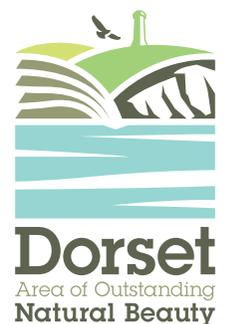


“With every £1 of Dorset local authority support, we are able to bring in over £29 of funding from elsewhere. We use this support to conserve and enhance our outstanding landscape in the most efficient, effective and innovative ways we can. Working in partnership and supporting local businesses, communities and landowners is always at the heart of our work”

Andy Foot, Dorset AONB Chairman

Annual Review 2013 -14

Highlights





Dorset AONB team uncovers £ millions for the land of bones and stones

In June 2013, the Heritage Lottery Fund announced that the Dorset AONB Landscape Partnership bid was successful, enabling us to transform £170k of compensation for the Weymouth Relief Road into a £2.86 million, 5 year project to conserve and celebrate the unique heritage of the Ridgeway area.

Community engagement is key to the success of this project - raising the profile of this nationally significant archaeology as well as engaging local people in future care and management.

A strong partnership of environmental, arts and heritage organisations is in place to achieve this and progress this year includes:

- Reaching young people through a strong and sustainable schools programme
- Recruiting a Countryside Ranger for the Ridgeway who will support apprentice rangers, volunteer training & events
- Engaging communities in cultural heritage of the Ridgeway through the West Gallery Music project
- Using art to work with communities to explore the nature of the Ridgeway and how it is managed through the Land Felt project and Seasonal Sound Walks

Wild Purbeck makes good progress for wildlife

The Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area (NIA) has shown that working in partnership really does add value. NIA status has not only brought Purbeck national recognition as an area of outstanding biodiversity, it has also allowed us access to new resources and national networks of expertise. This year this has helped us:

- Restore 400+ ha of heathland, create 15 ha of new woodland and improve a further 315ha
- Involve over 3000 people in events & training as well as 1278 volunteer days
- Attract £549,000 new funding for Purbeck
- Establish a community woodland at Langton Westwood
- Develop good practice through workshops on grassland management and climate change resilience



Local people start to restore Dorset's iconic road signs

Parish Councils, community groups and local businesses have become champions in the restoration of their local fingerposts.

Building on the thorough survey of fingerposts in Dorset last year, the Dorset AONB led Dorset Fingerpost Project have been working with Dorset County Council Highways to restore these iconic Dorset signs to their former glory.

Local craftsmen have been challenged to make new letters, arms, and posts in the original style and local fingerpost champions have been enlisted to bring these old favourites back to life. Two restored posts have been reinstated, 5 are awaiting installation and 40+ are in the pipeline.



Young people draw inspiration from the landscape

Over 400 school children, from 15 local schools across Dorset, have been looking at landscape artworks from the past to learn more about their local area.

The Drawing Inspiration project worked with local museums to uncover historic paintings, sketches and photographs of the landscape. The schools used these as a starting point to take a closer look at their local area and how it has changed.

Artists Darrell Wakelam and Richard Jeffery worked with the schools to produce their own artworks inspired by those they uncovered.

Primary schools made models of their local area and these have been developed into walking trails to highlight their local heritage. Secondary schools rephotographed their local area, creating stunning artworks displayed in local exhibitions.



Statutory Dorset AONB Management Plan in place

Local authorities and the wider AONB partners worked hard this year to produce the statutory 5 year management plan for the AONB, which was adopted in March.

As well as being the mechanism to unlock sources of funding, the management plan has been an effective mechanism for agreeing priorities with up-front engagement of Parish Councils, planners, landowners and working partners.

Key changes since the last plan include:

- Enhanced Planning, Highways and Infrastructure chapter
- Climate change and ecosystem services at heart of policies & actions
- Community engagement running throughout the plan
- New Cultural Landscape chapter to reflect special qualities



New champion for local food & drink has an overwhelming 1st year

We've known for a long time that food is a sure way to people's hearts but have been overwhelmed by the passion shown since we launched the Dorset Food & Drink initiative in July.

With joint ambition of supporting local producers and celebrating the wealth of local food in Dorset, the success of Dorset Food & Drink is down to its members. Successes this year include:

- 90 members signed up with 9 Founder members including some of the biggest food businesses in

the county – Dorset Cereals, Hall & Woodhouse and Olives et al.

- Dorset Day at the Houses of Parliament, with great attendance from Peers, MPs and their staff
- First ever all-Dorset Christmas Fair at Athelhampton House which attracted over 2500 people.
- Special affordable deal for DF&D members to attend the Bournemouth Hotel & Catering Show

"Joining Dorset Food & Drink was the best business decision I've ever made"

Local people conserve, promote and celebrate their outstanding landscape

To date, the Dorset AONB Sustainable Development Fund has allocated over £500,000 to support local projects worth over £3million, generating over 18,000 hours of volunteer time.

This year, the projects supported were as diverse as the landscape itself ... local people have been managing woodlands, working with young disadvantaged people, restoring reed beds, promoting the AONB to green tourists, training up in countryside skills and even bringing the landscape into hospital on film.

“SDF funding has really let us move forward with our sustainable forestry project at Prime Coppice Working Woodland”

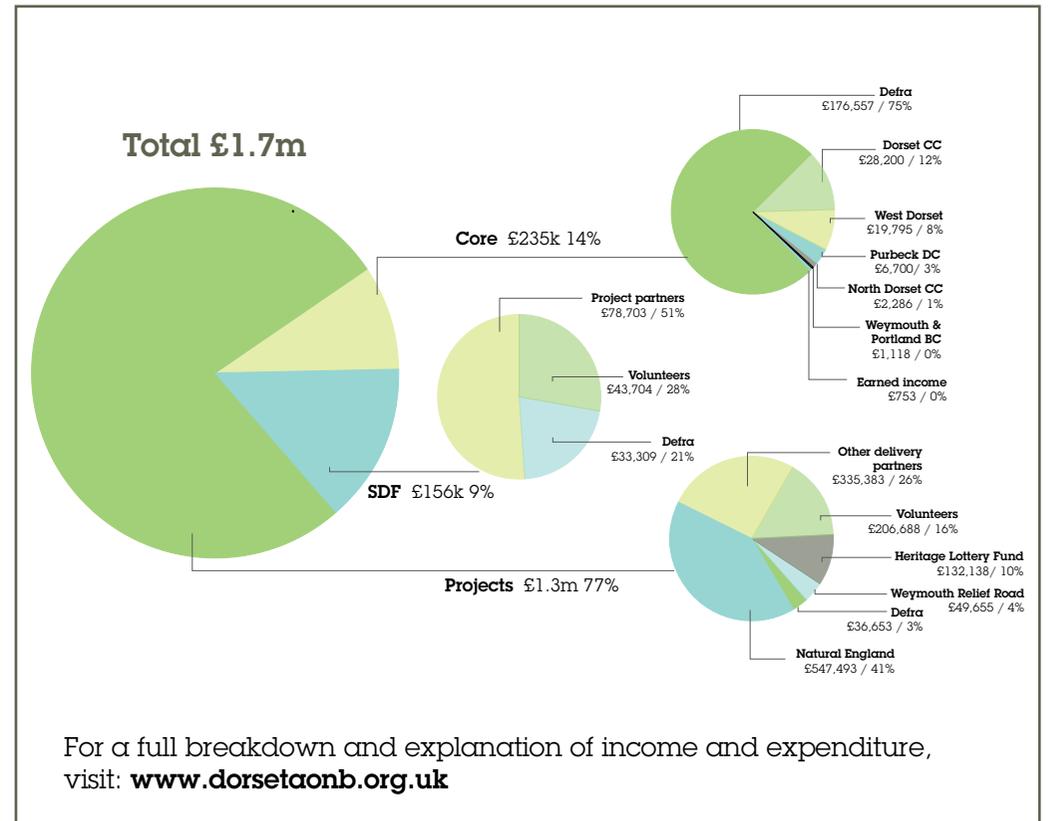
Kit Vaughan, owner of Prime Coppice, West Dorset

Planning

The AONB Team continue to give the area’s local authorities advice on landscape effects of development through an agreed protocol; in 2013-14 we were involved in 141 cases.

These cases include Local and Neighbourhood Plans, large-scale wind and solar development, significant housing proposals and the Navitus Bay offshore windfarm.

A key development in the AONB has been the proposal to extend the operation of the Wytch Farm oilfield in Purbeck. The Team has worked closely with the minerals planners in Dorset County Council to secure a landscape compensation package potentially worth £1.7M when planning permission is granted.



Outstanding Landscape, Outstanding Partnership

The Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers over 40% of Dorset and is the fifth largest in the family of 46 AONBs in UK.

The Dorset AONB Partnership is made up of 22 organisations which have an interest in conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB landscape, each bringing very different skills and experience to the partnership.

The Dorset AONB also has a small core team of 5.3FTE and a further 3.85 delivery fixed-term projects, hosted by Dorset County Council at County Hall in Dorchester.

Get in touch, find out more

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For more details on our work visit: www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

