Annual Review
2010-2011

In partnership with:

Cumbria
Country Council

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European Year of Volunteering 2011
Solway Coast
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Solway Coast AONB Partnership is a member of the National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB). The Association is an independent organisation acting on behalf of AONBs and their partners to promote, conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the 49 areas designated as AONBs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The NAAONB is funded by Natural England, the Countryside Council for Wales and partner membership subscriptions.

Landscapes for life .org.uk

Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this publication are correct at the time of printing.
The culmination of almost three years of research, consultation and community engagement was published in our new Management Plan for the Solway Coast in September 2010. It is a statutory five year plan and creates the driving force for improvements through restoration of the landscape, job creation, economic growth and sustainable development. We feel that this, the third plan for the area, is a mature plan which embraces and fully encompasses the needs of the area. We also published a new Landscape Character Assessment, a document which will help to protect the area and its setting from adverse developments such as “large scale” renewable energy schemes and will provide guidance for landscape restoration projects. The two documents are available on our newly refreshed website.

Like all other public services we have had our funding cut to meet government targets to reduce the national financial deficit and as such we have responded by re-structuring our programmes and outputs. In the process we have looked further a field for funding opportunities and we have been successful in securing project funding for the next four years. We estimate that the new funding will deliver large parts of the actions in our new Management Plan.

Finally we wish to thank our volunteers for their efforts in hail, rain and snow and to point out again that they are essential to the well being of the habitats and villages in the AONB. As you will see from the following Review all of our outputs have made a positive contribution to the area and the Partnership, staff and volunteers will continue to help the area prosper and improve as a nationally recognised place of unrivalled natural beauty.

William (Bill) Jefferson O.B.E. Chairman
Brian Irving Manager
Settlers of the Solway

A new session has been developed for Key Stage 2 children visiting the Discovery Centre. This session is closely linked to the requirements of the History National Curriculum which requires children to study the influences which have affected their local area.

The children are able to dress up as Roman settlers. Some are slaves, others soldiers and they compare the clothes with those of the local population. Other children are able to look at the lives of the Vikings who settled along the coast and gave lots of our villages their names. They use maps to find different place names and to discover whether the names are still relevant today. The Cistercian monks at the monastery in Abbaytown developed the area for sheep farming and the children learn that the sheep provided the monks with wool for their clothes, meat to eat, bone knives and spoons, anclin which had many medicinal uses and the horns which could be turned into drinking cups. The children use the Discovery Centre exhibition to find out about themselves and report back to the rest of their class about their findings.

The children are encouraged to compare a collection of artefacts from these settlers with what we have and still use today. As part of their visit the children learn about writing in Anglo Saxon runes. In a letter from one of the children after they returned to school one child said that he liked the way all the letters were made up of straight lines. Another child was surprised about the fact that gold jewellery was only worn by the very wealthy. Many of the children signed their letters in runic writing. All the children learn about illuminated writing and Roman numbers. The children are encouraged to think about the things they use today and see that some things have not changed in over 2000 years.

During the summer term a teacher training student from the University of Cumbria worked alongside the Education Officer as an alternative placement. She worked with the Education Officer in Allonby Primary School on a week long art project based on the village buildings.

As part of a larger project organised by the Cumbria Coastal Learning Network, a group of Go6ed after children from Whitehaven spent time on Mawbray beach and in the Discovery Centre and produced two pieces of art work which were displayed at a conference in Tullie House, Carlisle.

Students studying for GCSE examination visited the AONB as part of their course work looking at the management of the coast and the landscape. A group of land management students from Newton Rigg also visited to look at the coastal habitats on the dunes at Mawbray. On two very cold evenings in July groups of scouts, guides, brownies and cub scouts from the Wigton area spent time on the beach at Mawbray.
'Facts and Figures' from the 'State of the AONB'

The Solway Coast AONB was designated in 1964 and is one of the UK's 49 AONBs.

Size: 115km square, 59 km of shoreline

Landscape Character: Estuary and Marsh, including two sub types, intertidal flats and coastal marsh; Coastal Margins including dunes and beaches, coastal mosses and coastal plain; and Lowland including low farmland, rolling lowland and drained mosses.

Area by Land Use: The majority of the AONB, around 85%, is farmland. Raised bogs cover a further 10% and the remaining 5% covers areas such as settlements, sand dunes, saltmarshes, rivers and highways.

Types of Agricultural Land Use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>No holdings</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>% agricultural land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crops/bare fallow</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1097.8</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp. grass</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>854.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent grass</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4881.7</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough grazing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>452.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>222.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set aside</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other land</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>183.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total farmed area</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>7779.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bare fallow = 42 Bha, Crops = 1055.2ha (13.6%)

Habitats:
The following UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats are present within the AONB:
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Coastal Sand Dunes (including both Dune Grassland and Dune Heath)
- Lowland Raised Bog (and Lowland Heathland)
- Coastal Vegetated Shingle
- Coastal Grassland
- Maritime Cliffs and Slope
- Reedbed
- Fen
- Saltmarsh
- Mudflats
- Saline Lagoons
- Sabellaria alveolata reefs

Special Historic Sites:
- 423 Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- 102 Listed Buildings (4 x grade I, 6 x II*, 92 x II)
- 51 Scheduled Monuments
- 7 Conservation Areas (containing 65 SMR sites, 48 listed buildings, 8 Scheduled Monuments)
- 0 parks & gardens

Public Rights of Way within the AONB:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Access</th>
<th>Length, km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Rights of Way</td>
<td>144.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridleways</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 byways open to all traffic (BOATS) 2.4

The National Cycle Route 72 passes through the AONB (the Hadrian's Wall Cycleway) and part of the Cumbria Cycle Way.

Three long distance footpaths pass through the AONB: The Cumbria Coastal Way, the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and the Averdale Ramble which extends northwards along the shore as far as Grupe Point. There are also 11.4km of Easy Access walks.

Population:
The total population of the AONB is approximately 3220. The population increases significantly over the summer months due to tourists.

Number of Parishes: 13

Planning Authorities:
- Cumbria County Council, Allerdale Borough Council & Carlisle City Council
The Solway Coast AONB Conference, AGM and Launch of the Management Plan

Held in the Golf Hotel, Silloth, on Friday 24th September 2010, the theme was ‘Solway Coast AONB - The Next Five Years’

Speakers at the conference included; Howard Davies, Chief Executive of the National Association for AONBs (NAAOBNs), Brian Irving, AONB Manager, Rose Wolfe, Assistant Manager, Barbara Hepburn, Education Officer and Brendan Quayle, consultant with the Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership Project.

The conference was very well attended and the AONB speakers outlined the varied projects and work of the AONB Unit and Partnership.

Howard Davies was the key speaker and began with an account of the history of the NAAONB which acts as a voice for the family of AONBs. The NAAONB represents AONBs nationally, builds advocacy, responds to consultations, and organises the annual conference of AONBs. From here he continued with what the future holds for the family of AONBs, discussing the effects the Comprehensive Spending Review reports, on 20th October 2010, might have on future funding to AONBs.

The NAAONB was proving to Government the role that AONBs play in our rural economy, in the delivery of those goods and services which we all take for granted, such as food, clean air, clean water, carbon storage, a rich array of wildlife and that responsible management of these resources through the AONBs is the ultimate front-line public service. He noted that Richard Benyon, the Minister charged with leading DEFRA, sees the AONBs as a key delivery agent of the ‘Big Society’.

Howard commented on the work the NAAONB is doing to develop a brand identity for the AONB family, the Landscapes for Life brand, which conveys the message of the provision of goods and services and also that the AONBs are here for life.

He continued to note that the AONBs will have better and stronger collaboration with the National Parks to draw up a shared agenda on such things as climate change, Sustainable Development Fund and biodiversity delivery.

To close he noted that the draft Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice) would give us a real opportunity to make clear the role our protected landscapes play in delivering some key areas such as farming, sustainable food production, enhancement of the environment and biodiversity, and the support of a strong and sustainable green economy.

Brian Irving outlined the policies and actions that the new Solway Coast AONB Management Plan contained and the implications these would have for the next five years of management in the AONB.

Rose Wolfe presented the last five years of the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, describing some of the many and varied projects that had been carried out by communities, businesses, Parish Councils, charities, etc.

Barbara Hepburn talked about her role as AONB Education Officer and what children gain from learning outside the classroom. In March 2010 Barbara received the Quality Badge Award for Learning Outside the Classroom by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. The award combines learning and safety in one easily recognisable badge for all organisations providing this experience. She then introduced teacher, Cath Mitchell and two pupils from Upperby School, Carlisle. They talked about their learning experience with the AONB and how they followed it up back in the classroom.

Brendan Quayle outlined the Sule Way Landscape Partnership project and how this would develop over the next four years.
Making Spaces for Nature

The Natural Environment White Paper is a bold and ambitious statement outlining the Government’s vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years, backed up with practical action to deliver that ambition.

Nature is sometimes taken for granted and undervalued. But people cannot flourish without the benefits and services our natural environment provides. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prosperous communities and personal wellbeing.

Alongside the White Paper, the Government has published its response to the Laverton Review, The Review, Making Space for Nature, found that nature in England is highly fragmented and unable to respond effectively to new pressures, such as climate and population change.

NAAONB Response to Natural Environment White Paper

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) welcomes the publication of the Government’s Natural Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice). We have signed up to a joint statement which summarises the opportunities and challenges and lists actions for moving forward on ecological networks in protected landscapes.

Protected landscapes (AONBs and National Parks) have a clear role to play in delivering the White Paper’s aspirations through our continued partnership working at the local level. It is incumbent upon us to work strategically across landscapes in ways that will ensure we continue to maintain not only the health of our nation’s natural environment but also the vital relationship between people and nature. This will mean improving the delivery of ecosystem services for people while increasing wildlife’s chances of successfully adapting to climate change. Richard Benyon MP noted that we are already delivering in many of the ways identified in the White Paper by citing at today’s launch ‘The Big Chalk, a collaborative project between Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs, Dorset and North Wessex Downs AONEs, and we look forward to working with partners at national and local level to make the aspirations of the White Paper a reality.

Peter Stevens, Chairman of the National Association for AONBs said:

*Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are what they say they are. Each AONB is a spectacular place in its own right, its individual character harkened over time by the collective endeavours of makers of these distinctive landscapes, the farmers, foresters, landowners, rural families and those who have acted as guardians of their natural beauty. The future of AONBs and the wildlife and nature they conserve and enhance, are founded on partnerships working; established partnerships that cross administrative boundaries and unite national interests and local communities. It is through these partnerships that AONB Joint Advisory Committees and Conservation Boards are providing the range of benefits that we all enjoy. We look forward to working through this successful, tried, tested route to ensure that the aspirations of the White Paper are delivered and that our AONBs remain Landscapes for Life.

Notes

1. The NAAONB is an influential, trusted organisation that is seen as the mouthpiece for the AONB family. It harnesses the collective experience, enthusiasm and goodwill of the family and uses it to further our collective cause – to conserve and enhance the UK’s Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Further information www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

2. AONBs are designated by government to conserve and enhance the UK’s finest countryside. There are 46 AONBs in the United Kingdom: 33 in England; 4 in Wales, 1 which straddles the border between England and Wales, and 8 in Northern Ireland. AONBs are locally managed, nationally important, and deal with global issues.
Guided Walks, Events & Shows

The Solway Coast AONB has continued to maintain a high public profile by attending a number of events, where people from all ages and backgrounds were able to source information. These included: Attending Carlisle City Council’s Nature in the Park at Blitte Park Carlisle, 2 stands at Cumbria Voluntary Service Funding Fairs to promote the Sustainable Development Fund, Solway Firth Partnership Conference, and the 8th Annual AONB North Cumberland Style Hedgelaying Competition. The public also enjoyed some fascinating Volunteer Coordinator led walks including Bird Watching walks on Grune Point, History walks around Bowness on Solway, Port Carlisle and Allonby, Wildlife Watching on Campfell Marsh, and many more.

Media Coverage and Publicity

The AONB continues to work closely with national, regional, local press and publications to help promote the AONB on behalf of a wider partnership.

This has resulted in:
- 1 television interview,
- 4 radio interviews,
- 1 article in the Solway Firth Partnership magazine ‘Tidelines’,
- 2 articles in ‘Allerdale Outlook’ magazine, Allerdale’s intranet,
- 2 articles, 1 article in the National Hedgelaying Society magazine,
- 2 articles in Action in Cumbria Communities magazine, 2 local press articles, bi-monthly Volunteers Newsletter and the Spring/Summer ‘AONB Coaster’ magazine.

The AONB and Discovery Centre leaflet has also been distributed widely.
Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group

The work of the Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group was judged as Highly Commended in the Coastal Community Action category by the North West Coastal Forum, Inaugural North West Awards for Coastal Excellence.

The conference theme was ‘A Changing Coast in Changing Times: current and emerging policy – what it means for you’ and took place at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool. Members of the Volunteer Group and staff attended the North West’s Regional Coastal Conference on 25th November 2010, where the results were announced.

Innovative and inspiring examples of good practice and outstanding community and personal work were showcased with the winners of the first ever North West Awards for Coastal Excellence. There were 3 categories: Coastal Champion, Coastal Community Action and Coastal Best Practice. The award highlighted the hard work of the Group in supporting and maintaining the Solway Coast AONB and giving their time, support and commitment to help protect this unique landscape.

Tasks and events lead by Graeme Proud, the Volunteer Coordinator, have included:

- 15 guided walks, including 2 on RSPB Reserves, ranging from village walks, coastal walks, history walks, to bird and wildflower walks
- 21 workday events at Crosscanonby Carr Reserve, continuing the management and improvements on site, including boardwalk repair and rewiring the bridge, cutting and baling the meadow grass, weed control, coppicing, flood damage repairs, etc.
- 6 volunteer recruitment sessions and slide shows
- 1 litter pick with the charity ‘Mind’. Also 14 litter picks in partnership with other volunteers from CVS and V-Involved
- 5 surveys, including birds and Natterjack Toads (some volunteers have undertaken independent toad surveys for the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
- 5 working days at the historic Saltumbs site, removing overgrown vegetation and opening up the site for visitor interpretation.
- 6 events to clear and maintain the Milefortlet 21 pathway
• 2 volunteer social events including a summer BBQ and Christmas social with guest speaker
• 3 Young Ranger events including litter picks, seed planting on the dunes and wildflower garden maintenance
• 18 tasks on Mawbray and Wolsely Banks SSSI, removing scrub, gorse and ragwort, and 8 tasks involving management of the dune infrastructure including boardwalk maintenance, signage painting, dogs teeth installation, and removal of old fencing and palings.
• New natterjack toad pond liner installed and turfed around on Mawbray Banks working in partnership with the Amphibian and Reptile Trust
• Filling of the Natterjack pond at Mawbray Banks with help from the Fire and Rescue Service, due to drought
• 1 Cumbria wide Natterjack Toad Conference has been attended by volunteers and Volunteer Coordinator
• 1 training day working with Land Use Consultants to carry out surveys for the new Landscape Character Assessment
• 1 Annual Hedgelaying competition, organising, stewarding and marshalling
• Attendance at the Solway Firth Partnership Conference, and meetings with Hadrian’s Wall Volunteers and Countryside Volunteers Network
• 3 workdays strimming and maintaining Beckfoot Burial Ground (old Quaker burial ground)
• Cauldwayhead Women’s Institute continue to improve and upgrade the garden in front of the Discovery Centre with mulch provided by Allerdale Borough Council

There have been many other opportunities for the wider community to be involved in and there are at present over 160 volunteers on the data base. The AONB Partnership expresses its gratitude to the volunteers for giving their own time to help us protect the AONB landscape and wildlife for all to enjoy. Over 11,600 volunteer hours have been most generously provided over the last year.

Graeme Proud, Volunteer Coordinator, continues to work three days with the AONB and Community Volunteers and two days with Allerdale Borough Council working on two reserves.
Adoption of the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment

The Solway Coast AONB Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment (LSCA) was formally adopted by the Joint Advisory Committee on 28th January 2011. ‘Land Use Consultants’ was commissioned to “undertake a landscape and seascape character assessment for the AONB and its setting, updating and improving the existing study”, carried out in 1995.

The project was guided by a Project Steering Group, consisting of a number of partner organisations including Natural England, the AONB and Cumbria County Council. The Assistant AONB manager and other AONB officers, as well as volunteers for the AONB contributed to work on the project.

The purpose of the assessment is to inform the management of the area and to be available for use by partners, stakeholders and communities.

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into effect in the UK in March 2007 and is promoted by the Council of Europe. The ELC definition of landscape is all embracing: “landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.” The new AONB-wide LSCA recognises the importance of all landscapes and seascapes, and includes appropriate guidelines for their protection, management and future planning.

The study area includes the extent of the AONB, but also considers those areas of similar or matching landscape and seascape character around it, so that it can be seen where landscape/seascape character areas extend over the boundary, as well as those areas of land and sea which constitute the ‘setting’ of the AONB. The study area falls largely within Cumbria with a small area to the North West lying within Dumfries and Galloway.
Partnerships
Working Together

Local Partnerships

The Solway Coast AONB works alongside a wide variety of organisations, community groups, local landowners and volunteers advising on policy and undertaking activity that furthers the interest of the AONB and without whom the delivery of the Management Plan could not take place.

Partnerships include: the Solway Coast AONB Joint Advisory Committee, a partnership of public, private and other organisations, which acts as a forum to advise and guide activity on a range of issues in the AONB and is important in monitoring, implementing and reviewing and producing the AONB Management Plan 2010-2015; the Solway Firth Partnership; Tourism and Conservation Partnership; Marine Conservation Society; Local Access Forums; Cumbria Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group; Hadrian’s Wall Heritage Limited; Cumbria Tourism; Friends of the Lake District; Cumbria Cycle Coordination Group; Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust: Action with Communities in Cumbria; Cumbria Voluntary Service; Scottish Natural Heritage; CCC Protected Landscapes; Heritage Skills Initiative; Coastal Learning Network; University of Cumbria; Countryside Volunteer Network; Coastnet; Places; North West Coastal Forum, Silloth Tourism and Action Group; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Dumfries and Galloway District Council; Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust; United Utilities; National Grid; Age Concern; National Hedgelaying Society; the Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership Project (HLF funded), comprising Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; Environment Agency, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Western Lake District.

Over the past 12 months the AONB has maintained and developed links with the following local partnerships and initiatives:

- Irish Sea Conservation Zone Project
- Solway Wetlands Project
- Green Spaces Project
- Silloth Green Project
- West Cumbria Archaeological Society
- Solway Firth Partnership and Members
- Coastal Access Forum
- Cumbria Countryside Access Partnership
- Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership
- Hadrian’s Cycle Way
Regionally

The Solway Coast AONB has attended meetings held by the North West AONB Partnership and the Northern Group of AONBs; four staff attended the Forest of Bowland AONB in June 2010 and three members of staff attended the Northumberland Coast AONB Northern Group meeting in March 2011.

The AONB has also been represented at meetings including the Historic Seascapes Character for the Irish Sea (NE), consultations on the Scottish Territorial Waters Windfarm proposal in Dumfries and Galloway, Climate Change NW (NE), Coastal Planning for the Marine and Access Bill (Defra) and Scottish Government Rural Affairs and Environment Committee.

National Partnerships

The AONB team has regularly participated in a number of events organised through the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) to share skills and training opportunities with our colleagues from other AONBs. These include National AONB meetings for Lead Officers and Chairman looking at governance of the NAAONB, corporate risk and an up to date report on Defra Funding.

Staff attended the 12th Annual NAAONB conference during July 2010, entitled ‘Landscape and Nature for All’ at Hythe, Kent. The conference looked at how AONBs and Parc Natural Regionals (PNRs) deliver biodiversity gains whilst working on a landscape scale. Many other objectives were explored whilst undertaking the landscape approach such as marine and water, community engagement, education including ecotourism, climate change and forestry, biodiversity and the European Landscape Convention.

The Solway Coast AONB Partnership has supported and endorsed the NAAONB on a wide range of initiatives undertaken on behalf of all the 49 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some of the important NAAONB activity has included:

- Securing continued central government support and funding
- Developing common objectives for the AONB family
- Working to develop national identity for the AONB family
- Developing new website www.landscapesforlife.org.uk
- Lobbying and influencing decision makers commenting on national strategies

A major focus for the NAAONB has been to develop a national identity for the AONB family alongside the individual local approach to awareness raising. This will add strength to the common national objectives, also being developed.
Sustainable Development Fund in the Solway Coast AONB
Annual Report 2010-2011

Introduction

In the period from May 2010 to March 2011, the Sustainable Development Fund in the Solway Coast AONB supported 17 projects and was allocated £39,865.28, of which £39,865.28 was actually spent. There were no administration fees. The variety and spread of projects within the AONB has again been of a high standard.

The SDF has been delivered by the Assistant AONB Manager and the AONB Administrator. The AONB Unit and Grants panel was responsible for setting the local criteria for the fund, and agreeing a system of applications, delegation and approval.

The grants panel, this year, has comprised six representatives from a range of agencies and the community providing a valuable contribution to the working of the fund. The projects levered in cash match funding of £756,451 and in-kind contribution of £57,031.

The SDF supported several projects which specifically 'conserve and enhance natural beauty', several which supported the 'economic and social needs of local communities and others to provide 'interpretive and educational opportunities' to enable people to understand more about the environment of the AONB.

Through mid-term and final progress reports, visits and information we have been able to assess accurately how well the projects have achieved their underlying objectives. The grant has achieved public benefits for all projects. The SDF has changed the way the AONB is perceived by outside bodies. The funding has increased the awareness of the AONB and its ability to fund sustainable projects for the benefit of the AONB and its greater community. There was a general spread in all the sectors.

Phase Two, Photovoltaic System South East Elevation Crosscanonby Community Centre: Crosscanonby Community Centre

This project involved the installation of photovoltaic systems on the roof of Crosscanonby Community Centre. The outcome will be to enable the community centre to be self-sufficient in the production and use of electricity and to provide a learning example to other community organisations, schools and public who visit the centre.

Green Fest Silloth:
Silloth Tourism Action Group

A two day festival of food and drink was again held to promote food from the Solway area. 25 producers based in the Solway Coast attended providing a greater variety of local produce, with over 500 people attending over the weekend. Young people were encouraged to be involved, with local cookery demonstrations. The Green Fest has continued to grow and is providing increased recreational use by visitors and locals in the area with good return to the local economy.

Production of leaflets and Mapboards and Development of Footpath Network: Kirkbride Parish Council

This project has enabled the continuation of work on the development of an improved village path network, which the Parish Council has been carrying out over the last 3 years. Three new mapboards have been erected along the pathways and village walking leaflets have been distributed within the Parish. Two new kissing gates have been installed and local contractors have been used for 'sensitive' re-development. The project aims also to promote healthy walks within the Parish.
Holme Cultram Community Research Project: West Cumbria Archaeological Society

The group have been researching the history and architecture of what was once the largest Cistercian monastic house in Cumbria, Holme Cultram Abbey, Abbeytown. Having established the layout of the cloisters, Chapterhouse, the south wall of the east range and surrounding buildings the West Cumbria Archaeological Society now have been able to produce an interpretation panel, information leaflets and a display of the artefacts found during the excavations. Continued research has also been carried out by use of geophysics and field work, in particular to trace the water resources of the monks. Professional archaeologists have been involved and have also given some volunteer time to the excavation. Local schools and community members have also volunteered with the project and the group have produced a power point talk. Heritage Lottery Fund has provided the main funding over the years of excavations.

Sule Way Project Phase Two Development: Allerdale Borough Council

The Solway Wetland’s Landscape Partnership, comprising a partnership of Natural England, Solway Coast AONB, RSPB, the NFU (representing local farmers), Environment Agency, Cumbria Tourism and local community organisations, secured a bid for HLF Landscape Partnership funding in March 2010.

The objective of this project is to develop Phase 2 of the Solway Wetlands HLF Landscape Partnership bid for the Sule Way Project, and a Development Officer is now in place to carry out this work.

The Sule Way project has specific outputs including:

- To extend the existing wetland areas and encourage moves towards a low-carbon local land-use economy
- To provide essential educative access and interpretive facilities for visitors involving participation in development by local schools and community groups leading to the creation of a ‘wetlands destination’.
- To consolidate existing mire communities through habitat regeneration and nutrient controls, clear up and manage riverine, mudflat and shoreline carbon assets
- To encourage the exploration of wetlands environments, as a tool towards enhancing popular understanding of climate change processes and the role played locally by wetlands in carbon sequestration
- To encourage local and ‘branded’ Solway produce and promote Solway Heritage through feasibility studies in Phase 1.

The Partnership envisage that the programme of works which will result will provide not only a best practice example of new working within a rapidly changing and challenging situation of advancing climate change, but will make a substantial new contribution to the economic and cultural life of a beautiful (but outside it little appreciated), historic and ecological valuable landscape area.
Continued Development of Footpaths in Kirkbride:  
Kirkbride Community Committee

As part of the above project this small project involved the local school children in seed sowing around the paths to encourage wildlife and 'green up' the paths. The children also made bird boxes and fitted them to trees by the paths.

Solway Shore Stories; Ann Lingard

This project was to set up a website comprising 3 sections; "Solway shore stones", articles about a wide variety of the Solway’s special attributes – shores, marshes, fisheries, wild-fowling, collieries, geology and art etc, with emphasis on interviews with local experts and the people who work along and on the Solway; "Look what I’ve found", a collection of photos of adults’ and children’s hands holding natural and man-made objects found on the shore, with comments; and “Shore-walker”, a blog about Ann’s guided walk-shore walks, which have emphasis on the ‘science of the shore’, and what can be found throughout the year. The Solway Coast AONB is strongly linked to the website and promotes events and education in the AONB. www.solwayshorestories.co.uk.

Silloth Music and Ale Festival:  
Silloth Beer Festival.co.uk

This is a four day festival held in September which helps to promote local culture, local micro breweries and cider producers. The Sustainable Development Fund was used to support this event which mainly recoups finances from ticket sales and sponsorship. Local accommodation was used and transport via local services was promoted, with some transport subsidised. Many people attended from outside the AONB, and local hotels, B&Bs and campsite benefited.

The 8th North Cumberland Style Hedgelaying Competition; Solway Coast AONB, Allerdale Borough Council

This project is to maintain the traditional skills of the North Cumberland style of hedgelaying, maintain distinctive hedge structure of the Solway Plain, improve biodiversity and move towards species rich hedgerows, train and educate young people in the skills and promote traditional hedge maintenance to a wider community. The Competition was carried out on 21st February, 6 competitors entered and many spectators came and went during the day. The event succeeded in discussion and exchange of ideas, improvement of skills, excellent performance of competitors with a good age range and promotion of the style of hedgerows in the Solway area. This year again, the AONB teamed up with Cumbria Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, to hold a hedgelaying training event on the same day, which also attracted new interested parties and information transfer.

Sacred Solway Faith Trail:  
Churches Trust for Cumbria

The idea behind the trail is to ‘tell a story’ of the role of the 10 faith sites (church buildings) in the Solway area and how they contributed to the rich history of the area as a way of attracting renewed interest in the historic built environment in part of the Solway area. The aim of the trail is to bring summary information about each church together in one leaflet which encourages local people to explore and appreciate the rich built history.

An initial print run of 7,500 leaflets has been produced and there was local community involvement in the launch of the leaflet, with Kirkcumber children producing artwork for the launch, and the Bishop of Carlisle and local Mayors attending.

Safeguarding Natterjack Breeding Pools on the Grune:  
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

This project was to secure and repair the breach into the Natterjack toad breeding pools on Grune Point, by building up the shingle bank and covering with turf. The ponds are important breeding areas for the toads and the improvement will prevent further erosion of the shingle bank which could, if left, also affect the route of the Allerdale Pambie and integrity of the peninsula. The AONB Community Volunteer Group were involved with the improvements. Overall the pools help to maintain and enhance a population of the UK’s rarest amphibian species, which is a Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) target species.

Second ‘Write on the Wall’ 2010;  
Lindow Village Hall, Bowness on Solway

A second most successful Literary Festival was held in Lindow Hall, with local and acclaimed artists attending as well as local schools and the wider community. More than £1,000 was raised towards renovations of the hall and the festival raised the profile of the area bringing many people to the Solway Coast who had not been here before. Forty volunteers from 130 households in the village helped to organise and run the event.
Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre; Tullie House Museum (on behalf of Cumbria Biological Data Network)

This project will provide biodiversity data services to planners and conservation organisations using the best available information for the county. Based at Tullie House Museum the service will support local wildlife recording groups and individuals and encourage interest in Cumbria wildlife and participation in wildlife recording. It will also provide biodiversity data for funding partners, disseminate information on the wildlife of Cumbria to a wider community and establish a Biodiversity Data Centre for Cumbria with 2 staff.

Landscaping and Rejuvenation of the ‘Banks’ Garden; Bowness on Solway Community Group

The Community Group have restored and improved the original ‘Roman’ planting (done first in 2009) for the benefit of the local community, walkers, birdwatchers and wildlife. A record will be kept of visitors comments and the group will continue to maintain the garden on the ‘Banks’ at Bowness on Solway, the start/finish of the Hadrian’s Wall Path Trail.

Refurbishment of Burgh by Sands Village Hall; Burgh by Sands Village Hall Management Committee

The refurbishment of the Parish Hall is a central part of a wider ‘Heart of the Community’ scheme, involving the Hall, Church Heritage Group and Village Green, all of which is designed to provide an integrated and coordinated approach intended to breathe life into the local community and help towards reversing the effects of a gradual rural decline and improve the quality of life for residents of all ages.

The funding from the AONB is directly linked with plans to establish a Local Heritage Display within the refurbished Hall, which will inform visitors of the history and rich local heritage of Burgh by Sands, the AONB and the surrounding area.

All of the projects helped to further the Management Plan for the Solway Coast AONB in one way or another, by supporting measures to enhance the natural and cultural landscape, providing social and economic opportunity, and understanding and enjoyment of the AONB.

The fund was promoted through a network of contacts including the Joint Advisory Committee, Parish Councils, County Council, Borough Councils and all partnerships. Leaflets were available to all businesses, community groups, individuals as well as the above. Press coverage has been exceptional for some projects including the Annual AONB Northumberland Style Hedgelaying Competition.

Sule Way- Solway Wetlands Extension; Allerdale Borough Council

Additional funding towards extension of the phase two development through to the phase 3 HLF Award. This includes extension of project officer time and heritage skills training.

Boustead Hill Shelter Fencing: Burgh by Sands Parish Council

A protective wooden fence was erected around the Boustead Hill shelter, Burgh Marsh Road C2042. Walkers on the Hadrian’s Wall Path Trail and residents all make use of the shelter, and the fencing prevents cattle and sheep entering the area. Burgh by Sands Parish Council maintains the area as a safe resting place that has spectacular views over the Solway.
The Solway Wetlands Project

Alex Kaars Sijpsteijn was appointed as the Project Officer responsible for developing the project for full funding submission in December 2011.

The objective of the project is to enhance, protect and promote wetland habitat development in the South Solway, involving the local community in interlinked projects which will capitalise on the area’s ability to store carbon as well as encourage new visitors and facilitate more educational opportunities.

There are many different facets to the project. So far a feasibility study for the idea of a food brand based on the values of the Solway Plain has been completed, involving consultation with local producers and businesses. The response was generally positive and the idea will be built on.

Other work includes the ‘design a wetland’ competition at Bowness Primary School. The children have had a presentation about the project and a field trip to Campfield Marsh to learn more about wetlands and inform their design. The winner was Caleb, although all the designs will be used to construct the wetland at Campfield Marsh. All being well construction will start in summer 2012.

Contact has also been made with West Cumbria Archaeological Society for their continuous involvement at Holme Cultram Abbey. There is great potential for further excavations and field studies surrounding the monastic period and the monks’ impact on the landscape.

There is also great potential for this project to make a lasting impression on the landscape and the opportunity for many different people to be involved through events, training, heritage and conservation volunteering and education. Hopefully it will make a substantial contribution to the economic and cultural life of a beautiful, historic and ecologically valuable landscape.
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

**Solway Coast AONB Financial Summary**

**Income 2010-2011**
(subject to audit)

- £158,704
- £44,995
- £1,331

**Expenditure 2010-2011**
(subject to audit)

- £138,991
- £502
- £99,065
- £16,908
- £6,966
- £4,816

**Solway Wetlands Project Committed Income 2010-2011**

- £30,500.00
- £19,000.00
- £12,400.00
- £5,000.00
- £5,000.00

**Solway Wetlands Project Expenditure 2010-2011**

- £313,53
- £10,213.54
- £50,470.50
- £1,417.11

**Solway Coast AONB Financial Summary**

- Staffing & General Office Costs
- Partnership Running Costs
- Partnership Budget PR, Events & Research
- Central Support - Allerdale Borough Council
- Project - Re-design of Solway Coast AONB Website
- Sustainable Development Fund
- Education Resource Materials for Discovery Centre
# JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011

### STATUTORY BODIES (2)
- John Redgate: Natural England
- Steve Garner: Environment Agency

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTED MEMBERS (5)
* (subject to local government elections)
- Cllr. Duncan Fairbairn: Cumbria County Council
- Cllr. Val Tarbitt: Cumbria County Council
- Cllr. Tony Markley: Allerdale Borough Council
- Cllr. Sam Standage: Allerdale Borough Council
- Cllr. John Collier: Carlisle City Council

### PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATION (4) LEAD GROUPS
- Mike Bacon: West One
- John Molyneux: West Two
- Cllr. Vaughan Hodgson: East One
- Martin Gaitskell: East Two

### TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION (2)
- Cllr. Bill Jefferson: Silloth Town Council
- No representative: Maryport Town Council

### COMMUNITY (4)
- Sue Gallagher: Port Carlisle Community Group
- Barry Maxwell: Lakes Area of Ramblers
- Jeff Downham: Voluntary Action Cumbria
- Jean Murray: Bowness on Solway Community Group

### LOCAL LAND OWNERSHIP & MANAGEMENT ISSUES (4)
- Carole Hodgson: Country Land & Business Association
- Jack Ellerby: Friends of the Lake District
- Jane Lasky: Senhouse Roman Museum
- Norman Holton: RSPB

### TOURISM & COMMUNITY SECTOR (2)
- Katie Read: Cumbria Tourism
- Jim Worsnop: Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group