

NORTH WESSEX DOWNS LANDSCAPE TRUST

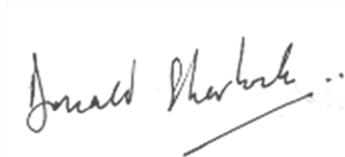
*Increasing awareness of the North Wessex Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and securing its long-term
protection and enhancement*

Welcome to our Autumn 2022 newsletter, keeping you up to date with our current projects, their progress and thoughts for the future.

I was blissfully unaware of the necessity and importance of AONBs in 1972 when the politicians were grinding through the legislation. Now every day sees further threats from humans to the planet's existence, as we know it. Much like the changes taking place as featured in the BBC series, Frozen Planet II and the latest report from the World Wildlife Fund (who calculate that 70% of wildlife has been lost in the last 50 years), the AONBs face far reaching changes which will present new challenges to the constant need for the protection and enhancement of the special qualities of their flora, fauna and landscape.

For this edition of our newsletter, we are featuring some of the activities of the NWD AONB that celebrates its 50th birthday this November. On page 3 is a small selection of our favourites from the major attractions in the Area.

The Trust's mission is to increase awareness, conserve and enhance the NWD AONB and hopefully the Government will increase the powers available to the AONB Management to do so. We shall, with your help, continue to support them with all means at our disposal.



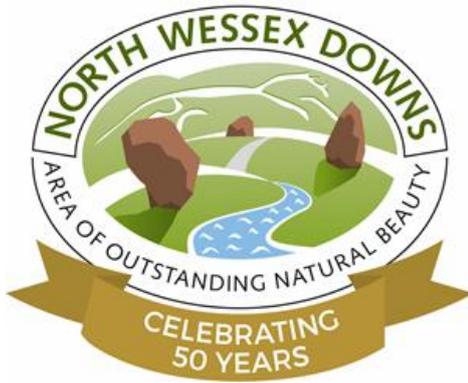
Donald Sherlock, Chairman

Registered Charity Number: 1168708



North Wessex Downs
Landscape Trust

The NWD AONB covers 668 square miles, taking in 173 parishes and stretches from Swindon and Didcot in the north to Devizes and Basingstoke in the south, Calne in the west and Reading in the east. It is the third largest AONB in the country. Over 80% of the world's chalk streams are in the south of England and the AONB includes the rivers Kennet, Lambourn and mighty Test amongst others.



The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (“NWD AONB”)

Celebrating 50 Years as a Protected Landscape

Protected for the nation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty since 1972, the North Wessex Downs AONB is celebrating its 50th anniversary this November. The many achievements of the last fifty years include the introduction of The Sustainable Development Fund (“SDF”) in 2005, enabling communities to develop sustainably by stimulating economic prosperity and local culture, whilst also nurturing respect for the landscape.

Up to 2021, over £655,000 in grants has been awarded, and this has generated cash and in-kind match funding to the tune of an impressive £1.5 million. Over 230 projects have been supported ranging from provision of rural services, biodiversity conservation, renewable energy provision, access and community planning.

In 2017, the Landscape Trust assumed management of the scheme on behalf of the NWD AONB Council of Partners. (For further details see below.)

Recent successes of last fifty years include:

- Woodland Conservation and Improvement
- Dark Skies project
- Walking Festivals
- Sparkling Streams project
- Mend the Gap GWR reparation programme
- Farm Cluster programme
- Introduction of a Planning and Development Officer in 2012.

Since then, it is estimated that the AONB has responded to over 3,300 planning application consultations. For the years 2019-2021 the planning officer responded to over 750 planning application consultations, 13 planning policy consultation requests and 39 pre-application consultations.

Other recent significant achievements include:

- Withdrawal of 1000+ homes allocation at Harwell Campus from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.
- Dismissal of the Wasdell Science Park (Swindon) appeal due to landscape harm in the AONB setting

- Collaboration with Natural England and West Berkshire on the Local Plan review resulting in a stand-alone AONB policy including dark skies and context for understanding major development

The AONB has published a “**Selection of the 50 Things Not to Miss in The North Wessex Downs AONB**”. To see, [click here](#). We have listed below a selection of our favourites from the rich assortment of views of rivers, hills, buildings and nature that make up the diverse and beautiful landscape

1. Wittenham Clumps

The Clumps are the oldest known planted hilltop beeches in England.



2. The Ridgeway National Trail

Travel along its length and you will experience wide, open views of rolling chalk downland and find many archaeological monuments.



3. Starry Nights

The North Wessex Downs has significant areas of dark skies with 15% as dark as any in the country.



4. Chalk Streams

Around 85% of the world’s chalk streams are in England and the AONB holds a significant proportion of these.

5. Wilton Windmill

The only authentic working windmill in the entire AONB.



FORTHCOMING & PAST EVENTS

March 2023 Quiz – Save the Date

After the success of the quizzes held in the past, and due to popular demand, we are planning another on the evening of Saturday, March 11th, 2023. Further details nearer the time.

Ramsbury Street Fair 2022

The Landscape Trust took part in the Ramsbury Street fair in June on a very rainy day. Despite the weather, people turned out and enjoyed all that was on offer. The Trust's "Find the Lost Sheep" activity proved very popular with the children, most likely due to the £1 coin prizes!



NWD AONB Walking Festival 2022



To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the North Wessex Downs (NWD) as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Landscape Trust teamed up with the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust to provide a walking and boating afternoon as part of a two-week Walking Festival held across the NWD. Some twenty people assembled at Hungerford Wharf where they boarded *The Rose of Hungerford*.

After going through the first lock a small party landed and started walking along the towpath. From then on people alternated between cruising and walking, transferring at the various locks encountered by the boat. Just short of Little Bedwyn, the boat was

turned round for the cruise back to Hungerford. The weather was glorious, the countryside looked perfect, and everyone enjoyed themselves enormously.

Hungerford Health & Wellbeing Fair 2022



The Landscape Trust was represented for the second time at this annual event. It should have been a sunny summer's day on 25th June, but it was more like a spring day, with gusty winds and showers between the sunshine! It made keeping a gazebo and banners upright quite tricky, but we tent-pegged or stuck everything down that we could.

With the unpredictable and (from time to time) unpleasant weather, the event wasn't as busy as last year, but we still saw and spoke to lots of people and gave out many leaflets.

We shared the gazebo with Visit Pewsey Vale and the event raffle.

Wilton Windmill 200th Anniversary Open Day 2022

The Trust took part in an open day at an iconic landmark of the North Wessex Downs - celebrating 200 years of the Wilton Windmill on 30th July, when the weather was much kinder. It was a glorious summer's day and the event was packed with families – an outstanding success for The Windmill, raising important funds to support its conservation.



This time, our gazebo was right next to the Tea Tent, which was a useful place to be!

Marlborough College Summer School 2022

After a gap of two years the Marlborough College Summer School returned in July/August. Of the hundreds of courses available "Getting to Know the North Wessex Downs" was offered after a pilot course in 2019 had been well received. This time the course proved even more popular – in fact it was a sell-out – and the surplus funds

generated have gone to support the Landscape Trust. Plans are being made to repeat the course in 2023 so why not join us? Click [here](#).



Peter Lemon, one of the NWDLT trustees, hosting a tour of his farm during the course.

Please do let us know if you, your parish or other organisation are planning to hold an event at which the Trust could be represented. We would love to hear from you.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS ONCE AGAIN.

On behalf of the North Wessex Downs AONB, the Trust manages the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits for our landscape and the people living and working here. **A new application module has now been implemented and the Fund is accepting applications again.**

The Fund supports small-scale projects promoted by local communities and charities. For further information on the Sustainable Development Fund, please go to our website www.nwd-landscapetrust.org.uk, where details will be found under the table "Our Work", www.northwessexdowns.org.uk. or click [here](#).

Photography Credit: "Selection of the 50 Things Not to Miss in The North Wessex Downs AONB".

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2, image courtesy of Steve Davison

3 image courtesy of GreatWestWay.co.uk

4, image courtesy of Action for the River Kennet

5, image courtesy of GreatWestWay.co.uk

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