



# Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Communications Strategy April 2020 - 2024

## Background

This communications strategy has been developed to complement the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 and to help the AONB Partnership<sup>1</sup> achieve its vision and objectives to conserve and enhance the nationally important landscape of Cannock Chase.

It takes forward the findings and recommendations of a communications review<sup>2</sup> of the AONB carried out in November 2019. It is also prepared in the context of the recent review of England's designated landscapes<sup>3</sup>, which has called for bold action and a new approach to maintain the beauty and appeal of the nation's finest landscapes. Both reviews have significant implications for Cannock Chase AONB's approach to communications over the next few years.

This strategy follows the Government Communication Service's **OASIS** format which lays out our **Objectives, Audience, Strategy, Implementation** and how we will **Score** our success.

The way the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership communicates is important because it affects the way people view Cannock Chase, how they behave, and consequently how they support our objectives. In a busy world, it is vital that our strategic messages get through to our users, partners, local businesses, supporters and wider audiences.

Our communications must be strong and consistent – consistent communication is key to helping us grow fruitful relationships with all our stakeholders. Closer working between the AONB Partnership and SAC Partnership<sup>4</sup> is essential in this regard.

The AONB Partnership is built around a shared sense of the central importance of Cannock Chase – the place. Effective communication requires everyone who represents the AONB –

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<sup>1</sup> The AONB Partnership comprises all those bodies and individuals that collaborate to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of Cannock Chase. More information on the Partnership is available at: [www.cannock-chase.co.uk/](http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/)

<sup>2</sup> Communications Review Cannock Chase AONB. November 2019

<sup>3</sup> Landscapes Review: final report. September 2019

<sup>4</sup> The Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation Partnership works together to prevent damage from visitor uses to the internationally important heathland and associated habitats.

staff, stakeholders and partners – taking responsibility, working jointly, and being able to communicate our key messages with ease and confidence. This strategy is an internal document for use by the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership to ensure that communication is embedded in each partner’s day-to-day work.

The Strategy is being written during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may impact on our ability to deliver some of the proposed short-term actions.

## Objectives for our communication

It is important to understand at the outset, why we are communicating and what it is that we want to achieve. Our communication has 3 primary purposes:

1. To promote the profile and understanding of Cannock Chase – the place
2. To inspire people to want to love and look after Cannock Chase
3. To strengthen the profile of the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and increase the transparency of, and support for, its work.

The partnership has worked together at several meetings and workshops to develop key objectives for the next three years. We have broken these down into short, medium and long term objectives.

### Short term objectives (2020 – 2021)

- We want to develop a strong place brand for Cannock Chase in collaboration with the AONB and SAC partnerships. The new place brand will give Cannock Chase a clear identity and story that can be consistently told by all partners. **We expect that our brand will be defined by April 2021, and that by March 2024 our re-brand will be complete and 40% of our key audience will be able to recognise the new brand.**
- We want to improve communication internally within the AONB Partnership with our key stakeholders and professional partners, so they fully understand the objectives of the Cannock Chase AONB and are regularly informed with the latest updates. **We expect that by April 2021 60% of our partners will be aware of our key objectives.**
- We want to streamline Cannock Chase’s online presence and work better with our partners to co-ordinate our digital messages. We expect that by April 2021 our social media presence will have grown (Twitter – 1,500, Facebook Group 800) **We expect that 50% of our key stakeholders will also have shared our messages on their digital platforms.**

### Medium Term objectives (2021- 2022)

- We want Cannock Chase to reach out and connect to all parts of society, particularly those who currently do not benefit from this landscape. ***We expect to have a targeted plan to spread our key messages to ‘missing audiences’ by April 2022.***
- We want to build more sustainable and empowering relationships with local businesses by improving their awareness of Cannock Chase and embedding the AONB in their products, services and ethos. ***We expect that by April 2022, 30% of the businesses on and surrounding Cannock Chase will know and understand our key objectives.***
- We want to inspire young people to appreciate and look after Cannock Chase. ***We expect that by April 2022, all schools and libraries on and surrounding Cannock Chase will know and understand our key objectives.***

### Long term objectives (2022 – 2024)

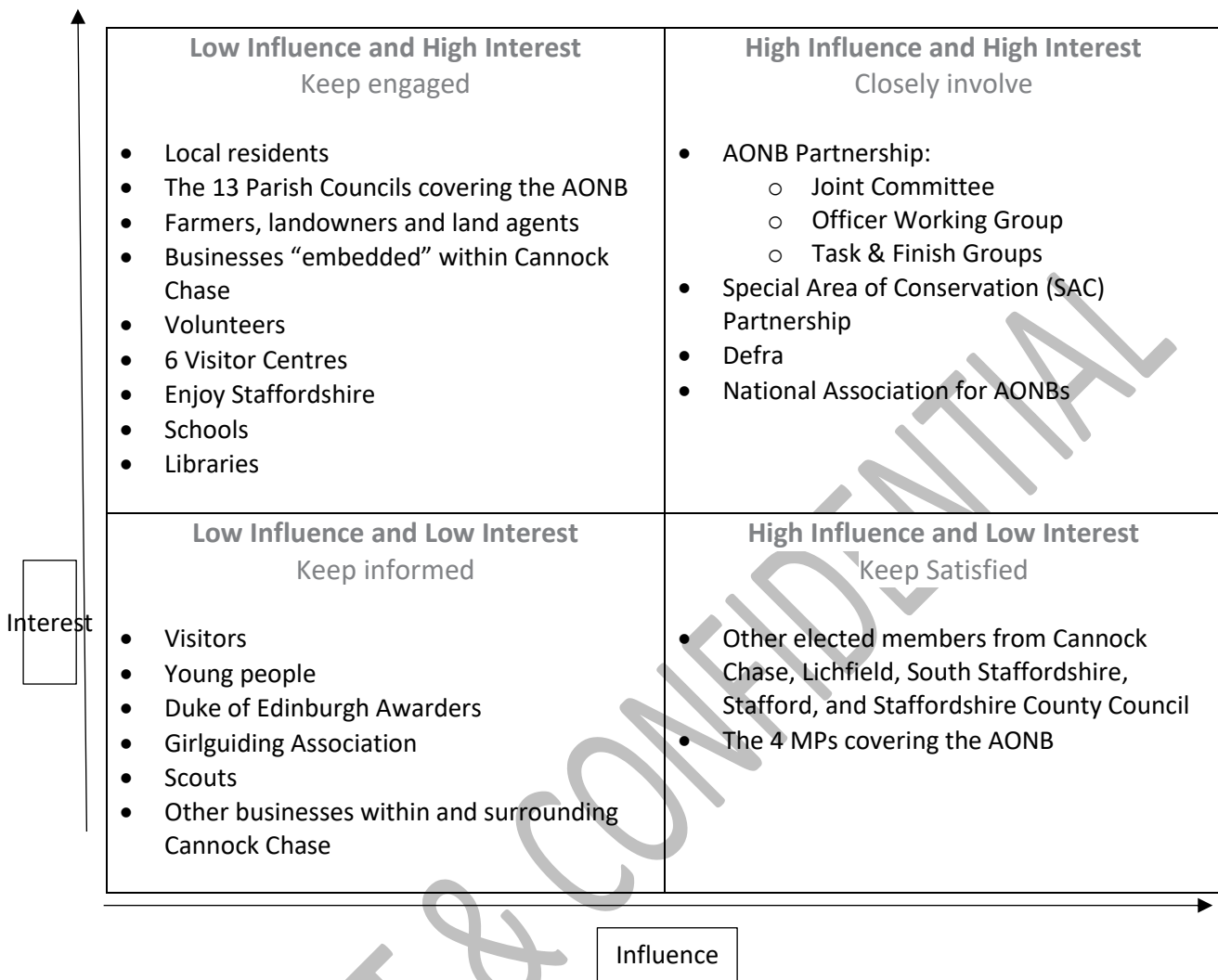
- We want to proactively share information about Cannock Chase with local and relevant media outlets, to raise awareness of the AONB’s key messages in the wider public domain. ***We aim to have 6 media stories in the mainstream media annually which raise awareness of our objectives and key messages from April 2022.***
- We want the AONB Partnership and SAC Partnership to speak as one voice for the benefit of Cannock Chase. ***We aim to investigate opportunities to move to a single website for all information about Cannock Chase, and supporting social media accounts by April 2024.***
- We want to share information about Cannock Chase AONB with national media and politicians to raise its profile and seek to influence the national agenda for designated landscapes. ***We aim to collaborate with the NAAONB in efforts to shape the national agenda and deliver the outcomes of the Designated Landscapes Review by April 2024.***

## Audience – Who do we want to communicate with?

We have developed a stakeholder matrix to capture those groups we communicate with and what level of information they need to meet our collective objectives. The matrix has two dimensions, which represents a group’s levels of Influence and their Interest.

The level of Influence depends upon how much influence a stakeholder has over the success of our projects or initiatives. The level of Interest depends upon how engaged the

stakeholder is around the outcome of the project. The matrix shows us how to appropriately engage and involve these different stakeholders.



The matrix should be treated as a live document and should be updated regularly as groups will move and change depending on the messages we wish to communicate.

### Targeting communication at the right audience

The below table shows what messages we plan to share with our stakeholders and how we plan to communicate them. This list is not conclusive and like the stakeholder matrix will grow over time.

Stakeholders	Messages	How
All	Cannock Chase is a National Landscape; Wild and Beautiful; a Landscape for Everyone.	Through the implementation of the Cannock Chase place brand.
AONB Partnership SAC Partnership Defra	We have a shared interest in, and responsibility for, conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of Cannock Chase.	Meetings and minutes of the Joint Committee, Officer Working Group and Task and Finish Groups.

	<p>This also applies to using the natural resources of the Chase sustainably, as well as meeting the needs of the people that visit, live or work in it.</p> <p>By working together, through an integrated landscape approach, we can better ensure the long-term future of Cannock Chase, and optimise the delivery of multiple goods and services.</p> <p>Sharing expertise, insight and evidence will generate better outcomes.</p>	<p>AONB e-Newsletter.</p> <p>Annual Conference.</p> <p>Annual Review.</p> <p>Partnership awareness events.</p> <p>Website and social media.</p>
National Association for AONBs	<p>Cannock Chase is proud to be part of the AONB family and shares the central purpose of the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.</p> <p>We will work with the association and other AONBs to drive ambition, collaboration and delivery for designated landscapes, and realise the recommendations in the Glover Review.</p>	<p>Membership of the NAAONB.</p> <p>Attendance at Annual AONB Conference, Chairmen's Conference, Lead Officers' meetings, regional AONB workshops.</p> <p>Joint working.</p> <p>Inputting to joint reports.</p>
Local residents Parish Councils	<p>You live in one of England's finest landscapes.</p> <p>Cannock Chase is constantly changing, and active steps are needed to look after it.</p> <p>Take pride in the Chase, and get involved.</p> <p>Partnership working and a landscape approach to resolving challenges can meet the needs of electors.</p>	<p>AONB e-Newsletter.</p> <p>Annual Conference.</p> <p>Annual Review.</p> <p>Website and social media.</p> <p>Resident Publications run by councils.</p> <p>Via Parish Council newsletters.</p> <p>Consultations.</p>
Farmers, landowners and land agents	<p>The choices you make to manage your land will impact on the special qualities of Cannock Chase, which is A National Landscape and a cherished local asset.</p> <p>Your land provides many public benefits. These can be maximised through joint working and an integrated landscape approach to land management.</p> <p>We would like to hear your thoughts on how the area should be managed, and we would like you to take part in joint programmes of activities.</p>	<p>Participating in joint activities.</p> <p>Targeted events.</p> <p>Through their representative organisations in the AONB Partnership.</p>
Businesses (all)	<p>The special qualities of Cannock Chase can be used to develop and promote your products, services or activities.</p> <p>The performance of your business can benefit from a relationship with Cannock Chase.</p>	<p>Business Sense of Place Toolkit.</p> <p>AONB e-newsletter.</p> <p>Website and social media.</p>

	Advocate the ethos and approach of the AONB to your customers, clients and staff.	Business communications from the local authorities.
Volunteers	<p>You have on your doorstep one of England's finest landscapes and a much-loved local asset.</p> <p>Volunteers are essential to the future of Cannock Chase and conserving its natural beauty.</p> <p>Being involved is fun, social and rewarding.</p> <p>Being involved enables you to share your skills and expertise.</p> <p>There are many roles that you can get involved in from supporting the visitor centres, land management to auditing and photography. There is something for everyone's ability and time availability.</p>	<p>Participating in volunteer activities.</p> <p>AONB e-Newsletter.</p> <p>Annual Conference.</p> <p>Annual Review.</p> <p>Website and social media.</p>
6 Visitor Centres Enjoy Staffordshire	<p>Cannock Chase is a National Landscape and the jewel in the West Midlands.</p> <p>It offers wonderful opportunities for open-air recreation, and discovering nature and heritage.</p> <p>You are welcome to come and enjoy the Chase. When you do, please take a few moments to plan your journey and reduce your impact, including your carbon footprint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use public transport if you can</li> <li>• Tread lightly on the Chase and keep to designated paths and routes</li> <li>• Respect other users and property during your visit</li> <li>• Leave no trace – take home all your belongings and litter</li> </ul> <p>Be Proud to Protect Cannock Chase.</p>	<p>Joint publicity awareness campaigns.</p> <p>Co-ordinated messages through website and social media.</p>
Schools and libraries. Young people. Duke of Edinburgh Awarders. Girlguiding Association / Scouts.	<p>Cannock Chase is a special place.</p> <p>It offers lots of opportunities for outdoor activities; learning about heritage and nature.</p> <p>Getting involved locally will help to address global sustainability issues.</p>	<p>Resources pack developed jointly with SAC Partnership.</p> <p>School Bag run through County Council.</p> <p>Educational school visits to the Chase.</p>
Visitors	<p>You are welcome to come and enjoy the Chase – one of England's finest landscapes. When you do, please take a few moments to plan your journey and reduce your impact, including your carbon footprint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use public transport if you can</li> <li>• Tread lightly on the Chase and keep to designated paths and routes</li> </ul>	<p>Proud to Protect code of conduct</p> <p>Information leaflets, interpretation and signage</p> <p>6 Visitor Centres</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect other users and property during your visit</li> <li>• Leave no trace – take home all your belongings and litter</li> </ul> <p>Be Proud to Protect Cannock Chase</p>	Joint working with the SAC Partnership
Other Elected Members from the constituent local authorities.  MPs	<p>Cannock Chase delivers great environmental, social and cultural benefits – some benefits are felt way beyond its boundary.</p> <p>Your Council’s priorities can be delivered through the AONB Management Plan. By so doing, you will be pro-actively delivering on your statutory duty to have regard to the AONB.</p> <p>Partnership working and a landscape approach can meet the needs of your stakeholders.</p> <p>The AONB maximises benefits for the area and society, and delivers great value for money.</p>	<p>Member Briefings and presentations.</p> <p>Consultations.</p> <p>Annual conference.</p> <p>AONB e-Newsletter.</p> <p>Website and social media.</p>

## Strategy – How will we achieve our objectives?

We have big aspirations for the Cannock Chase AONB communications, and we will rely on a partnership approach to deliver our messages. Our AONB Partnership is our greatest asset, and will help us to maximise our capacity and reach the widest variety of stakeholders. Appendix 1 captures the primary communication resources currently available within the Partnership.

In this section we look at our overarching key messages and how we plan to achieve our short, medium and long term objectives.

### Key Messages:

Our key messages aim to strike a balance between conserving and enhancing ‘A National Landscape’ on the one hand, and on the other promoting Cannock Chase as a ‘Landscape for Everyone’ to enjoy.

- Cannock Chase is **A National Landscape** - and the jewel of the West Midlands.
- Cannock Chase is **Wild and Beautiful** - well known and loved for its scenery, wildlife and rich history; offering superb walking, cycling and horse-riding in a tranquil and peaceful setting.
- Cannock Chase is **A Landscape for Everyone** - we want to ensure that all parts of society can enjoy the outstanding landscape that Cannock Chase offers, in ways that protect its special qualities. We aim to encourage people to act responsibly in the countryside and to respect other users.
- **We share responsibility for keeping Cannock Chase special** – working together, in a collaborative culture, we are better able to respond to the challenges we face and drive forward our ambition and delivery.





	the newsletter as well as gauging how well they understand our objectives.		
Our online social media presence will be cleansed and a Twitter and Facebook group will be set up and managed. This group will allow members of the public to join and post, creating an online community for people who love Cannock Chase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will delete our current <a href="#">Cannock Chase AONB facebook page</a> and replace it with a new Cannock Chase AONB group which we will administer, but members of the public can join and post into. Before we delete our page, we will give our current 212 followers of the Facebook page the chance to join the new group, which will become more of a community for members to post and share their stories about Cannock Chase AONB.</li> <li>We already have a strong following on our twitter so will update our cover photo and profile picture and start to share messages through this platform. We will share a mix of photographs, infographics and interesting facts about Cannock Chase that will spark conversation. We will also drive people to join our new facebook group.</li> <li>We will post on our social media channels at least once every two weeks.</li> <li>Using our Cannock Chase network, we will encourage our partners to share our social media posts on their pages to increase its reach.</li> </ul>	AONB Team  AONB Partnership	AONB budget  Existing resources
We will raise awareness of Cannock Chase and the benefits it provides through co-ordinated public awareness campaigns across our partnership network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will agree a calendar of awareness campaigns to share co-ordinated messages on our social media platforms, websites and other appropriate platforms.</li> </ul>	AONB Partnership	Existing resources
The Cannock Chase AONB website will remain the focus for information about the AONB and the work of the AONB Partnership. We will point site users, that want to find out 'what's on' towards the SAC Visitor hub website, as well as our partners' websites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will keep the AONB website up to date, and aim to post news items at least once every two weeks.</li> <li>Using our Cannock Chase network, we will encourage our partners to share news items on their websites to increase their reach.</li> </ul>	AONB Team AONB Partnership	AONB budget Existing resources
<b>How we plan to deliver our medium term objectives (2021-2022)</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources</b>
We will reach out and connect to all parts of society, especially those who currently fail to benefit from Cannock Chase.	<b>By April 2022:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will prepare a targeted plan to spread our key messages to 'missing audiences' by April 2022.</li> </ul>	AONB Team / Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	To be identified

	<p><b>From April 2022:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will revise our Communications Action Plan to include specific measures for engaging these audiences.</li> </ul>		
We will build more sustainable and empowering relationships with local businesses by improving their awareness of Cannock Chase and embedding the AONB in their products, services and ethos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the development of a place brand for Cannock Chase, we will prepare a sense of place toolkit for Cannock Chase businesses.</li> <li>We will distribute it to all known businesses on and in close proximity to Cannock Chase.</li> </ul>	AONB Team	AONB budget
We will inspire young people to appreciate and look after Cannock Chase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop a resources pack to be used in schools and libraries, based on the Cannock Chase Code.</li> <li>We will explore with outdoor education providers the scope for providing every child in Staffordshire to experience a 'night under the stars'</li> <li>We will target our educational packages at schools, libraries, Duke of Edinburgh providers, Girl Guide and Scout Groups through digital methods such as direct email, social media advertising and newsletters from our local partners.</li> </ul>	AONB Team / SAC Partnership / Schools / Libraries / outdoor education providers	To be identified
<b>How we plan to deliver our long term objectives (2022-2024)</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources</b>
We will focus our efforts on gaining local press and media coverage. We will get creative and release at least six media stories annually with the intention of raising awareness of Cannock Chase, as well as highlighting the importance to protect and conserve it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will work across the Cannock Chase AONB Partnership, SAC Partnership and 6 Visitor Centres to find stories that we can develop into press and media releases on a bi-monthly basis.</li> <li>We will update these on our website and ask our partners to share the press release with their contacts in the media.</li> </ul>	AONB Partnership / SAC Partnership / 6 Visitor Centres	Existing resources
We will align communication channels within the AONB Partnership and SAC Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will consider a move to a single website for all communications on Cannock Chase, and supporting social media accounts.</li> </ul>	AONB Partnership / SAC Partnership	To be identified
We will raise Cannock Chase AONB's profile nationally, and work with the National Association for AONBs and AONB family to shape the national agenda and drive forward our collective ambition for designated landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the National Association for AONB's and the AONB family, we will contribute towards national press, research, papers and advocacy to promote Cannock Chase and help deliver the outcomes of the Glover Review.</li> </ul>	AONB Team / NAAONB	Existing resources

## Scoring our success

In order to make sure that we are achieving our objectives, we will be checking a number of measurable statistics such as:

- Social media – following/ engagement / Shares /Sentiment
- Media score – (+/-)
- Website visits
- Granicus (Gov Deliver) subscriber numbers
- Downloads of resources packs for young people from website
- Business engagement
- Input into digital consultations

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## Appendix 1. Primary current communication resources within Cannock Chase AONB Partnership

Resource	Host
<b>On-line / electronic</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannock Chase AONB website <a href="http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk">www.cannock-chase.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Cannock Chase visitor hub <a href="http://www.cannockchase.org.uk">www.cannockchase.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Destination Staffordshire <a href="http://www.enjoystaffordshire.com">www.enjoystaffordshire.com</a></li> <li>• Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram</li> </ul>	<p>Cannock Chase AONB</p> <p>Cannock Chase SAC</p> <p>Destination Staffordshire</p> <p>Various</p>
<b>Publications</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AONB Management Plan 2019-2024</li> <li>• AONB Annual Review</li> <li>• Leaflets (routes/information)</li> </ul>	<p>Cannock Chase AONB</p> <p>Cannock Chase AONB</p> <p>Various</p>
<b>Interpretation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateway signs</li> <li>• Road signs</li> <li>• Village signs</li> <li>• Site interpretation and information panels</li> <li>• Mobile displays</li> </ul>	<p>?</p> <p>?</p> <p>Various Parish Councils</p> <p>Various</p> <p>Cannock Chase AONB</p>
<b>Events</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AONB Annual Conference</li> <li>• Local shows/events</li> </ul>	<p>Cannock Chase AONB</p> <p>Various (County Show, Common Wealth Games 2022)</p>
<b>Visitor centres/hubs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shugborough</li> <li>• Wolesley Centre</li> <li>• Marquis Drive</li> <li>• Birches Valley</li> <li>• Museum of Cannock Chase</li> <li>• Chasewater Innovation Centre</li> </ul>	<p>National Trust</p> <p>Staffordshire Wildlife Trust</p> <p>Staffordshire County Council</p> <p>Forestry England</p> <p>Cannock Chase Council</p> <p>Staffordshire County Council</p>
<b>Networks</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AONB Partnership members</li> <li>• SAC Partnership members</li> <li>• Staffordshire Association of Parish Councils</li> <li>• Friends of Cannock Chase</li> <li>• Volunteer networks</li> <li>• Business networks</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Scouting/Girl Guides</li> <li>• National Association for AONBs</li> </ul>	