

Quantock Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

on

Tuesday 20th April 2021

at

2.15pm

To: The members of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer, Amanda Sampson on 07976 695913 or email asampson@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting is given on the last page.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda	
1	Apologies for absence
2	Declarations of interest - an opportunity for members of the JAC to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter being considered at this meeting.
3	Accuracy of the previous minutes - Tuesday 26 th January 2021 (copy appended) and to consider any matters arising.
4	Public question time - The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask questions or make statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting or present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit.
5	Paper A - Team and Partnership Report (Chris Edwards)
6	Paper B - Budget Report (Iain Porter)
7	Paper C - Rangers Report (Andy Stevenson & Owen Jones)
8	Paper D - Volunteering Report (Verity Jones)
9	Paper E - Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme (Bill Jenman)
10	Paper F – Financial Outrun 2020/2021 (Iain Porter)
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>Future JAC meetings (all start at 2.15pm)</p> <p>Tuesday 20th July 2021</p> <p>Future Officer Working Group meetings (all start at 10.00am)</p> <p>Tuesday 6th July 2021</p>
	<p>Note: Further information about any of the reports for this meeting may be obtained from the report authors based at the Quantock Hills AONB Service office, Fyne Court, Broomfield, Bridgwater, TA5 2EQ. Telephone: 01823 451884 or Email: quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk</p>

THE MEETING – GUIDANCE NOTES

1.	Inspection of Papers Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson on 07976 695913 or email asampson@somerset.gov.uk
2.	Notes of the Meeting Details of the issues discussed, and decisions taken at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions taken can be obtained from Quantock Hills AONB Communication and Support Officer Amanda Sampson on 07976 695913 or email asampson@somerset.gov.uk
3.	Public Question Time At the Chairman’s invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee’s agenda . You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee’s remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 20 minutes in total. A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. If you wish to speak, please tell Amanda Sampson, the committee administrator, before the meeting . You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take direct part in the debate. The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish. If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting.
	Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.
4.	Substitutions Committee members can appoint substitutes if they are unable to attend the meeting.

QUANTOCK HILLS JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)

Minutes of a meeting of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee held virtually via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday 26th January 2021 at 2.15pm**

Present:

Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew, JAC Chair (ATB)	- Somerset West & Taunton Council
Cllr Mike Caswell, JAC Vice Chair (MC)	- Sedgemoor District Council
Chris Edwards (CE)	- Quantock Hills AONB Service
Iain Porter (IP)	- Quantock Hills AONB Service
Cllr Julian Taylor (JT)	- North Petherton Town Council
Cllr Dixie Darch (DD)	- Somerset West & Taunton
Philip Comer (PC)	- Friends of Quantock
Cllr Alan Bradford (AB)	- Sedgemoor District Council
Mandy Chilcott (MAC)	- Somerset County Council
Alicia Aras (AA)	- Somerset Local Access Forum
Hugh Warmington (HW)	- Countryside Landowners Association

Also present:

Amanda Sampson (AS)	- Quantock Hills Comms & Support Officer
Michael King (MK)	- Bagborough Estate
Alan Hughes (AH)	- Friends of Quantock
David Stripp (DS)	- Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Colin Falla (CF)	- Nether Stowey Parish Council
Joshua Schwieso (JS)	- Spaxton Parish Council
Cllr Greg Glendell (GG)	- Kilve Parish Council
Nick Bryant (NB)	- Somerset West & Taunton Council
Cllr Hugh Davies (HD)	- Williton, Watchet and Stogursey
Adam Lockyear (AL)	- Honesty Box
Alex Meletiou (AM)	- Quantock Hills AONB Planning Officer
Dr Martin Jones (MJ)	- West Bagborough Parish Council
Edward Strachan (ES)	- Halswell Estate
Kristina Luxton (KL)	- National Trust
Jonathan Doyle (JD)	- Somerset County Council
Cllr Peter Payne (PP)	- Williton Parish Council
John Acland-Hood (JAH)	- Fairfield Estate

1. Apologies:

Jo Chesworth (Natural England), Crispian Cook (Halsway Manor), Julie Cooper (Sedgemoor District Council), Laeticia Kelly (Friends of Quantock) and John Ebsary (Forestry England).

2. Declarations of Interest

ATB declared himself to be a member of Quantock Eco, Friends of Quantock, Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group, Quantock Stag Hounds, and a Quantock Hills Landowner. No other declarations were given.

3. Accuracy and matters arising from the previous minutes

Page 4, Gatepost at Triscombe Stone. ATB had a meeting the Area Highways Manager on Friday 30th October to discuss this further, the road is in a bad state of repair and some people have damaged their vehicles using it which ends up with people trying to sue the County Council. The council are trying to discourage people from using this road and so the gate has been installed but will not be locked and will remain open most of the time but is there to act as discouragement to people using the road.

Proposed coffee outlet, Tony McCullum has contacted ATB about the proposal as a landowner but ATB confirmed that Styles Ice-cream are already present at Crowcombe Park Gate and didn't want any more vans up there. ATB added that Styles ice-cream van deep freeze runs off of solar panels which means that the vehicle engine doesn't have to be running whilst stationary.

Page 9, Ash Dieback. ATB wanted to stress that diseased Ash Trees are very dangerous to cut down so please spread the message to be very cautious and seek expert advice.

The minutes from the previous meeting were signed off as a true representation of the meeting.

4. Public Question Time

GG from Kilve Parish Council raised a question about the quiet lanes. Kilve have been having problems with Sea Lane/Hilltop Lane with people driving too fast so the parish have started a voluntary scheme, to be agreed with the highways authority, requesting drivers slow down and have more consideration for vulnerable road users such as walkers, dog walkers, cyclist and horse riders. Currently in the early stages but will keep the JAC informed, if anyone would like more information about the scheme, please contact Kilve Parish Council.

ATB – the problem in the past has been people not having a clear understanding about what quiet lanes were and what to do with them unless more signs are provided. ATB asked GG if he could keep in contact with CE over the quiet lanes and asked CE if he could find out what other AONB's were doing about quiet lanes. CE – happy to make contact with GG about the quiet lanes.

No other public questions.

5. Paper A – Quantock Hills Team and Partnership Update (Chris Edwards)

Due to technical issues CE had to leave the call so was unable to give his update himself. IP gave a brief highlight of the team and partnership update in CE's absence.

The Quantock Hills team remain working from home other than the Rangers who continue to patrol the hills. Redeployment of staff to mass testing and vaccination sites was requested by SCC and where possible we have reacted positively; this includes Iain and Ranger Andy providing 2 days a week and Verity 3 days a week to start soon. In addition to this our Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme sub-team were allowed by Lottery Heritage Fund to take part in redeployment, although SCC have pay for any hours the team spent on redeployment. John Barrett the QLPS Community Engagement & Volunteering Officer is currently redeployed 4 days a week while Bill Jenman the QLPS Manager and Dan Broadbent the QLPS Historic Heritage Officer are both on an ad hoc basis. This is likely to continue until March but the situation is being reviewed frequently.

During lockdown the hills have been increasingly busy with the Rangers having to liaise with the police who have had an increased presence on the hills and are occasionally issuing fines. Social media links and posts remain constant reminding people how to use the hills and following the Countryside Code.

QLPS team have had to reshape their delivery plan for the year due to Coronavirus but have managed to keep some delivery going. Simon Phelps who was appointed for the QLPS Natural Heritage Project Officer position left the QLPS team back in December to take up a permanent position with Natural England that he had applied for at the same time. We wish Simon all the best. Recruitment for the position will be happening soon.

MAC - huge thank you to those who are helping with the Covid vaccination programme.

No further questions or comments.

Paper A Recommendations:

- 1) The JAC supports a Quantock trial of the developing app Honesty Box – Supported all agreed**
- 2) The JAC notes the report - Noted**

6. Presentation - App for Quantock Trial Proposal (Adam Lockyear)

AL gave a short presentation about 'Honesty Box' - a visitor payment app he and a colleague have developed to connect landscapes and their visitors giving them the opportunity to support conservation work. A website has been developed that works as an app either on a computer or mobile phone enabling visitors to make a contribution/donation towards the conservation of the landscape - anonymously if requested. This can be done with very little infrastructure and signage. Small roundel signs can be added to existing signs already in place.

ATB - there are a lot of areas across the top of the hill with very poor connectivity for mobile phones, would this cause problems. AL currently looking into some alternatives for poor areas such as being able to pay via a text if needed.

DD - agrees this is a great idea and the voluntary aspect will be more attractive to most people.

MAC - any income stream is obviously helpful, not sure about signs going up everywhere and has concerns over the term 'honesty' and if this would affect people wanting to use the hills if they didn't make a contribution.

JT - supports this proposal and wonders if there are any ways of giving contribution stickers to acknowledge people who have made contributions. Perhaps differing contribution values for walkers, cyclist and horse riders ect.

IP - the issue of more signage as already mentioned would be built into pre-existing signs and also be prominent on the website.

DS - great idea and should be pushed. Could we get people to walk the most common routes to check phone reception could small notices be put up to let people know they would have signal to make a contribution at that point.

ES – Mill Wood in Goathurst opens to the public and funds go towards Halswell Park Trust but these funds could go towards the Quantock Hills AONB. Could you make it compulsory to make a contribution as it is private land people should pay something which could go straight into the 'honesty' app. AL – yes people can create boxes on the app which funds can be paid into. Currently looking at the voluntary element as opposed to mandatory. ATB if ES wished to make it mandatory that people make a contribution that goes towards the AONB when visiting Mill Wood that's a personal decision and wouldn't see any objections being made. ES will talk more to IP about the open events at Mill Wood.

HD – would there be any issues with the Tax man from income generated from contributions. AL – Honesty Box owners would have responsibility to look into this themselves. IP – in the past we have been able to deal with this through SCC so is possible.

AL to email the presentation to AS to circulate to the JAC members.

No further comments or questions.

7. Paper B - Budget & Work Priorities 2021/22 (Iain Porter)

IP gave an update on the budget and work priorities for next year from paper B. The Quantock Hills AONB Partnership is required to submit its grant application to Defra by the end of January. This report sets out the budget and main work areas that will form the basis of the grant application.

The Funding and Income working group has met a couple of times, looking at the AONB service funding. The next phase is to look at reducing expenditure or increasing income.

JT – The Bridgwater Town Fund and 2 further funds are available and possible applications could be made to those funds. IP asked JT to email any information to him to look into.

No further comments or questions.

Paper B Recommendations:

1) The JAC notes the report - Noted

8. Paper C - Planning Report (Alex Meletiou)

AM - The Government consultation out would require a response if any by 28th January 2021. Does the JAC agree to AM or CE replying to the questions on behalf of the AONB and the JAC. All agreed.

ATB - Regarding new Government consultation 'supporting housing delivery and public service infrastructure' noted that the JAC would like prior approval to be required especially within the AONB. All agreed.

AM – planning application comments are looking to be reduced and AM does not consider this to be a good idea and may prove not to be very useful and would like to comment that the AONB would not like to see this reduced to 14 days. ATB agreed with AM that 14 days would be problematic and should be left at 21 days. All agreed.

JT – Appropriate notice needs to be given to arrange meetings to discuss planning applications 14 days is not enough. AB – Most parish councils only meet every couple of months, and this would not leave enough time to discuss planning applications within the 14 day deadline. JT – Suggested that our MP Ian Liddell Grainger be written to informing him of the JAC concerns. ATB suggested MP's Ian Liddell-Grainger and Rebecca Pow be written to regarding the AONB concerns over the proposed reduction from 21 to 14 days.

No further comments or questions.

Paper C Recommendations:

1) The JAC notes the report - Noted

9. Paper D - Project Report (Iain Porter)

IP gave an update on the projects that have been taken forward this year. These included the Somerset AONBs Nature and Wellbeing project which ended in August 2020. Following the success of this Project the three Somerset AONBs joined with Somerset Wildlife Trust to develop and launch a more comprehensive and better funded version, Somerset Nature Connections, in September 2020. The Elms Test & Trials project started in January 2020 and is due to finish in April 2021, the project was due to run for 2 years but due to delays with contract agreements with Defra it was reduced. The project report is due in April 2021 which will include a Landscape Spatial Framework. The Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund started in 2014 and is due to finish in 2021/2022 as the final tranche of projects complete. The Quantock Landscape Improvement Scheme associated with the HPC development is due to continue running for another 2-3 years. The Level Up project was awarded funding in December 2020 and will be completed by March 2022. This includes the Mires project which is led by Friends of Quantock and finally the Access project which is a small scale project for improvements where these would not be the responsibility of the Rights of Way department.

AB - was a shame to see a steel gate installed and not wood at the mire opposite CPG. IP noted this concern.

ATB - concerns about the underplanting. IP Forestry England have advised to take out small coupes of the trees suffering from Ash Dieback.

No further comments or questions.

Paper D Recommendations:

1) The JAC notes the report - Noted.

10. Paper E - 2020/2021 Finance Update (Iain Porter)

IP gave a brief overview of the 2020/2021 Budget Highlight Report.

JAH – Is there a sense of the budget for next year. IP – next year going forward the assumption is that the grant from Defra will be largely the same, we should know more mid-February onwards.

MAC – within the budget how much increase has been allowed for salaries. IP – a 2% increase has been estimated. MAC – Government have been looking for a 0% increase and SCC have budgeted for a 1% increase.

No further comments or questions.

Paper E Recommendations:

1) The JAC notes the report - Noted.

6. AOB -

AB – how is the Broomfield replanting going. IP – Bill is looking to distribute the trees out to people soon after they have been given advice on how to plant them themselves to avoid crowds and socialising.

ATB thanked IP for stepping in to cover for CE during the meeting and for all of his presentations.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 2.15pm, virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams.

Meeting was closed at 4.26pm

Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee **20th April 2021**

AONB Team and Partnership Report.

On-line meeting under Covid 19 restrictions

1. Team

- 1.1 As previously most of us continue to work from home with weekly Teams team meetings and occasional visits to the office for essentials. The Rangers are regularly patrolling the hills giving advice and guidance to the public. The 6 team members who have been working at mass vaccination and/or testing sites have all finished their redeployment in the last few weeks. A heart-felt thank-you goes to them from me for this important work that they have delivered by squeezing/postponing their day-jobs. Inevitably much work has gone on beyond paid hours, the AONB Team has provided across the core team and the Landscape Partnership over 100 days of test/vaccination site work, and the collective pandemic response is better for it. As a really helpful aside to this, and not expected when it was agreed that we would go ahead with core team redeployments, Somerset County Council has agreed to recompense us for the staff time provided. This applies not only to the Landscape Partnership staff (Bill, Dan and Jon) where it was a pre-requisite for these lottery-funded posts, but also to the core team redeployment activity of Iain, Verity and Andy.
- 1.2 We have updated (agreed with SCC H&S) our AONB Outdoor Covid Risk Assessments for the 29th March changes and are looking forward to getting our many volunteers back out on the ground over time, as the lifting of restrictions goes forward. Here are a few RA key elements:
- *Continue to work from home where possible*
 - *Remember to clean down touch points and to wash hands more regularly.*
 - *Small group activity can happen outside, this includes staff and volunteers. It is good practise to be thinking about the rule of six for group activity - this number is likely to increase when the restrictions on group sizes ease in May.*
 - *Therapeutic group activity is continuing to happen as previously – max 15 participants + staff/volunteers.*
 - *Engagement with the public is allowable but it needs to occur in a Covid Secure way. Consider use of face coverings if you will be working in a busy outdoor setting e.g. car parks, as well as maintaining social distancing.*

- *Car sharing is still not allowable, multi-occupancy in mini-buses is allowable in line with guidance.*
- *People who are 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' are still required to work/ volunteer from home, even if they have received both doses of a Covid-19 vaccine.*

2. Partnership

- 2.1 Key team members including the Rangers met to prepare in advance for the expected very high visitor numbers over Easter and beyond, although in the event the numbers were more mixed than anticipated with some periods and places very busy over Easter and others less so. Various coping mechanisms were put in place - particularly elements becoming known as 'pre-visit information and liaison'. This is helping visitors understand in advance what is and isn't acceptable behaviour when visiting - we significantly upped our Countryside Code based info going out on social media and in press releases with articles and short Ranger videos covering issues such as dogs on leads and not feeding the ponies.
- 2.2 The Countryside Code has just been significantly updated (published 1st April 2021), it now addresses more of the issues and behaviours that can cause visitor-associated problems in the hills and will be very helpful in advising the public. View the full code (referred to as Statutory Guidance) here: [The Countryside Code: advice for countryside visitors - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and the leaflet here: [The Countryside Code A5 Leaflet \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk) There is also statutory guidance provided for land managers.
- 2.3 The Quantock Hills AONB trial of Honesty Box (<https://honestybox.org/>) is now live - this app still under development facilitates small scale visitor giving towards access and conservation management/improvements when visiting the countryside. The app can be accessed online and will locate nearby popular countryside sights (currently just Quantock sites for the trial) plus QR codes/web details will be available on site and in social media. This allows visitors to give a small contribution towards looking after the countryside site or area they visit while they are at the location, or afterwards if they prefer. Giving is entirely voluntary with contributions going to the AONB Service for access and conservation work/projects. Promotion will be low key and the sites are now visible by visiting <https://honestybox.org/>.
- 2.4 Following the removal of all of the ash trees along the road, around the car park and beside the path at Cothelstone Hill in the autumn (due to ash dieback disease) replanting has been undertaken this quarter. Since Christmas - working in Covid-secure ways - the Rangers, AONB staff and members of the Working Well group have planted over 1000 trees to fill the gaps left by the ash trees. A mixture of broadleaf trees were planted including hazel, oak, hornbeam and wild cherry. We may find that some of the ash trees recover and send up new shoots but the replacements are a guarantee that there will be tree cover in years to come.

2.5 **National Marine Parks - 1 Vision for British Seas:** this report released early April by the charity Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE) identifies 10 areas around the coast which *"could be designated national marine parks within the next 10 years"*. Currently there is only one (self-declared) National Marine Park in the UK which is around Plymouth Sound. Many of the proposed locations overlap with existing AONBs and National Parks, including the Quantocks, and the Blue Marine Foundation has a strong reputation for influencing coastal and marine policy globally. The 10 Proposed National Marine Parks are listed below, see Appendix A for more detail on the Severn Sea proposal:

1. The South Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Dorset, Solent and the Isle of Wight to Sussex
2. The Greater Thames London Gateway, North Kent & South Essex
3. East Anglia Suffolk, The Wash & North Norfolk
4. North East England Tyne to Tees Seascape, Northumberland and Berwickshire
5. North West England Cumbria's Colourful Coast, the Solway Firth and Coastal Regional Parks.
6. The Severn Sea Severn Estuary and the Bristol Channel
7. Atlantic Cornwall The Isles of Scilly
8. Wales Pembrokeshire
9. Scotland Argyll Coast & Islands
10. A Crown Dependency Jersey

To quote the executive summary: *Following the 2018 conference in Plymouth, BLUE commissioned Natasha Bradshaw to look at where the evidence might support the creation of other national marine parks and the level of support for the idea. This report is a distillation of her research.* For more information and to see the report follow: <https://www.bluemarinefoundation.com/2021/04/06/national-marine-parks-a-vision-for-british-seas/>

Natasha is a Somerset resident with a distinguished record in UK and global marine research and protection, she was a Parish Representative on the Quantock Hills JAC in 2016/17.

- 2.6 Defra will be providing a 'flat financial settlement' for AONB teams next year with no inflationary rise, however it may include additional funding specific to the Farming in Protected Landscapes initiative (see below). This settlement forms nearly 75% of our core funding for the team – see Iain's reports for more detail.
- 2.7 The government's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) initiative is currently under detailed discussion – a fairly brief statement on GOV.UK is the only public information so far released, and we await detail and concrete direction on Defra funding and expectations. This initiative is potentially very significant for AONBs and National Parks. The government statement includes:

We want: To support farmers and other land managers in Protected Landscapes, to help them diversify their income streams and lay the groundwork for our Environmental Land Management offer.

We will: Provide support to farmers, via National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty bodies, to help grow businesses, create green jobs, enhance biodiversity and invest in infrastructure to attract more diverse visitors to support local economies. Farmers in Protected Landscapes operate in challenging agricultural conditions and are often very reliant on Direct Payments. At the same time, they provide huge environmental, social and cultural benefits.

Scheme description: The scheme will deliver funding through the Protected Landscapes bodies to support farmers, particularly upland farmers (75% of whom live and work in Protected Landscapes) to make improvements to the natural environment, cultural heritage and public access on their land.

Eligibility: Farmers and other land managers in Protected Landscapes will have the opportunity to work with their National Park or Area of Outstanding National Beauty. More information will be provided on this scheme in early 2021.

Chris Edwards

Quantock Hills AONB Manager

April 2021



Paper A Recommendations

1) The JAC notes the report

Appendix 1

THE SEVERN SEA

Known as ‘Mor Hafren’ in Welsh, the ‘Severn Sea’ has one of the highest tidal ranges in the world and Britain’s largest estuary. The Severn Estuary and surrounding areas have the highest level of international and European designations for wetlands which are linked to the Somerset Levels and Moors, the Gwent Levels and River Wye.

The Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel are surrounded by nationally designated coastal landscapes with Exmoor National Park, the Wye Valley AONB, Quantock Hills AONB, Glamorgan Heritage Coast, Gower Peninsula Heritage Coast AONB and the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Despite the special features and many designations around the ‘Severn Sea’ there is limited understanding and celebration of the natural seascape and marine environment amongst neighbouring urban communities. Accessibility to the coast and water is challenging due to the fast tidal currents and large mudflats in many areas. The cities of Gloucester, Bristol, Newport and Cardiff offer significant potential for more community awareness, understanding, engagement and enjoyment of this ecosystem. Wilderness and wellbeing opportunities exist, but few interpretation and recreational facilities are available to encourage people to understand the marine environment or connect their daily lives with the sea. The ‘Severn Sea’ faces many challenges and opportunities. Coastal and marine designations span the border across England and Wales but there are significant pressures for development on both sides. The Severn Estuary Partnership has been co-ordinating local authorities and key stakeholders around the estuary since the 1990s, providing essential networking effort across the border. There is significant potential to work on citizen engagement, particularly with deprived coastal communities who could benefit from socio-economic opportunities associated with the Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel. Marine Park status could attract investment for awareness raising and engagement effort, bridging connectivity between millions of people and this vast ecosystem.

To: Quantock Hills JAC
From: Iain Porter, Quantock Hills AONB Development Officer
Date: 20/04/2021

Quantock Hills AONB – Budget & work priorities 2021-22

1. Introduction

- a. The Quantock Hills AONB Partnership is required to submit its grant application to Defra by the end of January. This report sets out the budget and main work areas that will form the basis of the grant application.
- b. On 15th March Defra confirmed that the AONB baseline grant allocation will be a flat rollover of current year's figures. The detailed individual AONB allocation has yet to be confirmed and this will set out the expected areas of work and outcomes for the grant.
- c. Since 2015 the AONB Service has been delivering HPC Landscape & Visual Schemes (GQLDF & LIS). These have been delivered by the Development Officer, alongside other workstreams. To ensure completion of these schemes within timescale and budgets the Development Officer will be allocating 0.6FTE of their time for the next 12 months. This will have an impact on the other workstreams being delivered by this post.

2. 2021-22 Work Priorities

- a. Work priorities and business planning is directed by the Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan and priorities of funders (Defra, local authorities). For 2021 / 22 these will include:
 - i. Maintaining 'on-the-ground' staff and volunteers for visitor management and land management.
 - ii. Provision of Nature & Wellbeing engagement through the Somerset Nature Connections Project.
 - iii. Provide opportunities for engagement through volunteering in a variety of roles.
 - iv. Development of a Nature Recovery Plan and embedding into statutory management plans and linking to national Local Nature Recovery initiatives.
 - v. Advocacy of agri-environment schemes including ensuring farmers / landowners are engaged with Environmental Land Management (ELM) through Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes initiative. Though this is due to start this month (April 2021) and run for 3-years there is no detail on amount of funding or type of activities the project is due to deliver.
 - vi. Nature recovery actions through externally funded projects
 1. Levels Up (NLHF funded). Woodland resilience, woodland improvement, mires enhancement.
 2. Landscape Improvement Scheme (EDF S106 funded) land management works to join priority habitats
 3. Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (EDF S106 funded). Creation of new hedgerows, tree planting, wildflower meadows.
 - vii. Support and administration of the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme delivering engagement, landscape improvements and historic heritage works.
 - viii. Provision of training in land management skills for young people to support growth in economic activity in the Quantock Hills and surrounds.

- b. The business plan will take account of opportunities and threats that may be realised during the year. This could include further impacts from the covid-19 pandemic or in-year funding opportunities, such as this year's Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

3. Assumptions made for budgeting purposes

- a. There is currently a lot of uncertainty over how the medium-term funding 'landscape' will look. The Landscape Review into National Parks and AONBs, the Agricultural Transition Plan and the local authority structure in Somerset all have the potential to change how the AONB is funded and operates.
- b. However it is necessary to make assumptions, especially in terms of next year's budget. The following assumptions have been made:
 - i. Core staff unit remains at present level (in terms of number of staff and hours)
 - ii. Core expenditure is comparable to 2020/21 levels in terms of accommodation, vehicle and travel costs and partnership running costs.
 - iii. Inflationary increase of 2% is applied to salaries
 - iv. Local authority contributions have minor increase as detailed in the Statement of Intent and any change in local authority structure locally will not be in place within the next financial year.

4. 2021-22 Budget

- a. The budget below reflects costs that are known or estimated for next year. It is important to note that the expenditure of the core budget exceeds the income. For the next financial year the gap is being plugged through significant levels of cost recovery in respect of delivering the HPC Landscape & Visual schemes.
- b. Over the last 3 years the deficit has been met from reserves. This is not a sustainable solution and the Funding & Income Working Group is looking at options. Currently the group is unable to progress much in the way of scenario planning due to the delay in government response to both the Landscape Review and the Farming in Protected Landscapes projects. Both of these will have impact on AONB funding and workstreams over the next 3-years.
- c. Table 1 shows the proposed summary budgets for the AONB along with the 2020/21 figures for comparison.

Table 1: Quantock Hills AONB budgets 2021-22

Core	2020/21	2021/22	Notes
Salaries, NI, SA	241,600	231,556	2021/22 figure does not include pension deficit figure as this is not expected to be payable.
Training	1,600	1,500	
Rent, rates, electricity, water	13,260	12,150	Insurance moved to different budget. Depot rent increased
stationary, post, phones, printing	3,000	3,310	
travel, vehicle costs	18,100	18,700	Assuming new lease cost @ £6k / vehicle.
Equipment, maintenance, clothing, uniform	3,500	3,000	
Literature, publications, publicity	0	200	
Meeting costs, hospitality	800	600	
Management Fee, Insurance	8,700	8,920	
Memberships	2,500	2,750	
Research & Development	2,300	0	
EXPENDITURE	295,360	282,686	

Income Defra	-166,239	-166,300	
Income Local Authorities	-44,400	-45,288	
Income Cost Recovery	-8,500	-32,300	Includes increased time allocated to HPC LVS of 0.6FTE development officer
Income Friends of Quantock	-1,000	-1,000	
Recharge - staff posts	-34,174	-35,688	
Recharge - SCC Pen Def & AL	-18,800	-864	
Funds from reserves	-24,300	0	
INCOME	-297,413	-281,940	
<i>Balance (to nearest £10)</i>	<i>-2,040</i>	<i>746</i>	<i>Showing a small overspend on core budget</i>
Projects	2020/21	2021/22	
Nature & Wellbeing	9,379	-	Project ended Sept2020
Somerset Nature Connections	43,300	43,300	
Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund	25,000	20,000	
Quantock Landscape Improvement Scheme	20,000	65,000	
ELMS T&T	49,485	-	Project ended Mar2020
ELM Advocacy	7,202	-	Project ended Mar2020
Levels Up	-	50,350	
Mires Project	1,854	-	Project ended Jun2020
Access	1,000	-	
EXPENDITURE	157,220	178,650	
Defra	-54,687	-	
HPC S106	-45,000	-85,000	
Somerset County Council (Prevent Demand Fund)	-13,300	-13,300	Somerset Nature Connections
Somerset Community Foundation	-30,000	-30,000	Somerset Nature Connections
National Association of AONBs	-2,000	-	
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	-50,350	Level's UP
Friends of Quantock	-1,854	-	
Fund from Reserves	-4,400	-	
AONBs contribution	-2,800	-	
INCOME	-154,041	-178,650	
<i>Balance</i>	<i>3,180</i>	<i>0</i>	
Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme	2020/21	2021/22	
Expenditure	250,000	541,824	Ring-fenced budget
Income	--250,000	-541,824	
<i>Balance</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	
Land Management	2020/21	2021/22	
Expenditure	31,675	2,000	Income from 2021/22 used to cover deficit from 2020/21
Income	-22,810	-8,110	
<i>Balance</i>	<i>8,870</i>	<i>-6,110</i>	
RIA	2020/21	2021/22	
Expenditure	38,500	0	
Income	-72,975	-38,923	b/f from previous year
<i>Balance</i>	<i>-34,480</i>	<i>-38,923</i>	
<i>Earmarked reserves (redundancy cover)</i>	<i>19,000</i>	<i>19,000</i>	
SURPLUS / DEFICIT	5,990	25,287	

To: Quantock Hills JAC

From: Owen Jones, Quantock Hills AONB & Forestry England Partnership Ranger
& Andy Stevenson, Quantock Hills AONB Ranger

Date: 20/04/2021

Quantock Hills AONB - Rangers Report

INTRODUCTION

Since our last report in October 2020, the Rangers have witnessed extreme highs and lows in terms of visitor numbers and visitor impacts on the Quantocks. During Lockdown 2 and 3 and national restrictions by and large people respected the guidelines to stay local. There have been a handful of exceptions resulting in the police issuing fines.

Andy Stevenson along with several of the AONB and LPS team was redeployed for several days a week between January and March at one of the Lateral Flow Test centres in Taunton.

As with the restrictions last year the Rangers have concentrated mainly on visitor management without the help of the various individual and groups of volunteers. When it was possible groups of six enabled us to get on with some of the autumn and winter works. Both Rangers attended their chainsaw refresher courses during December.

1. Habitat Management

- 1.1 Cothelstone Hill – following the extensive works to remove the roadside ash trees in the autumn we managed to replant most of the areas cleared with over 1000 native trees including oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, hazel and wayfaring tree. This was largely carried out by the Rangers occasionally assisted by volunteers. Since then the Rangers have taken the opportunity to coppice roadside trees and scrub whilst the roads were relatively quiet. The Rangers have also managed to carry out scrub management on the open hill, strim some of the old banks and thin some of the ash trees around the glade. The annual tree safety audit was also undertaken at Cothelstone Hill, with any identified tree work undertaken where/when possible. A charged safety inspection was also undertaken on Friends of Quantock land at their request.

A coupe of hazel was coppiced, although the plan to do several areas was put on hold without the help of volunteers. Some of the standard trees in this years' coupe and one coupe to be coppiced next winter were ringbarked. This is to create some standing dead wood habitat for birds, bats and insects – this was carried out at locations away from public access.

Early planning for next autumn and winter has started with the Rangers assessing the woodland blocks on the site. Iain Porter has secured some funding through the Woodland Resilience project which aims to protect our woodlands for future generations; with significant areas of ash likely to have ash dieback and other

areas predominantly of one species, this is an opportunity to pay for felling work and planting a mixture of species that will survive changing climate conditions.

We are continuing to establish additional grazing stock for the open grassland part of the site and have been in consultation with the Exmoor Pony Society with a view to introducing a number of new ponies. This is likely to be in the autumn of 2021 at the earliest.

- 1.2 Swaling/ Cut and Collect – our usual team of trained volunteers have not been able to be trained or come out to help with the swaling this season. The commoners approached us early in the new year to ask if they could work with us to do some burning. The Rangers have therefore managed to supervise and assist the commoners with 5 burns on the northern common and 1 on Aisholt Common. This gave the commoners an insight into the activity; some had not done it for many years and others had never done it. In addition two areas of cut and collect were overseen at Great Bear and Sandy Beds where the vegetation was too tall and leggy to burn. Cuttings from the cut and collect were mainly removed off-site by the contractor but some was utilised to block entrances/provide a seed bank for regenerating bare areas.
- 1.3 Working Well group – despite the bulk of volunteers being unable to help for large periods of time, this group have continued as they are classed as a therapy group. As a result we have managed to carry out some tree planting, hawthorn thinning, gorse cutting and burning at Cothelstone Hill and some hedgelaying at Cothelstone Manor.

One QCV event between the lockdowns was helping Stowey Greenspaces at Stowey Wood with some scrub clearance along the paths.

2. Visitor Management

- 2.1 Communications – a significant part of the Rangers role over the last year and the last few months has been trying to engage with the public and volunteers. With limited face to face contact possible we have had to invent new ways to communicate through videos as well as existing methods of radio and newspaper interviews, providing articles for the newsletter and social media posts. Through informing people about our work and the wildlife of the hills we have tried to educate people about how to behave in the AONB – many of the visitors to the area in recent times aren't used to the countryside, where to go or what to do. This includes a large number of new dog owners and mountain bike owners.
- 2.2 Fly tipping / litter – with increased numbers of visitors comes more litter. Over the Easter weekend it was noticeable how much litter needed to be picked up but now that the Volunteer Rangers are back we can hopefully get on top of this. Several of the parishes around the hills have organised spring clean litter picks. Fly tipping is less of an issue now that the council run tips are open but we do witness some occasional problems. 13 fly tipping incidents recorded from October to the start of April.
- 2.3 Car parks – just before Easter we managed to get approval and funding from SCC to make repairs to the car park at Lydeard Hill that was long overdue and tag it onto some minor repairs at Cothelstone Hill car park.

The Rangers have been involved in ongoing consultations about the new car park at Crowcombe Park Gate and the management of the surrounding common with the LPS staff, landowners and commoners.

- 2.4 Patrols – the Rangers maintain a regular routine of patrols during the weekend and at weekends or bank holidays. Joint patrols with the police have not been possible but we have constant communication with them.

3. Wildlife Monitoring

- 3.1 Pied flycatchers – during the winter the Rangers have replaced a number of the bird boxes for monitoring this species in the combes around Holford. A donation for the cost of the timber was received from Friends of Quantock.
- 3.2 Deer Count - the annual deer count took place on Sunday March 14th. Over 60 volunteers took part and some areas were sub divided to cater for the number of individuals where we would normally pair people up. Early indications show a large number of roe deer spotted and over 500 red deer. Working with the Quantock Deer Management and Conservation Group we hope the results will be published soon.
- 3.3 Nightjar Survey – The data from the survey that was undertaken earlier in the year was analysed and locations plotted. The second year of the survey looked at 10 km squares across the Quantocks and involved volunteers/staff plotting calling males in their dedicated square. As per last year the average number per square was 2.5 males. This data was submitted to Somerset Environmental Records Centre and will help to inform potential land management decisions in the future.

Paper C Recommendations: 1. The JAC notes the report

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee
From: Verity Jones, Quantock Hills AONB Volunteer Coordinator
Date: 20 April 2021

Quantock Hills AONB – JAC Volunteering Report

1. As with many things over the last year, volunteering has been very disrupted by Covid restrictions and the ever-changing rules for groups gathering and working together safely which has been a challenge. The AONB Service has had to balance the safety of its volunteers from the potential risk of Covid-19 against the mental health & wellbeing of people not being able to volunteer.
2. Group volunteering restarted from August 2020 but individual volunteers were able to get out much earlier (from May onwards) which included the Volunteer Rangers and various wildlife surveyors. Despite quite a few hurdles and difficult decisions the team has been doing its best to be as responsive as possible and managed to get volunteer groups out for periods in the second half of the year when lockdowns and tiers were less restrictive.
3. This was very welcome by volunteers who were very understanding of the difficulties of planning work with the changing situation and enjoyed meeting up with the rest of their groups and being out on the hills.
4. We have had a steady stream of volunteer interest over the past year with many people having more time on their hands one way or another and people's attention being focused on the importance of their local countryside. It has been a struggle to utilise this interest as we have struggled to get current volunteers out, let alone new ones. We hope that over the coming year alongside the LPS scheme and Somerset Nature Connections project, we will be able to provide opportunities for new volunteers to get involved with the AONB. On the positive side, even with such a disjointed year, we have still managed to achieve just over 2,200 volunteer hours in the period from last March which is a great achievement. During the year 2019-2020 we achieved just over 2,600 volunteer hours so a comparatively small difference.
5. The various longstanding wildlife surveying groups have been a core part of the volunteering effort over the past year and they were adapted to work individually or in small groups which has been very successful. Wildlife surveys have included:
 - a. Butterfly transects – Two transects undertaken weekly from April to September.
 - b. Bats – Six transects completed during July – September
 - c. Dormice – regular checks at Cothelstone Hills transect
 - d. Nightjar – Quantock Common and other areas dusk and dawn surveys undertaken
 - e. Deer Count – the annual deer count in March.

These have been done with slightly reduced numbers then on some years but we have managed to maintain some continuity with our long term environmental records which is great.

6. Volunteer rangers are a huge support to the AONB Service, especially with the increase in visitor pressure and they have been out and about since May 2020 patrolling and being a presence on the hills even when we had to ask them not to engage with the public - which is their favourite pastime! The volunteer rangers also undertake practical sessions on the first Thursday of the month where they have done various woodland management works around Cothelstone Hill such as coppicing and hawthorn thinning, allowing more light through the canopy to increase the diversity and ground flora in the woodland.
7. School groups and work experience students engagement has been heavily impacted in the last year. However a group of International Baccalaureate students from Taunton School did come out for a block of 6 weeks in the autumn and were involved with hawthorn thinning as part of the woodland management plan on Cothelstone Hill. This involved felling a lot of small hawthorn saplings under Andy and Owen's watchful eye and then having a bonfire which they thoroughly enjoyed.
8. One of the very well established and successful groups from the Nature and Wellbeing Project, the 'Working Well Group', which undertakes practical countryside tasks in the AONB with people with poor mental health was restarted in September. Under the Covid Regulations this group is classed as a Therapy Group, allowing us to have up to 15 participants attending over the winter, with lots of diverse practical activities undertaken including hawthorn thinning, hazel coppicing, gorse clearing and burning on Cothelstone Hill and hedge laying at Cothelstone Manor. It has been a tough year for people suffering with mental health problems and it has been really great to be able to keep the group running with many of the old hands and quite a few new members attending too.
9. The AONB Service has also been running guided walks around Fyne Court for the Recovery College who are a group of individuals with mental health problems who can sign up to a variety of outdoor activities around the county aimed at improving their connection to nature the outdoors and their mental health. This has been impacted as it is led by the NHS Recovery College, who suspended all activity in November.
10. The Quantock Countryside Volunteers were also able to meet up from September but limited to two groups of five with a leader. The groups does get a lot done and have undertaken coppicing at Cothelstone Hill; woodland work at Nether Stowey woodland and gorse clearing and burning at Cothelstone Hill. We hope to get QCV out from May and then throughout the summer with a return to normal groups sizes from July.
11. Since volunteer activities have been so restricted over the past year and many people have been unable to attend sessions due to shielding, we have also put on a variety of online talks for the volunteers jointly with the Blackdown Hills AONB and have also attending talks from the Mendips AONB and Somerset Wildlife Trust which has been a welcome distraction during the long winter months. These have included talks from the AONB and LPS teams such as Bat Ecology with Iain and Brown Hairstreak butterflies with Simon; not to mention talks from PlantLife, Somerset's Brilliant Coast project, Saving Devon's Treescapes and Devon Wildlife Trust on the beavers in the River Otter.

12. It has been a challenging year but the volunteers have been incredibly understanding and flexible and with the continued hard work of the AONB team we have managed to get quite a lot done in the brief spells when Covid has allowed us to. Fingers crossed for a slightly easier year this time around!

Paper D Recommendations:

1. The JAC notes the report

To: Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

From: Bill Jenman, Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager

Date: 20 April 2021

Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme

1. Team update

We had completed recruitment by early November, but unfortunately for us a previous job application from Simon Phelps (Natural Heritage Officer) to Natural England finally came good for him in December. The NE role was full time and better suited to his interests and career plans, so he left at Christmas.

We took the opportunity to review the job description to put a little more emphasis on delivering events and activities and slightly less on more technical nature conservation skills, and also made it full time (up from 0.8fte), when we advertised for a replacement in February. Unfortunately, the response was very poor for reasons that are unclear – there were barely four people worth interviewing from just 13 applications, and three of them dropped out before interview. The final one was disappointing in person. The readvertisement is currently open (until 22nd April) at [Wildlife Officer – DAS Jobs](#) so please do spread the word to anyone who might be interested – we are offering a relocation package this time to try to reach a wider pool. As of the 12th April we have already had a much better response this time.

Over the last three months I have been helping out with the vaccination roll-out in Wellington and Taunton while Jon has been running the Shepton Mallet test centre. Well worthwhile in their own right, these SCC/Government funded redeployments have also “recycled” about £8k back into the LPS budget to pay for extra staff time post-pandemic. Both ended by Easter as the LPS work is picking up.

We’ve all been working from home with weekly Teams team meetings and have only actually met in person as a team on three occasions. It is fairly easy to do predetermined business over Teams but very hard to build relationships or be creative amongst a group of people, so I am very pleased with how well the team has gelled and worked together through a very difficult initial year. Jon, it turns out, has hidden talents as a graphic designer and creator of Blue Peter style “makes”, Dan does excellent on-line presentations, and Vickie has got the LPS social media off to an brilliant start despite having very a very thin programme of activity to build on.

2. Delivery

The programme is grouped into three themes, "Inspire", "Live", and "Learn".

2.1 Inspire

The education programme has been badly impacted by the pandemic and lockdowns, and full delivery will not now start until Autumn. However a couple of schools are willing and able to take part in the summer term which will be a useful "soft launch" to iron out any difficulties. The outreach programme has been able to do a bit more work thanks to the exemptions to coronavirus restrictions for vulnerable groups and young people, and we have supported a programme of activities at Kilve for Young People at Risk of Offending and more general Easter School holiday activities in Priorswood. Jon has been busy developing relationships with various community groups and planning for a full programme of events and activities (Covid permitting) from this summer is well underway.

2.2 Live

Over the course of the winter it has become increasingly apparent that the proposed new car park at Crowcombe Park Gate is too small; Covid has generated a step change in demand for access and parking that is unlikely to fall back to pre-pandemic levels. Parking on the grass has become an ever more pressing issue, too. After a lot of discussions the Partnership Board has agreed to apply for fresh consents for a much bigger car park – essentially the size of what was originally planned before the compromises required by Rights of Way halved the intended capacity. Ironically RoW have since admitted that they had incorrectly mapped the bridleway involved – it's all a bit of a mess but we have agreed a way forward with them and are currently in the process of informally consulting with other interested parties including the Commoners and NE prior to submitting a fresh planning application. . In parallel FoQ as landowner of the land on the east side of the road will submit a s38 Commons application for a low bank/ditch to deter illegal off-road parking there. This is now urgent, hence the decoupling from the fresh car park applications which we may expect to take a couple of years. Ironically the Planning Inspectorate finally gave s.38 consent for the previous car park plan in March, nearly a year after we applied. In other projects the replanting following ash dieback work at Broomfield and Cothelstone has been completed.

2.3 Learn

Dan has been busy recruiting volunteers for the archive work and LiDAR analysis – the LiDAR has now been flown and we are awaiting the results. The archaeological interpretation of the data is taking a little longer than expected but should be with us shortly. The Cothelstone dig will run from the 19th to the 31st July, with a prehistory day the weekend before (17th) with flint knapping demonstrations, re-enactors, etc – this will be at a village hall venue tbc as the parking capacity at Cothelstone is a limiting factor on how many visitors we can cope with at once on site.

The village test pitting programme will start in late October at Bicknoller.

3. Budget

The budget has undergone several reviews because of Covid. Mainly we have adjusted the staff budget to account for delayed recruitment, changes in hours, and redeployments. As far as can be said this early and after so much uncertainty though, we're still on track.

The first tranche of HPC match funding has been received – they will clear the year end deficit each year until the full £250k has been received. This provides a rationale and audit trail while keeping the LPS cash flow reasonably healthy.

Our regular meetings with the National Lottery Heritage Fund continue to go well and they have been very supportive and flexible through this unusual year.

Bill Jenman

Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager

April 2021



Reimagining the Manor



Paper E Recommendations:

1. The JAC notes the report

Summary (year end): The Core budget has achieved a small surplus. This is mainly due to the AONB Service being able to reclaim redeployment costs, which was not anticipated back in January.

The project budget is overspent, specifically the Nature & Wellbeing project which ended at the end of August, this is being covered by additional income from the other project partners and the AONB reserves.

The Land Management budget has overspent this year which is due to the ash felling contract associated with ash dieback disease. This had been planned to be undertaken over 3 years but due to the progress of the disease through the stand it had to be done in one year. The overspend will be 'clawed' back in future years from income associated with agri-environment schemes.

2020/21 budget overrun is showing £19,300 surplus.

RECOMMENDATION: The JAC notes the report.

SUMMARY	Budget	Expenditure	Income	Outrun	Comment
	Core	£278,721	£290,693	£11,972	Core budget has ended the year in a good position. This has been through reduction in expenditure, increasing recharges for contracts (HPC) & recouped redeployment costs for core team members.
	Projects	£94,549	£82,430	-£12,119	Overspend associated with Nature & Wellbeing Project. Further income due in April 2021 (ELMS £12,059) to bring budget back to zero.
	Landscape Ptn Scheme	£155,618	£155,318	-£300	Budget figure revised down September 2020 as Covid-19 restrictions have impacted on scheme delivery. Likely to be further revised due to ongoing restrictions. Budget is ring-fenced and income from HPC LVS will bring overrun to zero.
	Projects [Landscape & Visual, HPC]	£35,213	£35,223	£10	
	Land Management	£35,899	£33,203	-£2,696	£2,696 overspent. Overspend will be 'clawed back' from Agri-environment scheme incomes in 2021/22.
	TOTAL	£599,999	£596,866	-£3,133	
	RIA (b/f 2019/20)	£38,500	£72,975	£34,475	
	Earmarked Reserves			-£19,000	To cover 50% of cost of whole team redundancy as agreed in the core funding partners Statement of Intent.
	Allocated carry forward	£5,100	£12,059	£6,959	£5,100 expenditure for Nature Recovery Plan contracts, £12,059 income from ELMS T&T.
Reserves			£19,301	Budget is £19,300 (rounded) in surplus	

Quantock Hills AONB Service – Budgets outrun

	Budget / Heading	Expenditure	Comments	RAG
CORE / REVENUE Expenditure	Salaries, NI, SA	£230,140	Expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Training	£900	Only essential training undertaken during 2020/21 e.g. First Aid.	😊
	Accommodation - rent, rates, electricity, water, premise insurance	£14,419	Budget overspent due to advance payment of office rent.	😐
	Stationary, post, phones, printing	£2,679	Expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Travel, vehicle costs	£15,524	Expenditure less than budgeted through reduction in travel costs.	😊
	Equipment, maintenance, clothing, uniform	£2,033	Savings made through reduced maintenance costs as plant not being used due to covid-19 restrictions.	😊
	Literature, publications, publicity	£1,247	Expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Meeting costs, hospitality	£9	Expenditure less than budget due to no meetings.	😊
	Management fee, insurance	£8,911	Expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Membership	£2,756	Expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Research & Development	£512	The Nature Recovery Plan contracted elements are still due to be paid out as the work was delayed slightly. This will mean £5,100 of the carry forward will be allocated to cover this expenditure.	😐
CORE / REVENUE INCOME	Grant - Defra	£166,239	Received in year.	😊
	Contributions – Local Authorities	£48,000	All local authority contributions received.	😊
	Contributions – Friends of Quantock	£1,105	Core contribution and small contribution towards nestbox materials for pied flycatcher monitoring scheme	😊
	Contributions – Other	£2,345	Contributions towards Nature Recovery Plan contract being run by AONB Service from other AONBs.	😊
	Cost Recovery - Contracts	£6,909	Cost recovery from contracts (HPC, land management) slightly higher than anticipated due to increased priority of contract delivery in last quarter.	😊
	Cost Recovery - redeployment	£6,229	Though not anticipated the AONB Service was able to recover the cost of staff redeployed to support the Covid-19 pandemic response.	
	Recharge – Contributions to staff posts	£35,065	Received	😊
	Income – AONB led events	£0	Due to Covid-19 pandemic AONB Service did not run chargeable events during 2020/21.	😞
	Funds from reserves	£24,800		😊

	Project	Expenditure	Income	Comment	RAGS
PROJECTS	Nature & Wellbeing Project	£9,697	£6,200	Final year, project ended August 2020. Overspend associated with extension of project. Additional income from project partners & reserves	☹️
	Somerset Nature Connections	£43,333	£43,300	Externally funded (HPC Community Fund & SCC Prevent Demand to Improve Lives Fund).	😊
	ELMS Test & Trials	£31,910	£22,874	Final claim of £12,059 to come in April 2021 This will ensure project balances.	😐
	ELMS Advocacy	£7,200	£7,202	Project complete, expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Mires (FoQ)	£1,854	£1,854	Project complete, expenditure inline with budget	😊
	Access	£556	£1,000	Projects complete within budget	😊
					😊
Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme		£155,618	£155,318	The QLPS is a ring-fenced budget with match funding from HPC Landscape & Visual schemes used to bring budget to zero at year end.	😊
HPC Landscape & Visual Schemes		£35,213	£35,223	HPC landscape & visual schemes. Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (GQLDF) has allocated £143,000, of which £137,000 has been claimed, with a further £20,000 available. The Landscape Improvement Scheme (LIS) has allocated £296,000, of which £105,000 has been paid, with a further £148,000 available.	😊
Land Management		£35,899	£33,203	Overspend associated with roadside tree felling on Cothelstone Hill. Overspend will be clawed back in future years through income from agri-environment schemes	☹️

Paper F Recommendations:
1. The JAC notes the report