



# Arnside & Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Annual Review 2017/18





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Chairman’s Foreword

We have had another busy and successful year in 2017/18 working in close partnership with others to conserve and enhance the AONB. The AONB Partnership’s work would not be possible without the continued support of statutory funding partners Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and Defra, together with collaboration, cooperation and good relationships with key partners. We work closely with the local parish councils and numerous other organisations, landowners, farmers, businesses and community groups, both large and small, along with many individuals and their support is much appreciated.

This year we have begun the process of reviewing the AONB Management Plan with a view to having a new Plan in place for 2019. Alongside this we’ve been working hard to support and advise South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council to finalise the AONB Development Plan Document, which will put in place consistent planning policies covering the whole AONB for the first time, a crucial step forward with ensuring decision-making to conserve and enhance the landscape.

Our AONB Partnership places great emphasis on the involvement and contribution of volunteers, with thousands of hours contributed each year to looking after this special place. Our work just wouldn’t be possible without them and I’d like to thank all of the many people who have been part of the AONB story this year.

The Government’s 25-year Environment Plan and the consequent Review of Designated Landscapes give us opportunities to be part of creating the future of looking after our designated landscape and we are working hard alongside our colleagues in the National Association for AONBs to influence the debate about the future.

*B. C. Meakin*

**Cllr Brian Meakin**  
Chair, Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership



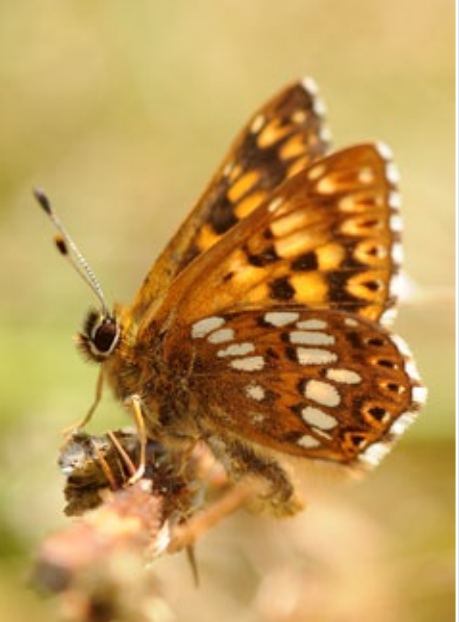
Introduction

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

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.







4  
Local Authorities  
6 Parish Councils

## Annual Review 2017/18

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 2018.

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 is based at The Old Station Building, Arnside and is made up of 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: Lucy Barron, Sue Hunter, Ruth Ainsworth, Barbara Henneberry and Tony Riden



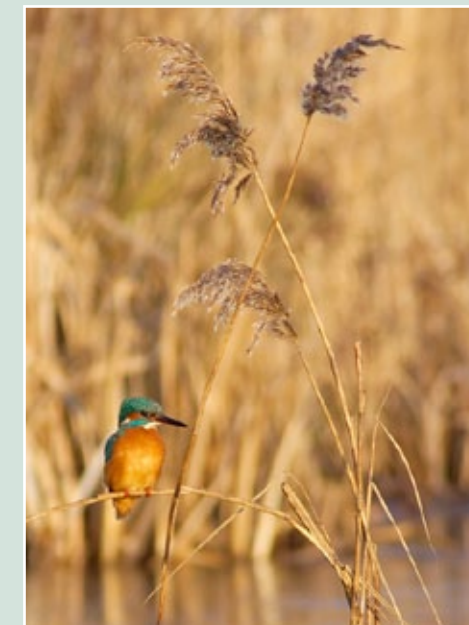
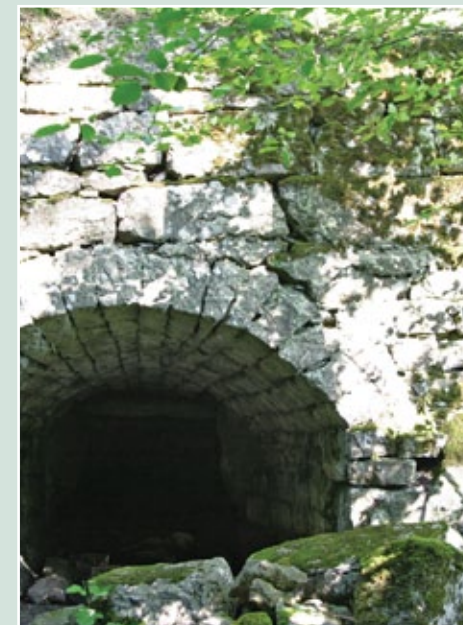
4 key  
outcomes

## 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

Almost a  
1/3  
of the AONB is under  
woodland cover



OVER  
110km  
of Public Rights  
of Way





**3,200**  
hours of practical  
conservation work done  
by our volunteers

## 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.

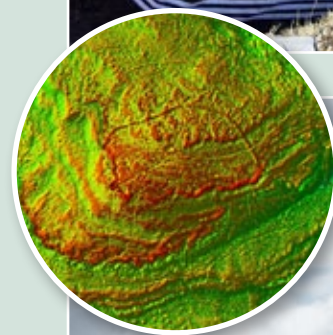


### In 2017/18 our achievements included:

- carrying out practical conservation work throughout the AONB with the help of the AONB volunteer team. There have been over 50 tasks during the last 12 months at various locations but at 2 sites in particular - Warton Crag and Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserves – where management work has been undertaken to conserve and enhance the special limestone habitats, plants and wildlife. The volunteers, led by the AONB Countryside Officer, have contributed an incredible 3200 hours of their time to help look after this special landscape.
- completing 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, from rebuilding drystone walls

Find  
out more  
page 7

and maintaining wells to helping to restore the historic designed landscape at Hyning Monastery. We have also worked closely with, and provided 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. Key projects this year have included the archaeological investigation of the chimney at Jenny Brown's Point (to unravel some of the mysteries and find conclusive evidence of its function); and work to try to understand more about the Iron Age hillfort on Warton Crag, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, and to develop appropriate land management.



- working with consultants on a detailed Geology Audit and Assessment. This work, looking at the distinctive limestone geology of the area, only began in March and will continue into the next financial year. The limestone landscape is particularly unusual because its karst features were formed at low altitude and show clear evidence of glacial and post-glacial processes. This combination of attributes makes Arnside & Silverdale AONB a nationally important geological asset.
- giving support and advice to 18 landowners, encouraging conservation of the AONB's special qualities and uptake of the new Countryside Stewardship grant scheme. Significant support was also given to Natural England regarding major habitat enhancement work at Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve and to RSPB regarding their proposal to restore 50ha of wet grassland at Warton Mires.



- assisting officers from Lancaster City and South Lakeland District Councils with the AONB Development Plan Document (DPD). This was completed and submitted to the Secretary of State (Planning Inspectorate) in February. The AONB DPD is a first of its kind in the country and will be an extremely important document 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.
- submitting 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. Lancaster City Council Local Plan; SLDC Development Management DPD; the AONB DPD; Cumbria Minerals & Waste Plan; Lancaster City Council Sustainable Settlement Methodology; Shoreline Management Plan; and the England Coast Path informal consultations.
- assessing 167 planning applications relevant to the AONB according to the planning protocol and submitting 53 formal responses.

Find  
out more  
page 8



**167**  
planning  
applications  
assessed



## The AONB Volunteer programme

You can never go very far in the AONB before you come across an example of work carried out by the AONB volunteers.

Fingerposts helping to guide visitors to the area through the intricate network of footpaths have been installed. Drystone walls and hedgerows which are characteristic features of this landscape and act as wildlife corridors, have been rebuilt or planted. Woodland glades, so important for butterflies and woodland flora, have been cleared. Then there is the work carried out to celebrate our industrial heritage through maintenance of limekilns or the work on the wells of Silverdale which once supplied water for all the villagers and their livestock.

Winter sees the volunteers turn out in all weathers to work mainly on the two Local Nature Reserves – Warton Crag and Trowbarrow – which are owned by Lancaster City Council but managed by the AONB Team and volunteers. Both reserves benefit from Countryside Stewardship funding, which enables work to be carried out to restore, protect and create important habitats and to increase biodiversity.

This year, through the volunteer programme of weekly Tuesday tasks and monthly litter picks, the volunteers have contributed an amazing 3200 hours of their time to help conserve and enhance this special landscape.



Over half of the UK's flowering plant species recorded, including the rare Lady's-slipper orchid



## Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document (DPD)

Over the last 3 years, South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council, with the support of the AONB Team, have been working towards a dedicated Development Plan Document (DPD) for the whole of the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The DPD will form part of both authorities' Local Plans, identifying sites for new housing and employment to meet local needs and setting out planning policies to ensure that development reflects the AONB designation. The DPD and supporting documents were submitted to the Secretary of State on 28 February 2018 and an independent Inspector appointed who, in June, will conduct a public examination into the soundness of the plan, taking account of the representations made on the proposed submission version. After the Inspector's report is received, the Councils will jointly consider adopting the plan, subject to any recommended changes.







## 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 2017/18 our achievements included:

- supporting 4 local projects through the AONB small grants fund which is run in partnership with the AONB Landscape Trust. RSPB (£1500), Swifts in the Community x 2 (£900 in total), Westmorland Red Squirrels (£1200) and Arnside Archive (£1000)
- organising and hosting a hedgelaying competition, the first event of the 2017-18 Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association Grand Prix, where 17 competitors (including 3 juniors) took up the challenge of laying a section of hedge in the traditional Westmorland style. By running the competition, we are delighted to be able to help keep this important traditional rural skill alive.
- adding more local businesses to our website, raising the profile of the fantastic range of locally made produce and helping support the local economy.
- involving many local producers in the AONB Apple Day, including orchard owners, beekeepers, coppice workers, arts & crafts people as well as local cafes and country market stallholders. There was also a demonstration of drystone walling on the day.
- working in partnership with the National Trust to create a seasonal ranger post which has enabled 2 young people to gain valuable experience in countryside management in the area. Both have gone on to secure permanent jobs within the conservation sector.
- continuing to support the Silverdale and District Wood Bank – a community group that is carrying out woodland management, producing woodfuel and helping people in fuel poverty.

Find out more page 10



## Grants for local projects

2017/18 was the second year of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Grants Fund, funded and operated by Arnside & Silverdale AONB and the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust working together.

During the year, four organisations benefited from grants as part of the scheme.

Swifts in the Community received £900 to improve their database, for a reprint of their leaflet and to work in a local school. The children benefited from a presentation and workshop, followed by a short school trip to look at known swift sites nearby. The children enjoyed the sessions and now have good knowledge of this priority species. As a result of the database improvements, the group can now upload local information on Swifts directly to the British Trust for Ornithology's Birdtrack database to contribute to their nationwide survey.

RSPB Leighton Moss received a £1500 contribution towards a project to restore habitats for the nationally rare High Brown Fritillary butterfly on Warton Crag. The Grant was match funding which helped the RSPB leverage a further £30,000 grant from the Lancashire Environment Fund. The project will see a significant area of improved habitat to join up with the work undertaken by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust on a neighbouring piece of land last year.



34 species of butterfly including the nationally rare High Brown Fritillary



Westmorland Red Squirrels received £1200 to further their work in providing the conditions for red squirrels to flourish in the AONB.

£1000 was granted to Arnside Archive for an information panel about the Maritime History of Arnside. Coupled with the successful purchase of the boat 'Severn', built by Crossfields' boatyard in the early 20th century, and a number of Maritime history events run by the Archive and Arnside Sailing Club during 2018, the information panel will make a strong contribution to putting Arnside back on the map as a key place in the history of boatbuilding.







## 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.



### In 2017/18 our achievements included :

- organising a successful AONB Apple Day which attracted over 800 visitors, including many young families. Held in a magnificent 250-year-old Westmorland orchard, this is a great day of fun and learning for all the family, a chance to discover the orchards of the AONB, learn all about the wildlife which feed and make their homes there and to sample delicious orchard produce. [Find out more page 12](#)
- reaching new audiences through our exciting WILD! Project pilot events. We are working hard to encourage young children and their families to visit the countryside and enjoy the outdoors, by organising events such as Woodland Fun Days and Land Art workshops, while also working with local schools. Feedback has been very positive. [Find out more page 12](#)
- running a successful education programme - hosting 12 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. [Find out more page 12](#)
- working with Beetham Parish Council on the production of new information panels to raise awareness of the AONB and to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism. This follows a similar project with Arnsdale Parish Council last year which we now hope to roll out across the AONB using a common design.
- improving access to Trowbarrow LNR for users of Trampers (all-terrain mobility vehicles) and ongoing improvements to the network of public rights of way and concessionary footpaths through good quality signage and vegetation management. The AONB Trampler, based at RSPB Leighton Moss, was hired 110 times over this 12 month period!
- providing numerous opportunities to engage in practical conservation management tasks, monitoring, administration and event support through the AONB volunteer programme.
- working closely with the Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charity with over 1200 members, which supports the work of the AONB Partnership and runs a very popular annual events programme including lectures, guided walks and study days.
- increasing the number of followers we have on social media, subscribers to our e-newsletters and visits to our website



### The Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Apple Day

"A great family day out" "I love Apple Day" "A brilliant event"... Just some of the feedback we got from visitors to the AONB Apple Day on Saturday 30th September.

A huge thank you to Peter Goulder and Sheila Porter who once again generously hosted the event at their 250 year old traditional Westmorland orchard in Arnsdale

In spite of the unpredictable weather, over 800 visitors came through the gate and enjoyed browsing the colourful displays in the marquees; finding out all about orchards and the wildlife they support; getting advice on buying, planting and looking after fruit trees; tasting varieties of apple you don't find in the supermarket and delicious freshly-pressed apple juice; and learning about traditional crafts such as coppicing and beekeeping. There were also demonstrations of woodturning, metal-forging and drystone walling, as well as guided walks around the orchard.

Younger visitors (many of whom had brought their parents along to see the colourful lanterns they had made at school with local artists Shane Johnstone & Anna Read) were admirably entertained by basket weaving, apple-printing, riding the smoothie-bike, making conkers, besom-making and joining in traditional orchard games. The Apple Crumble Kitchen, a new attraction for 2017, was a great success with over 90 children increasing their knowledge of how food is produced from 'farm to fork' and making their own fruit crumble to take home.

### Artist in residence

As part of our wider work celebrating the orchards of the AONB, and thanks to a £500 Discover Cumbria Grant from Friends of the Lake District and the support of local businesses, the AONB Team was able to work with two local artists in three of the AONB primary schools. The children worked really hard to make beautiful apple, flower, seed pod and caterpillar shaped lanterns, inspired by the orchards of the AONB and the story of the Selfish Giant, which formed part of the Kendal Torchlight Carnival as well as being displayed at the AONB Apple Day.



### WILD! Project – pilot events

The benefits of spending time outdoors in the countryside are well documented, but how do we encourage young families and children to actually come and enjoy the AONB? Over the last twelve months, the AONB Team has been running a series of free pilot events to try and find the best way to facilitate this. Activities arranged have included:

- Woodland Fun Day where the children enjoyed den-building, slack-lining, woodland craft trails, making wildlife habitats and leaf pressing.
- Butterfly Expedition where the children went on a walk to discover the butterflies that live in the AONB and then enjoyed butterfly flag printing with a local textile artist.
- Land Art workshop where the children enjoyed creating beautiful works of art using only the natural resources they found at Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserve – from stick stacks to fairy ladders, mud painting and leaf art. The workshops were facilitated by internationally acclaimed environmental artists Richard Shilling and Julia Brooklyn of landartforkids.com.

Feedback so far has been fantastic -'A super morning.' 'Brilliant activity' 'Wonderful day – well done!' Encouraged by this, the AONB Team is now planning to apply for funding to develop a wider WILD! Project.



110 young children and their families enjoyed our WILD! project Woodland Fun Day





## 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 2017/18 our achievements included:

- organising and hosting a successful conference attended by over 70 delegates in January, entitled "Deeper Roots". This saw the launch of the AONB Management Plan Review process and gave an opportunity to undertake some initial consultation on the challenges facing us over the coming years. This consultation was then opened up to the general public through an on-line survey which asked questions, not only on the challenges lying ahead, but also on what people felt were our successes/achievements over the previous 5-yr plan. Over 100 completed surveys were received.
- celebrating the enormous contribution to the management of the AONB landscape by Bill Grayson of Morecambe Bay Conservation Grazing Company and presenting him with the 2017 Bittern Award.
- building close working relationships with the Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charitable body, and the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company, both of which support the purposes of the AONB. We have been able to work towards an application for funding to Heritage Lottery to help build the capacity of our organisations to conserve and enhance the AONB in the long term. It is hoped to submit a bid in early 2018/19
- securing additional funds to help us carry out our work through a successful Countryside Stewardship application for Trowbarrow LNR
- 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 and the Management Plan Review.
- 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](http://www.morecambebaynature.org.uk)
- the AONB Manager being co-opted onto the Board of Trustees of the National Association for AONBs. As one of the AONB family of 46 AONBs in the UK, we value the work and support of the NAAONB and the associated opportunities for networking, sharing best practice, learning and inspiring.
- 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.

Find out more page 14

Find out more page 14



## The AONB Annual Conference

Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB's 2018 conference was a big success, booking up within a few days of places being made available. The keynote speaker this year was Howard Davies, Chief Executive of the National Association for AONBs. He spoke about the impact of climate change on the environment, the great work being done by AONBs across the country and the Government's 25 year environment plan.

Other speakers were Bekka Corrie-Close of the Horned Beef Company, which provides beef from cows free to roam in an organic environment, eating the fresh vegetation they choose, and managing the countryside at the same time; Craig McCoy of National Trust Arnsdale & Silverdale who manages woodlands across the AONB, told us all about the different management techniques they use to create healthier woodlands; and the AONB's own Tony Riden who reflected on 25 years of leading the volunteering programme – which contributes over 3000 hours of important practical management work each year – from dry stone walling to pond clearance; brush cutting to traditional hedgelaying.

The conference finished with a Question Time style panel discussion and then workshops where attendees helped identify the key issues and priorities for the AONB landscape in the coming five years. Experts in Biodiversity, Heritage Management, Recreation and Access as well as many other areas were in attendance and their feedback will be invaluable as the team develop their next AONB five-year Management Plan which is due to be published at the beginning of 2019 after public consultation.

70 delegates attended the AONB Conference

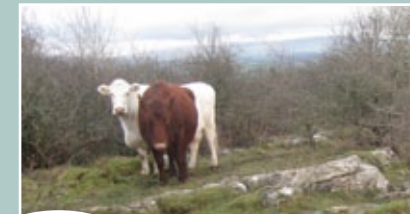


## The Bittern Award

Many congratulations to Bill Grayson, who was presented with the Bittern Award at the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB conference. The Bittern Award is given annually to recognise a person or organisation who has made an outstanding contribution to Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB. Bill has worked for 25 years as a conservation grazing farmer in Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB, and set up the Morecambe Bay Conservation Grazing Company.

Conservation Grazing benefits the special landscape and rare wildlife that the area is so famous for. Native species that evolved when farming was less intensive benefit from sensitive grazing regimes that allow herbs, wildflowers and butterflies to thrive. As the animals graze across the landscape they create a diverse mosaic of different sward heights, bare ground, glades and gentle woodland edges.

Bill uses native rare-breed cattle and rears them to become calm, contented animals all of which he knows individually, many of them by name. Getting the right grazing balance



to ensure that the landscape reaps maximum benefits is an inexact science and requires careful management and understanding, a skill Bill has worked hard to develop over many patient years. The animals benefit from being outdoors year-round and their diet mainly comprises fresh pasture containing a wide variety of plant species which in turn produces excellent quality meat.

Bill says: "It gives me great pleasure to receive the Bittern Award, in recognition of the targeted grazing regimes with which we in Morecambe Bay Conservation Grazing have been helping some of the area's land owners to enhance the conservation value of the places that they manage. It has been very encouraging to see how the grazing that our native-breed cattle have provided for some of Morecambe Bay's special places has enhanced their wildlife value."







# Thank you and farewell Tony



We are about to say farewell to AONB Countryside Officer Tony Riden who will shortly be retiring after dedicating the last 25 years to caring for the outstanding landscape of the AONB.

I'd like to pay tribute here to Tony's enormous contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. Tony has led the AONB volunteer programme overseeing practical management tasks on a multitude of sites and worked with many landowners and partner organisations to influence land management and deliver benefits right across the area. Tony's passion and commitment for the wildlife and landscape of the area is second to none and his ability to inspire and encourage people to get involved is demonstrated in the dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of the AONB volunteers, some of whom have been working alongside him for many years.

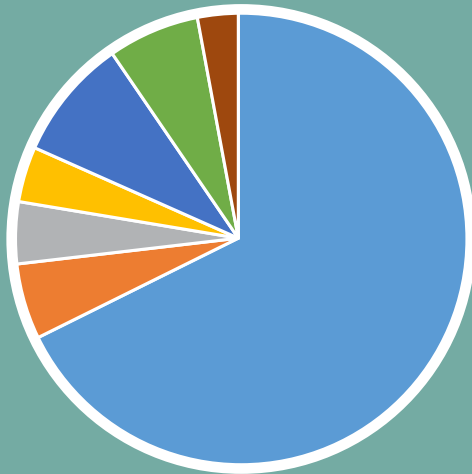
Tony will be leaving a fantastic legacy and I'm sure everyone who knows Tony will join with me to wish him a long and very happy retirement!

*Lucy Barron*

Lucy Barron  
AONB Manager

# Financial Summary

Arnside & Silverdale AONB Expenditure 2017/18



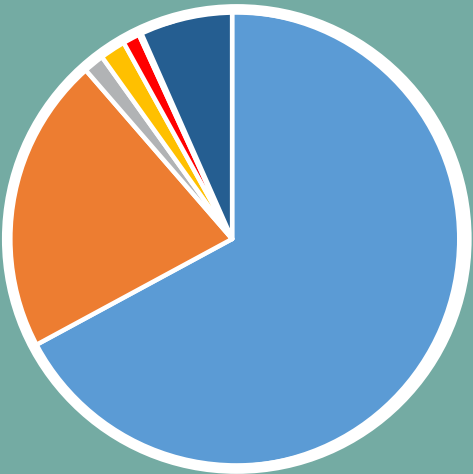
- Staff costs
- Core accommodation costs
- Management Plan delivery
- Core Partnership running costs
- Contribution to reserve
- Print & Publicity
- Host Authority Support

Staff costs	£138,820
Core accommodation costs	£11,247
Management Plan Delivery	£9,191
Print & Publicity	£8,245
Core partnership running costs	£18,073
Host authority support recharges - provided in kind plus R&M central costs	£13,572
Contribution to reserve	£6,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£205,148</b>

Public  
spending  
on AONBs is  
only 13p per  
person per year

**13p**

Arnside & Silverdale AONB Income 2017/18



- Defra
- Local Authorities
- Parish Councils
- Contracting income & donations
- Other grants
- Host Authority in-kind contribution

Defra	£137,682
Local Authorities	£44,142
Parish Councils	£3,050
Contracting income and donations	£3,794
Other grants	£2,500
Feed-in tariff	£408
Host Authority in kind contribution	£13,572
<b>Total</b>	<b>£205,148</b>

**AONB reserve** Balance as at 31st March 2018 £23,557





Arnside & Silverdale AONB  
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**Design:** Capra Design.

## Arnside & Silverdale AONB

 AONB Boundary



Front cover: Sunset at Jenny Brown's Point - David Toft