

Annual Review

2014-2015



Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to this Annual Review of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 2014 - 15 has been a challenging period for the Unit as our host authority is undergoing a major review and we have taken steps ourselves to look at the best model for future service delivery.

Three months into the year I took over the as Chairman of the Partnership Committee from Councillor Richard Foss. On behalf of the Partnership I'd like to thank Richard for all his hard work and efforts in championing the AONB during the past ten years, seven of those of which were as Chairman. Richard I know will continue to support the AONB Partnership whenever he can.

We were delighted that Dr Sarah Wollaston MP for Totnes launched our 2014 - 19 Management Plan in July last year, at the site of a new orchard near Loddiswell.

This review demonstrates the great breadth of work undertaken by a small team much of which is in partnership

with a range of partners including the Environment Agency, West Country Rivers Trust, National Trust, arts organisations, local landowner and community organisations.

The year has been a busy one delivering elements of projects and preparing funding applications for new ones. This has involved a major consultation as part of the South Devon Rivers Catchment Based Approach, the Greater Horseshoe Bat project development events and continuing to develop the app Rate my View. The area is very much a living, working landscape and we hope the range of work will continue to protect and enhance the South Devon AONB. The challenge continues to be a high degree of developmental pressures and a new AONB planning guidance document is currently in draft format.

We are very grateful to all our funding partners for their continued support and I would like to thank the Partnership Committee and the AONB team for contributing to the success of the past year.

Rosemary Rowe,
Chairman, South Devon AONB Partnership Committee

Highlights in 2014-2015



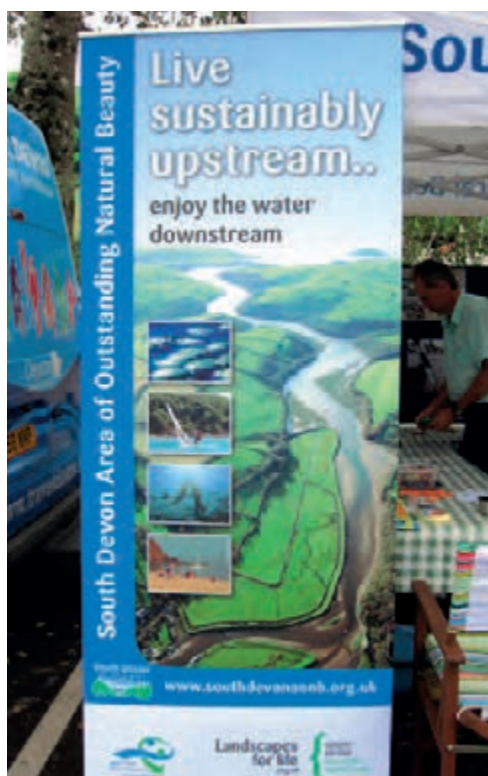
Delegates at the Kingsbridge catchment workshop.

Catchment Based Approach



Defra's new Catchment Based Approach initiative aims to engage communities living, working and enjoying our South Devon river catchments. The aim is to encourage greater awareness of their local water quality issues and to take more active responsibility for a resource that we all depend on so much. South Devon AONB was invited to set up and co-host a South Devon Catchments Partnership, together with the Westcountry Rivers Trust.

We hosted a series of local workshops across the 'South Devon Catchment,' from source to sea, inviting representatives from all interests to discuss the wider water catchment issues, proposed solutions and setting up of the South Devon Catchments Partnership. The Partnership is actively preparing a South Devon Catchments Action Plan and has successfully secured funding of £46,000 for a flagship project to work with the local communities of Slapton Ley and the Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary - encouraging a better community understanding of the issues and work to reduce non-agricultural sources of nitrates and phosphates.



Catchment Based Approach stand at Totnes Canoe Festival

Estuary forums

We continue to support biannual meetings of our Avon and Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary forum and Yealm estuary management groups and the current review of all our individual estuary environmental management plans is bringing them all together within one new 'South Devon AONB Estuaries Environmental Management Plan.' The plan attempts to retain and encourage the local identity of each, encouraging a feeling of local community ownership and responsibility whilst supporting more closely the AONB management plan and the South Devon Catchments Action Plan in progress.

We gave carefully considered comment on many shoreline development applications and on several occasions successfully worked with the applicant to enhance both their wants and needs whilst also meeting those of the local outstanding natural beauty. Shoreline development guidance will form an important part of our progressing South Devon AONB Planning Guidance.

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)

There were 83 applications for the South Devon catchments 2014/15, totally a spend of about £830,000. There were in the region of 70 1:1 on-farm visits, plus 6 on-farm events, with the average attendance of 35 at each. Making an approximate CSF engagement of about 280 farmers.

From this July, the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme begins, with the application window of July - Sept, with agreements to begin in Jan 2016.

CSF continues as before for the next 5 years, with the usual suite of advice and events, plus the stand-alone grant in the CS scheme, as well as the full CS land and capital options available. The only difference is the catchments that CSF will prioritise in South Devon – they are Erme, Salcombe/Kingsbridge and part of Slapton, excluding the Gara.

A new track being laid as part of the catchment sensitive farming scheme





Delicious Dart Trail runners line up to start!

B Lines



Wild Flowers on the coast

The South Devon B-Lines Project is a partnership between Buglife and the South Devon AONB to identify and develop a network of wildflower-rich meadows, grasslands and hedgerows throughout the area to benefit pollinators, people and other wildlife. The project's initial phase developed a B-lines map for the area linking Dartmoor to the coast, and linking our towns and urban areas to the countryside. Future project phases will work with landowners and land managers to restore, create and enhance habitat along the B-Lines. See www.buglife.org.uk for more information.

Devon GHB Project

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Enjoy some
**AONB
nightlife**



Our patch is a favourite hangout for Greater Horseshoe bats!

Working in partnership to protect landscapes for Greater Horseshoe bats

photo © John Kaczmarek

South Devon AONB
www.southdevonaonb.org.uk

The South Devon AONB is an active partner in this multidimensional partnership project led by Devon Wildlife Trust seeking to secure the future of this species in Devon.

The development phase of this Heritage Lottery funded project comprised:

- Working with landowners that manage the habitat where these bats live.
- Bringing bats to people; and improving our knowledge and understanding of this mammal through citizen science surveys.
- Habitat analyses to understand more clearly what landscape features the bats are using.

A second round application covering five years of activity to September 2020 was submitted to HLF in May 2015.

See devonbatproject.org for more information.

Sustainable Development Fund

We awarded two projects with funding during the year:

Delicious Dart Trail

£300 was awarded to help support the Delicious Dart Trail, a unique event designed to showcase South Devon's spectacular scenery and local produce in an innovative way. It combined trail running with food and drink sampling and is best described as a food festival on the run. Participants ran from Dartington Hall to Dartmouth sampling various local food and drink at stop points along the way. The event was inspired by the Marathon du Medoc in France an annual race in which 22 chateaux open their doors and provide wine tastings to 1000's of runners as they make their way around the 26.2 mile course.

The inaugural Delicious Dart Trail attracted 220 runners from all over the South West and beyond. Over 20 local food and drink producers supported the event and £5000 was raised for charity. The Charity is CHICKs <http://www.chicks.org.uk/> the Devon Based organisation offering respite breaks in the countryside for children from challenging backgrounds.

Great South West Walks 2104

Along with other AONBs in Devon and Cornwall, we awarded £750 to South West Coast Path association to deliver Great South West Walks 2014. This celebration of the South West Coast Path, took place from around the Coast Path in Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. Over the nine days 250 walkers took part, with over £40,000 being raised from the event in total. This will be used for improvements to the Coast Path and to provide hospice care to children and their families in the south west.



Walk leader Ian Jarvis Commandant of Dartmoor Training Area, points out the Staddon line defences

GSWW 14 was important evidence of community/business support for the South West Coast Path and led to a successful £1 million bid from the Coastal Communities Fund.



Wembury Marine Centre celebrates its 20th anniversary.

Apple day at Holbeton showcases the work so far

Over 100 Villagers from Holbeton enjoyed a sunny Apple Day celebration in October. The group secured a grant for the restoration and development of their Community Orchard in autumn 2013 from the Big Greenspace

Fund with assistance from Communities Officer Nicky Bailey.



The ceremonial log splitting for the new bench by craftsman Peter Lanyon

The area which is well used and much loved by residents of Holbeton needed regular tree maintenance. The grant has enabled pruning workshops and some new planting at the orchard as well as the drawing up of a new action plan for its development.

The apple day was action packed and included a wide range of 'apple' activities including juicing, a cider tent, longest apple peel and guess the true/false Devon apple names competitions.

The grant was to fund a programme of works and exciting community events and activities. It is administered by South Hams District Council Natural Environment Team.

Annual Forum and Celebration

The 2014 AONB annual celebration and forum was hailed a great success as members of the public gathered at Holsome Park Farm Diptford to have a farm tour enjoying stunning views and learn more about modern farming in the protected landscape.

The family farm walk was led by Rupert Goddard from the charity Buglife and AONB Communities Officer Nicky Bailey, with farmer Graham Lethbridge leading the main walk with AONB Project Officer Roger English. The farm which is part of the environmental Higher Level Stewardship scheme has carried out a number of projects to protect water quality under the Catchment Sensitive Farming and Westcountry Rivers Trust schemes.

Displays included pictures and writings from Diptford Primary School pupils created as part of a project about



The family farm walk and bug hunt at Holsome Farm, Diptford.

Greater Horseshoe Bats. Speakers included Rupert Goddard from Buglife and Masters student Alison Hood who reported on her hedge survey work.

Wembury Marine Centre celebrates its 20th Anniversary

The centre is jointly managed by the AONB Unit with South Hams District Council, Devon County Council, Devon Wildlife Trust, and The Wembury VMCA Advisory Group.

Key messages for this anniversary year centred on:

- The restoration of our seas with the understanding that marine life at Wembury is special and needs protecting.
- The establishment of Marine Protected Areas with a designated network of 127 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) around England.
- The sustainable management of the marine environment, with links to local heritage, prosperity and guardianship, especially fisheries and fishing practices that encourage and support the recovery of species and habitats.

Planning

Over the past 12 months we have reviewed and commented on over 50 applications. These have included housing developments, wind turbines and other alternative energy schemes, farm buildings, equestrian facilities, holiday developments and many others. It is anticipated that the AONB Planning Guidance Document under preparation will be useful to everyone involved in the planning process.

Website

The website has proved to be very popular with additional project sections added to ensure that it is up to date. The Explore section continues to be the most popular, in particular walks and trails which attracted 39,628 views.

The total no of visits was 56,227, up 52% from previous year, total users 42,960 up 56% from previous year and the total pages viewed 167,239 up 33% from the previous year.





Totnes Show



Enjoying Open Farm Sunday



Shearing demonstration by
John Warne

Events & Shows

The AONB has continued to deliver a programme of events focussed on specific projects. The most well attended were the Big Night out on the Beach attracting 400 people, Lambing Sunday attracting 75 people and Open Farm Sunday.

We attended Totnes and Kingsbridge one day shows and Celebrate Start Bay. These events were a great opportunity to engage with the public with a competition related to the B lines project which participants young and old had fun participating in.

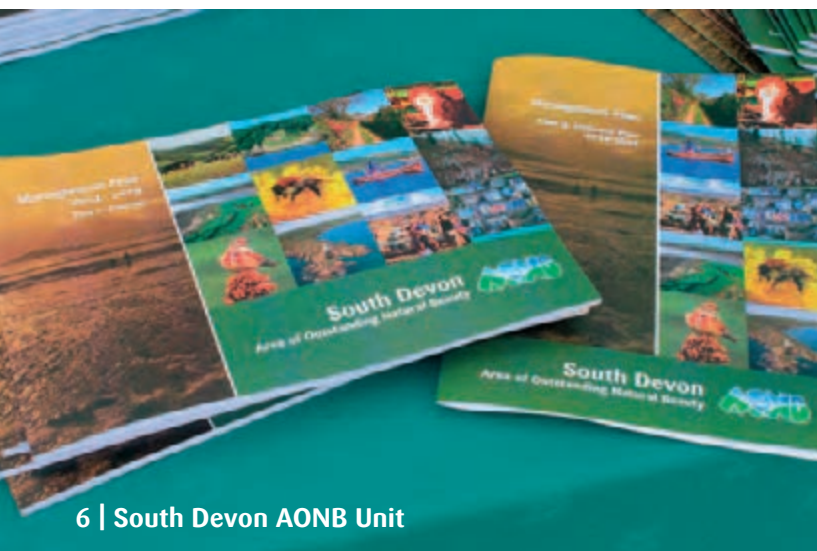
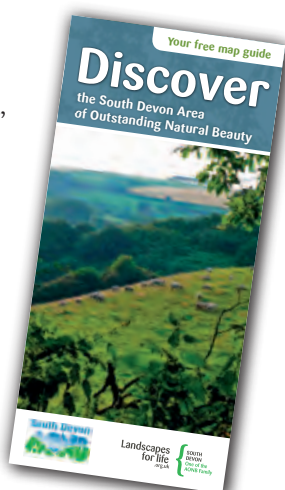
Publications

Discover

We published our new “Discover” map leaflet in the autumn aimed at helping visitors enjoy the AONB with a large map on one side and lots of useful information about walking routes, joining events, beaches, heritage, and food and drink.

Launch of 2014 - 19 Management Plan

We were delighted that Dr Sarah Wollaston MP for Totnes launched our new Management Plan at the site of a brand new orchard in the Avon Valley, courtesy of Heron Valley Drinks. It was attended by the AONB Partnership Committee and partner organisations. The Plan can be found on line at www.southdevonaonb.org.uk



Summer Quests - Exploring our Estuaries!

Over the summer we ran our innovative family ‘quests’ to encourage visitors and residents to get out and explore the estuaries of the AONB. The quest was made up of landscape letterboxes – a trail taking in 10 points around the area, and landscape challenges – a series of fun activities to find out more about people’s perceptions of the area.

Over 500 people took part in the quests which were focused round the Dart and Salcombe estuaries.



Adam Debney receives his prize from Tina Doyle of Coast & Country Cottages

The Dart Estuary Quest ran from the beginning of July until the end of August and participants were encouraged to use public transport – the ferries, steam train and water taxis to travel between the letterbox sites from Dittisham and Greenway down to Dartmouth and Kingswear. Coast and Country cottages generously donated a

top prize of £200 holiday vouchers which was won by local Dartmouth boy, Adam Debney. His family recently moved to the town and they enjoyed the quest as a way of getting out and exploring the area.



AONB Unit financial profile 2014-2015

Core costs & income

The **core costs** of the AONB staff unit (four staff) were funded jointly by Defra, Devon County Council and South Hams District Council.

AONB Unit core income

Defra	£118,750	75.3%
Devon County Council	£17,919	11.3%
South Hams District Council	£20,749	13.1%
Other income	£358	0.2%
Total	£157,776	100%

AONB Unit core expenditure

Direct staff costs incl. travel, training, etc.	£119,165	75.5%
Office costs and support services	£20,077	12.7%
Communication costs	£10,862	6.9%
Commissioned specialist work	£6,481	4.1%
Partnership Committee support costs	£1,191	0.8%
Total	£157,776	100%

Contribution to partnership programmes

In addition to the direct project expenditure run through the AONB Staff Unit budget, the Unit was also involved in part-funding or jointly leading a number of wider partnership projects where the project spend was run through other organisations or budgets. These included the following two project programmes:

- **Slapton Adaptation Project.** Total spend 2014 - 2015 was £4,480. Project managed by AONB Staff Unit. Funded through a separate budget held by South Hams District Council on behalf of the Slapton Line Partnership.
- **Wembury Marine Centre.** Total spend 2014 - 2015 was £42,167. Management group chaired by AONB Manager. Budgets run by South Hams District Council (building management) and Devon Wildlife Trust (warden costs) and funded by six organisations.

Direct project costs & income

The **project costs** directly incurred by the AONB Unit budget were funded by a wider range of sources:

AONB Unit direct project income

Defra	£31,842	27.0%
Devon County Council	£3,000	2.5%
South Hams District Council	£24,157	20.5%
Torbay Council	£5,000	4.2%
Salcombe Harbour Authority	£10,300	8.7%
Dart Harbour & Navigation Authority	£10,200	8.7%
Duchy of Cornwall	£7,150	6.1%
National Trust	£1,000	0.8%
Plymouth City Council / Local Nature Partnership	£4,250	3.6%
Heritage Lottery Fund	£6,496	5.5%
Environment Agency / Westcountry Rivers Trust	£14,189	12.0%
Miscellaneous income	£515	0.4%
Total	£118,099	100%

AONB Unit direct project expenditure

Estuary project costs	£49,247	41.7%
Events programme and "Explorer" publication	£7,331	6.2%
Temporary staff for events programme and community work	£24,778	21.0%
Development costs for biodiversity partnership projects	£7,925	6.7%
Sustainable Development Fund – support for community projects	£3,050	2.6%
River catchment coordination	£9,189	7.8%
Holbeton community orchard	£2,257	1.9%
Plymouth fringe project development	£3,250	2.8%
Signage and interpretation	£3,159	2.7%
Greater Horseshoe Bat partnership project	£2,500	2.1%
Kingswear routeways and connections	£5,513	4.7%
Total	£118,099	100%

The total value of the AONB Unit plus its direct projects and indirect partnership projects, during the year (that is, the total of all the figures above) was £322,522.



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The AONB Unit is funded by:

