



The primary purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty (which includes cultural heritage, as well as scenery). In pursuing this, agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and social and economic needs are taken into account.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there is a huge variety of scenery and landscapes. Those landscapes considered most valuable are designated as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and are protected by law. They are managed to maintain their special character for now and the future.

## What is an AONB?

## Cannock Chase AONB

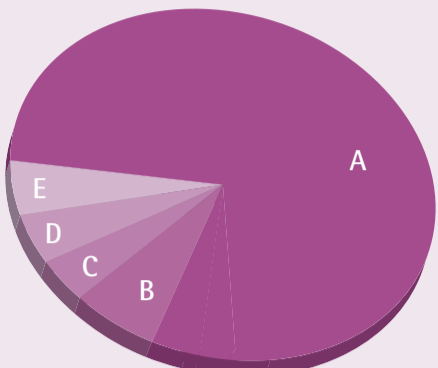
There is considerable economic and recreational pressure on this beautiful landscape and the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan aims to ensure the right balance is maintained to conserve and enhance the area whilst sustaining it as a living, working environment.

The AONB has significant areas of lowland heath, extensive areas of forestry (around 40%) and also designed parkland, sand and gravel quarrying and mixed agriculture. Around 58% of the AONB has public access. Around 12,000 people live within the AONB, with thousands more living within a 15km radius of the place.

Cannock Chase was designated as an AONB in 1958, principally for its lowland heathland and its one of 46 in the UK. Some of its special characteristics include its wildlife, geology and military, social and industrial history. At 6800ha (26 square miles) it is the smallest mainland AONB and much cherished and visited by people.

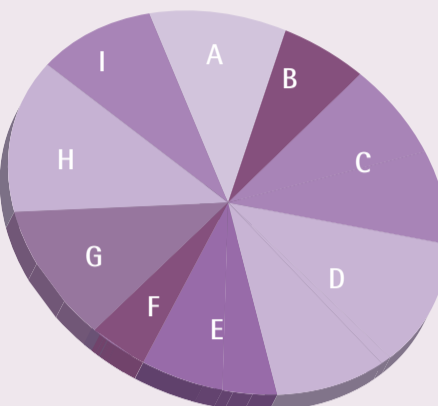
## Finances 2012-13 for Cannock Chase AONB Core and Project Costs

### AONB Core



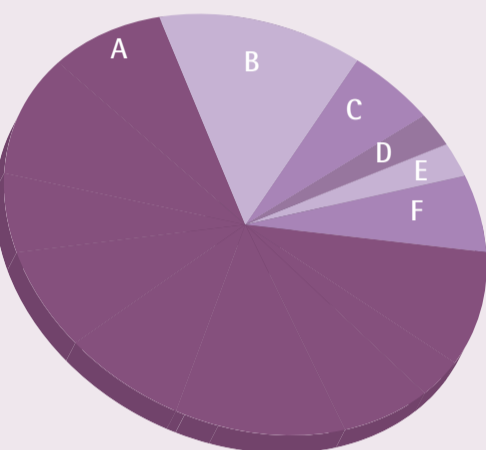
- A) Staff Salaries and Associated costs - £117,365
- B) Accommodation / Office Equipment - £8,649
- C) Partnership budget for PR events - £3,246
- D) Transport - £4,655
- E) Partnership running costs - in kind £6,600

### Core Action Projects



- A) Gateway Signs - £3,120
- B) Conference - £1,125
- C) Maximising Income - £5,905
- D) Planning Adviser Project - £6,804
- E) Monitoring Projects - £3,167
- F) AONB Annual Review - £448
- G) Community Awareness events - £3,500
- H) Management Plan - £3,425
- I) AONB Website - £1,610

### AONB Funding



- A) Defra - £127,119
- B) Staffordshire County Council - £20,920
- C) Stafford Borough Council - £8,368
- D) South Staffordshire District Council - £2,092
- E) Lichfield District Council - £2,092
- F) Cannock Chase District Council - £8,368

### Management & Governance

#### Members

Stafford Borough Council - Cllr Frances Beatty MBE – Chairman  
 Lichfield District Council - Cllr Val Richards – Vice Chairman  
 Cannock Chase Council - Cllr Janos Toth  
 South Staffordshire Council - Cllr Dave Billson/Cllr Bob McCauley  
 Staffordshire County Council - Cllr Mark Winnington

#### Advisors

Cannock Chase AONB Officer - Ruth Hytch  
 Natural England - Hazel McDowall  
 Forestry Commission - Jason Maclean  
 Cannock Chase AONB Advisory Partnership Chairman - Cllr Pat Ansell/June Jukes MBE  
 Staffordshire County Council, Honorary Secretary - John Rowe  
 Staffordshire County Council, Honorary Treasurer - Joy Currey

#### Officers

Cannock Chase Council - Antony Lancaster  
 Lichfield District Council - John Smith  
 South Staffordshire Council - Hayden Baugh-Jones  
 Stafford Borough Council - Naomi Perry  
 Staffordshire County Council - Noreen Moore  
 Cannock Chase AONB Unit, Clerk to the Committee - Anne Walker

#### Advisory Partnership

Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association – Cllr Pat Ansell – Chairman (to June 2012)  
 Friends of Cannock Chase – June Jukes MBE – Chairman (from June 2012)  
 Walton Chasers Orienteering Club – Ian Jones – Vice Chairman  
 British Horse Society – Doug Smith  
 CEMEX UK Operations Ltd – Shaun Denny  
 Country Land and Business Association – Donna Tavernor  
 Forestry Commission – Andy Coggins  
 Hanson Aggregates – David Southgate  
 National Farmers' Union – Mary Cope  
 Natural England – Hazel McDowall  
 Ramblers – Bryan Phillips  
 Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – Guy Corbett-Marshall  
 West Midland Bird Club – Frank Gribble MBE  
 Cycling Representative: Swinerton Cycles Forest Centre Ltd/MIAS – Mark Swinerton/Paul Massey  
 Local Business Representative: Silvertrees Holiday Park – Trevor Barber  
 Young People's Representative: Michelle Edwards  
 Local Authority Representatives:  
 Cannock Chase Council – Cllr Graham Burnett/Cllr Alan Pearson and Karen Ward  
 Lichfield District Council – Cllr Gwyneth Boyle and Justine Lloyd/Chris Walsh  
 South Staffordshire Council – Cllr Len Bates and Hayden Baugh-Jones  
 Stafford Borough Council – Cllr John Francis and Naomi Perry  
 Staffordshire County Council – Cllr John Bernard and Noreen Moore  
 Parish Councils' Representative – Cllr Steve Welch  
 Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association – Debbie Wakefield

#### Officers Working Group

South Staffordshire Council - Hayden Baugh-Jones – Chairman  
 Cannock Chase Council - Antony Lancaster – Vice Chairman  
 Lichfield District Council - John Smith  
 Stafford Borough Council - Naomi Perry  
 Staffordshire County Council - Noreen Moore  
 Forestry Commission - Jason Maclean  
 Natural England - Hazel McDowall

#### Cannock Chase AONB Unit

AONB Officer - Ruth Hytch  
 Assistant AONB Officer - Emma Beaman/Anne Walker  
 AONB Office Manager - Anne Walker/Denise Watts

# Management and Governance

## From the Chairman



Frances Beatty

This year I must start by paying tribute to the longest standing member of our Joint Committee, Cllr David Billson who passed away after a long illness. David spent time as our Vice Chairman and unstintingly offered advice and common sense solutions for our work throughout. His good humour and calm, patient approach will be much missed.

We were very pleased to welcome the Minister for AONBs, Richard Benyon MP in May. His visit enabled us to take the time to stop and take stock of our successes in working on projects with business partners; delivering keynote conservation for habitats; inspiring volunteers and focusing on getting AONB-wide strategy right for its future.

On those very themes, I would like to offer thanks for the support from the Police Mutual Assurance Society, Decathlon, South Staffordshire Water and Veolia Environmental Services for their staff resources and cash that have enabled us to do so much more for the protection of people, informing them and providing healthy opportunities for enjoying the AONB.

The Walsall Ramblers group received their Volunteer of the Year 2012 award for their hard work in land management; scoping, testing and writing up a suite of walks leaflets and supporting Anne Walker in achieving her walk leader qualification. They may have walked away with the award this year but join a whole army of tree surveyors, weed pullers, information givers and ambassadors in being a core part of the Partnership's on the ground delivery. Indeed, AONB volunteers have joined Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the Forestry Commission and Staffordshire County Council in working on the Connecting Cannock Chase project to create habitat corridors and re-introduce grazing on heathland corridors, promoting an influx of butterflies, birds and other key species into the area. We want to do more of this work as we move forward into next year.

Finally, strategic planning continues with our pursuance of appropriate policies for the AONB in Local and Neighbourhood Plans; our decision to develop a visitor management strategy to underpin the AONB Management Plan and our partners' conference to stimulate the process of reviewing and revising our current Management Plan for the 2014-19 period. We have had superb responses from all our partners during consultation work, demonstrating an incredibly strong sense of partnership. A big thank you to all those who work so hard to achieve this.

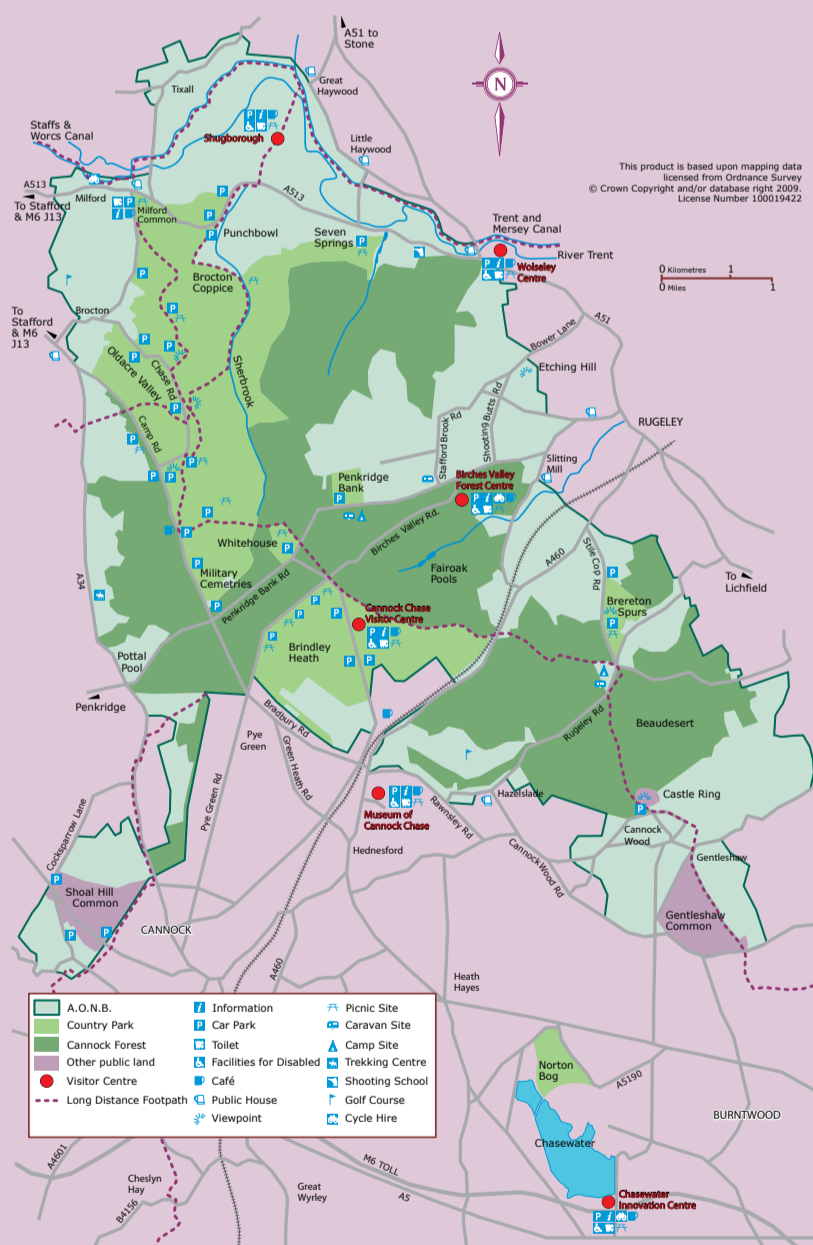
Thinking ahead to next year, it is not only the Minister who is focusing us on pursuing the really key priorities but the continued need to maximise reducing cash resources. We plan for this not to deter us in revising and delivering the Management Plan next year and to pursue innovative ways to get our goals achieved. I look forward to working with you all in 2013-14.

Cllr Frances Beatty MBE – Chairman of the Joint Committee 2012-13

## Planning

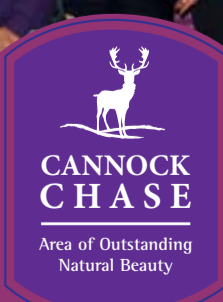
The Partnership works with local planning authorities to ensure that the AONB is recognised and developed appropriately. During the year we retained an expert adviser who worked on commenting on 33 development applications, 8 Local and Neighbourhood Plan issues and 6 other pre-application and appeal matters. In addition, liaison has continued with Western Power to pursue the undergrounding of overhead electricity lines where possible.

## Cannock Chase Map



### Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is supported by:

Defra, Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Council, Stafford Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council, AONB Parish and Town Councils, British Horse Society, Cemex UK Operations Ltd, Country Land and Business Association, Forestry Commission, Friends of Cannock Chase, Hanson Aggregates, National Farmers Union, Natural England, Bernard Perry, Ramblers, CASS Young Carers, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Swinerton Cycles Forest Centre Ltd, Walton Chasers, West Midland Bird Club.



## Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Annual Review 2012-13



### Cannock Chase AONB Unit

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 Stafford ST16 3AQ

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[www.cannockchase.co.uk](http://www.cannockchase.co.uk) and <http://aonb-blog.co.uk>

Facebook page : Fredas Footsteps or Cannock Chase AONB

Follow CannockAONB on Twitter

Images courtesy of:  
 Dick Turton, Steve Welch and  
 Cannock Chase AONB Unit.



## Connecting Cannock Chase

The Connecting Cannock Chase – Lowland Heathland project is led by the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase AONB, RSPB, Butterfly Conservation and Staffordshire Biodiversity Partnership.

Aiming to restore heathland in three areas, the partnership will be managing 73 hectares of heath where the Forestry Commission has cleared 40,000 conifers. It will be linking up existing areas of heathland which are part of the Special Area of Conservation. Restoration will involve scrub and bracken control and grazing animals will be introduced as a more sustainable way of managing one of the areas. This aims to achieve connectivity between different habitat types, opening up opportunities for a range of species to thrive and for the management of this part of the AONB to be approached in a way that considers the impact of land management across a wide area.

AONB volunteers have been involved in helping to deliver the work right from the beginning of the project, learning about the reasons why it is needed and good for our ecosystems, as well as providing much needed effort on the ground. Work will continue into future years.



## Moving forward on projects



## Awareness Days and Community Work

More than 200 people took part in events during the year focused on awareness and practical tasks in the AONB. This equates to around 75 days of work donated to the AONB.

**Walks** - Eleven walks led by six different partners and members of the AONB Unit. Familiarising - Friends of Cannock Chase led a walk through Mifflin's Valley. The bluebell woodlands at Beaudesert suffered as a result of the wet spring weather but we were able to see the work that had been carried out on the cascades in the former gardens. Information walks were held at Gentleshaw Common, Deavals Farm and around the Connecting Cannock Chase project area. Demonstrating - A party of 50 Nordic Walkers from Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB were met by 11 of our volunteers for a walk from Milford Common. Enjoying - Three walks testing out routes for Walsall Ramblers Cannock Chase AONB walks were held. Learning - a Great War themed walk also helped deliver a Day Walk Leader's qualification.

**Action** - Two litter picking sessions were held, 2 sessions removing invasive species (ragwort and Himalayan balsam) and 8 sessions of heathland and woodland management. A willow weaving event was also held with 17 volunteers learning techniques using woodland products.

**Surveying** - fourteen volunteers received training from the National Trust and Staffordshire County Council to survey Veteran and Notable Trees on the Shugborough Parkland. Ten volunteers surveyed signs and waymarkers along the Heart of England Way from Milford Common to Gentleshaw Common. Training for this project was delivered by the Forest of Mercia Project Team.

**Helping Visitors** - Volunteers extended the amount of time the Information Hut at Milford Common was open between Easter and October. It was also opened every day during the February Half Term week along with family activities which included a rabbit trail from Milford Common and making bird feeders in the Hut.



The annual **Armistice Day ceremony** for service and support animals was held at Freda's Grave. It was led for the second year by Rev Jane Nash and June Jukes MBE, with a reading from Warrant Officer Greg Hedges, who was accompanied by Watchman V, the mascot of the Mercian Regiment. Around 30 people and 20 dogs remembered the work of animals in wartime and current day service dogs. Wreaths were laid on behalf of South Staffordshire Council, Friends of Cannock Chase, Pets as Therapy and other individuals. Support dogs also attended with members of the public.

## Continuing support by our local community

### Sustainable Development Fund 2012-13

Between 2012 -2013 the Sustainable Development Fund supported 11 projects totalling £30,081.82. The total match funding generated from these projects was £52,486.31

#### In total:

- 5 projects directly involved 1,465 young people, 800 in Walk to Win, an event linked to the 2012 Olympics
- An outdoor activity barn installed at Beaudesert Scout and Guide Camp
- 25 photographers signed up on a training course to provide images of the AONB for the next Management Plan
- 14 volunteers surveyed veteran and notable trees on the Shugborough Parkland
- 7 volunteers surveyed sites looking for evidence of pine martens



Project Title	Project Lead	Project costs	Award
Mustelid Project	Paul Clenton - volunteer	£821	£471
Walk to Win	Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust	£9142.13	£4750.20
As special as the AONB	Young Carers	£7740	£3870
Outdoor Activity Barn	Beaudesert Trust	£17570	£5475
Heathland Fire Awareness Project	Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service	£9500	£4500
Veteran Tree Project	Staffordshire County Council	£1080	£240
AONB Art project	Unit 12 Gallery	£4475	£1475
Management plan photography	Steve Welch - fixed point photography group	£2780	£1319.09
Ramblers walking project	Walsall Ramblers	£4075	£2850.00
Replacement of crime prevention signs on car parks around Cannock Chase AONB	Police Mutual Assurance Society	£2085	£1131.53
AONB Passport project	Young Enterprise	£23300	£4000

#### Conference March 2013

In order to stimulate the start of our core work to review and revise the current Management Plan ready for the 2014-19 version, our regular partners were asked to come to an annual conference and work on the key areas for focus of the review.

50 delegates attended the annual conference in March at Chase Golf Club.

Keynote presentations were received from Rebecca Waite, Head of Protected Landscapes at Defra; Roger Owen from Natural England; Adrian McLaughlin from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and June Jukes MBE, Chairman of Friends of Cannock Chase and the AONB Advisory Partnership made presentations during the day to help guide discussions.

Work at the conference has provided guiding data and ideas around which the review of the Management Plan will be based. This work will form a substantial part of the Partnership's delivery in 2013-14.

## AONB Horsiculture

A project to monitor and up-date information on the keeping of horses and its impact in the landscape was completed. It up-dated a previous report from 2008 and now provides important information on projects we need to focus on in future years.

A refreshed snapshot of the health of the AONB landscape at a number of sites has been provided by the work. It assesses the changes in the standard of pasture management and the appearance of associated infrastructure between the 2008 and 2012 surveys and also provides new data relating to an additional seven sites. It contains recommendations on how equine land managers could be encouraged to implement improved practice on their land in the future.

We look forward to renewing links with partners in the equine world to work towards the delivery of the report's recommendations next year.



## Our People are Our Strength