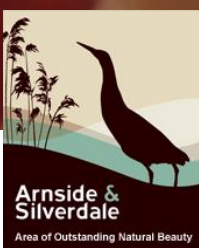




# Arnside & Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Annual Review 2021/22



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## Chairman’s Foreword

### Chairman’s Foreword

Despite the challenges of the ongoing covid pandemic much valuable and important work, detailed in this Annual Review, has been delivered this year to conserve and enhance the AONB and connect people with the landscape. In particular, the new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has transformed the way the AONB Team are able to work with farmers and land managers. We were delighted to welcome Tonia Armer and Richard Park to the team as Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers and we look forward to the programme making a real positive difference within the AONB over the coming years. Our volunteer programmes have gone from strength to strength this year with many new volunteers joining us following the covid lockdowns. I’d like to personally thank all our volunteers for their support and dedication, without which the achievements of the AONB Partnership would not be possible. The continued support of statutory funding partners Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and Defra, is also vital, together with collaboration, cooperation and good relationships with partners and stakeholders. We look forward to the recommendations made as part of the National Review of Designated Landscapes in 2019 taking effect as we move forward.

*Cllr Brian Meakin*

# Annual Review 2021/22

## 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. 54% of the AONB is covered by national Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations and 33% of the AONB is under woodland cover.

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.

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has:

- 10 scheduled monuments
- 14 listed buildings
- 34 species of Butterfly
- Over 110 km of Public Rights of Way

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 Arnside & Silverdale AONB area includes land administrated by 4 Local Authorities, and 6 Parish Councils.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. As of 2021/22, there are 46 AONBs in the UK.

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.

## Our 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 31st March 2022 and to show how we are contributing to delivery of the objectives set out in the AONB Management Plan 2019-24.



*Left to right: Helen Rawlinson, Sue Hunter, Dougie Watson, Caroline Howard, Lucy Barron, Richard Park, Tonia Armer, Julia Sier, Belinda Barclay*

## The AONB Partnership Team

**AONB Manager:** Lucy Barron

**AONB Officer:** Sue Hunter

**AONB Countryside Officers:** Helen Rawlinson (0.6 FTE); Dougie Watson (0.8 FTE)

**AONB Communications & Funding Officer:** Caroline Howard

**Local Nature Reserves Warden and Gateway to Warton Crag Project Officer:** Belinda Barclay (0.5 FTE plus additional hours)

**Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers:** Antonia Armer (0.4 FTE, August 2021 onwards), Richard Park (0.4 FTE, August 2021 onwards)

**Wildflower Nursery Coordinator:** Julia Sier (Casual)

The team is based at The Old Station Building, Arnside.

**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 1: Conserve, enhance and improve understanding of the natural beauty, landscape and seascape character, and special qualities of Arnside & Silverdale AONB

We gave landscape planning advice to Local Authority Planning Officers **64 times**, in response to planning applications. We assessed a total of **186 planning applications** (1c), 177 within the AONB and 9 outside the AONB.

We worked as a key partner in various projects and steering groups including the **Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership** and **Cumbria Local Nature Partnership**. We were also involved in the **Morecambe Bay Partnership**, **Warton Mires Steering Group** and the **Back On Our Map (BOOM)** project as a supporting partner (1d).

At Warton Crag and Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserves, we managed the reserves in accordance with **2 Higher Level Countryside Stewardship** schemes, undertaking work to conserve and enhance the special limestone habitats, plants and wildlife (1f). We organised and supervised **65 practical conservation tasks** with the AONB volunteer team on the LNRs and other sites, supporting the management of various sites and conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the AONB (1f). The AONB has established a **tree nursery** at Trowbarrow LNR, with volunteers helping growing native trees of local provenance (1l). In 2021-22 this was predominantly oak. We included woodland management prescriptions in Trowbarrow and Warton Crag Local Nature Reserves (1h). Both of the LNRs that we manage have had **conservation grazing**, with cattle at Warton Crag LNR and ponies at Trowbarrow LNR (1i). Warton Crag has now moved out of the Higher Level Countryside Stewardship, as we are preparing an application for combined stewardship for the sites in 2023.

We supported the **undergrounding of overhead wires between Silverdale and Warton**, as part of the Underground for Visual Amenity Scheme (1k).

We have continued to work with Lancaster University on the **Dark Skies Project** (1n), as well as supporting Friends of the Lake District in promoting the Cumbria Dark Skies Festival. We have taken **18 sky quality meter readings at 18 sites** (40 SQMs now undertaken on 38 sites across the AONB from October 2019 to March 2022).

### Strategic objective 2: Conserve, enhance and improve understanding of the natural capital of the AONB and the range and value of the public benefits and ecosystem services that it provides to society

We promoted the health & wellbeing benefits of nature through our social media feeds (2b), including the promotion of our Walks for All programme and of easy access walking routes.

### Strategic objective 3: Conserve and improve understanding of the geodiversity of the AONB.

In our formal responses to **2 planning applications**, we have raised awareness of the existence and importance of a Limestone Pavement Order (3b). We also directly conserved **7 hectares of land for geodiversity** (3b).

We raised awareness of the importance of geodiversity in the AONB landscape by commissioning and contributing to a **Geological Story of the AONB**, due for publication in 2022 (3c, 3d). We continued to offer the **Landscape Trust Geotrails** for sale in the AONB Information Centre (3d). We have raised awareness of the **Conservation Management Plan for the Warton Crag Scheduled Monument** (produced by Morecambe Bay Partnership, with the AONB Partnership's support) (3e).

We have developed links with **Lancaster University** to facilitate future geology research projects (3f, 3g).

**Strategic objective 4: 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.**

We worked as a key partner in the **Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership** (LNP) and participated in discussions about wider **Nature Recovery Networks** (NRNs) across Cumbria and Lancashire (4a, 4b). We supported the **Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot** (4a, 4b). We worked as part of the **Colchester Declaration steering group** to develop national approaches to nature recovery within the AONB network and began work to develop an AONB 'coastal cluster' project (4a, b). We advised the **Westmorland Red Squirrels Group** (4m). We worked in partnership with the **Forestry Commission** on deer management (4n). We organised meetings and field visits for the **Local Nature Reserves Advisory Groups** to ensure collaboration and joined-up habitat management on these 2 sites on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept (Trowbarrow) and 25<sup>th</sup> June (Warton Crag) (4q).

We worked with Plantlife to deliver the Green Recovery Challenge Funded '**Meadow Makers**' meadows restoration project within the AONB (4b), enhancing 11 meadows habitats within the area. We organised and supervised **practical conservation tasks** with the AONB volunteer team to improve grassland habitats through activities such as scrub clearance, plug planting and seed collection (4g). Through the Meadow Makers project we helped to ensure the appropriate seasonal cutting of hay meadows and spreading of species-rich green hay, we also facilitated a scything course as part of the project (4h, 4i). As part of both the **Bee on the Verge** project and the Meadow Makers project we created or enhanced pollinator habitats (4w) including those in roadside margins and verges (4x).

We published two issues of the '**Land Matters**' newsletter (4f). We launched the **Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme** in the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB, hiring two part time Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers to deliver the programme. We allocated over £55,000 in grant funding via the programme (4f). We delivered a workshop on carbon and soil (1g) and supported the **Coppice Co-Op** in their purchase of a mobile retort, both funded through the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (1h).

The **AONB volunteer team** undertaking vital habitat management works in ancient woodlands and other key woodland sites, including scrub management and coppicing (4l). We carried out **ash dieback monitoring** at Warton Crag and Trowbarrow (4l). We maintained **wildlife boxes** on Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserve and Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve (4o). We controlled the spread of **invasive cotoneaster** through AONB volunteer work parties (4r).

We supported **Back on our Map** (BOOM) project officers in their work on **species reintroduction** (4t) and in undertaking woodland management across a wider area (1h).

We continued our participation in the **Warton Mires project**, working with RSPB and others. This project which will create a large area of wet grassland habitat in the south of the AONB alongside flood alleviation measures for Warton village, although progress has been somewhat disrupted due to the pandemic. We worked with the RSPB and Salford University to put together a proposal for a virtual reality model for the project to aid community and stakeholder consultation (4p, 4aa).

**Strategic objective 5: Improve water quality and condition of watercourses and waterbodies in the AONB and support natural flood management.**

We supported South Cumbria Rivers Trust (SCRT) on the **Arnsdale 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 carry out water quality monitoring at Leighton Beck (5a). We worked as an active partner in the **Becks to Bay** local catchment partnership led by SCRT (5b). We promoted the **Love my Beach** initiative via social media (5f).

In our formal responses to **5 planning applications**, we have raised awareness of the importance of septic tanks (5g).

**Strategic objective 6: Conserve, restore and improve understanding of the historic environment of the AONB including heritage assets, historic landscape character and cultural heritage**

In our formal responses to **17 planning applications**, we have raised awareness of the importance of designated or non-designated heritage assets and features and the historic landscape. We have maintained the ‘A rich sense of history’ section on the AONB website and downloadable walks offer an insight into the area’s rich heritage. Our Communications volunteers have researched content to improve these sections of the website, including information about historic wells and water in the AONB (6o). We held **AONB volunteer conservation work parties** at **2 historic wells** in Silverdale – *Bank Well* and *Woodwell* (6s).

### Strategic objective 7: 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

We implemented a landscape-capacity-led approach to planning and development as set out in the **AONB Development Plan Document (DPD)** (7b-x). We assessed **186 planning applications** relevant to the AONB according to the planning protocol and submitted **64 formal responses** (7f).

We submitted **3 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: Lancaster City Council Climate Emergency Review of the Local Plan; Lancaster District Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy; and the South Lakeland Local Plan Review – Issues and Options (7e).

## Vibrant and sustainable communities



### Strategic objective 8: 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.

We launched our **Farming and Land Management Group**, developing a network for farmers within the AONB to support a viable sustainable approach to ‘high nature-value’ farming and forestry (8a). We supported the **Coppice Co-op** and **Silverdale District Woodbank**, 2 local groups carrying out woodland management, producing woodfuel and helping people in fuel poverty (1i, 8e). We actively supported the Landscape Trust Reserves committee (8b).

We worked with Butterfly Conservation to develop plans for extension of the **Morecambe Bay Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund** scheme (8c).

The **Damon Peacock Hedgelaying Competition** took place at Dobshall Wood on the 9th January 2022, in conjunction with the Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association (1j, 8g). 18 competitions took part, competing across Junior (under 18s), Starter, Novice and Open categories. Volunteer sessions prior to and following the event also included training in these rural skills, and poles were harvested onsite by our volunteer for use in the competition.

**Strategic objective 9: 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.**

We worked with local Parish Councils to develop, design and produce **information panels** to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism and improve the visitor experience. We worked with Silverdale Parish Council to develop a panel for Silverdale (9b, 12b). Further information is also available on our website under the 'Discover – Things to see and do' section (12b). We provided '**bedroom packs**' of our leaflets to local accommodation providers upon request (9c). We remained a member of **Cumbria Tourism** and supported local Tourist Information Centres through provision of information and our '**Discover**' leaflet and **Visitor Map** (9f). Our Local Nature Reserves Warden monitored our **Local Nature Reserve** sites to ensure they were maintained in a suitable condition for visitors (9h).

We promoted the **Silverdale & Arnside Arts & Crafts Trail** (9d). We maintained the local businesses feature on our website, raising the profile of the fantastic range of locally made produce and helping support the local economy (9i).

We worked as a key partner in discussions with the Eden Project in advance of their plans to establish an **Eden Project North** in Morecambe (9j), through our role within the Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership.

**Strategic objective 10: 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.**

We **promoted the use of public transport** through leaflets, website, downloadable walks routes etc. wherever possible, although this was scaled back due to Covid 19 restrictions (10d). We participated in **Furness Line Community Rail Partnership**, including co-hosting Friends of Arnside Station (10e).

We promoted the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and Arnside & Silverdale AONB Grants Fund via social media, word of mouth, our website and some direct mailouts. We also suggested other grant funding options in response to enquiries and promoted possible sources of grant funding for local projects via social media (10g).

**Strategic objective 11: Engage local communities in conserving and enhancing the AONB and encourage active involvement through volunteering.**

We delivered the **AONB Grants Fund** - run jointly by the Arnside & 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 (11c).

. This year the grant supported the following projects:

- Tree planting at Bottoms Farm (1l)
- The restoration of Severn, a yacht built by Crossfields of Arnside in 1912
- The erection of a plinth for an interpretation panel at Jenny Brown's Point (6e)

We worked with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust and Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company to develop possible resilience grant funding applications (11d). We also worked together to develop a joint events programme and led on events whilst the other organisations have not had the capacity to do so. We have worked closely with the **Arnside/Silverdale AONB Landscape Trust**, a charity with over 1000 members, which supports the work of the AONB Partnership (11d).

We supported and encouraged the **Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company's** initiative to help people reduce their use of plastic (11f). Working with the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company we developed the **Bittern Sustainable Schools Programme** to support schools within the AONB to improve their environmental sustainability and understanding of the special qualities of the local natural environment (11h).

Our **Bee on the Verge** project worked with Yealand Women's Institute, Yealand Redmayne Parish Council, Yealand Conyers Parish Council, Arnside Parish Council and Beetham Parish Council to identify roadside verges and community green spaces for enhancement (11h). All **6 parish councils** are represented on the **AONB Executive Committee**. We provided annual reports of AONB Partnership activity to each parish (11b).



We developed the AONB Partnership volunteer programme to include the following opportunities:

- Habitat & Access Management (Tuesdays, weekly)
- Litter Pick (Thursdays, monthly)
- Friends of Warton Crag (Saturdays, monthly)
- Communications (remote with a monthly meeting)
- Photography (remote)
- Walks for All (Tuesdays, weekly, March – December)

Where possible, we provided opportunities to engage in practical conservation management tasks, monitoring, administration and event support through the **AONB volunteer programme**. Volunteers have continued throughout to help us with website updates and social media. We supported our volunteer network through lockdowns, to avoid social isolation and put them in touch with local volunteer support networks if needed (11g). Volunteers undertook vital habitat management works on a range of sites from SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites to ancient woodlands and roadside verges. We organised and supervised **65 practical conservation tasks** with the AONB volunteer team, supporting the management of various sites and conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of the AONB (1f). **Volunteers contributed 3437 hours** of their time. We carried out **11 monthly litter picks** as part of the AONB volunteer programme with over **30 bags of rubbish** collected and recycled wherever possible. We also organised the annual joint litter pick with the National Trust Volunteers and our regular Tuesday Habitat & Access Management Volunteers at the Carnforth Slag Heaps (5l, 11i). As part of the legacy of the 'Gateway to Warton Crag' project, we organised activities for the **Friends of Warton Crag volunteer group**, in line with the main AONB volunteer programme (9h, 11a, 11d). We continued to advertise various volunteering opportunities on our website, both AONB Partnership led and on behalf of the Landscape Trust and other local stakeholders (11e).

## A strong connection between people and the landscape



**Strategic objective 12: 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.**

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:

- **4,287** followers on Twitter
- **700** followers on Instagram
- **3,212** followers on Facebook
- **1,416** subscribers to our e-newsletters
- Website analytical reports show **46,052** users and **260,238** page views in this 12-month period (12a).

Due to the uncertainty around Covid-19 restrictions we did not host an annual conference, however we delivered two remote **Talking the Landscape** lectures via Zoom. One lecture focused on the partnership, Landscape Trust and Bittern Countryside CIC (1o), and the other discussed woodland management techniques in the AONB (2b). We delivered the first in a series of guided walks, as part of the **Walking the Landscape** series, based on the 'Wells of Silverdale' walking route (1o, 12c, 14b). We operated the information centre based at the AONB Office, opening when in line with government guidance on Covid-19 (12f).

Despite the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, we were able to engage directly with local schools on a few occasions, hosting **4 educational visits** to the 2 Local Nature Reserves (12d). We delivered a project funded by the Areti Trust entitled **The Wyrn of Trowbarrow**. Children from 2 schools within the AONB and 2 schools from the Lancaster & Morecambe district were brought into the AONB for a workshop about ectotherms and a walk through Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserve, where they engaged in land art activities facilitated by local artists Shane Johnstone and Anna Read. They then worked with the artists to create a mythical beast for the reserve (a giant flying serpent made from lanterns) and brought their creation to Light Up Lancaster where they undertook three parades over the two-day event (12g, 14c). We also delivered the pilot **Into the Woods** project, bringing students from Chadwick Pupil Referral Unit to Silverhelme Scout Camp on a weekly basis for a term, for workshops facilitated by Stomping Ground CIC. This project was generously funded by the Areti Trust (12h, 14c). Unfortunately, the first of our WILD! Woodland Fun Days to be booked after the Covid-19 restrictions eased had to be postponed due to high winds, but the event was rescheduled for later in 2022 (12i).

**Strategic objective 13: 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.**

We **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). We purchased and installed **10 new/replacement fingerpost waymarkers** (13g). We maintained downloadable **self-guided routes** available on our website (13m). We also **improved access to Trowbarrow LNR** for users of Trampers (all-terrain mobility vehicles) (13b). The **AONB Tramper**, based at RSPB Leighton Moss, was hired 21 times (13d). We shared surveys feeding into feasibility assessments for a new footpath/cycleway from Grange-over-Sands to Arnside via our social media (13l).

We worked in partnership with staff from Natural England with regard to the section of the **England Coast Path** which passes through the AONB (13c).

We updated our website with further information for visitors to encourage responsible behaviour in the countryside (4bb, 13h). We also hosted a Visitor and Access Management Group meeting to discuss visitor welcome and behaviour management issues within the AONB (13h, 13j). We promoted the updated **Countryside Code** via our website and social media (4bb, 13h, 13i). We supported Silverdale Parish Council in planning a safety on the sands video (13k). We raised awareness of the updated Countryside Code via our website and social media outputs (4bb).

**Strategic objective 14: Provide opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting with nature, culture and the landscape.**

We promoted the rights of way network and Local Nature Reserves both via our online presence and printouts and leaflets available in the Information Centre (14b). We highlighted the benefits of nature and beauty and landscape for health and wellbeing via our website and social media streams (14b). We facilitated the **Dementia Friendly Walks for All** programme as well as delivering training facilitated by Dementia Adventure in February 2022 (14a, 14b).



## Some highlights from 2021/22

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

In 2021 / 2022 we continued to manage Trowbarrow and Warton Crag Local Nature Reserves, in line with our Countryside Stewardship agreements, as well as managing a network of small sites in the AONB (for example the orchard verge at Sandside).

We participated in the Plantlife led **Meadow Makers** Project, funded by the NLHF Green Recovery Challenge Award. As part of this project we enhanced 11 meadow habitats within the AONB. As part of this project, we brought children from Arnside National School out to Coldwell Meadow to celebrate National Meadows Day, as well as hosting an event for the general public from Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve. We hosted a scything workshop to promote the traditional rural skill, which helps to manage grasslands for biodiversity. We also worked with the project apprentices, helping them build skills in both nature recovery and in communications.

We developed the **Bee on the Verge** project we supported the initiation and development of the Arnside Wild Verge Group, a working group with Arnside Parish Council and carried out restoration and improvements on 3 sites in the Arnside Parish. We also worked with Beetham Parish Council and Yealand Women's Institute, identifying further sites for the project. We undertook baselines surveys to determine the species present and collected seeds through the Meadow Makers project and volunteer work parties. We prepared, sewed and plug planted 6 sites.

The government launched the **Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme** in Summer 2021. We employed two Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers, Tonia Armer and Richard Park, to help deliver the programme. The programme built on prior work with the Farming and Land Managers Group and we were able to help several landowners and managers bring forward applications to the Local Assessment Panel, which we established and facilitate. During 2021-22 the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme funded:

- The planting of 2km of hedges (including 100 in-hedge trees) at Arnside Tower Farm
- The purchase of a mobile retort by The Coppice Coop, to help support local charcoal production in coppice managed woodlands
- The purchase of a livestock trailer, water bowser, gates and other items to facilitate conservation grazing on Warton Crag and Black Hedges (multi-partner application led by RSPB Leighton Moss).
- A carbon audit for the Morecambe Bay Conservation Grazing Company's farm.
- The replacement of rainwater storage tanks to facilitate conservation grazing at the Landscape Trust's Coldwell Nature Reserves.

### Vibrant and sustainable communities

During 2021-22 our **volunteer programmes** have boomed, with volunteer contributing a total of 3437 hours of their time to various volunteer programmes. We have expanded our offer to include more structured volunteer opportunities for a wider range of volunteer activities. The Friends of Warton Crag group has become firmly established and offers a regular weekend volunteering opportunity, increasing accessibility for family groups and other audiences who may not be able to offer time during the week. Our volunteer litter pickers removed over 30 bags of rubbish through their monthly meetings. Volunteer photographers have contributed superb photographs, and communications volunteers helped to research content for our online communications and the first of our *Walking the Landscape* events.

The 2022 **Hedgelaying Competition** was held at Dobshall Wood in Arnside, and was dedicated in memory of Damon Peacock. The competition saw competitors young and not-so-young laying the hedge along the footpath at Dobshall Wood Meadow, and AONB volunteers attended to interpret the event for members of the public who were fascinated to see the rural skill in practice. One of our volunteer photographers took photographs on the day which appeared in local newspapers, and also produced a video which we shared through various social media channels.

### A strong connection between people and the landscape

In Autumn 2021 we were able to undertake a project funded by the Areti Trust, bringing schoolchildren from schools both within the AONB and from the Lancaster & Morecambe district into Trowbarrow Local Nature Reserve to work with artists and create a mythical creature for the reserve. The children then paraded the **Wyrms of Trowbarrow** around the *Light Up Lancaster* festival.

Also funded by the Areti Trust we delivered an Autumn pilot programme of *Into the Woods*, a new initiative working with Chadwick Pupil Referral Unit to bring young people from their mental health unit into Silverdale on a weekly basis for woodland wellbeing sessions with Stomping Ground CIC. Participants learned how to put up hammocks and tarpaulin shelters, cooked on a fire and tried their hand at rock stacking with land artist Richard Shilling. In the summer season we ran a second pilot, which included a trip to Leighton Moss and Trowbarrow and a day of sand art on the shore.

With the help of our Communications Volunteers, we have substantially grown our **social media** following. Following a shift to online pre-visit research during the pandemic, we have developed the **website 'Discover' pages** to offer more useful information to visitors. This has included safety messaging and the promotion of the refreshed Countryside Code.

As Covid-19 restrictions eased we have been able to start planning and delivering a new **events programme**. We worked with the Landscape Trust and Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company to develop a programme, conducting a survey to establish audience interests. We delivered online *Talking the Landscape* lectures and the first of our *Walking the Landscape* guided walks, with the help of our volunteers and partners.

## The Bittern Award 2021: The Back On Our Map (BOOM) Project

The 2021 Bittern Award recognised the efforts of the Back On Our Map (BOOM) Project, who have been working with local volunteers to reintroduce species within the Arnside & Silverdale AONB.

During the summer of 2021 the project saw the reintroduction of the hazel dormouse into woodlands on the Cumbria / Lancashire border. Since Britain's only native dormouse was returned to woodlands last summer, their numbers have been steadily rising with offspring even producing their own young. The AONB has also played host to BOOM's green-winged orchids, laboratory-cultivated by Kew Gardens and now carefully watched over by NE and National Trust staff.

At a time of biodiversity crisis, BOOM has provided inspirational nature enhancement with such positive impacts. Huge importance is placed on community and involves people from a variety of backgrounds. BOOM's far-reaching four-year reintroduction programme extends to 10 different kinds of endangered flora and fauna across South Cumbria, with Morecambe Bay Partnership overseeing volunteers.

BOOM Manager, Jo Sayers, said: "It was a wonderful surprise to learn about the award as it celebrates the achievements of many, including former team member, Dr Deborah Brady, and shows that our ethos of bringing back species to and with communities is the right one. There is great change in the countryside and this helps demonstrate to funders and decision-makers the value of what we are doing. We have helped raise the profile of hazel dormice to a nationwide audience. For the volunteers, I know it has captured their hearts and enthusiasm. We have learned from one another and the future for these adorable little mammals is in competent hands. We now eagerly await their awakening from hibernation and this year's release of more dormice in a different area of nearby woodland."

The BOOM project was made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and backed by University of Cumbria. For the reintroduction of the hazel dormouse the project team worked with the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) who manage the dormouse reintroduction programme, the Common Dormouse Captive Breeders Group and Zoological Society of London, who supplied the dormice, landowner Natural England (NE) and several other partners.

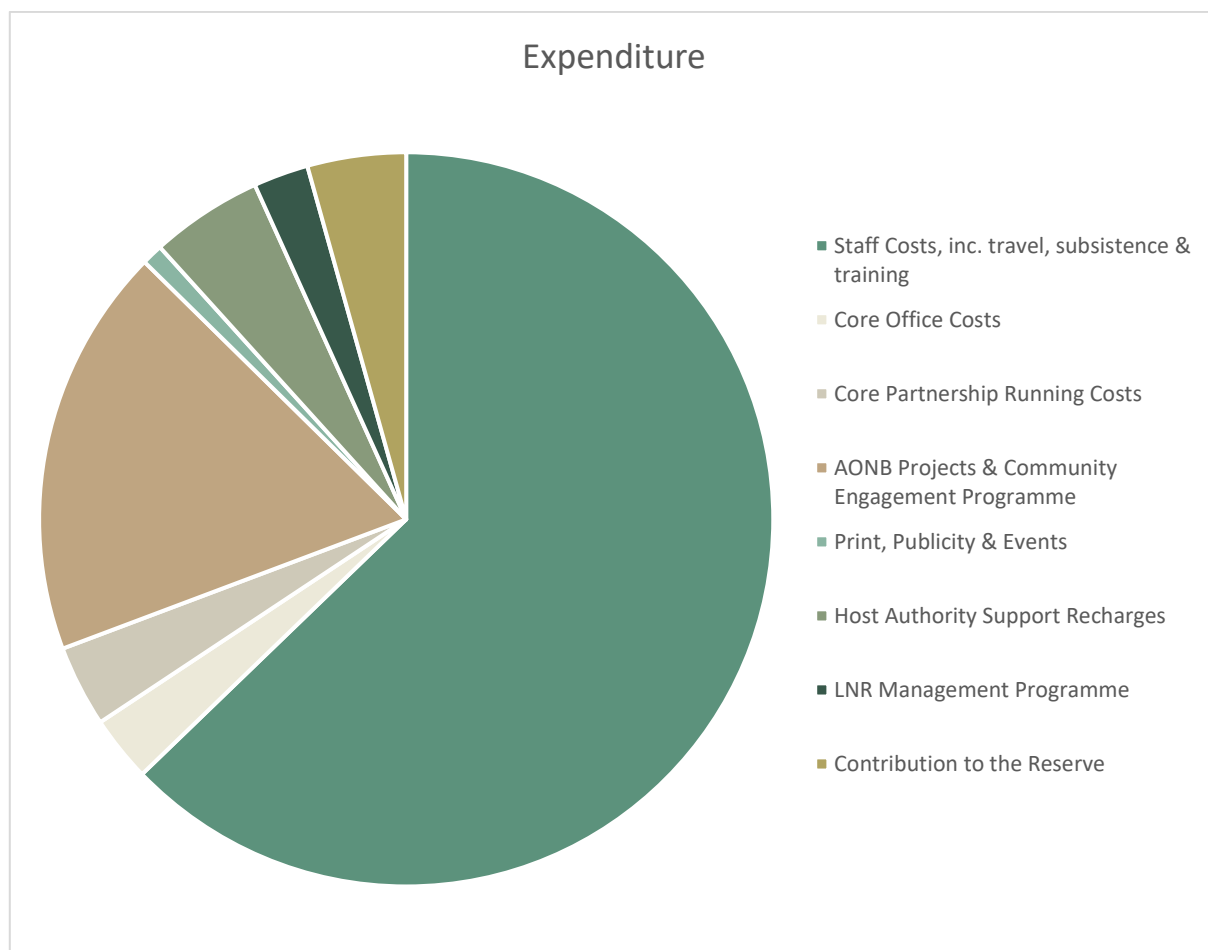
## **Thank you and looking forward**

This Annual Review gives a snapshot of just some of the huge amount of work that goes into conserving the AONB and connecting people with the landscape but cannot fully reflect the integral role that farmers and land managers play in caring for the landscape. The new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, for the first time, gives the AONB Team the resources and capacity to work directly with farmers and land managers to develop and fund projects that make a real positive difference. We are very pleased with the excellent start that has been made and excited to see what the programme can deliver over the next few years. The publication of the National Review of Designated Landscapes in 2019 made a series of recommendations for AONBs and National Parks to be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing into the future, alive for nature and beauty, and, for everyone. Everything we do is focussed around putting this into practice. Thank you to the many people involved in caring for Arnside & Silverdale AONB, a very special place.

***Lucy Barron***  
***AONB Manager***

## Financial Summary 2021/22

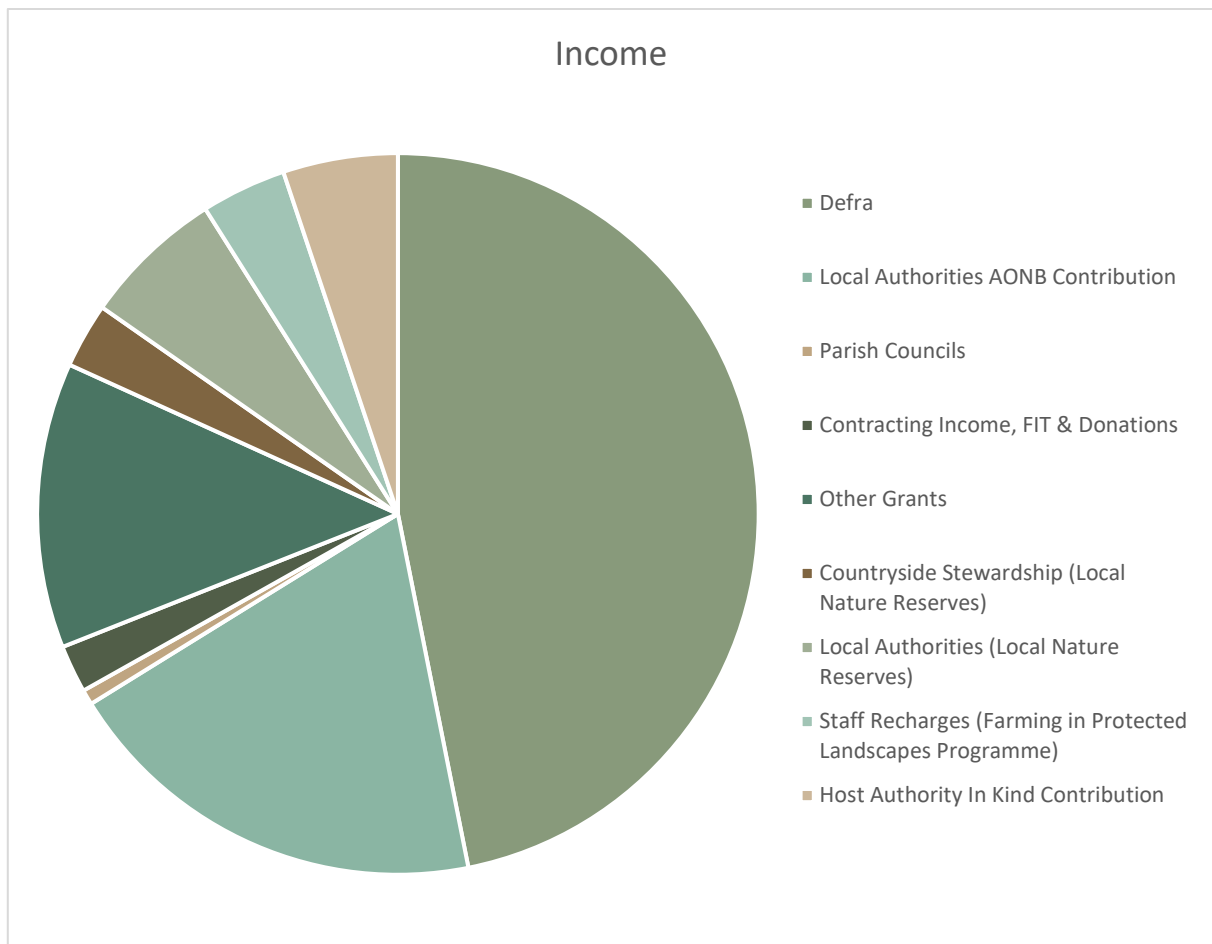
### Expenditure 2021/22



### Expenditure summary

Staff Costs, inc. travel, subsistence & training	£207,107.00
Core Office Costs	£9,547.80
Core Partnership Running Costs	£11,848.58
AONB Projects & Community Engagement Programme	£59,684.94
Print, Publicity & Events	£3,060.55
Host Authority Support Recharges	£16,300.00
LNR Management Programme	£7,989.15
Contribution to the Reserve	£14,321.36
<b>Total</b>	<b>£329,859.38</b>

## Income 2020/21



## Income Summary

Defra	£154,598.00
Local Authorities AONB Contribution <sup>1</sup>	£63,705.00
Parish Councils <sup>2</sup>	£2,225.00
Contracting Income, FIT & Donations	£7,048.41
Other Grants	£42,209.84
Countryside Stewardship (Local Nature Reserves)	£9,613.64
Local Authorities (Local Nature Reserves)	£20,894.25
Staff Recharges (Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme)	£12,594.24
Host Authority In Kind Contribution	£16,971.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£329,859.38</b>

## Balance held in reserves:

AONB reserve	22/23
Balance as at 01/04/22	£66,624.36

<sup>1</sup> South Lakeland District Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancaster City Council, Cumbria County Council

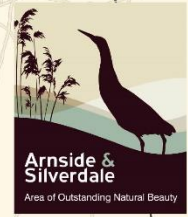
<sup>2</sup> Arnsdale Parish Council, Beetham Parish Council, Silverdale Parish Council, Yealand Conyers Parish Council, Yealand Redmayne Parish Council, Warton Parish Council

# Arnside & Silverdale





Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Discover... explore... enjoy

- Best places for ...**
-  Butterflies/ dragonflies
  -  Orchids/ wildflowers
  -  Bird watching
  -  Buildings of historic interest
  -  Views



**WARNING** Access onto Morecambe Bay is dangerous. Seek local guidance.

- KEY**
-  AONB boundary
  -  Public footpaths
  -  Concessionary/permissive footpaths
  -  Bridleways
  -  Byways
  -  Railway
  -  Limestone pavement
  -  Woodland
  -  Saltmarsh

The representation on this map of any other road, track or path is no evidence of the existence of a right of way.  
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 Ordnance Survey 100025403.



# Arnside & Silverdale



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Photo Credits: Brad Cheek, Tony Riden, Deborah Woods, Arnside & Silverdale AONB Partnership



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