



# Arnside & Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Annual Review 2018/19



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## Chairman's Foreword

We have had another busy and successful year in 2018/19 working to conserve and enhance the AONB and connect people with the landscape. 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. Our AONB Partnership places great emphasis on the involvement and contribution of volunteers, with thousands of hours contributed each year and I'd like to personally thank all our volunteers for their support and dedication.



This year we have fully reviewed and finalised the AONB Management Plan for 2019-24 and worked alongside South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council to ensure the adoption of the AONB Development Plan Document, which is the first of its kind in the country and puts in place consistent planning policies covering the whole AONB for the first time - both huge achievements of which we can be very proud.

Looking to the future the National Review of Designated Landscapes proposes a strengthened role for AONBs. We look forward to rising to the challenge and translating the proposals into action over the coming years.

*B. C. Meakin*

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





## Introduction

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1972 and covers an area of approximately 75km<sup>2</sup> in south Cumbria and north Lancashire, including around 30km<sup>2</sup> of intertidal sand and mudflats in the Kent estuary and Morecambe Bay.

The AONB is especially celebrated for its distinctive limestone landscape, magnificent views and extraordinary diversity of wildlife. Low limestone hills, limestone pavements, ancient woodlands, mosses, orchards, meadows and pastures and an impressive coastline, along with a rich cultural history, make this a truly special place.

The intricate nature of many parts of the area and an exceptional variety of special features occurring in such a small place, creates a sense of intimacy and discovery. This fine-grained landscape character then contrasts in every way with the vast openness of adjacent Morecambe Bay.

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

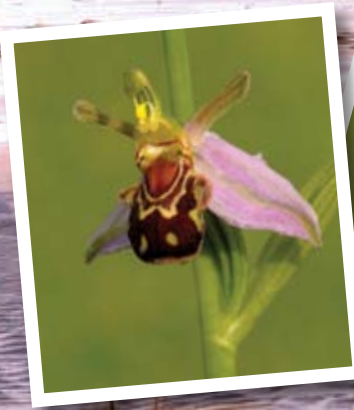




# In 2018/19...



Our volunteers have contributed time and expertise worth almost £40,000 to conserve the landscape, improve access, carry out monitoring and help with events and office administration.



259 hectares of land have been conserved or enhanced for biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage through the work of the AONB Team.





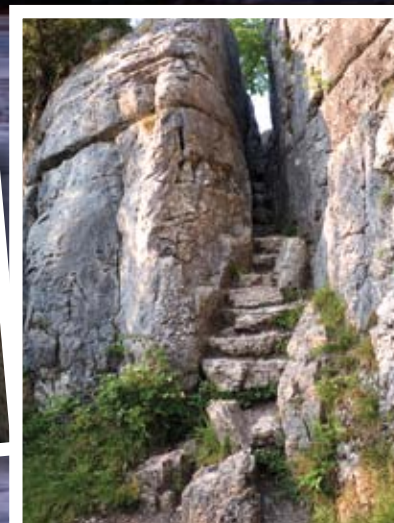
Over 1000 young children have been engaged via our WILD! project Woodland Fun and Land Art Days; school visits to the Local Nature Reserves; and Light Up Lancaster artist-in-residence project.



The AONB Tramper (all-terrain mobility vehicle) was hired 247 times.



206 planning applications relevant to the AONB have been assessed according to the planning protocol and 94 formal responses submitted.



We have increased the number of followers on Twitter to over 3,000 and 940 subscribe to our e-newsletter.

2 major documents were completed and adopted by the local authorities – The AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document.





## Annual Review 2018/19

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 programme of actions to help guide the work of the AONB partner organisations is set out in the Delivery Plan.

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 purpose of this report is to provide a summary of our work and to record our achievements in the 12-month period up to 31st March 2019.



The AONB Team is based at The Old Station Building, Arnside

- **AONB Manager:** Lucy Barron
- **AONB Officer:** Sue Hunter
- **AONB Countryside Officer:** Tony Riden (Apr – Aug);  
Helen Rawlinson (Aug – March)
- **AONB Communications & Funding Officer:** Barbara Henneberry (0.6FTE)  
and Ruth Ainsworth (0.4FTE)
- **Local Nature Reserves warden:** Belinda Barclay



L to R: Barbara Henneberry, Belinda Barclay, Lucy Barron, Ruth Ainsworth, Sue Hunter, and Helen Rawlinson



## 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.



### In 2018/19 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 which are both in Higher Level Countryside Stewardship schemes – where management work has been undertaken to conserve and enhance the special limestone habitats, plants and wildlife.
- assisting officers from Lancaster City and South Lakeland District Councils with the AONB Development Plan Document (DPD). This was completed and adopted by both Councils in March. The AONB DPD is a first of its kind in the country and is an extremely important document as it identifies sites for new housing and employment

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Find out more page 10

development to meet local needs and also sets out planning policies to ensure that any development is in keeping with the AONB designation.

- conserving or enhancing 259 hectares of land for biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage
- 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 and maintaining wells to helping to restore the historic designed landscape at Hynning 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.







- publishing a detailed Geology Audit and Assessment alongside a summary 'Geological Story'. The limestone landscape is particularly distinctive in that 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.
- organising an Ash Dieback workshop which was attended by over 70 landowners/managers and conservation workers and giving support, advice and training to 18 landowners through the Morecambe Bay Facilitation Fund. 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.
- 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. We also responded to the Call for Evidence from the National Review of Designated Landscapes.
- assessing 206 planning applications relevant to the AONB according to the planning protocol and submitting 94 formal responses.





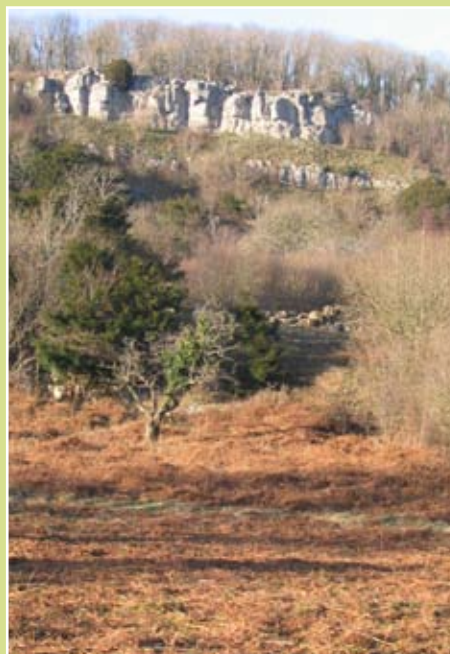
## Increasing biodiversity on Warton Crag

One of Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership's targets, stated as part of its statutory management plan, is to increase biodiversity across the area. This supports the recommendations of the Lawton report, 'Making Space for Nature' (2010), with the aim of creating 'Bigger, Better and more Connected' priority habitat sites to increase and protect England's biodiversity. Warton Crag is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest for its important species-rich limestone grassland.

As part of this aim, the partnership has a Countryside Stewardship agreement with Defra to achieve stated goals on the Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve, which the partnership maintains on behalf of Lancaster City Council.

Warton Crag LNR is a haven for wildlife, including the nationally rare (red listed) High Brown and Pearl Bordered Fritillary butterflies. One aim of the Countryside Stewardship agreement is to create and maintain the habitats for these rare native species to flourish.

The partnership achieves these aims with the use of trusted contractors, but also through habitat maintenance tasks for its established volunteer group - bringing benefits for nature and also for the people involved.







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

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers part of South Lakeland and part of Lancaster District. Recognising the distinctive nature of the AONB landscape, and the specific needs of residents, in 2014 South Lakeland District Council and Lancaster City Council began a project to prepare a joint Development Plan Document (DPD) for the whole of the AONB.

This plan, which complements the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Management Plan, is the first in the country to be prepared in this way to apply policies and allocations across the AONB.

The AONB DPD summarises the development and planning considerations for the area by saying that within the Arnside & Silverdale AONB housing, employment, services, infrastructure and other development will be managed to contribute towards meeting the needs of those who live in, work in and visit the area in a way that: conserves and enhances the landscape, the natural beauty, and the special qualities of the AONB; creates vibrant, diverse and sustainable communities with a strong sense of place; and maintains a thriving local economy.

The plan allocates appropriate sites for development and its policies are more restrictive towards development than elsewhere in the districts, excluding national parks. It includes a principle that 50 per cent of all new housing in the AONB on sites of two or more dwellings should be affordable, as well as principles relating to development strategy; Open Space and Key Settlement Landscapes; camping, caravanning and visitor accommodation; and water quality, sewerage and sustainable drainage in areas where there is no mains drainage.

The DPD was adopted on 13 March 2019 as part of the Lancaster City Local Plan and as part of the South Lakeland Local Plan on 28 March 2019.







## 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 2018/19 our achievements included:

- allocating grants to the value of £2,190 in support of local projects through the AONB small grants fund which is run in partnership with the AONB Landscape Trust.
- organising and hosting a hedgelaying competition, the first event of the 2018-19 Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association Grand Prix, where 16 competitors 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

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produce and helping support the local economy and inviting several local producers – including beekeepers, local cafes, coppice workers, country market, and local artists - to participate in the AONB Apple Day in September.

- continuing to support the Coppice Co-op and Silverdale District Woodbank – a community group that is carrying out woodland management, producing woodfuel and helping people in fuel poverty.
- Supporting the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company's campaign to help people reduce their use of plastic.





## Grants for local projects

### The Listening Tree – an Arts project with Arnside School (£290)

The Listening Tree was a project with a total budget of £750, working with year six pupils of Arnside National School to create an outdoor audio installation in Ashmeadow Woodlands as part of the Silverdale and Arnside Arts and Craft Trail. The children were encouraged to explore the woodlands, a well-loved and popular space, in a new way.

The project focussed on bringing the hidden sounds of Ashmeadow to life, sounds that resonate through the walls, fence posts, trees, ponds and pathways of Ashmeadow but which they may never have heard. The children spent time scouting, listening, thinking and exploring nooks and crannies with stethoscopes and ear trumpets before using contact microphones to pick up sound vibrations in solid objects and hydrophones to record underwater.

Using the hidden sounds as a framework, the children were encouraged to explore and discover the pathways, woodlands and even the manmade structures in a different way, inspiring a new curiosity about the flora and fauna.

The installation for the weekend of the Arts trail featured multiple pairs of headphones hanging down from a tree, offering visitors the chance to stop and listen to some of the strange or melodic sounds the children had found. From pond skaters skipping along the surface of the water trough to the pitter patter of the tiny feet of a woodlouse on the gravel pile and the eerie sounds of the hinge as the gate opened and closed.



the Listening Tree helped people discover the special characteristics of the woodland.

"Amazing! Transported to an unknown world through sounds of nature" "What an excellent opportunity for children to engage with and deepen their understanding of their surroundings" "Very unusual and thought provoking. Brilliantly narrated" – just some of the feedback received.



## Restoring Challan Hall Allotment for Rare Butterflies (£1,300)

The overall aim of this project which has a total budget of £25,000 and is led by RSPB is to reinstate woodland management at Challan Hall Allotment in Silverdale to provide multiple benefits for both biodiversity and for visitors.

Through coppicing and restoration of open habitats and improving connectivity with the surrounding landscape, suitable breeding habitat for a variety of woodland wildlife, including rare butterflies such as the Duke of Burgundy and High Brown Fritillaries, and breeding and wintering birds, will be created.

In addition to the wildlife conservation outcomes, the work provides benefits to the public. Visitors can now enjoy more extensive views while still being immersed in the peace and tranquillity of the woodland and will soon be able to enjoy a new permissive footpath.



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.



### In 2018/19 our achievements included :

- running a successful education programme - twinning Archbishop Hutton Primary School (within the AONB) with Ryelands Primary School (in Lancaster), arranging a visit to the AONB to learn about the area's wildlife, followed by workshops to make bird lanterns and create poetry for the Light Up Lancaster Festival; hosting 25 educational visits at Warton Crag and 4 at Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserves; and giving 7 talks to both local and national groups about the area and our work.
- reaching new audiences through our exciting WILD! Project 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.
- 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 247 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 Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charity with over 1,000 members,

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which supports the work of the AONB Partnership and runs a very popular annual events programme including lectures, guided walks and study days.

- increasing our social media presence through Twitter and Facebook. Following implementation of the new GDPR regulations, the number of subscribers to our e-newsletters originally fell but numbers are now on the increase again and we have almost 1,000 subscribers. Website analytical reports show over 30,000 users and 270,000 page views in this 12-month period.





## Light Up Lancaster Lantern Project - a National Lottery Awards for All art project with schools

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty secured £4,100 of National Lottery Awards for All funding to work with two local schools to create lanterns and poetry for the 2018 Light Up Lancaster Festival on 2/3 November. We wanted to pilot a project to twin schools from within the AONB with schools in the nearby urban centres so worked with Archbishop Hutton's School, Warton (in the AONB) and Ryelands School in Lancaster. We commissioned two local artists to create bird shaped lanterns and a poet to help the children write bird-themed poetry. The lanterns and poems were displayed in the free to attend Light Up Lancaster Festival and all the children were invited to bring their families to see their work. Many families did come along and were amazed by what the children had created.



The success of the project centred around the absolute enthusiasm from the schools involved. Their recognition that time spent learning outdoors, hands-on, is a benefit; their willingness to facilitate creative enrichment work for the children was invaluable. Finding schools and teachers prepared to give time to these types of activities is an indicator of the possible success. The situation of the finished work was wonderful – the Storey Gardens looked stunning lit up by the lanterns, and projecting the photos and poems on to the neighbouring stone building gave it an unexpectedly impressive impact. The children were rightly proud of their work.

The success of this pilot initiative has given us the confidence to request more funding in order to broaden the reach of the project to more schools with a wider variety of activities and build the twinning programme to create long lasting benefits. We plan to develop closer ties with older people's organisations locally, and develop a database of retired people who would be interested in supporting similar work in future.







## 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 2018/19 our achievements included:

- undertaking a review of the current AONB Management Plan Find out more page 16
- organising and hosting a very successful conference attended by over 70 delegates in January, entitled "The Geology of Arnside & Silverdale AONB". Find out more page 16
- celebrating the enormous contribution to the management of the AONB landscape by Tony Riden during his 25 years as AONB Countryside Officer and presenting him with the 2018 Bittern Award Find out more page 16
- building closer working relationships with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charitable body, and the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company, both of which support the purposes of the AONB
- securing additional funds to help us carry out our work eg: £3,000 towards the Geology Audit; £1,000 in connection with the Ash Dieback workshop; and £4,100 towards the schools Light up Lancaster project.
- 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 sitting on the Board of Trustees of the National Association for AONBs. 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.
- 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.





## Review of the AONB Management Plan

In accordance with section 89(9-10) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the current AONB Statutory Management Plan 2014-19 required review and it was agreed at the AONB Executive Committee in October 2017 that we would formally conduct the required Review on behalf of the four relevant local authority partners. A review group was established, and work commenced towards the end of 2017.



Phase 1 saw the scoping and preparing for the Review; Phase 2, the undertaking of the review followed by the publication of the 2019-24 Management Plan.

Both phases included consultation exercises to enable key partners, stakeholders and members of the public to contribute, either through workshops, on-line surveys or website consultations.

The final pre-adoption draft AONB Management Plan 2019-24 was completed in March 2019 and submitted to the four partner local authorities for adoption.



### Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Management Plan 2019 - 2024  
Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Partnership, May 2019

Landscapes for life  
Arnsdale & Silverdale  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## The AONB Annual Conference

It was another packed house for the AONB Partnership's Annual Conference which took place on 31st January at the Gaskell Hall in Silverdale.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Alan Thompson and Jane Poole from Cuesta Consulting as our keynote speakers. Alan and Jane have recently completed a full audit and assessment of the geology of the AONB and the Conference presented a great opportunity to launch their 'Geological Story'.

Sylvia Woodhead from Cumbria GeoConservation, Jarrod Sneyd from RSPB and Adam Guy from Plymouth University also gave really interesting presentations on Local Geological Sites, the new Warton Mires Project and Landscape Values.

"Absolutely fascinating", "Great partnership working", "So much fantastic information" "Absolutely informative and inspiring" – just some of the excellent feedback received.



## The Bittern Award

Many congratulations to Tony Riden, who was presented with the Bittern Award at the Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's Annual Conference in January.

The Bittern Award is given annually to recognise a person or organisation who has made an outstanding contribution to Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB.

Tony was the AONB Countryside Officer for almost 25 years before retiring in August last year.

He worked tirelessly, running the successful AONB volunteer programme, turning out in all weathers for the regular Tuesday tasks, making a huge contribution to the biodiversity of the area and to the maintenance of the footpath network and was always happy to help and give advice.

His knowledge of the flora and fauna of the AONB and his enthusiasm to inspire others was second to none.

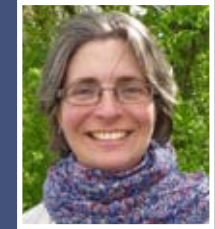
Enjoy your well-earned retirement Tony and thank you!







## Thank you and looking forward



This Annual Review speaks for itself in terms of the huge amount achieved over the last year to conserve the AONB and connect people with the landscape. None of it would be possible without committed collaboration between partner organisations and the dedication of our AONB volunteers. Thank you to the many people involved in caring for this very special place.

Findings from the National Review of Designated Landscapes propose strengthening AONBs with expanded purposes, greater powers and more resources. At a time when nature recovery and addressing the climate emergency are priorities for the whole of society, the conservation and enhancement of this area is critical.

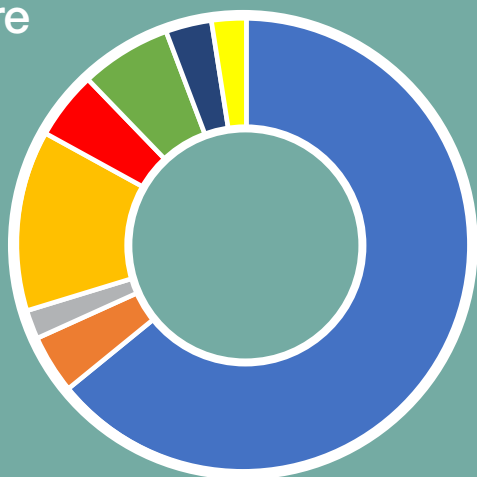
I look forward to continuing this essential work into the future.

Lucy Barron  
AONB Manager



# Financial Summary 2018/19

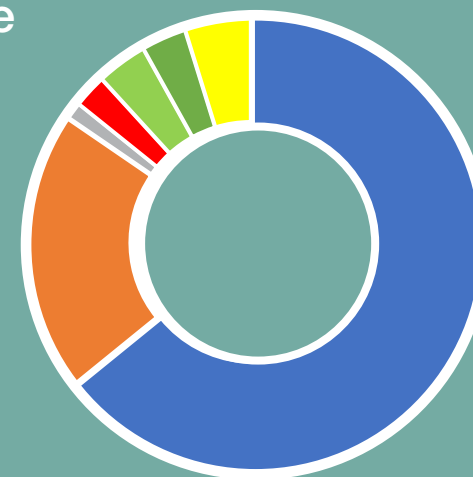
## Expenditure



- Staff costs incl Travel, Subsistence and Training
- Accommodation costs
- Print & Publicity
- Partnership running costs
- Host Authority Support
- AONB Projects and community engagement programme
- Local Nature Reserves management programme
- Contribution to reserve

Staff costs inc Travel, Subsistence and Training	£140,011
Accommodation costs	£8,997
Print & Publicity	£4,457
Partnership running costs	£27,764
Host authority support recharges	£10,466
AONB Projects and Community engagement Programme	£14,100
Local Nature Reserves management programme	£7,158
Contribution to reserve	£5,415
<b>Total</b>	<b>£218,368</b>

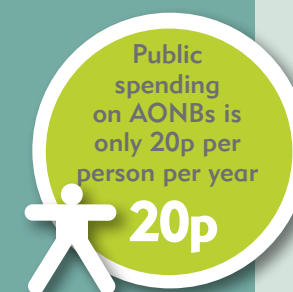
## Income



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

Defra	£140,053
Local Authorities	£44,586
Parish Councils	£2,675
Contracting income and donations	£5,330
Other grants	£8,100
Higher Level Countryside Stewardship	£7,158
Host Authority in-kind contribution	£10,466
<b>Total</b>	<b>£218,368</b>

**AONB reserve Balance as at 31st March 2019 £31,472.45**







Arnside & Silverdale AONB  
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**Photos:** Helen Dodd, Alan Lawlor, David Morris,, Art-image, Adrian Almond, AONB Team, David Morris David Talbot, Susannah Bleakley, Adam Donaldson, Cliff Raby, Tony Riden, Laura Sivell, David Poole, Ella Riden, Steve Birtwhistle, Mike Redman, Barry Stacey, Liz Withey, David Toft, Robert Metcalfe, Karen Pringle, David Morris, John Reaney, Jean Warren, Mike Moon, Steve Waterhouse, Dan Pancamo, Phillip Tomkinson, Mike Moon, NE Wildlife, Margaret Breaks, David Moreton, Greentraveller, Ben Hall [rsbp-images.com](http://rsbp-images.com), Steve Birtwhistle.

**Design:** Capra Design.

## Arnside & Silverdale AONB

 AONB Boundary



Front cover: Blackheaded gull by Helen Dodd