

# Awareness and Understanding

*'Do You Know?'*





The Chase at Cranborne



Untouched by time



Untouched by time



Do you know



The force of this magic land?

## Do You Know?

Do you know  
The Chase at Cranborne?  
Vast Downlands  
Untouched by time  
Bokerley Dyke, Hill Fort White Sheet Down  
Kingston Deverill and Sixpenny Handley.

Do you know  
How dark, how deep  
Is the Royal Hunting Ground?  
Forests full of druidical mistletoe  
Draped around ancient oaks,  
Stars hang, like seeds of light.

Do you know  
The force of this magic land?  
Inspiring fantastical follies  
Inviting us to a full-moon dance  
With the Father of Archaeology  
Around the faery lights we go,  
In the garden at Larmer Tree

Do you know  
In days gone by  
The ladies would curtsy

Do you know  
Who stole  
The pumpkins from Ansty?



## 15. Awareness and Understanding

*The AONB is a living, working landscape shaped and managed by people. Its natural beauty, historic and cultural heritage has long provided inspiration for artists, crafts people, writers and musicians, many of whom have made the area their home. Improving awareness and understanding of the AONB is a critically important task to ensure the landscape is recognised, enjoyed and valued by all.*

15.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regards to awareness and understanding:

- The AONB is an inspirational area; a 'hidden gem' with a wealth of visual, natural, historical and cultural characteristics.
- Cultural footprints through the ages are visible throughout the landscape.
- The diverse, distinctive and often unique elements that comprise the AONB are a valuable, mainly untapped, educational resource.
- The special qualities of the area have been recognised and valued by many local people and visitors for many years.
- There are ½ million people within thirty minutes drive of the AONB in surrounding market towns and the Bournemouth and Poole conurbations.
- The landscape character of the AONB is clearly understood and valued by non-experts.

### Aim

15.2. We want the area's special qualities and landscape character; its traditions; and its historic and natural assets understood and valued by all. We want everyone to understand what the AONB designation means and why the area was designated. We want everyone to promote and support the AONB.

### Achievements to date

- **AONB Annual Forums** - These have attracted almost a thousand attendees since 2004, the Annual Forum regularly attracts around 100 representatives from different interest groups each year, both from within and outside the area. Presentations, workshops and site visits focus on topics of current interest.
- **The Hart newsletter** - This has been delivered to over 14,500 homes and businesses twice a year for the past 8 years. It covers news, views, events and the work of the team and Partnership. Over 2,000 people receive the AONB E Bulletins.
- **The AONB website** - This receives around 12,000 visits per year, doubling in the last 5 years (*Appendix 26*). There are now linked sites for the Historic Landscape, the Wood Fair and the sustainable tourism site 'Discover Nadder'.
- **The AONB blog** - The blog receives 500-600 visits per month. The AONB currently has many hundreds of 'followers' on Facebook and Twitter.
- **Social Media training** - The AONB Team devised and delivered social media training days for over 20 tourism businesses.
- **AONB leaflets and the events programme** - Both are in increasing demand. Nearly 50% of respondents to a recent online survey<sup>41</sup> said they would like to take part in more events such as guided walks. Assisted the National Association of AONBs (*Appendix 27*)



in the 50th anniversary promotion of 'Diamonds in the Landscape' celebrations through producing the round walk information for each AONB, together with promotion of the AONB's own 30th anniversary in 2011.

## Key Issues

1. Low public profile.
2. There is limited understanding and appreciation of the purposes of the AONB. There is an ongoing lack of awareness amongst some of the AONB population of the designation purpose or boundaries. People are often unaware of the benefits gained from the designation (high quality environment, recreation, health and well being) or the role they can play in caring for the area.
3. Profile with partners and other organisations.
4. Being at the edge of the counties of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset means that the AONB can suffer from the 'edge effect' in that it can be overlooked. Partners and other organisations the AONB works with do not always have a full understanding of the designation or of the work undertaken by the Partnership.
5. Engaging young people.
6. To date it has been difficult to engage young people. To do so is vital, as they will be future custodians of the landscape.

## The Issues Explained

- 15.3. Despite the AONB being designated over 30 years ago and having a small team of officers in place since 2004, the AONB Partnership continues to find that there is limited understanding of where the AONB boundaries are, why the area was designated, what the AONB designation means and the benefits that it brings. The area's special qualities and landscape character; its traditions; and its historic and natural assets are not well understood.

*'When meeting members of the public when on the land, I feel there is a lack of awareness in the population both locally and nationally that this AONB exists. This probably needs to be addressed. It has the potential to bring more business to the local shops and pubs in communities within the AONB and so help them become more sustainable and build up village communities again as opposed to allowing them to become only satellites for the wealthy who wish to live in the country'.*

*Member of the AONB's Land Manager's Forum*

- 15.4. Awareness of the AONB will improve with good information. Understanding will grow with relevant, good interpretation. There are a variety of ways to offer information and interpretation. However it is done, it must be of high quality and in keeping with the environment.

- 15.5. It will always be important to meet people:

- The 'Annual Forum' brings all stakeholders together and keeps them informed about the needs of the area and the role they can play in its care, alongside the AONB Partnership.
- The biennial Wood Fair attracts around 6,000-7,000 visitors and showcases the AONB, the value of woodland management and associated skills, products and crafts.
- The AONB team attends various events, large and small, in the area to promote the AONB designation, purpose and work of the Partnership.



- 15.6. The ‘Sense of Place’ promotional toolkit shows all the ‘special’ places, views, activities and wildlife of the AONB. These were chosen by local people. Anyone can copy the text and pictures to use in their own marketing material. This sends out consistent messages about the area in which they are based. This offers businesses and community groups the chance to promote their business, activities and the AONB, with one voice.
- 15.7. Electronic media sources offer a range of ways of reaching new people, especially the younger generation. To this end, the AONB website is a significant resource offering a wealth of information about the area. Up to date material and examples of good practice all help to inform. Moreover, ideas can be swapped, information given via regular blogs and use of different social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

## Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
<b>AU A</b>	<i>The purposes of AONB designation are known and understood by all</i>	<b>AU1</b>	Develop and promote a strong and distinctive identity for the AONB to all
		<b>AU2</b>	Investigate the potential for distinctive AONB signage at boundaries of, and within the AONB
		<b>AU3</b>	Work with Local Authorities, parish councils, councillors and community groups to develop AONB information and learning opportunities (information, training, presentations) relevant to their work
<b>AU B</b>	<i>The AONB landscapes, natural beauty and high quality environment are understood, valued and supported by all.</i>	<b>AU4</b>	Evaluate the number, scope and effectiveness of publications and other information media to improve understanding of the AONB
		<b>AU5</b>	Develop the existing ‘Interpretative Statement’ for the AONB into a strategy that sets out aims, objectives and action for increased awareness, understanding and interpretation across the AONB
		<b>AU6</b>	Seek specific opportunities to promote awareness and understanding of all aspects of the AONB to young people in particular, using the most appropriate media
		<b>AU7</b>	Work with relevant partners such as CreativeWiltshire, Dorset Arts Trust and others to develop opportunities for organisations, communities and visitors to better understand and appreciate the AONB eg volunteering, learning, artistic expression

(Additional Information: Awareness and Understanding Appendix 35)



“What do I know when  
I am in this place  
that I can  
know nowhere else?  
What does this place  
know of me that  
I cannot know of myself?

*Robert Macfarlane*

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