

Quantock Hills AONB

Annual Report 2018/2019

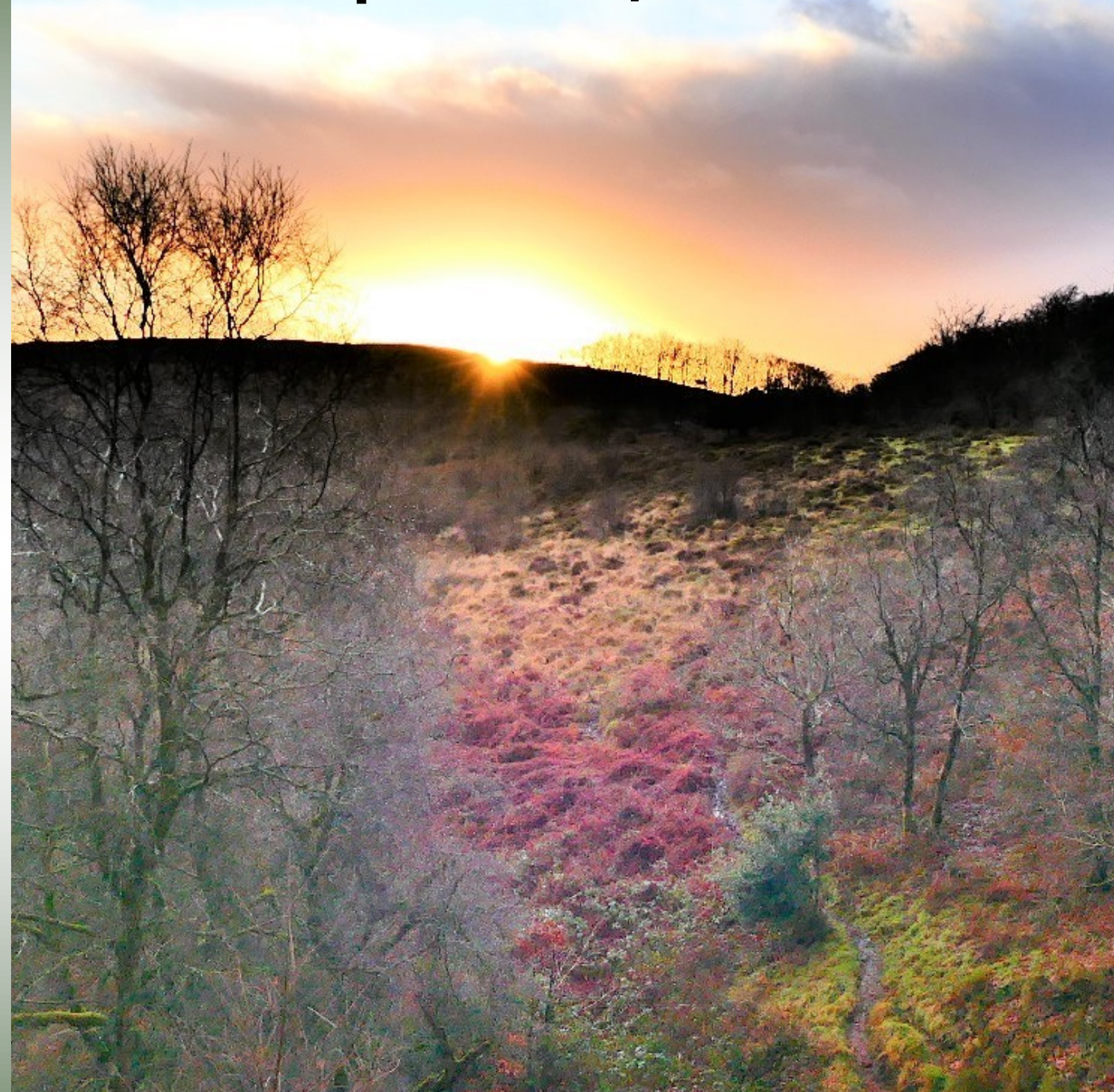
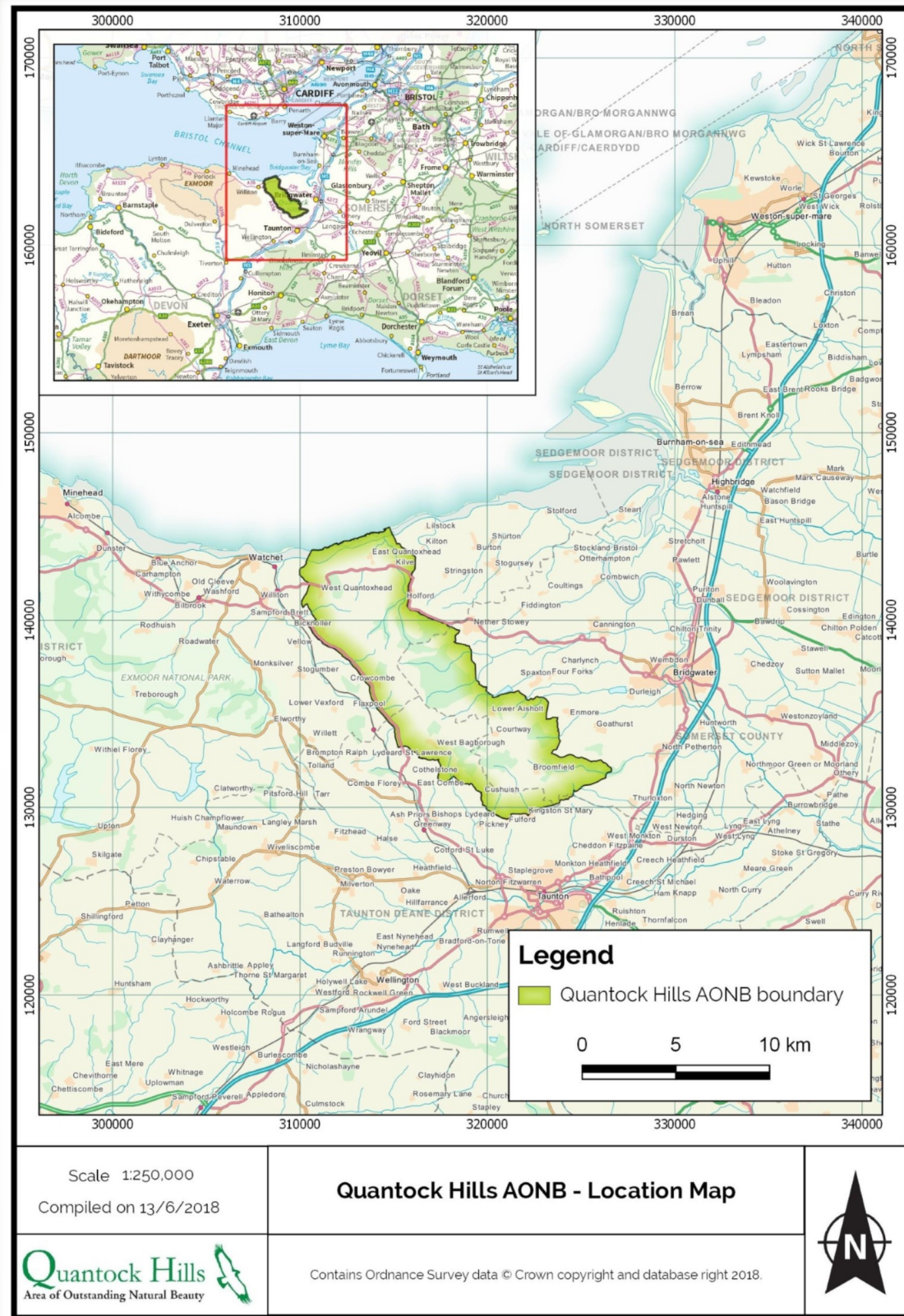


Image by Frank Clatworthy
Quantock Hills AONB and DoT
Photography Competition entry 2018



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Funded by:





- New Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 developed, published and adopted.
- Stage 1 pass from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop the full 2.6 million Landscape Partnership bid.
- Support of the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG-SW) with the development of the Quantock Facilitation Fund, a stewardship based initiative bringing farmers/landowners together to achieve landscape-scale improvements.
- Proposal and subsequent development of a Quantock Hills Land Management Scheme.
- 9 annual wildlife surveys completed including deer, pied flycatcher, ticks, dormouse, bats and butterflies.
- Completion of the Summer Heathland Breeding Bird Survey during May to June 2018 in collaboration with RSPB, Somerset Ornithological Society, Forestry Commission and National Trust. Over 4km² of Quantock heathland.
- Installation of natural flood management structures on Aisholt Common as part of the Hills to Levels Project.
- Clearance of 6 Scheduled Monuments using brush cutters on Quantock Common by trained volunteers as part of the Historic England Capacity Building Project.
- 13 blocks of heathland swaled on Quantock heathland sites. 15 volunteers were supplemented by 15 Commoners who were trained to come and assist with the tasks.
- 11 public events led by volunteers and rangers with 272 attendees.
- Over 36 miles of public rights of way and promoted routes inspected by volunteers and rangers.
- 171 planning applications monitored in and around the AONB and with detailed consultation and comments on 45 applications.

Financial Summary 2018 - 2019



Core Income

Defra	£161,172
SCC	£27,700
TDBC	£10,000
SDC	£11,500
WSC	£1,000
Friends of Quantock	£1,000
Cost Recovery / Charges	£13,496
Mendip Hills AONB (recharge)	£
Blackdown Hills AONB (recharge)	£
Forestry Commission (recharge)	£19,502
Events income	£1,970
SCC (pension deficit recoupment)	£18,693

Total Core Income

£280,623

Core Expenditure

Salaries NI, pension	£224,872
Training	£1,455
Accommodation	£14,695
Stationary / post / phones	£3,093
Travel & vehicles	£18,321
Equipment, materials	£3,966
Literature & publications	£2,852
Meeting costs / hospitality	£1,176
Management fee / Insurances	£8,896
Memberships	£2,693
Research & Development	£2,998

Total Core Expenditure

£285,018

Budget

Budget	Expenditure	Income	Balance
Core	£285,018	£-280,623	£4,395
Project	£30,985	£-33,369	£2,384
Landscape Partnership Scheme	£72,833	£-55,101	£17,732
Projects HPC	£10,684	£-10,634	£50
Amenity Land	£5,715	£-24,367	£-18,652
RIA	£18,704	£-92,524	£-73,820

Forward Year - 2019/2020

RIA (b/f from 2018/19)	£72,680
Move to Amenity	£-18,652
Move to Project (N&W)	£-14,010
Accrual from HLF	£17,732
Earmarked Reserves	£-24,100

Surplus / Deficit

£33,650

Looking Forward 2019 - 2020



- ◆ Submission of the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme in September with commencement of delivery starting in spring 2020.
- ◆ Development of a new joint Nature & Wellbeing Project to allow a step change in provision and engagement .
- ◆ The delivery by FWAG-SW, supported by the AONB Service, of nine events open to farmers, landowners and community groups to encourage collaboration.
- ◆ Creation of approximately 18Ha of open ground to be restored to acidic grassland and heathland.



Image Peter Phillips
Quantock Hills AONB and DoFE
Photography Competition 2017



- 2,140 of volunteer hours by over 100 volunteers undertaking a wide range of tasks including visitor management, heritage monument surveying, land management tasks, wildlife surveying and community engagement.
- Support of volunteers with the development and collection of images for the Quantock Views online based image archive which now contains over 800 images.
- Active participation in the Glover review of National Parks and AONBs, after a discussion with the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) a response to the 'Call for Evidence' was submitted.
- Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund. Providing landscape enhancement through funding from the mitigation agreement associated with Hinkley Point C.

Project outputs to date are:



Quantock Case Studies



Quantock Hills LPS – Reimagining the Manor

Bill Jenman started work as National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF) Landscape Partnership Scheme Development Officer in April 2018 and has been developing the component projects during the year. Various supporting studies, including a Visitor Survey and a Landscape Character Assessment, have been commissioned and delivered and are available to download on the AONB website.

The Scheme's social inclusion elements particularly needed further input from community groups and others and that work has gone very well with many new relationships developed. A large-scale consultation workshop was held on 5th February with over 65 attendees to pull all the ideas and ambitions together.

At the end of March 2019 development is nearly complete and the AONB is now moving into the bid writing stage ready for submission in early Autumn 2019. If the full bid is successful delivery will start in spring 2020.



Reimagining the Manor



Quantock Partnership



Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee 2018—2019

Membership as at 31st March 2019:

Anthony Trollope-Bellew	(Chair) West Somerset Council
Mike Caswell	(Vice Chair) Sedgemoor District Council
Nick Salter	Forestry Commission
Hugh Warmington	CLA
Alice Roberts	DEFRA
Alan Hughes	Friends of Quantock
Sharon Farnham	Kingston St Mary Parish Council
Matthew Uren	National Farmers Union - Somerset County Advisor
Simon Larkins	National Trust
Jo Chesworth	Natural England
Julian Taylor	Parish Rep
Stuart Parkman	Parish Rep
Debbie Salvidge	Quantock Commoners Association
Mandy Chilcott	Somerset County Council
Alan Bradford	Sedgemoor District Council
Vacant	SLAF
Ian Dyer	Somerset and Wiltshire Federation of Small Businesses
Hugh Davies	Somerset County Council
Gwil Wren	Taunton Deane Borough Council

Quantock Hills AONB Service

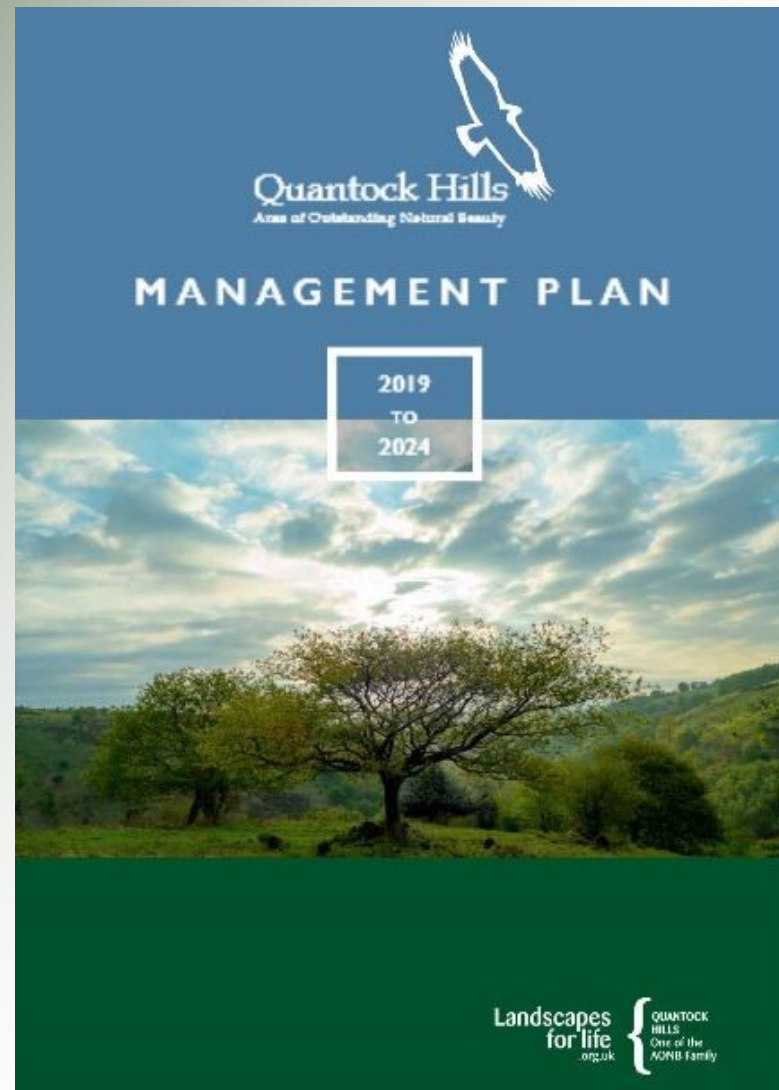
As at 31st March 2019:

Chris Edwards	AONB Manager
Iain Porter	Development Officer
Andy Stevenson	AONB Ranger
Owen Jones	Partnership Ranger - AONB & Forestry Commission
Katy Coate	Communication & Support Officer (Job share)
Amanda Sampson	Communication & Support Officer (Job share)
Daniel Wrench	Nature & Wellbeing Officer (Maternity cover)
Kristen Lambert	Nature & Wellbeing Officer
Alex Meletiou	Planning Officer
Sammy Fraser	Volunteer Coordinator
Bill Jenman	Landscape Partnership Development Officer

Quantock Case Studies



Management Plan Development



Drawing together all the information gathered during stakeholder and public consultations in 2018, the AONB Manager with the support of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee has reviewed and developed a new statutory Quantock Hills Management Plan for 2019-2024.

A five-year Delivery Plan for the document is nearing completion under the guidance of our Development Officer. The Management Plan is available as a flip-book or downloadable PDF from our website:

<https://www.quantockhills.com/qh-aonb-management-plan>

Quantock Case Studies



Quantock Hills Farmers Group

The AONB are a supporting partner to FWAG in coordinating this Stewardship-based initiative bringing farmers/landowners together to achieve landscape-scale improvements in the natural environment of the Quantock Hills.



The project runs for 3 years and will be driven by the ideas and requests of its farmer/landowner membership to deliver site visits, demonstrations, workshops and trials relevant to the Quantock landscape and conditions. During this first year four training/courses have been provided including woodland management, bird identification, Countryside Stewardship and orchard management. The 2019/20 event programme has also been developed with feedback from members which has also included a boundary adjustment to incorporate more farms where the landscape character is significantly similar to the existing area.

Quantock Case Studies



Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (GQLDF)

- Hedges

Continued funding has been awarded to the Somerset Hedge Group (SHG) from West Somerset Council's Land Management and Skills Scheme provided through the S106 funding agreement with EDF (HPC development).

The funding supported two training events at local Quantock farms attended by 32 participants. Instructors from SHG and Quantock Hills Rangers gave training in the various styles of hedging and tools available, with each small group laying a 15-metre section of hedge.



Leading on from the training, the Rangers undertook hedge laying with existing volunteer groups, and combined with the competition held at Cothelstone Manor, a total of 175 metres of outgrown native hedge have been brought back into management.

Two further training dates and a competition have already been booked for the 2019/20 winter season.

Staff Changes



Staff changes at the Quantock Hills AONB Service



Alex Meletiou - Landscape Planning Officer

Alex has joined the AONB team as our Landscape Planning Officer, replacing Emma-Jane Preece who left to take a position of Senior Landscape Planner with a local consultancy and we wish her well. Alex can be contacted at the Quantock Hills Office on 01823 451884 or by email at:

apmeletiou@somerset.gov.uk



Kristen Lambert - Nature & Wellbeing Officer

This year we welcomed back Kristen Lambert, who returned from Maternity Leave, and we said goodbye to Danielle Wrench, who was Kristen's cover. Danielle did a wonderful job supporting the various groups and teams and we wish her well for the future. Kristen has been working with existing groups as well as developing new work areas, such as the Naturally Healthy Month and a potential follow on project. Kristen can be contacted at the Quantock Hills Office on 01823 451884 or by email at:

klambert@somerset.gov.uk



Amanda Sampson - Communications & Support Officer

Amanda joined the team in April 2018, dealing with all aspects of communications, including producing newsletters, annual reports, managing public relations, media enquiries and running our website which is the first point of contact for many visitors. This role also includes administration, finance and the day to day running of the Quantock Hills Office and supporting the other officers and rangers in their roles. Amanda can be contacted at the Quantock Hills Office on 01823 451884 or by email at:

asampson@somerset.gov.uk



Bill Jenman - Landscape Partnership Development Officer

Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme

Bill also joined the team in April 2018 as our lottery-funded Landscape Partnership Scheme Development Officer. He'll be developing the full bid for the £2.6m 5 year project.

Bill can be contacted at the Quantock Hills Office on 01823 451884 or by email at:

wjenman@somerset.gov.uk