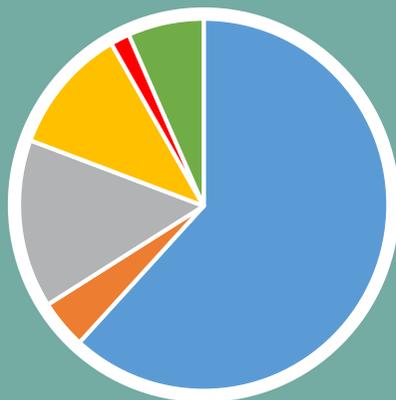
Looking ahead our priorities remain to foster collaboration, secure protection and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB and to encourage people to enjoy and connect with the area.

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

Lucy Barron
AONB Manager

Financial Summary

Arnside & Silverdale AONB Expenditure 2015/16



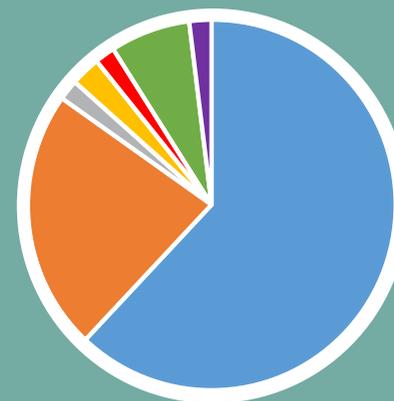
- Staff costs
- Core accommodation costs
- Management Plan delivery
- Core Partnership running costs
- Contribution to reserve
- Capital costs - purchase of vehicle

Staff costs	£132,755
Core accommodation costs	£9,164
Management Plan Delivery	£31,439
Core partnership running costs	£23,620
Contribution to reserve	£3,600
Capital costs – purchase of vehicle	£14,189

Total **£214,767**



Arnside & Silverdale AONB Income 2015/16



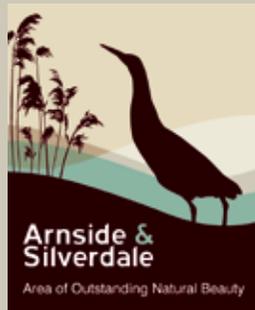
- Defra
- Local Authorities
- Parish Councils
- Contracting income & donations
- External grants
- Host Authority in kind contribution
- Transfer from reserve

Defra	£133,199
Local Authorities	£48,888
Parish Councils	£3,867
Contracting income and donations	£5,624
Other grants	£3,800
Transfer from reserve	£15,189
Host Authority in kind contribution	£4,200

Total **£214,767**

Vehicle, plant & machinery replacement reserve

Balance as at 31st March 2016 £15,057



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Photos by: Art-Image, Ella Riden, Tony Riden, Diana Jarvis-Greentraveller, David Morris, David Moreton, Adam Donaldson, Imogen Bone, Rob-Petley-Jones, Margaret Breaks, Andy Hay-RSPB-Images.com

Design: Capra Design.

Arnside & Silverdale AONB

AONB Boundary



Front cover: The AONB Apple Day, Ella Riden

