

# Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Annual Review 2019/20



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## Chairman's Foreword

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is an extraordinary place, a place that is loved and valued by many people from all over the world and nationally designated for its natural beauty - stunning views and distinctive and diverse landscape, geology, wildlife and history.

This Annual Review demonstrates the wide range of activities undertaken by the AONB Team to conserve and enhance this special place and connect people with the landscape. Partnership working and collaboration is key to our success.

Thank you to our local authorities Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, South Lakeland District Council and Cumbria County Council and many funders, partner organisations, local groups and individuals for your support and contributions, and in particular to everyone who volunteers giving a vast amount of time, energy and knowledge.

Together we are well placed to help meet the challenges highlighted in the national Designated Landscapes Review to ensure that national landscapes are alive for nature, beauty and people and new ways of working are established to strengthen AONBs.

**Cllr Brian Meakin, AONB Partnership Chair**

## 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 AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

The Arnside & Silverdale AONB Management Plan 2019-24 is a statutory document which sets out a shared vision for the AONB for the next 20 years. The Plan 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.

### Vision

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a landscape of international importance, whose distinctive character is conserved and enhanced for future generations.

It is a place that is much loved and highly valued, for its strong sense of place, unique geology, diverse wildlife and rich heritage and the benefits it provides to society.

Its outstanding landscape - an intimate mosaic of low limestone hills, woodland, wetland, pastures, limestone pavements, intertidal flats, coastal scenery and distinctive settlements - and rich natural and cultural heritage are enjoyed, cherished, conserved and enhanced by those who live in, work in and visit the area.

The high quality and resilient landscape supports and is supported by the area's thriving rural economy and vibrant sustainable local communities. There are many and varied opportunities for people to access, enjoy and understand the area's special qualities, and participate in their conservation and enhancement, creating a strong connection with nature and the landscape.

Challenges and pressures are effectively and sensitively managed in an integrated way through a partnership approach. The area's natural capital and cultural assets are appropriately and sustainably managed to ensure a wide range of public benefits for present and future generations.

## About Us

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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and to show how we are contributing to delivery of the objectives set out in the AONB Management Plan 2019-24.

The Team is based at The Old Station Building, Arnside

- AONB Manager: Lucy Barron
- AONB Officer: Sue Hunter
- AONB Countryside Officers: Helen Rawlinson (Apr – May); Dougie Watson (June – March)
- AONB Communications & Funding Officers: Barbara Henneberry (0.6FTE) and Ruth Ainsworth (0.4FTE)
- Local Nature Reserves Warden and Gateway to Warton Crag Project Officer: Belinda Barclay

Throughout our work we are aiming to make a real difference and for three key outcomes:

- **An outstanding landscape rich in natural and cultural heritage**
- **Vibrant and sustainable communities**
- **A strong connection between people and the landscape**

## An outstanding landscape rich in natural and cultural heritage



Strategic objective	Actions
<p><b>Strategic objective 1:</b> Conserve, enhance and improve understanding of the natural beauty, landscape and seascape character, and special qualities of Arnside &amp; Silverdale AONB</p>	<p><b>74</b> instances of landscape planning advice given to Local Authority Planning Officers in response to planning applications (<b>172</b> planning applications in total assessed). Worked closely with both Councils on briefing planning officers on the newly adopted AONB Development Plan Document (1c)</p> <p>A total of <b>259</b> hectares of land, a mosaic of landscape types, directly conserved/enhanced for biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage. (1d)</p> <p>Operated the AONB Partnership and working groups to facilitate coordinated landscape-scale approaches, develop collaboration, partnership projects and solutions (1d)</p> <p>Worked as a key partner in <b>8</b> projects/steering groups including the Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership (LNP). Also involved in <b>12</b> other partnerships as a supporting partner (1d)</p> <p>Organised and supervised over <b>50</b> practical conservation tasks with the AONB volunteer team. Volunteers contributed more than <b>3000</b> hours of their time. (<i>Find out more Page 17</i>) (1f)</p> <p>Managed <b>2</b> Higher Level Countryside Stewardship schemes at Warton Crag and Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserves undertaking work to conserve and enhance the special limestone habitats, plants and wildlife. (1f)</p> <p>Appropriate grazing regimes implemented for <b>2</b> Local Nature Reserves(1i)</p> <p><b>120</b> metres of hedgerow laid in traditional Westmorland style (1j)</p> <p><b>2</b> overhead wires surveyed as part of the Underground for Visual Amenity scheme and submitted to Electricity Northwest for consideration (1k)</p> <p>Sky quality meter readings taken at <b>20</b> sites across the AONB to provide evidence for a potential Dark Skies project working in partnership with Lancaster University, Friends of the Lake District, the Eddington Astronomical Society and other partners (1n)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 2:</b> Conserve, enhance and improve understanding of the natural capital of the AONB and the range and</p>	<p>Promoted The Natural Health Service – in particular through running weekly Walks for All dementia-friendly walks (2b)</p>

value of the public benefits and ecosystem services that it provides to society	
<b>Strategic objective 3:</b> Conserve and improve understanding of the geodiversity of the AONB.	<p>In our formal responses to <b>2</b> planning applications, we have raised awareness of the existence and importance of Limestone Pavement Orders (3b)</p> <p><b>7</b> hectares of land conserved for geodiversity (3b)</p> <p>Raised awareness of the importance of geodiversity in the AONB landscape by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hosting a site visit to Trowbarrow LNR, organised by Natural England for geo-conservation specialists (3c)</li> <li>• organising a Family geology and geocaching walk in Trowbarrow LNR in May as part of Geoweeek celebrations and in partnership with local geological societies. <b>25</b> people attended (3d)</li> <li>• co-leading a discovery walk at Warton Crag alongside Peter Del Strother of Geo Lancashire - attended by <b>8</b> people.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic objective 4:</b> Conserve, enhance and restore the AONB's characteristic mosaic of habitats and improve their connectivity, take targeted action to conserve key species and improve understanding of the biodiversity of the AONB.	<p>Participation in NAAONB Colchester Declaration steering group. Early work completed on a Nature Recovery Plan for the AONB including detailed habitat opportunity mapping (4a-b)</p> <p>Worked as a key partner in the Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and participated in discussions about wider Nature Recovery Networks across Cumbria and Lancashire (4b)</p> <p>Organised and supervised over <b>50</b> practical conservation tasks with the AONB volunteer team undertaking vital habitat management works on a range of sites from SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites to ancient woodlands and roadside verges (4g - 4l)</p> <p>Supported the Westmorland Red Squirrels Group (4m) and the Deer Initiative (4n)</p> <p>Installed 50 wildlife boxes at Trowbarrow LNR as part of the Higher Level Countryside Stewardship agreement (4o)</p> <p>Organised meetings and field visits for the Local Nature Reserves Advisory Groups to ensure collaboration and joined-up habitat management on these 2 sites (4q)</p> <p>Controlled spread of invasive cotoneaster through AONB volunteer work parties (4r)</p>

	<p>Supported Back on our Map (BOOM) project officers in their work on species reintroduction. Project Officers also spoke at the AONB Annual Conference to raise awareness of the project and its aims. (4t)</p> <p>Supported further development of Warton Mires project which aims to restore wet grassland habitat with a primary focus on breeding lapwing alongside measures to alleviate flood risk in Warton village (4aa)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 5:</b> Improve water quality and condition of watercourses and waterbodies in the AONB and support natural flood management.</p>	<p>Supported South Cumbria Rivers Trust (SCRT) on the Arnside Silverdale Water Quality project. This is part of a wider partnership project by the National Rivers Trust – Wholescape Approach to Marine Management (WAMM). We helped find appropriate sites and a team of volunteers to carry out water quality monitoring (5a)</p> <p>Worked as an active partner in the Becks to Bay local catchment partnership led by SCRT (5b)</p> <p>Promoted the Love my Beach initiative (5f)</p> <p>Submitted comments to the Draft NW Inshore and Offshore Marine Plan Consultation (5k)</p> <p>Organised shore-line litter picks with AONB volunteers (5l)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 6:</b> Conserve, restore and improve understanding of the historic environment of the AONB including heritage assets, historic landscape character and cultural heritage</p>	<p><b>90</b> hectares of land surrounding heritage assets conserved or enhanced</p> <p>Work carried out on <b>1</b> scheduled monument and <b>5</b> non-designated assets (2 historic gardens, 2 ponds and 1 industrial chimney) (6c)</p> <p><b>8</b> limekilns surveyed – results will inform future management and/or restoration (6d)</p> <p>Worked with Plymouth University on a Heritage App, helping to create the online questionnaire and running an associated workshop (6e)</p> <p>Received a European Garden Heritage Award for our earlier work on the Historic Designed Landscapes of the AONB (<a href="#">Find out more Page 16</a>) (6e)</p> <p>Following the discovery of a previously unrecorded stone jetty at Blackstone Point, worked with Cumbria County Council, Morecambe Bay Partnership and Green Lane Archaeology to survey and record the site which has now been recorded in Cumbria’s Historic Environment Record (6f)</p>

	<p>Supported survey work to record the historical interest of boat building premises in Arnside (6i)</p> <p>‘A rich sense of history’ section maintained on the AONB website and downloadable walks offer an insight into the area’s rich heritage (6o)</p> <p>AONB Volunteer conservation work parties at 2 historic designed gardens - the Hyning Monastery and Greywalls, Silverdale (6r)</p> <p>AONB volunteer conservation work parties at 2 historic wells in Silverdale – Bank Well and Wood Well (6s)</p> <p>Supported Morecambe Bay Partnership in developing and publishing the Warton Crag Scheduled Monument Conservation Management Plan (6t)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 7:</b> Implement a landscape capacity-led approach to development planning and management, which conserves and enhances the natural beauty, landscape, seascape and special qualities of the AONB and its setting</p>	<p>Implemented a landscape-capacity-led approach to planning and development as set out in the AONB Development Plan Document (DPD). The DPD was awarded North West overall winner in the Royal Town Planning Institute Regional Awards for Planning Excellence. (<a href="#">Find out more Page 16</a>) (7b-x)</p> <p>Submitted <b>4</b> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumbria Coastal Strategy</li> <li>• NW Marine Plan</li> <li>• South Lakeland District Council’s Local Planning Validation checklist and</li> <li>• Lancaster City Council’s Planning Application Validation Guide (7e)</li> </ul> <p>Assessed <b>172</b> planning applications relevant to the AONB according to the planning protocol and submitted <b>74</b> formal responses. (7f)</p>

## Vibrant and sustainable communities



Strategic objective	Actions
<p><b>Strategic objective 8:</b> Support landowners and managers to sustainably manage the landscape in ways that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB and deliver a range of environmental, community and local economic benefits, in particular by encouraging farming, land and woodland management practices that enhance natural beauty and landscape character.</p>	<p>Organised <b>3</b> workshops for landowners, land managers and other interested parties (8a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>10</b> attendees at a training course on habitat assessment for fritillaries and Duke of Burgundy</li> <li>• <b>8</b> local landowners attended a 'Save our Soils' workshop</li> <li>• <b>20</b> came to a workshop run jointly with Butterfly Conservation on 'Hedges, Wildlife &amp; Payments'</li> </ul> <p>Provided bespoke advice on hedges, meadows, grants, tree planting, visitor management, tree disease and heritage features to over <b>10</b> individual landowners (8b) Also supported the Landscape Trust with a mid-tier Countryside Stewardship application</p> <p>Supported the Coppice Co-op and Silverdale District Woodbank, 2 local groups carrying out woodland management, producing woodfuel and helping people in fuel poverty (8e)</p> <p>Delivered an AONB rural skills programme through competition and training events. <b>14</b> competitors took part in the AONB's Hedgelaying competition – part of the 2019-20 Lancashire &amp; Westmorland Hedgelaying Association Grand Prix. Chainsaw training was organised for <b>3</b> AONB volunteers. Multiple organisations in the AONB will also benefit from this. (8g)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 9:</b> Ensure that the visitor economy is environmentally sustainable and contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities, and enable visitors to have high quality experiences of nature, culture and quiet recreation.</p>	<p>Worked with local Parish Councils to develop, design and produce information panels to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism and improve the visitor experience (9b)</p> <p>Provided 'bedroom packs' of our leaflets to local accommodation providers (9c)</p> <p>Promoted and supported the Silverdale and Arnsdale Arts Trail – including the Landscape Trust's photography exhibition (9d)</p> <p>'Gateway to Warton Crag' Project launched with community day to gather suggestions on how to improve interpretation there (<a href="#">Find out more Page 17</a>) (9h)</p> <p>Added more local businesses to our website, raising the profile of the fantastic range of locally made produce and helping support the local economy (9i)</p> <p>Worked as a key partner in discussions with the Eden Project in advance of their plans to establish an Eden Project North in Morecambe and hosted a visit by their board members to enable them to learn about the special qualities of the AONB (9j)</p>

<p><b>Strategic objective 10:</b> Support delivery of affordable housing and services to help meet local community needs and environmentally sustainable local economic activity that conserves and enhances the special qualities of the AONB</p>	<p>Use of public transport promoted through leaflets, website, downloadable walks routes etc and through organising public events and meetings in venues which are serviced by bus and/or train wherever possible (10d)</p> <p>Participated in Furness Line Community Rail Partnership, including arranging to co-host Friends of Arnside Station (10e)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 11:</b> Engage local communities in conserving and enhancing the AONB and encourage active involvement through volunteering.</p>	<p>Consultation events held to launch the Gateway to Warton Crag project to establish the views and ambitions of the local community attracted lots of interest and a new Friends of Warton Crag group with monthly volunteer work parties was established (11a, 11d)</p> <p>All 6 parish councils represented on the AONB Executive Committee. Annual reports of AONB Partnership activity provided to each parish (11b)</p> <p>Delivered the AONB Grants Fund - run jointly by the Arnside &amp; Silverdale AONB Partnership and the Arnside/Silverdale Landscape Trust, working together to support projects which conserve and enhance the AONB or connect people with the landscape. This year we have allocated grants to the value of <b>£2062</b> in support of local projects (11c)</p> <p>Worked closely with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust, a charity with over 1000 members, which supports the work of the AONB Partnership and runs a very popular annual events programme including lectures, guided walks and study days (11d)</p> <p>Supported and encouraged the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company's initiative to help people reduce their use of plastic (11f)</p> <p>Provided numerous opportunities to engage in practical conservation management tasks, monitoring, administration and event support through the AONB volunteer programme. (11g)</p> <p>Carried out <b>12</b> monthly litter picks as part of the AONB volunteer programme with <b>40</b> bin bags of rubbish collected and recycled wherever possible(11i)</p>

## A strong connection between people and the landscape



Strategic objective	Actions
<p><b>Strategic objective 12:</b> Provide high quality information, events and activities to enable people to enjoy, learn about and celebrate the AONB's special qualities in a sustainable way.</p>	<p>We continued to deliver our own Communications Strategy to provide a variety of high quality, consistent online and printed material conveying our key messages. Our social media presence increased to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3400</b> followers on Twitter</li> <li>• <b>2100</b> followers on Facebook</li> <li>• <b>1100</b> subscribers to our e-newsletters</li> <li>• Website analytical reports show over <b>34000</b> users and <b>226237</b> page views in this 12-month period. (12a)</li> </ul> <p>Worked with local Parish Councils to develop, design and produce information panels to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism and improve the visitor experience. Further information available on our website under the 'Discover – Things to see and do' section. (12b)</p> <p>We would normally have 2 flagship events in the year – the AONB Apple Day and Annual Conference (12c)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A successful conference 'The Fight for Beauty' was held in January where Dame Fiona Reynolds was our keynote speaker. This was attended by over <b>100</b> delegates.</li> <li>• unfortunately the 2019 AONB Apple Day had to be cancelled at the last minute due to the ill health of the landowner but we were delighted to be able to host another flagship event during 2019 – a celebration of the 70th anniversary of Parliament passing the pioneering legislation that paved the way for the designation of the UK's 46 AONBs. <i>(Find out more Page 18)</i></li> </ul> <p>Ran a successful education programme (12d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hosting over <b>30</b> educational visits to the <b>2</b> Local Nature Reserves</li> <li>• working with <b>4</b> local primary schools (<b>150</b> children in total) on an arts project as part of Light Up Lancaster</li> </ul> <p>Continued to operate an information centre based at the AONB Office with <b>1112</b> visitor enquiries recorded (12f)</p> <p>Reached new audiences through our 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. Woodland Fun Days were attended by around <b>140</b> and Land art workshops by <b>30</b> (12i)</p>

<p><b>Strategic objective 13:</b> Maintain and improve access to the coast and countryside in a sustainable way for a diverse range of people and promote responsible, safe and quiet recreation.</p>	<p>Maintained the footpath network to a high standard through ongoing improvements to public rights of way and concessionary footpaths through good quality signage and vegetation management as part of the AONB volunteer programme of works. (13a)</p> <p>Improved access to Trowbarrow LNR for users of Trampers (all-terrain mobility vehicles) (13b)</p> <p>Worked in partnership with staff from Natural England with regard to the section of the England Coast Path which passes through the AONB (13c)</p> <p>The AONB Trampler, based at RSPB Leighton Moss, was hired <b>84</b> times over this 12 month period (This is lower than previous years due to severe flooding on the reserve in Sept/Oct and then the Covid-19 pandemic) (13d)</p> <p>Installed <b>6</b> new/replacement fingerposts, with several others being repaired/renovated (13g)</p> <p>Actively promoted the Countryside Code through signage and leaflets (13i)</p> <p>Added to the number of downloadable self-guided routes available on our website (13m)</p>
<p><b>Strategic objective 14:</b> Provide opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting with nature, culture and the landscape.</p>	<p>In 2019, the AONB Team launched a pilot project which saw a weekly programme of short guided walks for people living with dementia and their carers (<a href="#">Find out more Page 18</a>) (14a)</p> <p><b>150</b> children were involved in the AONB's Light up Lancaster project. Arnside and Archbishop Hutton Primary Schools (rural within the AONB) were twinned with Morecambe Bay and Ryelands Primary Schools (urban outside the AONB); visits were arranged to Warton Crag where the children set up instruments to measure and amplify the noise of the wind and explore the sights and sounds around them; the visits were followed by artist's workshops back at school to create an entry for the Light Up Lancaster Festival which transformed the streets, gardens and historical venues of Lancaster providing a spectacular 2-night festival of light and art by international and local artists and illuminating the city's heritage buildings, public spaces and community corners; the project necessitated applying for and securing additional resources and grant funding of £5k from the Areti Trust and £1k from the C Wilson Trust was received (14c)</p>

## Some highlights from 2019/20

### An outstanding landscape rich in natural and cultural heritage



#### Arnside & Silverdale AONB receives national and international recognition

We were delighted that the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document was announced as 'Overall Winner' in the **RTPI North West Planning Awards for Excellence 2019** and went on to become a finalist in the National Awards.

It is wonderful to receive this high level recognition for the plan, which is the first of its kind in the country and the result of close collaboration between Lancaster City Council, South Lakeland District Council and the AONB Partnership.

The comments from the RTPI judges highlighted the plan's positive approach to affordable housing provision and the Landscape Capacity approach to identifying potential development sites: *"This approach has helped the plan to achieve the delicate balance of preserving the natural beauty of the area, whilst providing for the specific housing needs of the community. The plan is an excellent example of joint working and positive planning, which has successfully addressed competing policy objectives at the national and local level. It is an innovative and ground-breaking plan, which showcases a wide range of skills and the high quality of planning work involved in its preparation."*

We were also delighted that Arnside & Silverdale AONB was awarded 2nd prize in the "Best Development of a Cultural Landscape of European Relevance" category at the **European Garden Heritage Awards** for our work to research and promote the cultural landscape of the AONB.

The Historic Designed Landscapes Project was initially commissioned by the AONB Partnership in 2013. With the arrival of the railway in the mid-19th century, many northern industrialists built properties here, with the area's distinctive limestone geology leading to some unique developments. Limestone was used as ornamental features in the gardens to create terraces, walks and viewing points.

There was great excitement when the research led to the discovery of a rare post-war garden by Ralph Hancock, who is more well-known for his work designing the roof gardens of the Rockefeller Center in New York.

More detailed research into some of the most important parks/gardens in the AONB was carried out in early 2015 and the final reports are being used to inform the conservation, restoration, enhancement and management of these special places. They are available on our website for use by partners, stakeholders and communities.



## Taking action for nature recovery and biodiversity

The Arnside & Silverdale AONB Team runs a hugely successful volunteer programme, built up over the course of 25 years. There are weekly practical management tasks led by the AONB Countryside Officer who is knowledgeable in terms of how habitats can be created, improved and maintained and how they can fit into the wider jigsaw of the AONB as a whole. The AONB invests in rural skills training (eg drystone walling, hedgelaying, chainsaw operation etc) for volunteers who wish to take part, and is therefore able to offer a skilled and enthusiastic workforce.

This invaluable work undoubtedly has a positive impact on nature recovery and the biodiversity of the area through creating stepping stones and wildlife corridors between the larger reserves as well as buffer zones around them.

In the annual work programme the volunteer group regularly:

- carries out coppice woodland management in the Woodland Trust's Dobshall Wood in Arnside, which buffers Arnside Knott SSSI and SAC . This has opened up the tree canopy allowing ground flora such as primroses and violets to flourish and the reserve is now home to established colonies of butterflies
- maintains the 'orchid verge' at Sandside on behalf of Beetham Parish Council which would otherwise be used as an informal car park – this now provides a habitat for five species of orchids: Early-purple Orchid, Fly Orchid, Twayblade, Common-spotted Orchid and Northern Marsh Orchid, as well as an array of common wildflower species
- conducts management work at Bank Well pond, a Biological Heritage site in Silverdale on behalf of Silverdale Parish Council. This is a fresh-water wildlife pond, and traditional historic livestock watering-place. Eleven species of Odonata have been recorded using the pond including breeding Southern Hawker, Common Darter and Blue Damselfly



## Vibrant and sustainable communities



### Gateway to Warton Crag

The AONB Team is currently helping to deliver a project which will see

- improvements to the Main Quarry car park at Warton Crag
- a wide habitat management programme
- the development of a “Friends of Warton Crag” volunteer group
- improved visitor information and interpretation of the reserves

The main quarry car park is a key arrival point for those visiting the Crag which is highly valued for its exceptional wildlife, geology, and heritage and of course the impressive views over Morecambe Bay. The rich mosaic of habitats supports a range of plants, birds and butterflies including the nationally rare High Brown Fritillary. The cliffs of the quarry are a nesting site for Peregrine Falcon as well as Raven. Last year a study was completed by Historic England and Morecambe Bay Partnership on the scheduled monument at the top of the Crag resulting in it being reinterpreted as a Bronze Age hill top enclosure and further research may follow.

There is so much to discover on Warton Crag, and we hope that through this project we can inform and engage further with our visitors and local community. The project is being funded by a grant of £30,000 from the Lancashire Environmental Fund, Lancashire County Council and the AONB Partnership.

### The Bittern Award

was launched in 2008 to recognise groups, organisations or individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 2019 the award was presented to Feleena Taylor who was nominated for her commitment, energy, enthusiasm and hard work in setting up and leading the AONB’s dementia-friendly “Walks for All” project (*see page 19*)



## A strong connection between people and the landscape



### Dementia friendly walks for all

In 2019, the AONB Team launched a pilot project which saw a weekly programme of short guided walks for people living with dementia and their carers, offering them the opportunity to be able to continue to enjoy our beautiful landscapes, wildlife and culture and to benefit from the support of walking with others.

Thanks to Morecambe Bay Partnership, we were able to offer specialist training by the charity Dementia Adventure to volunteer walks leaders. The walks took about an hour and there was always a chance for a chat and a cuppa afterwards in one of the local cafes.

This pilot initially ran for 6 months and following a full evaluation we were delighted to announce that the project will continue after a short winter break and will be opened up to anyone who would like the support of the group.



### Celebrating 70 years of AONBs

Saturday 21 September was the first day of Landscapes for Life week 2019, a national celebration of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This year saw the 70th anniversary of Parliament passing the pioneering legislation that paved the way for the designation of the UK's 46 AONBs, and to show our love for our precious designated landscapes and the health benefits being in nature brings we invited the local community to gather on the slopes of Arnside Knott and to form a heart shape in the landscape. 250 local residents came along and helped us celebrate and commemorate this milestone.

The National Association for AONBs also commissioned a poem by the Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage called *Fugitives*. Participants in the 'Heart' were delighted to see Simon at the event and to hear him read the poem for the first time.

## Fugitives

Then we woke and were hurtling headlong  
for wealds and wolds,  
blood coursing, the Dee and the Nidd in full spate  
through the spinning waterwheels in the wrists  
and over the heart's weir,  
the nightingale hip-hopping ten to the dozen  
under the morning's fringe.

It was no easy leap, to exit the engine house of the head  
and vault the electric fence  
of commonplace things,  
to open the door of the century's driverless hearse,  
roll from the long cortège  
then dust down and follow  
the twisting ribbon of polecats wriggling free from extinction  
or slipstream the red kite's triumphant flypast out of oblivion  
or trail the catnip of spraint and scat tingeing the morning breeze.

On we journeyed at full tilt  
through traffic-light orchards,  
the brain's compass dialling for fell, moor,  
escarpment and shore, the skull's sextant  
plotting for free states coloured green on the map,  
using hedgerows as handrails,  
barrows and crags as trig points and cats' eyes.

We stuck to the switchbacks and scenic routes,  
steered by the earth's contours and natural lines of desire,  
feet firm on solid footings of bedrock and soil  
fracked only by moles.  
We skimmed across mudflat and saltmarsh,  
clambered to stony pulpits on high hills  
inhaling gallons of pure sky  
into the moors of our lungs,  
bartered bitcoins of glittering shingle and shale.

Then arrived in safe havens, entered the zones,  
stood in the grandstands of bluffs and ghylls, spectators  
to flying ponies grazing wild grass to carpeted lawns,  
oaks flaunting turtle doves on their ring-fingers,  
ospreys fishing the lakes from invisible pulleys and hoists,  
the falcon back on its see-through pivot, lured from its gyre.

Here was nature as future,  
the satellite dishes of blue convolvulus  
tuned to the cosmos, tracking the chatter of stars,  
the micro-gadgets of complex insects  
working the fields, heaths tractored by beetles,  
rainbowed hay meadows tipsy with rain and light,  
golden gravel hoarded in eskers and streams.

And we vowed not to slumber again  
but claimed sanctuary  
under the kittiwake's siren  
and corncrake's alarm,  
in realms patrolled by sleepwalking becks and creeks  
where beauty employs its own border police.

And witnessed ancient trees  
affirming their citizenship of the land,  
and hunkered and swore oaths, made laws  
in hidden parliaments of bays and coves,  
then gathered on commons and capes  
waving passports of open palms, medalled by dog rose and teasel  
and raising the flag of air.

by Simon Armitage

## Thank you and looking forward

This Annual Review gives a short summary of the many things that have been achieved over the last year. I'd like to thank the incredibly hard-working and committed AONB staff and volunteers who all contribute a huge amount of time, energy and knowledge each year to looking after our special landscape and connecting people to it.

We work together with many partners, community groups, funders, landowners and managers, farmers, businesses, and residents and this collaboration is vital. So many people love and value the area and are passionate about its protection.

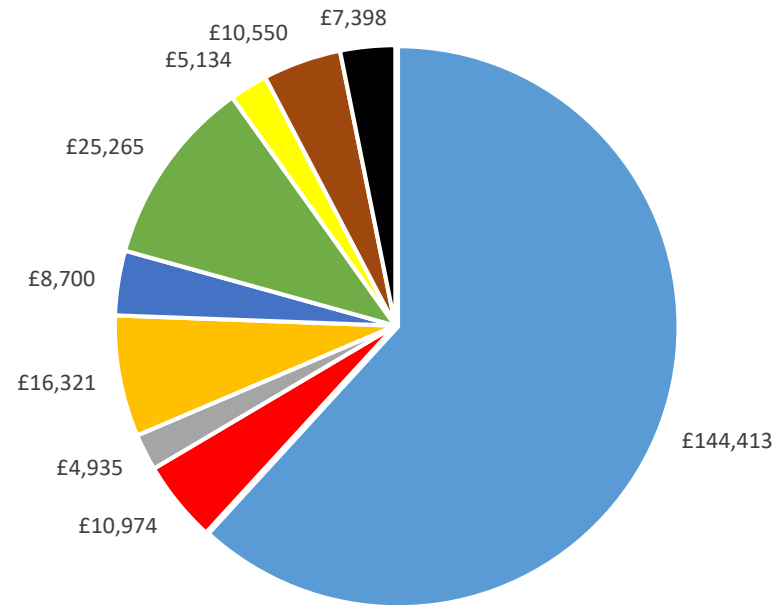
This is a time of great change and challenge: ensuring post-Covid recovery, addressing the climate emergency and ensuring our landscapes truly are for everyone. We were delighted that the national review of designated landscape proposed that AONBs be "strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources" as this will enable us to respond effectively. We are ready to work with others to take this critical work forward.

Lucy Barron  
Arnside & Silverdale AONB Manager



## Financial Summary 2019/20

**Arnside & Silverdale AONB Expenditure 2019-20**

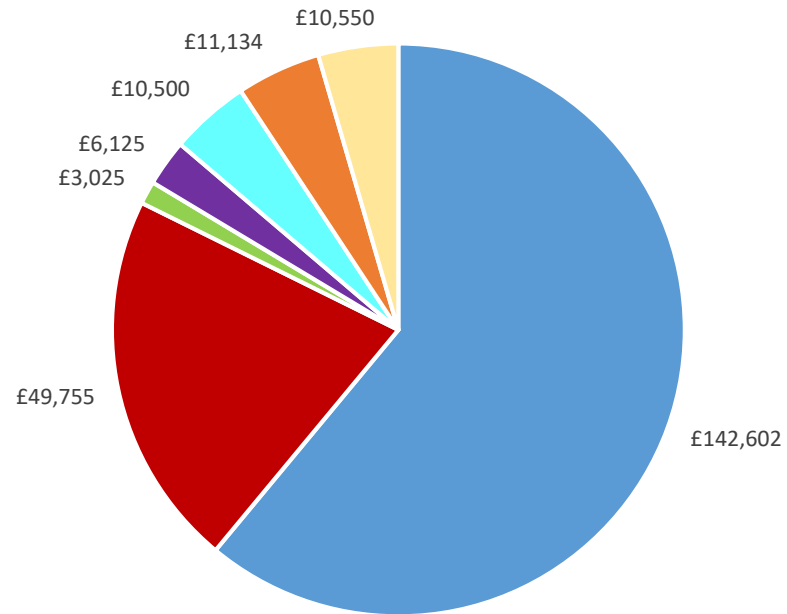


- Staff costs, including travel, subsistence and training
- Core accommodation costs
- Print, Publicity & Events
- Core Partnership running costs
- Host authority support recharges
- AONB Projects & Community engagement programme
- Local Nature Reserves - Gateway to Warton Crag
- Local Nature Reserves - management programme
- Contribution to reserve

**Expenditure**

Staff costs, including travel, subsistence and training	£144,413
Core accommodation costs	£10,974
AONB projects and community engagement programme	£25,265
Print, Publicity & events	£4,935
Core Partnership running costs	£16,321
Host authority support recharges	£8,700
Local Nature Reserves - management programme	£10,550
Local Nature Reserves - Gateway to Warton Crag project	£5,134
Contribution to reserve	£7,398
<b>Total</b>	<b>£233,691</b>

### Arnside & Silverdale AONB Income 2019-20



- Defra
- Local Authorities
- Parish Councils
- Contracting, donations, feed-in tariff and sales
- Host Authority in-kind contribution
- other grant income
- Countryside Stewardship re Local Nature Reserves

## Income

Defra	£142,602
Local Authorities	£49,755
Parish Councils	£3,025
Contracting income, feed-in tariff & donations	£6,125
Other grants	£11,134
Countryside Stewardship re Local Nature Reserves	£10,550
Host Authority in-kind contribution	£10,500
Total	<b>£233,691</b>

## AONB reserve

Balance as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	<b>£38,870</b>
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## Photo credits

Front cover: View over Blackstone Point from Arnside Knott © Sue Hunter

An outstanding landscape rich in natural and cultural heritage: Leighton Moss © Clare Witham

Vibrant and sustainable communities: Arnside & Silverdale AONB Apple Day © Arnside & Silverdale AONB

A strong connection between people and the landscape: WILD! Project © Ella Riden



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