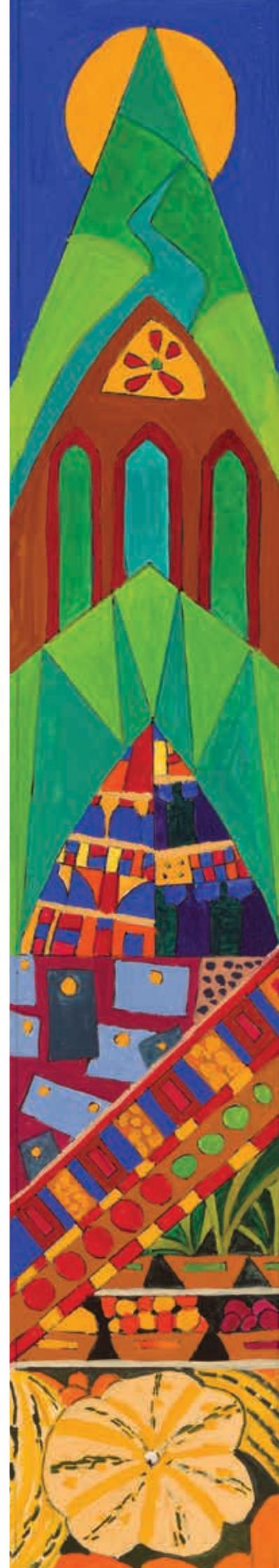


# Rural Economy

*'Open for Business'*



# Open for Business

Once upon a time,  
The Butcher, the Baker and  
The Candlestick Maker  
Made up the village.

Now in Broad Chalke,  
East Knowle and Hindon  
The shop is no longer just a shop.

The General, The Lawyer and  
The Post Office Lady  
Together with an act of faith  
Have paved the way.

Village shops open  
Doubling up with the chapel  
A café, a meeting room.

Chemist, Library, Local Supplier  
Hosting Summer Fetes, Winter Ceilidhs  
Run by village volunteers.

Places to congregate  
Places to mourn loss  
Places to celebrate birth.



Hosting Summer Fetes, Winter Ceilidhs



The shop is no longer just a shop



A café, a meeting room.



Now in Broad Chalke,  
East Knowle and Hindon



Places to congregate



Run by village volunteers

## 12. Rural Economy

*Alongside the land-based industries, the rural economy of the AONB also comprises a range of small to medium sized businesses, with the majority of employees commuting out to the administration and hospitality sectors in the market towns. The high quality environment offers immense, as yet untapped, opportunities for the development of low impact, sustainable rural tourism.*

12.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to the local economy:

- Generally the AONB has an outward looking economy.
- There is a concentration of employment in public administration just outside the AONB, creating a dependence on a few large employers.
- The majority of employment opportunities are in the boundary towns with less than 20% located in the rural areas.
- Strong 'high tech' business growth occurs at the periphery of the AONB.
- The diverse landscapes, wildlife, historic and cultural features are very attractive to visitors.
- A number of notable visitor attractions based around historic parks, lie within the area.
- Local village businesses acknowledge the relatively high value of the tourist/visitor trade within the local economy.

### Aim

12.2. We want a thriving rural economy that will sustain the landscape and ensure economic and social wellbeing.

### Achievements to date

- **LEADER funding** - The AONB, the Community Partnerships Executive of North Dorset (CPEND) and East Dorset District Council worked together to secure £1.5m European LEADER funding to improve the economic wellbeing of the area. The funding was delivered through the Sowing SEEDS Local Action Group (LAG) and over 30 projects were funded during the five year programme. (See Appendix 18.)
- **Sustainable Rural Tourism** - Amongst many projects, the Sowing SEEDS programme grant aided the 13 month AONB Sustainable Rural Tourism Project and a co-ordinator for Tisbury Business Association.
- **Community Shops** - East Knoyle, Hindon and Maiden Bradley have community shops, primarily run by volunteers, developed with Sustainable Development Fund and LEADER support.
- **'Open Femto'** - 3G mobile phone reception arrives in Cranborne, Dorset. The AONB team, Cranborne Estate and local businesses applied for this trial technology from Vodafone on behalf of the community in 2011. It was an action in the Parish Plan and the application was successful in 2013. The local MP said:

*"Bringing a mobile phone signal to the area will not only make the day-to-day lives of residents, both young and old, considerably easier, but will also help to sustain the economy of this rural village and create jobs and growth at a time when many rural villages are stagnating".*



- **Outstanding Shopper Campaign** - Local businesses joined in the campaign involving promotional shopping bags, stickers and shop banners, whilst 10,000 'Outstanding Local Enterprise' leaflets have been distributed encouraging shoppers to support local AONB businesses.

## Key issues

1. Many rural businesses are under serious financial pressure during current (2013) economic conditions.
2. Several villages have lost local facilities such as a shop, Post Office or fuel station, leaving local communities with no public transport struggling to access services.
3. The wealth of local products and services lack consistent and focussed marketing.
4. The effective development of green tourism is only just developing, which can provide an income for local people and support awareness and enjoyment of the landscape.
5. Serious barriers to the growth of rural businesses are poor broadband speeds and mobile reception.

## The Issues Explained

- 12.3. It is the special landscape character and local environments that attract people to live, work and play in the AONB. Sustaining the quality environment of the AONB is essential to the success of many of its key economic sectors. The recent review of the commercial opportunities that arise from valuing nature found that business is often unaware of its true reliance on nature<sup>30</sup>. Working as one, there is the chance for both nature and business to thrive. A key proposal in the report suggests a certification and labelling scheme to connect consumers with nature. Such schemes play an important role that benefits business and consumers. New markets will emerge when the natural environment is at the heart of selling. These will include livestock and food production, tourism and woodland products.
- 12.4. Farmers markets and campaigns such as 'Taste of the West' encourage consumers to purchase locally sourced food. This helps forge closer links between producers and customers. It can increase consumers' understanding of the countryside; how food is produced; and where food comes from. Although a number of rural shops and Post Offices are being lost, several community shops are emerging. They stock and promote mainly local produce.
- 12.5. The AONB provides a high quality setting for the tourism sector. There is therefore a good business case to have the AONB at the heart of 'green' tourism. There are many sustainable, low impact tourism opportunities in the area. They include walking, cycling, horse riding, visiting historic sites or enjoying a range of local events. The sector can improve the quality of the visitor experience and the quality of life of the local community. This is achieved by improving local facilities and raising local incomes.
- 12.6. Until the 2012/13 Sustainable Rural Tourism Project there had been little promotion or marketing of the opportunities. Local tourism networks are only now just emerging. However, there are existing initiatives that can give a boost to the sector. One such is the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. It is a voluntary agreement that sets standards and recognises areas that meet them.
- 12.7. Good communications are essential if the local economy is to grow. Business satisfaction with broadband speeds is low. The average broadband speed across the UK is 6.2 megabits per second. In the AONB, many people cannot access an acceptable level of broadband service. Superfast broadband allows easier and more efficient ways to do business. People can be in touch with family and friends. They can find new ways of receiving public services.

30 'Realising nature's value: The Final Report of the Ecosystem Markets Task Force'. March 2013 [www.defra.gov.uk/ecosystem-markets/files/Ecosystem-Markets-Task-Force-Final-Report-.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/ecosystem-markets/files/Ecosystem-Markets-Task-Force-Final-Report-.pdf)



Superfast broadband makes it possible to work from home or access education. For example, the key aims in Wiltshire and Dorset for superfast broadband are:

- At least 85% and 95% of premises respectively, being able to access superfast broadband (over 24 megabits per second).
- All premises in both counties to have access to a minimum broadband service of 2 megabits per second.

## Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
<b>RE A</b>	<i>Local communities benefit from a sustainable rural economy, based on the resources of the AONB, that also conserves and enhances its landscape character and special qualities</i>	<b>RE1</b>	Utilise opportunities within the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and other funding initiatives, to help achieve the needs of the local economy without compromising the special qualities of the AONB landscape and environment
		<b>RE2</b>	Work with all relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships to influence emerging economic strategies and policies to promote appropriate sustainable development within the AONB and in neighbouring market towns
		<b>RE3</b>	Work with relevant businesses, associations, and chambers of commerce to draw down external funding to develop local markets and add value to local products through embracing sustainable development principles investigating the development of a certification/labelling scheme and developing business networks promoting each others services/products
		<b>RE4</b>	Support all efforts to provide superfast broadband to AONB communities.
<b>RE B</b>	<i>The AONB is promoted as a high quality Sustainable Rural Tourism destination</i>	<b>RE5</b>	Implement actions set out in the ‘Enhancing the AONB Visitor Economy’ strategy through partnerships with tourism related providers, suppliers and relevant marketing organisations
		<b>RE6</b>	Seek to gain European Charter for Sustainable Tourism status by the end of 2019

(Additional Information: Rural Economy Appendix 32)



“  
He gets eggs and milk  
and I get a  
website  
”

*Kay, Ansty Farm*