



Theme 2 - Distinctive Local Landscapes

“Place names to treasure - ‘Pugs Hole’, ‘Patties Bottom’, and ‘Cow Down’ ”

Bowerchalke, 28th April 2003

Background

The underlying geology, topography and dominant vegetation are major contributors to the structure and the aesthetic aspects of landscapes. These have combined with cultural, historic, social and economic influences over centuries to create the unique and distinctive character of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. This is an area of great diversity and contrast. The night sky and seasonal changes inspire residents and visitors alike. Further details are contained in two major reports published by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB; the Integrated Landscape Characterisation and the Historic Landscape Characterisation.

Community Priority 2:

Conserve and enhance the landscape character, habitats, species and tranquillity of the AONB

Community Priority 3:

Conserve and enhance the historic, archaeological and cultural features within their distinctive landscape settings

Topics:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Natural resources
- Historic and cultural heritage

LANDSCAPE

Overview

The European Landscape Convention¹ has defined landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. This definition reflects the understanding that landscapes evolve through time, as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings. It also underlines that a landscape forms a whole where the natural and cultural components are taken together, not separately.

Landscapes change daily and seasonally, they respond to the weather, some have a greater proportion of hard and constructed elements whilst in others the soft and semi-natural predominate. They are perceived and valued in different ways by individuals and communities. It is with

1. See page 8



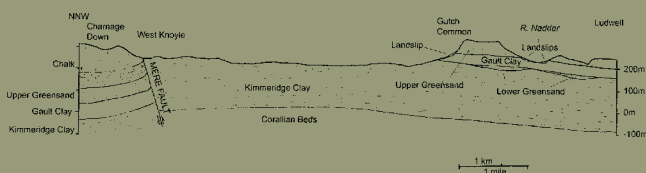


this definition in mind that the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Partnership approaches the task of enhancing and conserving the landscape.

Geology and Geomorphology

This part of Southern and Central England was covered by the sea between 200 million years ago until the end of the Chalk period (around 65 million years ago). The oldest rocks in the AONB are a small outcrop of Corallian Beds at Zeals (150 million years ago) and a wide outcrop of the Kimmeridge Clay (140 million years ago) across the western half of the Vale of Wardour. Farther east the Kimmeridge Clay is overlain by the sandy limestones of the Portland beds and overlying them the clays and limestones of the Purbeck beds. Either side of the Vale these older rocks are covered by the Gault Clay, then the Upper Greensand and finally the Chalk (these latter formations forming the sides and eastern end of the Vale).

The Chalk is formed out of microscopic remains of marine plankton that gradually accumulated on a slowly subsiding sea floor over a period of 20 million years, finally reaching a thickness of around 250 metres. The purer Upper Chalk contains layers and nodules of flint (pure silica derived by the accumulation of siliceous organisms on the sea floor). Around 65 million years ago, the Chalk was uplifted above sea level and suffered a degree of erosion before being covered by the sands and clays of the Tertiary Period, now completely removed from the area of the AONB but still present farther east. Around 20 million years ago another period of uplift created the folding and faulting of the rocks which started the development of the present landscape. Most dramatically, an east-west trending elongated dome split and gave rise to the Vale of Wardour. The Mere Fault, Wiltshire's most important structure, developed on the northern edge of the dome.



By kind permission of Isobel Geddes, 'Hidden Depths'.
Wiltshire Geology Group, geddes@wiltshiregeologygroup.freemove.co.uk



Please refer to **Map 4** in the accompanying guide

During successive glaciations of the last 2 million years, when the porous chalk was frozen into an impermeable state, rivers followed faults in the rock and eroded the valleys and steep scarp slopes. The dry valleys and

folded landform of the Downs we see today date from this period. The rivers cut down through the chalk to expose the Greensand and Kimmeridge Clay of the Vale of Wardour and the Chilmark Stone that was used to build Salisbury Cathedral. The building materials derived from the rocks give a local character to various areas; notably the stone villages built of the famous Chilmark and Tisbury freestones from the Portland strata; the sandstones in the Upper Greensand; flints in the chalk areas; and bricks from the local clays. One of the most important features of the landscape of the AONB is the underlying influence of the chalk, not only on the topography, flora and fauna, but on the pattern of human activity and settlement.

Landscape Character Assessment

An 'Integrated Landscape Character Assessment' for the AONB was completed in 2003. It built upon earlier work from 1995 and helps produce a more complete picture of what makes the area so 'outstanding'.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies local landscape features, the broad character of a locality, indigenous materials and all the other elements that contribute to the particular sense of place. LCA therefore presents an integrated view of the landscape and includes all the features which contribute to the special and distinctive character of the AONB. The AONB Landscape Character Assessment brings together a number of different studies including the socio-economics of the AONB, the agricultural character, an historical overview, recreational features, ecological characteristics, and visual information based on survey work conducted in the field. It plays a crucial part in enabling the AONB Partnership to conserve and enhance the AONB. Details are posted on the AONB web site and a summary booklet is available. With the publication of the Historic Landscape Characterisation in 2008, the issues and trends highlighted in the 1995 LCA now need to be re-assessed.

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs is an area of great diversity and contrast, represented by the definition of eight Landscape Types. These range from the high open remote downlands, the ancient forests and woodland of Cranborne Chase and the dramatic steep escarpment slopes, to the more intimate and secluded chalk river valleys with their distinctive pattern of settlement. Each of these landscape types have been further sub-divided into fifteen geographically specific Landscape Character Areas.



Please refer to **Map 5** in the accompanying guide



Special characteristics

- Simple and elemental character of the open downland - wide expansive skies, dominant skylines, dramatic escarpments and panoramic views.
- Unity of the underlying chalk expressed in the distinctive and sometimes dramatically sculpted landforms, open vistas, escarpments and coombes.
- A peaceful, tranquil, deeply rural area - largely 'unspoilt' and maintained as a living agricultural landscape.
- Strong sense of remoteness with expanses of dark night skies.
- Combination and contrast of the open exposed downland incised by intimate settled valleys and vales.
- The landscape character of the AONB is clearly read and appreciated by non experts.
- The very scale of the landscape is often grand and dramatic with the 'intensity' of landscape character almost palpable.
- A landscape etched with the imprint of the past – visible historic features including prehistoric earthworks, hill forts, field systems and water meadows together with the special landscapes associated with the former royal hunting grounds.
- Sparsely populated with absence of any large-scale settlement - reinforcing the rurality of AONB communities and sense of place.
- Distinctive settlement pattern along the valleys and vales, and small medieval villages along the scarp spring line. Local vernacular building styles include the chequer pattern of knapped flint, clunch, and straw thatch.
- Overlain by a woodland mosaic - including the eye-catching hill-top copses, veteran parkland trees and avenues, extensive areas of wooded downland and ancient forest together with more recent game coverts.
- Rich ecological character – expressed in the diversity of habitats including the distinctive herb-rich chalk downland, clear fast flowing chalk streams and rivers, ancient and calcareous woodlands and rare chalk heath and water meadows
- Legacy of historic Halls and Houses with their characteristic estate and parkland landscapes contributing important designed and visual elements.
- Strong sense of place and local distinctiveness represented by the use of local building materials and small-scale vernacular features such as the sunken lanes and distinctive black and white signposts.

Key issues²

Issues affecting the landscape are often inter-related and are described in more detail throughout the other sections of this plan. The issues and threats facing each Landscape Character Type within the AONB are summarised on pages 63 - 67. The headline issues are:

Sense of place - Small-scale local, specific features that form a distinct sense of place are being replaced by the use of standard designs and materials in developments and highway works, eroding local character and distinctiveness.

Roads and traffic - Noise pollution, size and speed of vehicles, damage to rural lanes and the potential visual intrusion of proposed improvement schemes such as excessive signs, road markings, and street furniture, can seriously detract from the rural character of the AONB, leading to significant losses of local distinctiveness and tranquillity.

Condition of landscape character areas - Some characteristic landscape features are deteriorating due, for example, to harsh edges from coniferous plantations or fragmented hedgerows.

Landscape character sensitivity - A study completed in 2007 evaluated the landscape character areas for both landscape and visual sensitivity. The distinctiveness of the AONB's landscape character is sensitive to changes in the area's appearance. There is a lack of awareness regarding AONB landscape character sensitivity that may lead to inappropriate development and land management schemes and policies.

Future trends affecting landscape character:

Fundamental changes in the agricultural economy - 82% of the AONB is farmland. Changes to the Common Agricultural Policy will drive land managers' decisions and, if activities change, there may be significant visual impacts within the AONB.

Development pressures – These, particularly for residential development and tall structures (such as wind turbines), threaten the special and perceptual sense of rurality, remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies.

Social and economic drivers of change - The AONB is a living landscape. As people's needs and

aspirations change then there may be impacts on the landscape. The area is characterised as having an aging population and their priorities may be different from those working in or commuting from the AONB. Visitor preferences may change.

Climate change - Changes to climate will have an impact on the characteristic habitats and species of the AONB but the detailed effects are still uncertain. Natural England has studied the area³ and each local authority is preparing a climate change report and there is a need to derive an AONB focused perspective from this work.

OBJECTIVES

C	The landscape character, tranquillity and special qualities of the AONB and its settings are conserved and enhanced.
D	The landscape character and special qualities of the AONB are fully understood, informing and incorporated within effective landscape management and planning.

POLICIES

C1	Encourage, support and analyse research on the impacts of the 'Forces for Change' on the AONB and its surroundings.
C2	Prepare and publish a Climate Change (Mitigation and Adaptation) Action Plan in consultation with those involved in the management of the AONB by the end of this plan period.
C3	Encourage the development of policy and grant aid packages which support sustainable land management that conserves and enhances the identified special qualities of the AONB.
C4	Identify areas and/or features where landscape character or quality has been or is being lost and encourage enhancement measures.
C5	Encourage the identification of factors that contribute to, or detract from, tranquillity in order to effectively conserve and enhance high levels of tranquillity.
D1	Develop landscape management guidance which collates and interprets information from the AONB Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Sensitivity Study and Historic Landscape Characterisation.
D2	Maintain an appropriate and effective record of the presence and condition of the AONB's visual, natural, historical and cultural resource through collation of external sources of data or surveying.

See also biodiversity, rural land management, natural resources, planning and transportation, local rural economy, sustainable rural communities, awareness and understanding

2. The issues and challenges facing each character type are considered from page 63

3. Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase Character Area Climate Change Impact Assessment and Response Strategy, 2008, Natural England

BIODIVERSITY

Overview

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB lies within two of Natural England's defined 'Natural Areas': Wessex Vales and South Wessex Downs. The Wessex Vales Natural Area covers the north-west corner of the AONB and supports a variety of habitats from wet woodland and acid woodland to calcareous and neutral meadows. The South Wessex Downs Natural Area covers the vast majority of the remaining area and is strongly characterised by the underlying chalk. It is internationally renowned for its chalk grassland and rivers.

The AONB holds remnants of once extensive unimproved chalk grassland.



Please refer to **Map 6** in the accompanying guide

This uncommon habitat holds a huge diversity of plant and invertebrate species. The chalk streams are biologically rich and also support an established sport fishing industry. A significant proportion of the woodland is of ancient origin but many have been replanted with non-native species or their management has lapsed. The area contains some of the best aggregations of ancient trees in Europe, supporting internationally rare species of invertebrate and fungi⁴.

The largest farmed land use is the arable fields dotted with typically small woodlands. Rare arable plants and several declining bird species occur in the arable habitats. The most significant change to agriculture has been the intensification of production in recent decades, resulting in a reduction of wild arable plants and a decline in several bird species.

Many species of wildlife still suffer from the technological improvements in arable farming that took place during 1945-1984. The wild flora of cereals experienced a combined loss of abundance and diversity of 82%, with many rare species lost. Plant bugs, grass sawflies, grasshoppers, Lepidoptera and many other insects decreased accordingly, causing, in turn, a shortage of food for the grey partridge, corn bunting, skylark, lapwing and several other species. UK research shows how these adverse effects can be overcome by unsprayed conservation headlands and beetle banks with associated wild bird seed mixtures, measures that are all now supported by government grants and known as 'in-field

options'. However, research commissioned by this AONB⁵ shows that 40% of environmental stewardship expenditure in the AONB (£669,000) is linked to options associated with hedgerow and grassland management, while only 12% of the agri-environment scheme expenditure is on arable farmland (by far the majority of the AONB). The most effective biodiversity options are the least popular with farmers. The system needs modifying so that farmers take up these least popular options, a view also promoted by Plantlife and the British Trust for Ornithology.

Key habitats within the AONB

The Government identifies biodiversity as a key headline indicator of environmental sustainability in the current Public Service Agreement 28: 'Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future' and has agreed a new National Indicator (NI 197)⁶ – 'Improved Local Biodiversity - the proportion of Local Sites⁷ where active conservation management is being achieved'. A key biodiversity indicator is change in the abundance of wild bird breeding populations. The AONB is a major partner in the South West Farmland Bird Initiative, a significant project that seeks to safeguard and expand populations of farmland bird species. There are three chalk grassland projects underway in the AONB that, if coordinated, could present the AONB as a showcase for chalk grassland restoration and enhancement work.

The AONB features in the Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) that cover each of the four counties (see figure 5)⁸. These are a mechanism for achieving species and habitat enhancement. 'Rebuilding Biodiversity in the South West'⁹ is a regional project to prioritise areas where the benefits and opportunities for habitat restoration are greatest. The AONB Partnership played an active part in the determination of priority areas and this has been taken on board in the South West Regional Spatial Strategy.

5. 'Strengthening Landscape Character through Entry Level Stewardship', Dr Jemma Batten, Black Sheep Countryside Management August 2008
6. NI 197: Managed by Defra, the indicator measures the performance of local authorities for biodiversity by assessing the implementation of positive conservation management of Local Sites.
7. Local Sites have many names, for example they include Sites of Nature Conservation Importance; Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation; County Wildlife Sites; Regionally Important Geological Sites.
8. LBAP reference is www.ukbap.org.uk
9. Rebuilding Biodiversity in the South West reference is www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map

4. Ancient tree Forum - www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum

Examples of Biodiversity Action Plan species within the AONB	
Corn bunting	Early gentian
Grey partridge	Adonis blue butterfly
Skylark	Duke of Burgundy butterfly
Stone curlew	Marsh fritillary butterfly
Tree sparrow	Brown hare
Turtle dove	Greater horseshoe bat
Water vole	Otter

Figure 5: Examples of Biodiversity Action Plan species within the AONB

International and national nature conservation designations within the AONB:



Please refer to **Map 7** in the accompanying guide

- Five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- Three National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and
- Fifty seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (including eight geological sites).

These designations cover 3,413.2 hectares, or 3.5% of the AONB. Natural England reports that 41% of the SSSI land is in favourable condition for wildlife and that a further 36.4% of the land is recovering following the introduction of focused management prescriptions (Figure 6).

SSSI CONDITION	Number of sites or part thereof *	Area (hectares)	Percentage of total area
Favourable	38	1,398.1	41
Unfavourable (Recovering)	21	1,241.7	36.4
Unfavourable (No Change)	21	257.6	7.5
Unfavourable (Declining)	16	483.9	14
Not Assessed	1	31.8	0.9

* Total number of SSSIs in the AONB is less than the sum of SSSIs of different conditions. This is because some SSSIs are separated into areas of different condition and each area is counted separately. Therefore "Number" for each condition is number of whole or part SSSIs.

Figure 6: Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the AONB





Local non-statutory nature conservation sites within the AONB:

- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (Dorset);
- Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (Hampshire);
- County Wildlife Sites (Wiltshire and Somerset); or
- Regionally Important Geological Sites.

The AONB contains 519 of these sites, amounting to 9,155 hectares of land locally important for nature conservation (just over 9% of the AONB).

A rich diversity of woodland types is represented within the AONB and the most ecologically diverse are the ancient semi-natural woodlands, of which there is a significant proportion in the Cranborne Chase Landscape Character Area 3A¹⁰.



Please refer to **Map 8** in the accompanying guide

Special characteristics

- An ecologically diverse area.
- Rolling downland, river valleys, woodlands and wetlands.
- Internationally important chalk grassland and rivers supporting rare wildlife.
- Extensive tracts of arable land supporting some rare arable plants.
- Main geological features are chalk plateaux, scarp and dip slopes, clay with flint deposits and valleys – both dry and occupied by rivers and streams.

Key issues

Habitat and species decline

Chalk grassland - A priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The cover of lowland calcareous grassland has suffered a sharp decline in extent over the last 50 years. There are no comprehensive figures but a sample of chalk sites in England surveyed in 1966 and 1980 showed a 20% loss in that period and an assessment of chalk grassland in Dorset found that over 50% had been lost between the mid-1950s and the early 1990s. This AONB now supports 14% of the national total. Nationally rare plants include the early gentian, tuberous thistle, dwarf sedge and bastard toadflax. There are internationally

important populations of the marsh fritillary and silver spotted skipper butterflies.

Decline in bird populations - A key national biodiversity indicator is the abundance of wild bird breeding populations. While the AONB is still a stronghold for farmland birds in particular, most of them have declined by between 15 and 30% since 1994. The Farmland Bird Indicator is made up from the trends of 19 widespread farmland bird species and is used by Government to assess the success of its policies for conserving wildlife. The apparent levelling-off of the indicator since 1999 suggests that the decline in farmland birds has been halted, but it is too early to tell whether this recent turn-around represents the start of a sustained population recovery. Our work to conserve Farmland Birds Species in the AONB is of national significance.

Decline in livestock farming – Flower rich grasslands are not a natural state. Woodland species will grow and dominate the habitat unless they are regularly kept in check by cutting or grazing. Chalk grassland conservation relies on the availability of suitable grazing animals, especially traditional breeds of sheep and cattle, to maintain a low sward. The AONB Partnership is, amongst others, working with the Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and RSPB to address chalk grassland conservation and restoration at a landscape scale.

Land management practices – Inappropriate management regimes have led to the loss of unimproved grasslands and ancient woodlands during the last few decades.

Fragmentation of habitats - There is now a fragmentation of habitats with isolated wildlife communities that may not be able to respond to climate changes. There is a need for coordinated management with surrounding natural environments to create viable habitat corridors to allow species to respond to climate change.

Invasive non-native species – Species such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, Rhododendron and American signal crayfish are increasingly common in the AONB and are displacing local flora and fauna and reducing biodiversity.

Funding issues

The main public investments in landscape-scale management are through Single Farm Payments, Environmental Stewardship and the England Woodland

10. See the Landscape Character Assessment

Grant schemes¹¹. The AONB should be treated as a priority area. There is a need for consistent recording and monitoring of the impacts the implementation of these schemes has on the AONB's biodiversity.

OBJECTIVES

E	Characteristic habitats and species are conserved and enhanced at a landscape scale.
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POLICIES

E1	Encourage the conservation and enhancement of habitats and species by extending and improving ecological connections between habitats at an appropriate landscape scale.
E2	Support partnerships that work to conserve, enhance and connect sites and areas of high biodiversity value within the AONB.
E3	Support action to control invasive non-native species within the AONB.
E4	Endeavour to determine availability of baseline biodiversity data across the AONB to help monitor the outcomes of land management work.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Overview

There is a growing understanding and development of long-term natural resource management planning at all levels of government. Natural resources are the essential elements of the natural environment. The pressures on these finite resources, such as air, soil, water and minerals, are greater today than ever. The increased demand for water, building development, agricultural production, and a constant supply of energy, have all contributed to their degradation. In recognition of their fundamental importance, natural resources are the focus for long term planning, such as the Environment Agency's Water Services Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans, which the Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs AONB Partnership will work with partners to deliver.



Please refer to **Map 9** in the accompanying guide

In government guidance there is a clear expectation that the protected landscapes of England will make a strong contribution to both the local delivery of sustainable development and its wider promotion. In this context, the environment can be likened to a major public service that benefits us every day. The protected landscapes of England

form the pinnacles of this service, delivering a wide range of benefits essential for human survival and well-being, sometimes referred to as 'ecosystem services'¹², that seeks to deliver:

- the conservation of landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and local ways of life;
- food and fresh water;
- the capturing of carbon;
- spiritual refreshment and inspiration;
- recreation;
- public health and
- education.

Special characteristics

- Clear water supporting sensitive fish and other aquatic species
- Chilmark and Greensand stone deposits
- High open downlands with abundant Rights of Way, ancient droves and trackways
- Far reaching panoramic views
- Semi natural woodland, both forest and coppice, together with plantation woodlands
- Dark night skies
- Cultural footprints through the ages visible throughout the landscape

Key issues

Sustainable development - This is concerned with achieving a physical and natural environment that is protected and enhanced, where natural resources and energy are used as efficiently as possible; an economy that is innovative and productive with high levels of employment, and a society that promotes social inclusion and personal well-being. Living within environmental limits is a pre-requisite for the future. Working within environmental limits means not reaching a stage where the environment can no longer recover naturally, nor destroying those aspects of the environment that are finite or cannot be recreated.

Light pollution - Two national datasets showing light pollution are available from 1993 and 2000 which demonstrate the spread of light pollution across the AONB

11. See Figure 10 and 'Strengthening Landscape Character through Entry Level Stewardship', Dr Jemma Batten, Black Sheep Countryside Management August 2008

12. For further information on ecosystems services see 'Securing a healthy natural environment - An action plan for embedding an ecosystems approach', Defra, 2007 www.Defra.gov.uk/wildlifecountryside/natres/pdf/eco_actionplan.pdf

and the general loss of dark night skies¹³. Contributory factors are street and highway lighting, and the sideways and upward dispersion of light from a variety of sources.

Diffuse pollution - Diffuse sources of pollution include run-off from roads, houses and commercial areas, run-off from farmland, and seepage into groundwater from developed landscapes of all kinds. Diffuse sources are often individually minor but collectively significant. Increases in nutrient levels can result in toxic algal blooms, resulting in adverse impacts on the food chain which supports fish, animals and birds. Agriculture is one of the main sources of diffuse pollution and Defra¹⁴ wishes to encourage Catchment Sensitive Farming¹⁵ - managing land in a way that is sensitive to the ecological health of the water environment. Farming is not the sole cause of these problems, but it does contribute approximately 60% of nitrates, 25% of phosphorus and 70% of sediments entering our waters, amongst other pollutants.

Renewable energy - There is an increased demand for renewable energy. Developments must harmonise with the character of the area and inappropriate developments, such as visually intrusive wind turbines, should not be sited within the AONB boundary, its setting or impair significant views from it. Options for the AONB to help meet local energy needs on a scale that can be accommodated within the landscape include:

- wood-fuelled heating and hot water systems,
- micro-hydro electricity generation,
- on-farm bio-digestion,
- active solar and
- photovoltaics.

Waste - An essential part of the sustainable management of our natural resources is the need to reduce waste. In its Waste Strategy 2007 the Government sets out waste management practices through a 'waste hierarchy': Reduction; Re-use; Recovery (including recycling, composting and energy recovery); and Safe and Environmentally Sound Disposal, with landfill and other disposal methods used as a last resort. Local authorities

within the AONB Partnership all have domestic waste reduction targets. Wiltshire Council has a target to reduce municipal waste by 40% by 2011 and by 50% by 2020¹⁶. Dorset County Council has a target of 60% by 2016¹⁷.

Mineral extraction - The AONB has a long history of providing local building materials, mainly from greensand and sandy limestone (Chilmark stone). The need to safeguard local identity and distinctiveness through the use of local materials to strengthen the local vernacular should be balanced against the disruption, visual and other impacts resulting from the extraction of materials to achieve this.

OBJECTIVES

F	The AONB Partnership and other stakeholders work together to secure the sustainable future of natural resources within and around the AONB.
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POLICIES

F1	The exploitation of natural resources is managed so as to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.
F2	Reduce carbon emissions from activities within the AONB by applying energy conservation measures and encouraging more sustainable patterns of development.
F3	Support renewable energy generation by technologies that integrate with the landscape character, are neither visually intrusive nor harmful to wildlife, and are of an appropriate scale to their location and siting.
F4	Less waste is produced through both waste minimisation and recycling of waste materials generated by residents and visitors, construction and redevelopment, agriculture and tourism providers. Any residual waste is disposed of where there is no harm to the distinctive characteristics of the AONB.
F5	Promote good practice that encourages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable utilisation of soil • avoidance of direct pollution • avoidance of soil erosion • measures to reduce diffuse pollution

13. www.cpre.org.uk and go to Campaigns, Landscape

14. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/environment/water/csf/index.htm>

15. Defra - "Catchment Sensitive Farming is land management that keeps diffuse emissions of pollutants to levels consistent with the ecological sensitivity and uses of rivers, groundwaters and other aquatic habitats, both in the immediate catchment and further downstream. It includes managing appropriately the use of fertilisers, manures and pesticides; promoting good soil structure and rain infiltration to avoid run-off and erosion; protecting watercourses from faecal contamination, sedimentation and pesticides; reducing stocking density; managing stock on farms to avoid compaction and poaching of land; and separating clean and dirty water on farms".

16. Wiltshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2006 - Wiltshire County Council

17. Dorset Municipal Waste Strategy 2003 – Dorset County Council



HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Overview

The countryside we see today is an expression of the interaction between people and the landscape over the millennia. Every part of the landscape has a history and this is a major component that contributes to the special landscapes of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The landscapes of the AONB bear the imprint of successive eras of human activity and settlement. This is one of the richest and most closely studied parts of prehistoric Wessex, the haunt of General Pitt-Rivers, Heywood Sumner, Richard Bradley and Martin Green.

The medieval hunting grounds of Cranborne Chase and the wealth of deer parks, such as Harbin's Park, were set within a medieval world of commons, strip fields, and ancient woodlands, the last cut into by tiny assarts. Post medieval planned enclosure and the creation of new large scale fields in the 20th century, have reduced the extent of the surviving ancient landscapes transforming some areas of the AONB. The 18th and 19th century, for example, saw the dominance of the sheep-corn system of agriculture in Wessex, when vast flocks of sheep grazed on the high downland. Many parishes were newly enclosed and the chalk river valleys were dominated by water meadows along their lengths.

The landscape continues to change: agriculture intensifies, infrastructures are upgraded, and the make-up of rural society and settlement adjusts to regional and national pressures. The landscape is susceptible to a range of forces for change, many of which will impact on the historic environment. Our understanding of the historic aspects of the landscapes of the AONB is also continually developing, just as there are also unknown, unexplored and unrecorded archaeological sites in the AONB waiting to be discovered.

New studies undertaken by and on behalf of the AONB

An **Historic Landscape Characterisation** of the landscape of the AONB was completed in July 2008. This project characterised and mapped the historic and archaeological dimension of the present day landscape of the AONB. The project can be explored further at www.historiclandscape.co.uk. It provides the AONB Partnership with a fuller understanding of the cultural and historic evolution of the landscape.



Please refer to **Map 10** in the accompanying guide

A desk based study of the medieval deer parks of the AONB was completed in 2007¹⁸. The location of these sites is not just of historic importance but also indicates areas of potentially great ecological wealth.

Nationally designated heritage in the AONB

Designation is a way of marking that a building, monument or landscape is of 'special architectural or historic interest' in a national context and is made on the recommendation of English Heritage. It is a stage that identifies a site as being architecturally or historically important before any planning stage that may decide its future. In the AONB, there are:

- 556 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 2015 Listed Buildings, 77 of which are Grade I, and 106 Grade II*
- 16 Registered Parks and Gardens

When English Heritage says that a Listed Grade I or II* Building is 'at risk' they mean it is vulnerable through neglect and decay rather than alteration or demolition. This is what leads us to the 'At Risk' Register (Figure 7)¹⁹.

Nationally designated heritage at risk in the AONB	
•	The 2008 Buildings at Risk Register contains 6 buildings which are within the AONB
•	The 2008 Scheduled Ancient Monuments At Risk Register contained 273 monuments which are at High Risk within the AONB

Figure 7: Nationally designated heritage at risk in the AONB

Local heritage designations and records

- 63 designated Conservation Areas
- Historic Parks and Gardens of county importance
- Historic designed landscapes of local importance
- The four county archaeological services record and protect the archaeology within the AONB, and maintain an individual Historic Environment Record/Sites and Monuments Record

18. Medieval Deer Parks of Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB - some initial research and interpretation by Katherine Barker, MA (2006-07).

19. The first edition of English Heritage's annual Heritage at Risk register was published in July 2008 and can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk



Literary, artistic and cultural associations

The landscapes of the AONB hold a special place in the origins and development of archaeology. The antiquarian Richard Colt Hoare resided at Stourhead, laid out the gardens there and studied the ancient monuments of Wiltshire publishing his work in the 1820s. General Pitt-Rivers' excavations and findings on Cranborne Chase in the late 19th century marked a new systematic approach to archaeological excavations. An approach followed by Heywood Sumner, archaeologist, artist and writer, when he undertook a survey of the archaeology of Cranborne Chase between 1911 and 1913.

Important literary figures associated with the area include poet and barrister Sir John Davies (1569-1626), antiquarian and writer John Aubrey (1626-1697), naturalist and writer W H Hudson (1841-1922), author and surgeon Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923), poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) and author and broadcaster Desmond Hawkins (1908-1999).

Other artistic and cultural connections include the architect Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) Prime Minister Anthony Eden (1897-1977), photographer Sir Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner and classical guitarist Julian Bream.

Special characteristics

- A rich legacy of landscape scale archaeological features including the Neolithic Dorset Cursus, and the Saxon Bokerley Dyke.
- A wealth of archaeological features especially in downland areas.
- Historic borderlands, with important Saxon and even Roman roots, once marginal land and often subject to late enclosure.
- The former Medieval delimited hunting preserve of the Cranborne Chase, which was not disenfranchised until 1829.
- A rich land use history, with areas which have a concentration of ancient enclosure, ancient woodland, and former common land.
- An historic settlement pattern (pre 1750) which has seen minimal infilling.
- A concentration of historic parklands, estates, and manor houses.

- Many Historic Parks and Gardens of county importance.
- Literary, artistic and historic connections of national distinction.

Key issues

Management

- Inappropriate management of some sites is an issue, particularly ploughing and other forms of site / monument disturbance or damage, for example from burrowing mammals, such as badgers and rabbits.
- Inappropriate development may adversely impact the setting of many sites, monuments and the historic cohesion of the landscape.
- Some unrecorded sites are almost certainly being damaged or lost.

Funding

- There is insufficient funding to protect and conserve the historic wealth of the AONB adequately.

Awareness

- There is a need for greater knowledge of the location and importance of the historic elements of the landscapes of the AONB, particularly by decision makers, land managers and young people.

OBJECTIVES

G	The historic, archaeological and cultural elements of the landscape of the AONB are conserved and enhanced.
H	The culture and traditions of the AONB are celebrated, valued and supported.

POLICIES

G1	Promote and develop the Historic Landscape Characterisation study as a tool for managing the historic and cultural environment of the AONB, providing a framework for policy making, planning decisions and research agendas.
G2	Ensure that the historic landscapes, designated and listed sites and areas, together with sites of local importance, are appropriately identified, recorded and managed.
G3	The AONB will normally only support 'enabling development' that seeks to secure the conservation or restoration of an historic feature if it is not at the expense of another historic feature or the setting of that historic feature or another. ¹
H1	Encourage and promote local traditions, customs and artistic expression that add to local identity, sense of place and reflect the special qualities of the AONB

¹ In addition, refer to English Heritage 2008 - Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places.