



The sun sets in Mistley, part of the Coast & Heaths

News from the AONBs

Welcome to the latest News from the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), covering the Coast & Heaths AONB, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project area.

In this month's News from the AONBs:

- [Value of Visitors to the AONBs](#)
- [AONB Partnerships respond to Five Estuaries](#)
- [Volunteering Opportunities](#)
- [Landscapes for All](#)
- [The Great British Beach Clean](#)
- [News from the National Association for AONBs](#)
- [Fen Bridge replacement](#)
- [Grants awarded in Coast & Heaths](#)
- [Successful first guided beach comb](#)

Thanks as always for your support,

Simon Amstutz
AONB Manager

Value of Visitors to the AONBs

Research findings have shown that the visitor economy in the AONBs has been hit hard by the pandemic, but is starting to rebound. The impact on the visitor economy for 2021 is summarised as:

- Up 40% in the Coast & Heaths AONB on 2020, but still 27% below the 2019 levels
- Up 52% in the Dedham Vale AONB on 2020, but still 24% below the 2019 levels
- Up 57% in the Stour Valley on 2020, but still 30% below the 2019 levels

Visitors play a key role in the local economy with bespoke businesses providing employment, while other businesses being viable due to money spent by visitors. Many of these businesses trade on being in an outstanding landscape.

Despite some problems associated with a minority of visitors, such as littering, the visitor economy provides an economic stimulus to the area which can contribute to a greater understanding and conservation of the nationally designated landscapes.

AONB Partnerships respond to Five Estuaries proposals

The Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale AONB Partnerships have responded to a consultation relating to [RWE's proposals](#) for an offshore wind farm and associated onshore infrastructure. The response covers:

- Impacts on AONBs from the offshore element
- Impacts on AONBs from the onshore elements
- Potential socio-economic impacts on the AONB

The points raised included concerns about the experience of those living in and visiting the nationally designated landscapes and whether the AONBs had been paid due regard in assessing the impacts of the proposals.

The AONB Partnerships recognise the important part that offshore wind generated electricity can have in meeting aspirations for net zero and its contribution to energy security.

[Read the Full Response \(PDF\)](#)



Volunteering Opportunities

Would you like to help nature in your local area? We're looking for volunteers to help with different roles in the AONBs.

There is some limited availability for volunteers to undertake different roles, including:

- Group work parties
- Nature Recovery tasks
- Beachwatch activities
- Free the Trees work

Volunteering tasks take place on different days of the week in various locations, and all training is provided. You can learn new skills and meet new people. Find out more about the volunteers' roles and get in touch via our websites.

[Coast & Heaths Volunteering](#)
[Dedham Vale Volunteering](#)

Landscapes for All

The AONB team has recently added the post of Landscapes for All Officer to the team. This newly-created post seeks to meet part of the aspiration of the Government funded [Landscapes Review](#) report published in September 2019. Funding partners agreed to the proposal:

To create the capacity within the team to research, plan and implement meaningful steps to increase diversity and inclusivity across all aspects of AONB engagement and project delivery. To create a new role, with the primary purpose to deliver on the ambition to connect all people with the AONBs.

Following a competitive selection process, the new officer starts with the team in early September 2022.



The Great British Beach Clean

Every September thousands of people across the UK head to the coast to take part in the Great British Beach Clean. This year's event is taking place between Friday 16th and Sunday 25th September 2022. In the AONB, the activity is promoted throughout the year as [Beachwatch](#).

Neil Lister from the AONB team has organised a Beachwatch activity for registered AONB volunteers at Bawdsey Beach on Tuesday 20th September.

For more details about attending this, and for registering as an AONB volunteer if you aren't already, please contact Neil directly neil.lister@suffolk.gov.uk

Many communities independently organise Great British Beach Clean activities in their local area. The [Marine Conservation Society website](#) publishes some useful information to support this activity.

If you do organise your own activity, please let Neil Lister know as this will help with collation of results from all Beachwatch activities taking place along the coastline of the AONB. The 2021 Suffolk Beachwatch report is available on [our website](#).

News from the National Association for AONBs

Staff at the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) continue to engage with Government on the legal purpose of AONBs following the designated landscapes report commissioned by Defra.

Currently AONBs have a single purpose to 'conserve and enhance natural beauty' but discussions are ongoing about a secondary purpose, similar to National Parks, which have a secondary purpose relating to understanding and enjoyment.

Further discussion relating to AONB's use of 'Green Finance' continues and more details and updates will be shared in due course.

[Learn More About The NAAONB](#)

Fen Bridge replacement

Following the removal of Fen Bridge in East Bergholt earlier this year, the Highways Authority with responsibility for the bridge has been working alongside its contractors to progress its replacement.

The bridge replacement works are programmed to commence on Monday 5th September 2022 and will take approximately four weeks to complete.

Grants awarded in Coast & Heaths

Some of Suffolk's most loved, historic landmarks as well as projects that will improve accessibility and inclusivity are among ten organisations to receive more than £15,000 in grant funding from the [Amenity and Accessibility Fund](#), bringing the total the fund has awarded to more than £300,000.

In addition, more than £2,000 of funding has been awarded to four projects across Suffolk from the [Community & Conservation Fund](#) that will help people in the area discover nature on their doorstep and understand why the landscape is so special.

News of more AONB grant opportunities and funding announcements will follow in the coming weeks and months.

Explore AONB Grants



Successful first guided beach comb

The first of our programme of guided beach combs took place at Old Felixstowe Beach on Monday 22nd August, delivered by Kate Osborne of Beach Bonkers and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We were delighted to welcome the Karibu African Women's Support Group to the first session, where we searched the shoreline for hidden treasures. The group

found some sea glass, geode rocks, an 80-million-year-old fossil sea sponge and three shark's teeth!

Like all our upcoming National Lottery Heritage Funded activities, the aim was to connect new audiences to the Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and teach people about the wealth of exciting opportunities to engage with the natural environment in our designated landscapes.

News in brief

- Great British Life magazine has identified 10 reasons why the Coast & Heaths is one of the best AONBs in the country (the AONB team thinks the Dedham Vale is pretty good too). [Read more](#)
- In addition to this email update, we also send out monthly email newsletters. You can sign up to receive them in [Coast & Heaths](#) and [Dedham Vale](#)
- Throughout the year there are external opportunities for non-AONB funding. Two grant opportunities are currently open if you have relevant projects planned in Suffolk and need funding. [Find out more](#)

Follow the Coast & Heaths AONB on social media



Follow the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley on social media



Our mailing address is:

The AONB team
Dock Lane
Melton
Woodbridge
Suffolk IP12 1PE