

# Annual Review

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2020/21



Nidderdale  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



[nidderdaleaonb.org.uk](http://nidderdaleaonb.org.uk)



# Nidderdale AONB

Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an area of 233 square miles located on the eastern flanks of the Yorkshire Pennines stretching from the high moorland of Great Whernside south and east towards the edge of the Vale of York.

Designated as one of the UK's protected landscapes in 1994, the AONB is home to over 16,000 people, as well as important habitats and wildlife, dark night skies, a rich history, and a diverse landscape.



Images: Covers © David Tolcher  
Curlew © Paul Skirrow

# Highlights of the year



## This year the team at Nidderdale AONB:

- Worked across 4,848 hectares of land to conserve or enhance biodiversity
- Created and improved 14 hectares of species rich meadow
- Worked with 273 farmers and land managers to provide advice and secure grants
- Worked with farmers and land owners on Countryside Stewardship advice to a value of £2,375,430
- Supported 77 people to volunteer in the AONB
- Worked on 243 land management schemes including Catchment Sensitive Farming, Woodland Management projects and Natural Flood Management schemes
- Appraised 57 planning applications in the AONB

## Test and Trials

During 2020, Nidderdale AONB participated in one of Defra's 44 nationwide Test and Trials programmes. During the project, we worked with six local farmers to help shape the future of farming in the UK.

Defra commissioned these projects to test new ideas and trial new approaches in the delivery of a future Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme.

As part of the programme, the National Association for AONBs coordinated the 'Farming for the Nation' project. Delivered by 12 AONBs, the project was designed to see how schemes could fit local conditions while reflecting national priorities.

Nidderdale AONB, together with our fellow Northern Uplands AONBs, North Pennines and Forest of Bowland, focused on the process involved in producing land management plans for upland farms.

A final report presents our main findings and recommendations, and a wider report was also sent to Defra on behalf of the 12 participating AONBs.



## State of Nature 2020

Launched in September, the Nidderdale AONB State of Nature 2020 report reveals for the first time a detailed assessment of the health of the area's wildlife and habitats.

It includes summaries of the pressures on our natural environment and outlines the actions that need to be taken to protect it.

This report is an important step toward undertaking landscape scale action for nature in the AONB.

It was produced at the end of The Wild Watch, our three year, National Lottery Heritage funded

project which successfully carried out the largest systematic survey for wildlife in the AONB.

The Wild Watch project successfully raised awareness of the AONB's nature and collected large amounts of new survey data. More than 3,000 new surveys were carried out and 1,095 new citizen science records submitted. Over 6,400 people attended more than 140 events and volunteers gave over 4,500 hours.

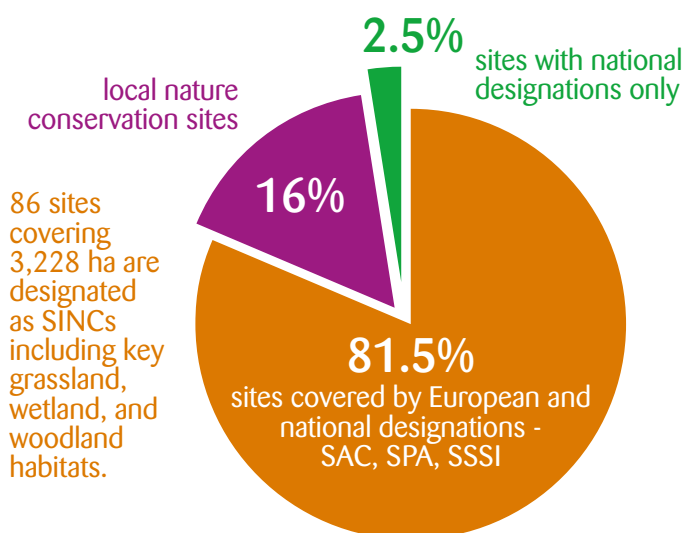
The full report is available at [nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/stateofnature](http://nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/stateofnature)

## Protection for nature

Almost 35% of the AONB has additional legal protection for its nature. These sites and the additional priority habitats in the AONB are our

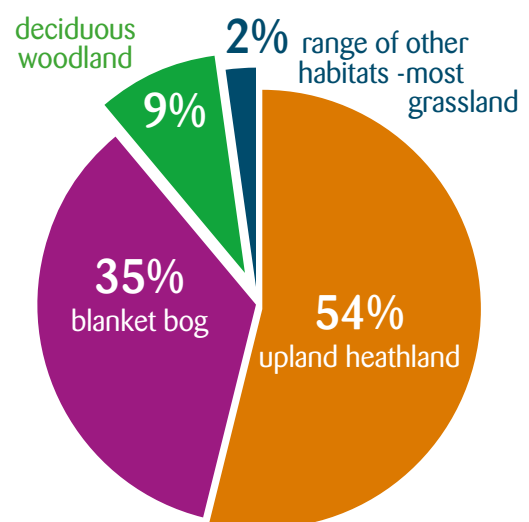
nature 'jewels' and offer valuable refuges to wildlife and are natural spaces for people.

**20,600 ha**  
of designated sites in Nidderdale AONB:



2,050 ha (12%) of the AONB's SSSIs are in 'favourable' condition, compared to 39% of English SSSIs. 15,300 ha (88%) are in 'unfavourable recovering' condition, compared to 55% of English SSSIs, meaning they have been entered into a scheme to improve their condition over time.

**24,000 ha**  
of priority habitat in Nidderdale AONB:



16,934 ha (70%) of the AONB's priority habitat is within designated sites. 16,645 ha (98%) of this is moorland habitat, including heathland and blanket bog.



## Woodland Opportunity Plan

The AONB launched an innovative new mapping tool to promote tree planting in November 2020, thanks to support from The Woodland Trust.

Created by our Biodiversity Project Officer, Dr Kelly Harmar, The Nidderdale AONB Woodland Opportunity Plan is a set of maps which provide a wealth of environmental data collated by the AONB team over the last decade.

The maps are free tools to help support AONB landowners to plant more trees. They easily locate areas where planting trees could potentially have maximum benefits for the environment. Landowners can also easily see which areas to avoid, where tree planting may cause environmental harm.

Our new maps will guide our tree planting advice and help direct woodland funding in the AONB over the next five years.

## Woodland Project Officer

With support from The Woodland Trust we appointed a Woodland Officer in October 2020.

The officer provides one-to-one support to landowners, helping them to identify suitable planting areas, suggesting the best type of trees to plant, and helping source funding to create new woodlands.

Over a three year period between 2020 and 2023 the officer will oversee the creation of 55 hectares of new woodland and ensure 15 planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS) access funding schemes for future management.

More information about how the AONB is supporting tree planting can be found on our website at [nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/treeplantingadvice](https://nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/treeplantingadvice)





© Chris Lacey / National Trust Images

## Skell Valley Project

In December 2020, the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded Nidderdale AONB and the National Trust £1.2 million to support the delivery phase of the Skell Valley Project.

The AONB and the National Trust are leading the project, which includes 16 partner organisations who have come together to create a sustainable future for the Skell Valley.

Over the last five years, partners, farmers, landowners and communities living, working and visiting the valley have worked together to develop and shape the scheme.

The project will cost approximately £2.5 million, with additional funding provided by contributions from project partners and a fundraising appeal.

It consists of 15 individual projects which all fit together to form a clear and ambitious vision for the river and the landscape.

The delivery of the Skell Valley Project will start from Spring 2021 and run to 2024.

## Beyond Nature™

In December 2020 Yorkshire Water and Nidderdale AONB welcomed Neil Pickard as the first ever Beyond Nature Farming Officer.

Beyond Nature forms part of Yorkshire Water's Land Strategy and aims to strengthen the sustainability of its land.

At the same time, it focuses on supporting farm tenants to secure businesses that can thrive in the future.

Yorkshire Water currently has nine farms signed up to Beyond Nature covering 5,000 hectares.

In partnership with Nidderdale AONB, Neil will expand the delivery of Yorkshire Water's Beyond Nature approach by providing one-to-one conservation and business advice and supporting farmers to develop land management plans and apply for grants.



© David Tolcher

# People



## Nidderdale AONB team

A dedicated AONB team works to protect and enhance this beautiful countryside and the qualities that make it so unique.

- Elizabeth Bishop, Information Officer (3 days/week)
- Paul Burgess, AONB Planning Adviser (1 day/week)
- Helen Byron, Development Team Leader (2 days/week until contract ended on 1 Oct)
- Alice Crosby, Wild Watch Project Officer, then Woodland Project Officer from 1 Oct. (3 days/week)
- Kelly Harmor, Biodiversity Project Officer (3 days/week)
- Christy Irish, Land Management Administrative Support (1 day/week)
- Sarah Kettlewell, Development Team Leader (3 days/week)
- Iain Mann, AONB Manager (5 days/week)
- Liz Milner, Volunteer Coordinator (3 days/week)
- Jackie Smith, Water Environment Grant Project Officer (2 days/week contract post)
- Marian Wilby, Land Management Team Leader (5 days/week)

## Joint Advisory Committee

The work of the AONB team is managed through the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). This is a partnership organisation made up of elected representatives from local authorities and parish councils, and representatives from special interest groups.

The role of the JAC members, listed below, is to advise local authorities and other organisations about how to best achieve AONB objectives.

### Borough and County Councillors:

- Cllr Nigel Simms
- Cllr Tom Watson
- Cllr Margaret Atkinson
- Cllr Stan Lumley
- Cllr Victoria Oldham
- Cllr Michael Harrison
- Liz Small, North Yorkshire County Council
- Paula Newson-Smith, Nidderdale Plus
- Caroline Bradley, British Horse Society
- Graham Spooner, AONB Volunteers Representative
- Justin Scully, The National Trust
- Tracey Rathmell, Harrogate Borough Council
- Tom Wheelwright, Moorland Association
- Lisa Harrowsmith, Yorkshire Water PLC
- Stephen Ramsden, Country Land & Business Association
- Tim Ledbetter, Nidderdale Chamber of Trade
- Andrew Smith, National Farmers' Union
- Katie Atkinson, Council for the Protection of Rural England
- Keith Wadd, Ramblers' Association
- Heather Garnett, Friends of Nidderdale AONB
- Richard Dimon, Natural England
- Sue Welch, Parish Councils Representative
- Joy Stanton, Parish Councils Representative

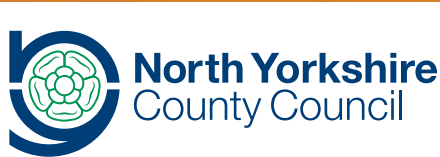
# Financial report

Income	Amount £	Expenditure	Amount £
Defra	188,923.43	Salaries and Staff Costs	212,648.11
Harrogate Borough Council	87,152.76	Accommodation and Office Costs	54,881.43
North Yorkshire County Council	14,800.00	Services provided by Harrogate Borough Council	20,980.00
Environment Agency	153,259.78	Promotion and Events	10,079.80
Rural Payments Agency	3,413.05	Volunteer Groups	966.45
Natural England	24,580.00	Partnership Running Costs	15,034.43
Yorkshire Water Services	26,157.04	The Wild Watch	289.35
Hackfall Trust	3,000.00	Skell Valley Project	15,191.67
Friends Of Nidderdale AONB	6,941.00	Headwaters for Healthy Rivers	158,259.78
Woodland Trust	12,500.00	Catchment Sensitive Farming	12,755.00
National Association for AONBs	63,417.68	Farm Conservation Support	2,662.50
North & East Yorkshire Data Centre	2,200.00	Beyond Nature Delivery	21,157.04
Misc. Income/Events Income	808.50	Test and Trials	62,247.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>587,153.24</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>587,153.24</b>



# Thank you

Thank you to our funders, partners, volunteers and all those who support our work and help us protect and conserve this incredibly special place.





# Nidderdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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