

Awareness and Understanding

'Do You Know?'





“ 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



Do You Know?

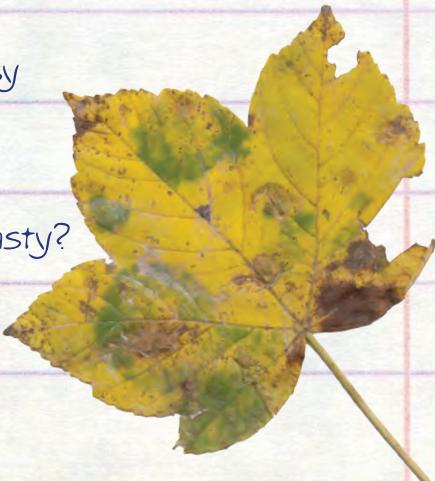
Do you know
The Chase at Cranborne?
Vast Downlands
Untouched by time
Bokerley Dyke, Hill Fort White Sheet Down
Kingston Deverill and Sixpenny Handley.

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 comprises living, working landscapes shaped and managed by people. The 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. To ensure that all recognise, enjoy and value the landscapes, it is vital to improve awareness and understanding of the AONB.

15.1. Special characteristics and qualities that make this AONB special, as a whole, with regard 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 and distinctive elements comprise the AONB are a valuable, mainly untapped, educational resource.
- Many local people and visitors value the special qualities of the area, including its tranquillity and dark night skies.
- There are nearly two thirds of a 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 can be appreciated and valued by non-experts.
- The AONB boasts a wealth of myths, mystery and legends.

Ambitions

15.2. Everyone understands and values the area’s special qualities and landscape character. This will include its historic and natural assets, its traditions and its mystery and mythical qualities. They will understand what the AONB designation means and why the area was designated. They will want to visit and spread the word. We want everyone to promote and support the AONB.



Key Achievements

- **This AONB's family of websites** – The AONB website is one of a suite of sites developed to promote special topics and projects; Chasing Stars, Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme, Historic Landscape, Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust and the sustainable tourism sites Discover Nadder and Discover Chalke Valley. The AONB website boasts regular news stories and a full calendar of events occurring in the area.
- **AONB leaflets** – Several general information leaflets on the area, its places, and its food have been published. Packs of walking and cycling routes have been produced for the sustainable tourism. These packs are in tourist information centres, especially those in the border market towns of Blandford, Salisbury, Shaftesbury, Warminster and Wimborne. In addition to a suite of information and guidance notes on development topics, including landscapes and neighbourhood planning, a number of leaflets focus on our bid for International Dark Sky Reserve status. One includes the top 10 places for stargazing within the area and another offers guidance on good lighting.
- **AONB Forums** – In response to the increasing consultation demands on community volunteers, the Partnership holds a forum biennial rather than annually. Around 50-70 attendees come from different interest groups, both from within and outside the area. Presentations and workshops focus on topics of current interest.
- **The E-Bulletin** – This monthly E-bulletin presents a vast array of stories. These are not only connected to the AONB Partnership's work, but also to projects and events run independently. While it still lacks the reach of The Hart⁶⁵, which was a hard copy newsletter sent to every home and business within the AONB, the E-bulletins have proved to be an effective way of keeping touch with communities.
- **Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme (CCCV LPS)** – a first stage pass for this Heritage Lottery funded project has generated significant community interest and through innumerable meetings and consultations to develop the round two bid has contributed to raising the profile of the whole AONB.
- **Social media** – The AONB is now very active on social media. However, a revised promotional strategy is needed, as numbers 'following' these accounts could be improved.
- Local and national press coverage –The AONB received national press coverage in 2017 in Country Life magazine and in local glossy 'Life' titles. These include Wiltshire Life and Dorset Magazine, the farming press and the Warminster Journal. The AONB submits a regular column to the Blackmore Vale Magazine that covers the majority of the area.
- **Wood Fair** – There were five Cranborne Chase Wood Fair events held on a biennial cycle from 2007-2015. Each attracted around 7,000 visitors. The primary aim of the weekend event was to showcase AONB woodlands and their ongoing management. This included the variety of skills and craftsmanship that produce locally sourced and produced goods and services. Feedback from the events was consistently excellent but austerity measures during the last few years led to its cessation.
- **Branding initiative** – The AONB team and Bournemouth University are working in tandem to highlight the special, mythical, mysterious and magical treasures of the Chase. This may be the basis for further image and branding activities. A new brand image would help raise the area's profile and encourage tourism. This would link to the 'Sense of Place' tool-kit for communities and businesses to promote themselves as a part of the AONB and their sustainable tourism initiatives.



65 Publication was dropped because of rising costs.



Key Issues

1. Low public profile of the designation.
2. The lack of awareness among some of the AONB population of the designation purpose or boundaries is a concern. People are often unaware of the benefits gained from the designation, such as the high quality environment, recreation and health and wellbeing opportunities or the role they can play in caring for the area.
3. Significance to partners and other organisations.
4. The AONB lies across the borders of four counties; Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. This generates an 'edge effect'. Other partners and organisations 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 with young people. To do so is vital, as they will be the future custodians of the landscapes.

The Issues Explained

15.3. Despite the AONB being designated in 1981, and having a small team in place since 2004, the AONB Partnership continues to find that there is a limited understanding of:

- where the AONB boundaries are;
- why the area was designated;
- what the AONB designation means; and
- the benefits that it brings.

'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. On learning more about the AONBs existence and extent, a very frequent and familiar comment is one of surprise as to its size. The AONB has no 'Welcome to..' signage on any roads leading into the area. A desk study determined that to sign each Trunk, 'A' and 'B' class road together with some minor, yet frequently used roads, between 36 and 41 signs would be required due to the frequency that these roads cross the AONB boundary. The number required and exact locations requires further discussion both within the Partnership and with the four Highways Authorities.

15.5. The many dispersed small villages and hamlets of the area might also be offered an AONB sign or logo to add to their village entrance signs to help raise the AONB profile, while the concept of adding the logo to Rights of Way way-markers has already begun, in partnership with Cranborne Chase Landscape Trust.



- 15.6.** Awareness of the AONB will also improve with regular, consistent and engaging promotion, using a strong brand image and easily accessible information whether via hard copy, web sites or comprehensive use of all social media channels.
- 15.7.** Knowledge of the area's special qualities, landscape character, its traditions and its historic and natural assets is not as widespread as the Partnership would like. Innovative digital or site based interpretation would increase understanding and appreciation of the AONBs special qualities. Regular engagement with residents and visitors of all ages (through annual programmes of walks, events and activities, competitions and/or a 'Pride of the AONB' award scheme) would also positively increase involvement and pride in, and enjoyment of, the area as well as raising its profile.
- 15.8.** The AONB team already consults with, and works alongside partners, parishes, farmers and interest groups as part of its ongoing work programme or Management Plan reviews. However, this wide-ranging and extensive promotion and outreach work requires additional resources to be secured, if the critical link between the Partnership and the communities of the AONB is to be improved.
- 15.9.** It is well understood and accepted that Local Authority and other AONB partners have changing and/or increasing demands placed on them; they also inevitably have personnel changes. The AONB Partnership should be aware of the need to consistently re-iterate or reinforce information regarding its designation purpose and the duties of others towards it. On its behalf, the AONB team should consider if further information needs to be drawn together that would be specifically helpful to different departments or partners and how that information might be most effectively disseminated, e.g. a regular planners' bulletin, parish training workshops or 'surgeries' for communities.
- 15.10.** Aimed at businesses and parishes, the 'Sense of Place' promotional toolkit shows all the special places, views, activities and wildlife of the AONB. All were chosen by local people. Anyone is free to copy the text and pictures to use in their own marketing material. This sends out consistent messages about the area in which the businesses are based, offering businesses and community groups the chance to promote their business or parish events, and the AONB, in parallel and with one voice. This resource needs to be regularly reviewed and updated.
- 15.11.** Social media is an incredibly important asset to the AONB, is a key communications tool, and especially significant in attracting the younger generation to engage with it. The AONB should continue to raise its profile and promote its activities, news and encouraging feedback via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, amongst others.
- 15.12.** The CCCV LPS is designed to attract, engage and involve all ages, backgrounds and abilities in discovering, learning about and enhancing the heritage of the scheme area, which covers approximately a quarter of the AONB. Some opportunities have been devised specifically to attract and engage youngsters. Exciting, creative projects with innovative digital interpretation have been developed to bring the AONB 'to life'. This scheme has the potential to significantly increase both the profile of the AONB, and appreciation of everything the AONB has to offer all residents and visitors. The AONB should grasp any opportunity to expand these projects across the whole area.





Folly Loo event at Ashmore - D Blake

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE		POLICIES	
AU A	The purposes of AONB designation are known and understood by all.	AU1	Develop and promote a strong and distinctive identity/brand image for the AONB to all.
		AU2	Work with partners to progress the potential for distinctive AONB signage at boundaries of, and within, the AONB.
		AU3	Work with Local Authorities, parish councils, partners and community groups to develop AONB information and learning opportunities (information, training, seminars) relevant to their work.
		AU4	Continue to review and deliver the AONB Communications Strategy to ensure all the elements of the AONBs work are promoted via the most appropriate media/channels.
AU B	The AONB landscapes, natural beauty and high quality environment are understood, valued and supported by all.	AU5	Work, with partners, to investigate the potential to secure field based staff to help plan, manage and deliver an array of outreach activities throughout the AONB.
		AU6	Develop and implement an Interpretative Strategy to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation across the AONB.
		AU7	Seek specific opportunities to promote awareness, understanding and engagement of all aspects of the AONB to young people in particular, using the most appropriate.

(Additional Information: Awareness and Understanding Appendix 35)

