



NEWS RELEASE

A £2.6m boost for the Quantocks

After four years of development the **Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme** (QLPS) has been awarded a £1.8m National Lottery grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. With match funding from the National Trust, Friends of Quantock, the Quantock Hills AONB and EDF Energy the award will allow the £2.6m, five-year scheme to begin delivery to enhance the landscape, natural environment and provide more opportunities for people to engage and enjoy the 200km² scheme area.

The Quantock Hills are a special place. Their designation in 1956 as England's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was not only for their particular qualities as a natural environment, but also for their remarkable story of human interaction with nature reaching back many thousands of years

The scheme, developed by the Quantock Hills AONB Service in partnership with South West Heritage Trust, Friends of Quantock and many others, aims to inspire the local communities to learn from the centuries of landscape development on the Quantock Hills and undertake a wide range of projects providing resilience and protection of the landscape into the future.

The scheme will deliver a number of projects which aim to work together to:

Inspire - engage people in understanding the landscape, its cultural influence and work with communities to understand the pressures and opportunities into the future.

Live - undertake physical works to conserve and enhance the landscape and heritage assets of the Quantock Hills.

Learn - increase knowledge of the Quantock Hills and the role of the estates in the formation of its landscapes.

Bob Croft, Chair of the Quantocks Landscape Partnership and Head of the Historic Environment for the South West Heritage Trust said:

"The partnership is delighted that The National Lottery Heritage Fund is supporting this exciting new scheme. Working with a wide range of partners, the project will enable more people to discover and experience the natural beauty and rich heritage of this unique landscape. From research projects that explore local archaeology and heritage to nature walks and cultural events, we look forward to working with local communities to celebrate what makes the Quantock landscape special."

Chris Edwards, Quantock Hills AONB Manager, said

“This funding award is great news for all those who live, work in, care for, or simply enjoy the Quantock Hills. Alongside initiatives with young people, local communities and schools, it is notable that more than half of the 5-year program of projects will directly address the natural and historic heritage that makes this area so special. These initiatives will protect and expand key elements individually from hedgerows, heritage trees and woodlands, to local wildflowers, traditional orchards, bats and dormice and will even address what the next 50-years may bring for the Quantocks.

I salute the ambitious and demanding work by AONB team members who have spent several years working with partners, the National Lottery and the wider public to develop and submit this successful bid.”

Stuart McLeod, Director London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “Wildlife and landscapes are our oldest form of heritage and we all need to play a role in protecting them into the future. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, this project will enable people to forge meaningful connections with the Quantock Hills, allowing them to develop the skills and passions needed to secure a bright future for their landscapes, and the culture and wildlife within them.”

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Notes to editors:

Photo caption:

- 1) Quantock Heathland
- 2) School group tree climbing Fyne Court

About the Quantock Hills AONB Partnership:

The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was the first to be designated in England in 1956. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is exactly what it says it is: a precious landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them.

The following statements form the Quantock Hills Vision; they describe the AONB we would like to see in twenty years time.

- Conservation of the distinctive and beautiful character and diversity of the AONB landscape, encompassing Quantock heaths, woods, farmland, parkland and villages.
- Detailed understanding of and protection for the Quantock historic environment and conservation of existing man-made elements retaining both the ordinary and the exceptional.
- Productive farming and forestry businesses that support and enhance the intimate scale, historic character and biodiversity and wildlife habitat over the whole Quantock landscape.
- A maintained level of tree cover containing an increased percentage of native species.
- Harmonious design in any new development in and around the AONB.
- A sustainable level of Quantock tourism and recreation maintaining the quality of experience for AONB users and contributing to the local economy without harming landscape and biodiversity.
- Easily available information helping to protect the Quantock environment and residents, while maximising public enjoyment and appreciation of the area.

There are 40 AONBs in England and Wales (35 wholly in England, 4 wholly in Wales and 1 which straddles the border). Created by the legislation of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949, AONBs represent 18% of the Finest Countryside in England and Wales. Their care has been entrusted to the local authorities, organisations, community groups and the individuals who live and work within them or who value them.

The Quantock Hills AONB Service is supported and funded by Defra, Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund:

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future.

www.heritagefund.org.uk.

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