



## 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:

- [AONB Chairs Conference and presentation by new AONB minister](#)
- [AONB Awards](#)
- [The AONB team were saddened to hear of the death of Michael Dower](#)
- [AONB team partners with Suffolk County Council for climate and nature webinar](#)
- [AONB Partnership response to consultation on proposals for North Falls offshore wind farm](#)
- [Joint Statement on the Historic Environment in AONBs](#)
- [AONB Sustainable Development Fund grants](#)
- [Stop press: Project ideas wanted](#)
- [News in brief](#)

**Simon Amstutz**  
AONB Manager

## **AONB Chairs Conference and presentation by new AONB minister**

AONB chairs from the 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland met online to hear presentations and discuss opportunities for green finance to support the delivery of AONB purpose (to conserve and enhance natural beauty).

Examples were shared from AONBs that demonstrated the outstanding work already being done. The National Association for AONBs has pledged to help build and coordinate programmes at scale and support the networks necessary need for developing new skills and knowledge among teams.

The chairs watched a recoded video presentation from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State whose responsibilities include AONBs, Trudy Harrison MP.

The National Association for AONBs held its Annual General Meeting shortly after the chairs conference. Members of the association voted to endorse the board's decision to develop the rebranding of AONBs as National Landscapes project, as recommended in the Landscapes Review report of 2019.

The proposal, which is supported by Defra, means the AONB name will remain as the legal term (to avoid the need for changes to legislation) but will operate under the new brand of National Landscape to reflect the national status of the designated landscape. It is anticipated the work will conclude in the new year.

[Find Out More](#)

## **AONB Awards**

The David Wood and Robert Erith National Landscape Awards celebrate the achievements of people and organisations that have contributed to conserving and enhancing the Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty respectively.

The AONB team is currently seeking nominations for the awards. Nominations could include achievements relating to community projects that have benefited nature, volunteers who have inspired others, unsung heroes deserving recognition, or groups that have engaged people with the landscape. All nominations are welcome!

[Nominate in Coast & Heaths](#)

[Nominate in Dedham Vale](#)

## **Michael Dower**

The AONB team were saddened to hear of the death of Michael Dower. Michael has been described as a giant of the designated landscapes world.

Michael always said he had the countryside in his blood, probably a reference to his father, John Dower, who wrote a white paper in 1945, which led to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 providing the legislation for designating AONBs and National Parks.

Michael was Chief officer at the Peak National Park, Director General of the British Countryside Commission; and lectured as Professor of European Rural Development at the University of Gloucestershire.

There is a proposal, currently being considered, that each AONB will identify its highest accessible point and brand them as 'Dowers' in a similar way to the 'Munros' in Scotland. This work would build on the Steppers UK group that have their #AONBChallenge to visit every AONB. They are said to be the Midlands equivalent of Black Girls Hike.



## Climate Change & Nature Talk

Climate change is one of the most important challenges faced by society today and it has already started to shape the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape and the wildlife within it.

In November we held an online event discussing climate change, nature, and what actions we can take as communities and individuals to make a difference.

The event featured two talks, plus a Q&A section and was packed full of useful information and advice. You can watch it free on our YouTube channel.

[Watch The Video](#)

## AONB Partnership response to consultation on proposals for North Falls offshore wind farm

The Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership have responded to a consultation from North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd for proposals for an offshore wind farm and associated onshore infrastructure. The response covers:

1. Impacts on the AONB of the offshore element
2. Impacts on AONBs from onshore elements (note plural AONB here is deliberate)
3. Potential socio-economic impacts on the AONB

[View The Response](#)

## Joint statement on the Historic Environment in AONBs

Historic England, individual AONBs and the National Association for AONBs have stated their intention to work together to conserve and enhance the historic and cultural environment in a shared declaration of ambition.

The historic environment is a key feature of AONBs and a factor in the designation process.

[Read The Statement \(PDF\)](#)

## AONB Sustainable Development Fund grants

The AONB Sustainable Development Fund panel met to look at a series of applications from communities that support the delivery of AONB purpose, to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

This was the second round of applications and the panel made awards worth £11,500 in the [Dedham Vale](#) across 4 projects, and £20,700 in the [Coast & Heaths](#) across 8 projects.

## Stop press: Project ideas wanted

Defra has provided funding to improve access in the AONBs. One of the proposed projects in the Dedham Vale AONB has fallen through. Projects need to be able to be completed by April 2023 and funds are for capital works only.

If you have an idea for an access project in the area, then please do get in contact with Simon Amstutz at [simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk).

### News in brief

- 67% of those polled at a recent Campaign for National Parks event thought that AONBs should have new purposes/stronger powers
- Gill Moon's new book 'Planet Suffolk' (apologies to Essex readers) is out now. [Find out more](#)
- Great work in partnership from the AONB, Green Light Trust and Stour Valley Farmer Cluster to offer a new volunteer opportunity to those that do not often volunteer in the environment sector
- The Guardian featured a no car itinerary for exploring the Shotley Peninsula. [Read more](#)
- Grants for community food growing projects in east Suffolk. For more details please email [communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)
- Essex fish migration map is now available online. [Find out more](#)
- You can sign up to receive more news from the AONBs in the [Coast & Heaths](#) and [Dedham Vale](#)

### 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  
United Kingdom