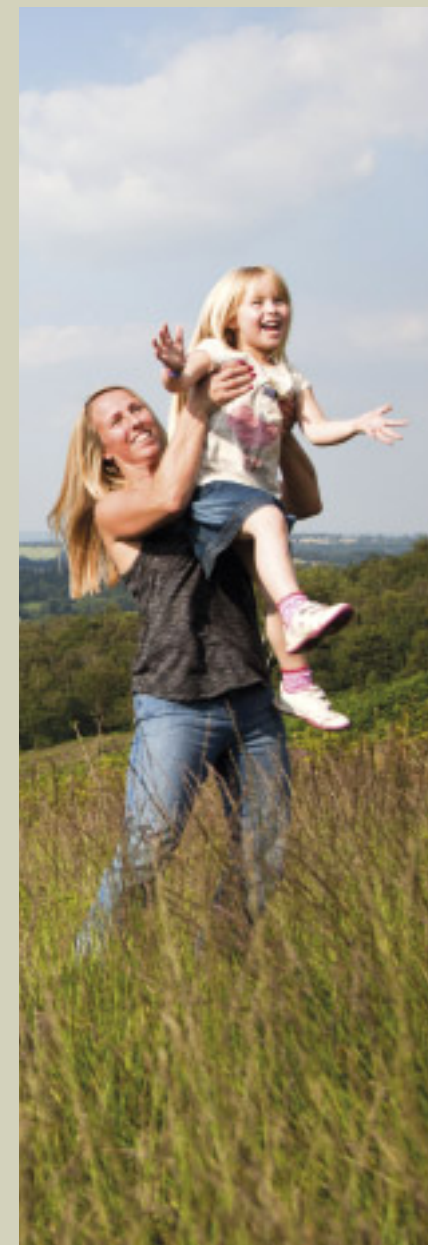


## High Weald Joint Advisory Committee Annual Review 2013-2014

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*Working together to care  
for one of England's  
Finest Landscapes*

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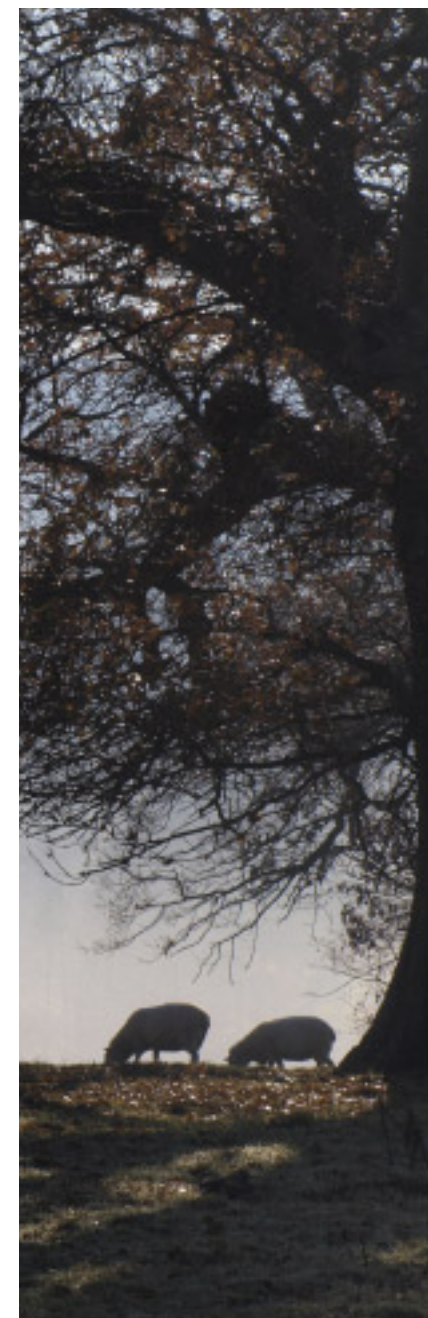


The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee is a partnership between: East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey County Councils; Horsham, Mid Sussex, Tandridge, Sevenoaks, Wealden and Rother District Councils; Tunbridge Wells, Hastings, Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling and Crawley Borough Councils; Defra; Natural England; and organisations representing farming, forestry, community, business and recreation interests.

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Councillor Brian Kentfield,  
Chairman of the High Weald  
Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)



## Foreword

**Welcome** to the 2013-2014 annual review for the High Weald AONB partnership, which outlines a selection of highlights the partnership has worked on during the year.

Casting my mind back over the work of the last 12 months, I've been struck by the variety of the AONB partnership's many achievements but one thing in particular sticks in my mind. It has been a year of change on many levels both nationally and closer to home and although we have had the occasional setback, the enthusiasm of the AONB partnership remains and the generally optimistic nature and outlook of its work is very heartening to see.

The High Weald is a beautiful and cherished place but it is much more than just the wonderful views. It is also the result of a close collaboration between people and nature over thousands of years and this on-going relationship needs to be recognized, nurtured and strengthened to allow the High Weald to continue to provide society's essential needs – food, water, energy, shelter, and employment.

In a rapidly changing world, the AONB partnership is about working enthusiastically with others to foster a culture of resilience and innovation. We are constantly seeking ways to take the best from traditional, conventional and imaginative uses of land and blend them in a way that ensures society can live well without destroying the natural and cultural resources on which we depend or the High Weald landscape we rightly celebrate and enjoy.

To do this, the AONB partnership cannot work alone. Instead we look to understand and learn from the High Weald's past and form modern relationships to harnesses the collective wisdom, experience and creativity of others – the farmers, foresters,



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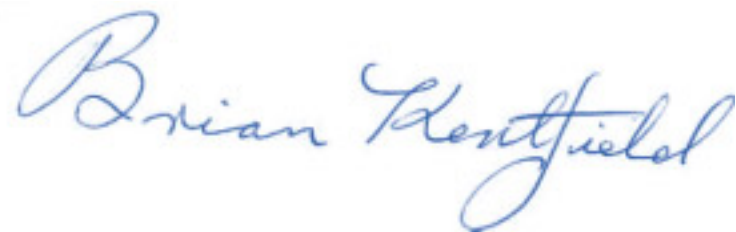
## Foreword

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businesses, local authorities, schools, residents and visitors – and strike a balance between what is desirable and what is possible now and for the future. One of the most visible expressions of this is the AONB Management Plan, a 20-year vision for the area, which has been significantly reviewed and widely consulted on throughout the year as part of its successful mid-term review. I'd like to thank all those who have worked so tirelessly on this important work to ensure it was well received and published on time.

Thank you for your support over the last year and given my thoughts above, I'd like to end with a quote from Sir Winston Churchill, who said: "If we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future."

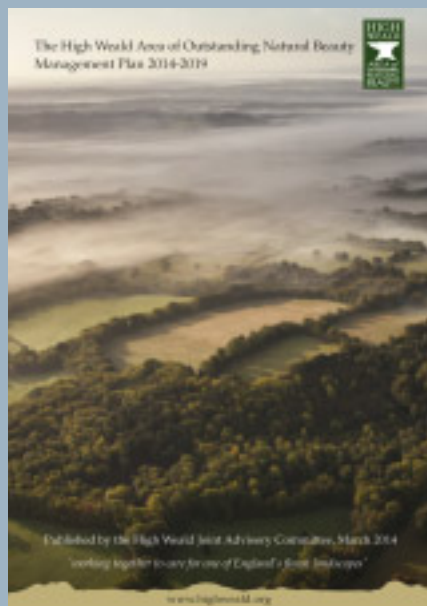
Thank you.



**Councillor Brian Kentfield**

Chairman of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)  
June 2014





AONB Management Plan  
2014-2019

AONB Management Plan launch



# 1

## Preparing, monitoring and reviewing the AONB Management Plan

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**Consultation on the draft High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 and its supporting documents was completed, the amendments approved by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and the final Plan approved by the area's 15 local authorities.**

Activities included:

- A **technical consultation** on individual plan sections using questionnaires.
- Production of a **consultation draft** of the AONB Management Plan and its supporting documents: the Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- A **public consultation** involving the creation of online consultation forms and promotional articles published by the JAC and local authority stakeholders, such as East Sussex County Council, with 202 separate comments received and incorporated.
- **Publication of the final High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019**
- Update of the High Weald AONB Management Plan section on **[www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)**



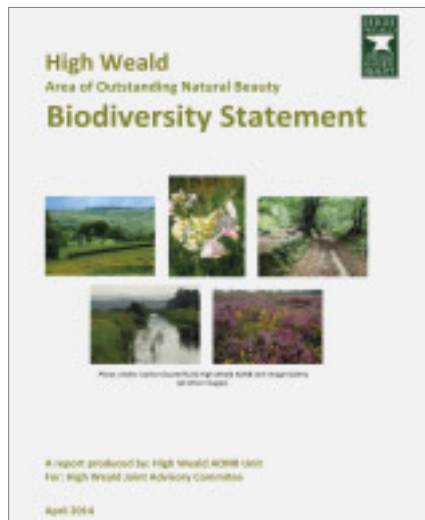


Restocking the Weald – a focus of research

# 1

Preparing, monitoring and reviewing the AONB Management Plan

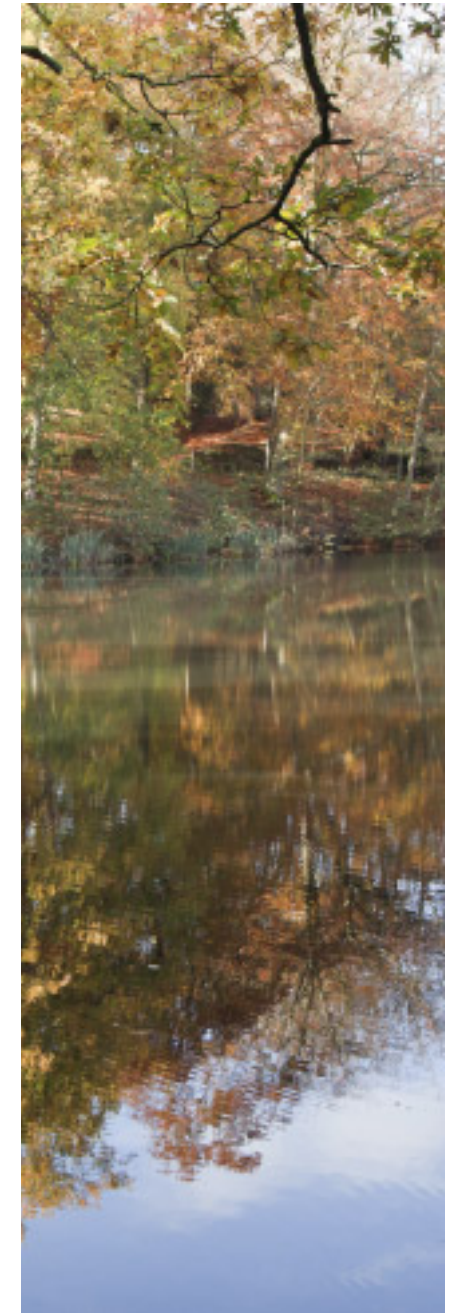
Biodiversity report



**6 projects were undertaken to provide an evidence base for the AONB Management Plan and to support the Unit's comment on planning proposals.**

The projects were:

- Production of **Restocking the Weald – a report on securing the future of livestock farming in the High Weald's working landscape**, produced by Dr Bill Vorley, Principal Researcher, International Institute for Environment and Development following interviews with farmers and farm managers, land agents, farm advisors, marketers, retailers, statutory bodies, and researchers, in and beyond the High Weald.
- Production of a **High Weald AONB Biodiversity Statement** which involved gathering information from over 170 documents (peer-reviewed articles, High Weald reports and web-based documents/pages) relating to biodiversity in the High Weald, as well as gathering and analysing GIS data and species lists from a variety of organisations, for example biological records offices, Natural England and the wildlife trusts.
- Production of **Human Landscape Perception – a report on understanding human landscape perception and how to integrate and implement this in current policy strategies.**
- **Rationalisation and consolidation of the JAC's GIS data** to produce maps to support the Plan.
- An update of **AONB key facts and figures.**
- Gathering and analysis of High Weald **socio-economic data** in preparation for the production of a socio-economic profile for the AONB.





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Exmoor ponies at Palesgate Land Meadow

Cornford Lane



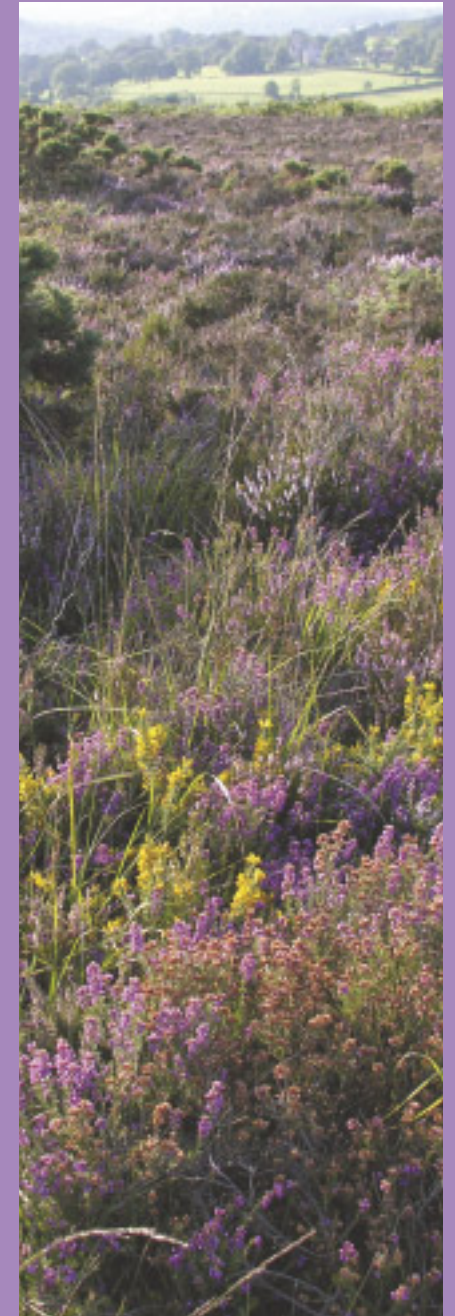
## 2

### Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan

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**The JAC awarded £12,342 of grant-aid to 12 projects supporting 12 organisations, business and community groups to help achieve AONB Management Plan objectives.**

- **Cornford Lane Residents Group: Preservation of Sunken Routeways**  
Cornford Lane Residents Group used the award to raise awareness and develop ideas for protecting and enhancing ancient sunken routeways. **Awarded: £500.**
- **Crowborough Town Council: Palesgate Lane Meadow**  
Crowborough Town Council, working in partnership with Crowborough Conservation and the Sussex Pony Grazing Conservation Trust, used the grant as a contribution towards the cost of stock fencing an ecologically-important wildflower meadow near Palesgate Lane. This will allow the introduction of pony grazing as a way of sustainably managing the meadow to ensure the habitat is protected for future generations. **Awarded: £2000.**
- **Danehill Routeway Society: Heritage Interpretation**  
The grant was awarded to volunteers from Danehill Routeway Society to research the heritage of specific ancient routeways within the Danehill Parish. The routeways were initially surveyed through the 'Ancient Routeway Survey Project' and will be developed into a heritage walk. **Awarded: £600**





Scrub-cleared land at Toot Rock

## 2

Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan

Meadows Folk Exhibition



- **Great Dixter Charitable Trust: Woodland Habitat Management**

The grant supported woodland conservation work on Great Dixter's areas of semi-natural ancient woodland – coppicing areas that have fallen out of rotation, creating habitat piles and clearing south facing banks to create new habitats for invertebrates. **Awarded: £1000**

- **Kent Wildlife Trust: The Gill, Calves Lodge Field**

Installation of stock fencing and a rainwater harvesting system for an area of unimproved grassland at The Gill, a Kent Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve near Goudhurst. This will enable sheep to graze as a sustainable way of managing and protecting this important habitat. The pasture's history was discovered through an archaeology and heritage project supported by a previous Community Landscape Fund (CLF) grant. **Awarded: £1,500**

- **Little Gate Farm, Beckley: All Access Pathway**

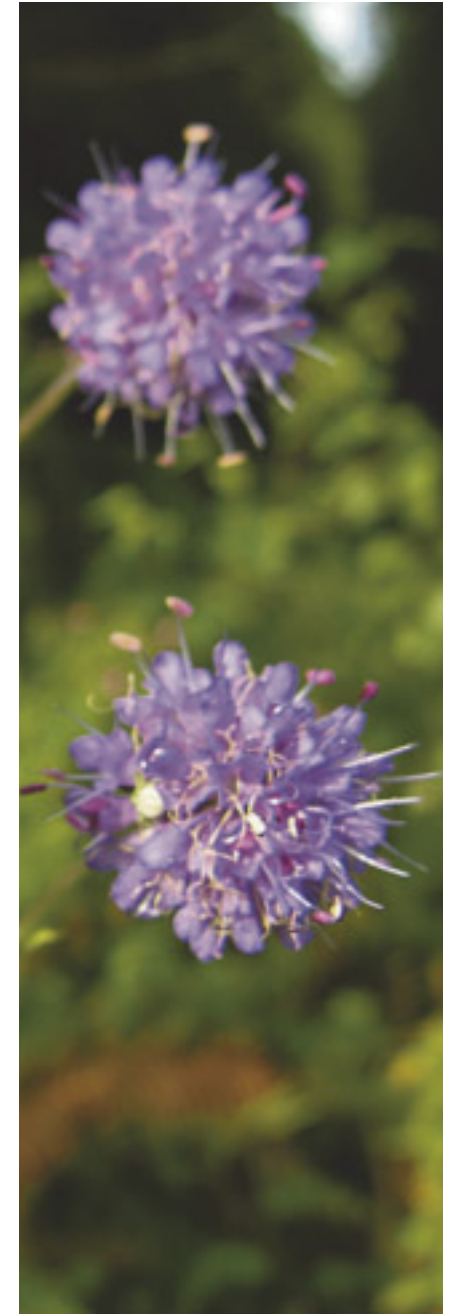
Little Gate Farm facilitates the development of woodland and farm skills for vulnerable adults in the local community. The award contributed toward building an all-access pathway to connect two training centres on the Farm. The new pathway will allow volunteers and staff of all abilities to access the centres. **Awarded: £2000**

- **Petts Level Preservation Trust: Toot Rock Revival**

The Pett Level Preservation Trust installed stock fencing around the area of Toot Rock, Petts Level, to secure long term grazing of the site. This was part of a wider project to clear invasive species and ensure a more sustainable method of managing the unimproved grassland. **Awarded: £800**

- **RBG Kew, Wakehurst Place: Meadows Folk Exhibition**

The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew at Wakehurst Place developed interpretation materials for the Meadows Folk exhibition. This exhibition celebrate meadows both in the High Weald and across the wider British Isles. This will also involve a scything competition to highlight the heritage of haymaking in relation to modern harvesting methods. **Awarded: £1,500**





Fringe-horned Mason Bee

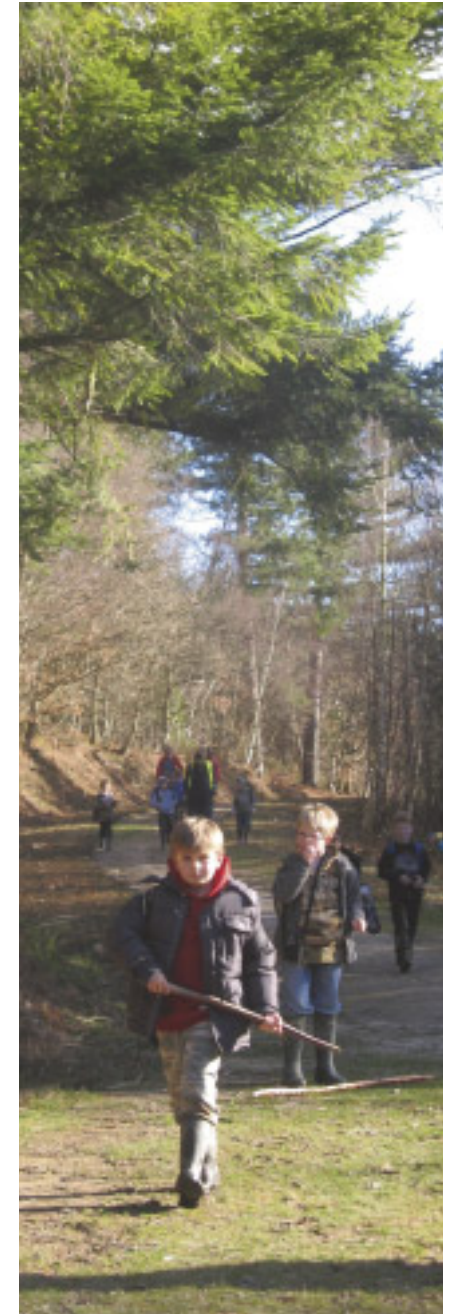
## 2

Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan

Geophysical survey in Rolvenden



- **Rolvenden Farmers Line: Rolvenden Heritage Survey – Phase 2**  
The second Phase of the Rolvenden Heritage Survey brought together local archaeology groups and Rolvenden Primary School (a High Weald Heroes school) to conduct surveys at Halden Place, to widen understanding of historic settlement in Rolvenden. A geophysical survey searching for the remains of building once situated at the Halden Place site was conducted using resistivity and megnetromic methods. **Awarded: £2938**
- **Rosie Earwaker: Rare Bee Survey**  
Rosie Earwaker from the RSPB led a series of surveys in four High Weald Woodlands and produced a species fact-sheet on the rare and solitary Fringed-horned Mason Bee (*Osmia pilicornis*). Amongst other valuable findings, Rosie established that the bee thrives in managed coppice woodland such as Fore Wood near Battle. **Awarded: £253**
- **The Holy Trinity Primary School, Cuckfield: Digital Weather Station**  
Holy Trinity Primary School in Cuckfield (a High Weald Heroes school) purchased a digital weather station. The weather station is part of a living classroom project to help the children understand climate change and its impact on their local landscape. **Awarded: £686**
- **Turners Hill C of E Primary (CEP) School, Crawley: Bees in the Woodland**  
Turners Hill CEP School (a High Weald Heroes school) used the award to develop their bee and local produce project. They used local coppiced wood to build a chicken shed and a bee hive. Teachers have been trained in beekeeping and the children are actively involved in caring for the chickens and using the eggs and honey in their curriculum work. **Awarded: £500**





Identifying foraged leaves from a Welly Walk

## 2

### Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan

Learning about the area's natural resources



**13 primary schools participated in High Weald Heroes, the JAC's school education programme, with 14 events involving over 25 sessions.**

Project highlights included:

- **2 teacher support sessions** to produce 13 week lesson plans using High Weald Hero teaching resources for Wadhurst and Penshurst CEP Schools.
- **2 events** involving 5 sessions with Wadhurst CEP School, led by High Weald AONB Unit staff and involving 120 children: focused on an **'Introduction to the High Weald'** and **'Woodland Building Construction'**.
- Supporting the delivery of a **School Energy Day** at Bedgebury Forest involving 180 pupils from 6 Tunbridge Wells schools: St Barnabas; Oakley; Bishops Down; Rusthall, St Pauls; Temple Grove and Pembury. Activities focused on solar, wind and water energy in the local landscape.
- The production of **new teaching resources**: Sensational Sandrocks, piloted by Penshurst School; and Dark Skies Activity cards produced to get children learning about the night sky, light pollution and counting stars, piloted by Wadhurst, Burwash, Mayfield and Benenden CEP schools. 2 events, 1 outdoor workshop and 1 After-school Club, involving 90 children, were run.
- **New projects** led by external education providers: the Unit helped recruit St Michael's, Withyham and The Mead, East Grinstead to work with Life Wisdom on the Beeching Oral History Project involving 60 KS2 children; and supported Go-Givers with recruiting 4 High Weald Hero Schools to work on wildlife-focused citizen projects.





Game Management in Woodlands training event

## 2

Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan

Students examining local timber



**The Living Woods Project; a 3-year project to engage landowners and communities funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Woodland Trust completed its 2nd year.**

Project highlights included:

- **31 woodland advisory visits** with follow on advisory reports/packs for woodland owners.
- **Community archaeology surveys** at 2 sites; the National Trust's Nyman's Wood in West Sussex and RSPB's Fore Wood Nature Reserve in Crowhurst, East Sussex.
- A walk-over archaeological survey for a woodland owner.
- **3 woodland management workshops: 'Game Management in Ancient Woodlands'** in partnership with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, British Association of Shooting and Conservation and Bellhurst Trust (21 attendees); **'Management of Woodland Ponds'** in partnership with the Freshwater Habitats Trust and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (35 attendees); and a **'Forestry Machinery Demonstration Day'** in partnership with Bedgebury Pinetum and the Kent Downs AONB Unit.
- **2 public events:** A History of Medieval Woodworking talk and a Woodland Archaeology Walk at Southborough Common.
- Project promotion at **Weald Woodfair**.
- Continuation of the secondary school **Woodland Careers Project** enabling A-level students from Uckfield Community College to source local timber for furniture design and production. This included a visit to a sawmill where students were able to choose their own local timber.





Landscape perception a focus of study

## 2

Co-ordinating action and enabling delivery of the AONB Management Plan

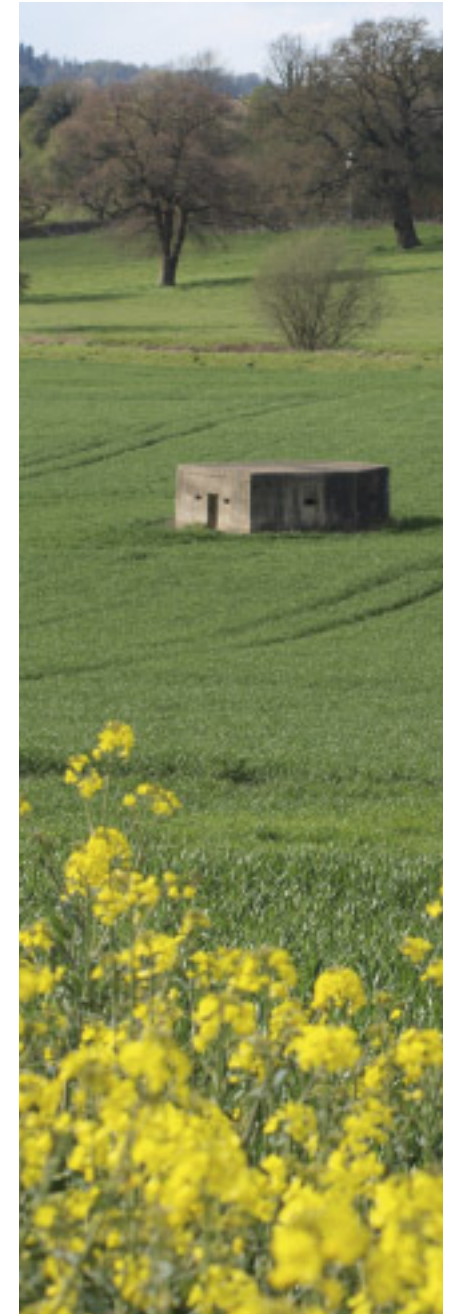
Using a LiDar map to identify heritage features



### **Additionally the Unit worked with students from 3 further education establishments.**

- Michael Satchwell, a Year 2 student from Hadlow Agricultural College studying Countryside Management, originally on a 3 month work placement, continued to work for the Unit until 26 July.
- Eugenie van Heijgen, a Dutch student, finished her 4-month, full time, work placement as part of her double Masters degree studies at Wageningen University and University of Groningen, producing a final report on landscape perception in May.
- Hannah Bodkin, a Year 2 student at University of Brighton spent 13 days over the Summer collating nature reserve information for [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org) and volunteer and community contacts; as well as scoping her dissertation on the impact of game management on woodland ecology.

### **10 landowners received cultural heritage site visits with follow on advisory reports/packs.**





Winners of the Kent Food and Farming Landscape Award

NAAONB Conference field trip



# 3

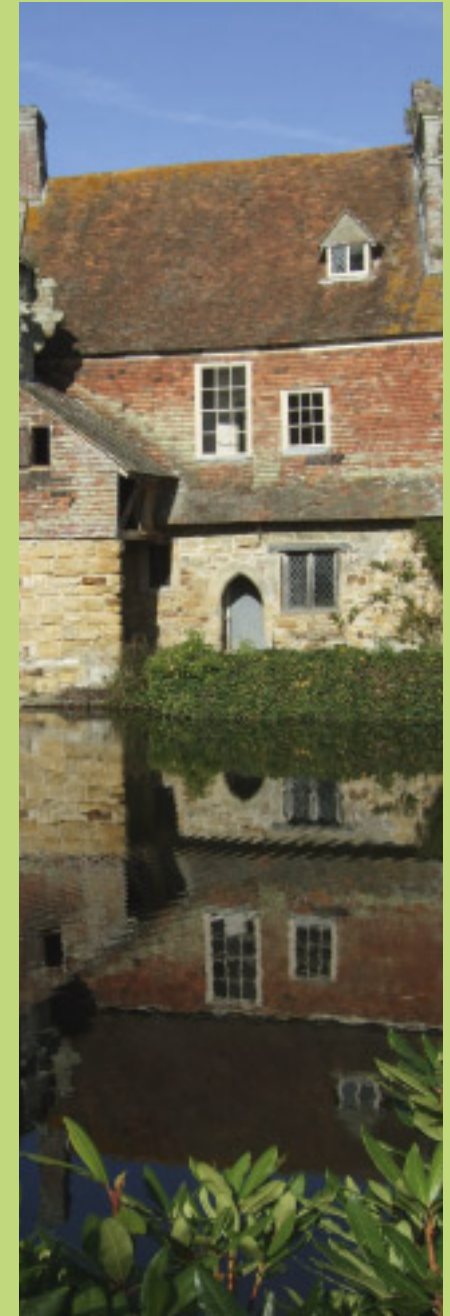
## Championing the High Weald and AONBs

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The needs of the High Weald AONB and AONBs were promoted nationally and regionally working with the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB), the South East region AONB chairs and leaders and regional task groups.

Key activities included:

- Meetings (2) with **Greg Barker, High Weald Patron** and Government Minister to discuss AONB issues.
- **Chairing the South East and East Protected landscapes lead officer's meetings** held quarterly and including a 2-day event on: policy challenges; biodiversity offsetting; planning and the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELM).
- Attending 3 **South East and East Region Planning liaison** meetings.
- Supporting the JAC Chairman at NAAONB AGM and regional Chairman's meeting.
- Contribution to the **NAAONB working group on planning** including presentations to a national planning seminar and preparation of guidance on AONB Management Plans and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Contribution towards the production of 2 reports: **The Value of AONB Partnerships** produced by LUC and **Examining AONB Best Practice in Non-exchequer Funding and Structures** produced by Linda Davies.
- A meeting and communications with AONB directors to support NAAONB business plan delivery.
- A meeting with NAAONB and Natural England to consider the operation and **review of designation criteria**.





Photography workshop

### 3

#### Championing the High Weald and AONBs

High Weald event display

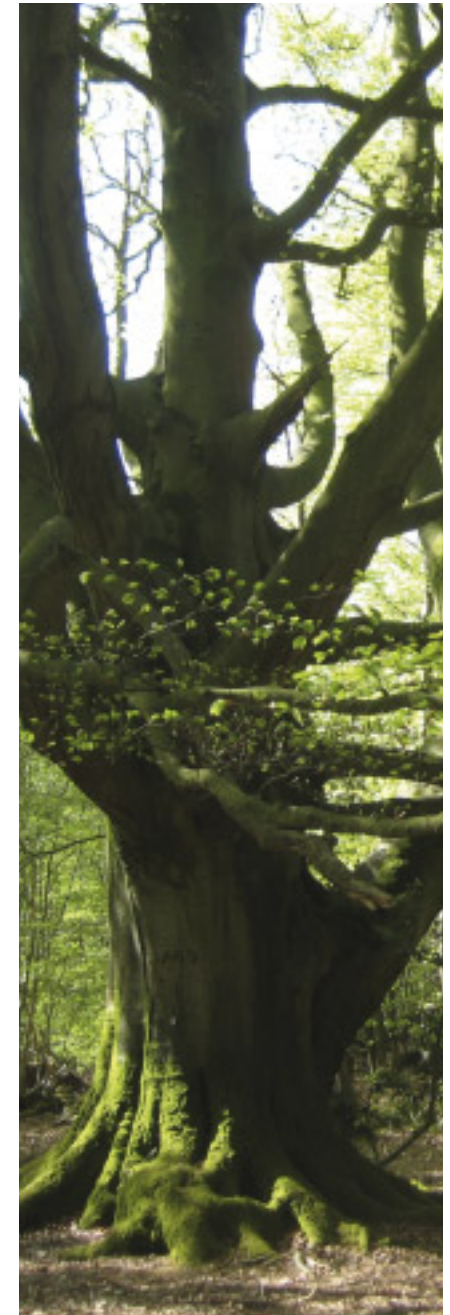


- A joint AONB meeting to **consider future funding of protected landscapes** with Defra consultants.
- Liaison at NAAONB level to develop a joint response to the Permitted Development Rights change use consultation.
- Attendance of the **NAAONB's annual conference** 'Landscapes for Life' in Ipswich.
- Sponsorship of the **Kent Food and Farming Landscape Award** working jointly with the Kent Downs AONB JAC.
- Initiation of two **Royal Geographic Discovery (RGS) walks** to support national joint working with RGS to promote exploration of AONBs.

**The 3rd year of the protected landscape's sustainable tourism project "Our Land" was completed successfully in 2013/2014.**

Highlights included:

- **Recruitment of 22 new businesses** working with online travel agency Responsible Travel, bringing the total number of High Weald Our Land accommodation providers to 89, activity providers to 16 and tour operators to 2 with a total of 120 products on offer.
- **3708 enquiries** to High Weald businesses, with an estimated 2224 bed nights booked.
- Distribution of **High Weald Welcome Packs** to new Our Land businesses.
- Production of **26 new web pages** on [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org) to promote individual High Weald Our Land businesses and an update of a further 55 pages.
- Development and delivery of an **events programme** to help accommodation providers promote their property and its landscape setting: **'Is your Page Sitting Pretty'** (7 attendees) with Robert Canis at Scotney Castle; **'Not Enough Beds Filled in My Inn'** with Susan Cross of Telltale at Wakehurst Place (18 attendees); **'Are You on You Tube'** with the High Weald AONB Unit (12 attendees) and **'An introduction to Social Media'** with Hidden Britain (14 attendees), both at the Woodland Enterprise Centre.





Our Land promotional activity

### 3

#### Championing the High Weald and AONBs

#### High Weald Heroes newsletter



- **8 blogs** were produced and 1 article produced for the Ordnance Survey news.
- **Joint promotions** were run in partnership with Wild Things Publishing and 1066 Country.
- A new publication, **Slow Bodiam – An Experience to Treasure**, was initiated.
- Expansion from a regional to a national project (10 other landscapes joined during 2014) and development of a Business Plan for new a national project.

#### 12 High Weald AONB presentations, tours and guided walks were undertaken.

Four guided walks for: High Weald network members; members and Trustees of Sussex Moors; Master's students from the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE); and Natural England planning staff. Five Illustrated talks on the Making of the High Weald landscape; two High Weald character presentations to Local Planning Departments – Rother District Council and Wealden District Council; and a talk on the importance of hedgerows in the landscape to Transition Wadhurst.

#### 37 promotional items were produced and distributed.

- **18 Enews** with a particular focus the AONB Management Plan consultation and events being run for Our Land accommodation providers and for those interested in the area's woodlands.
- 15 website news pages.
- A downloadable **Annual Review 2012-2013**.
- 2 primary school **education newsletters**, delivered to 80 primary schools.
- **2 videos** – a 'Wood Fuel Case Study' and 'Using Mechanical Harvesting Equipment within a Coppice Woodland' were published.





High Weald activity on social media increased

3

Championing the High Weald and AONBs

Wealden and Eastbourne Walks Festival website



**38 media articles** referring to the High Weald AONB were picked up by the Unit's press cutting service: the majority focused on the potential impact of development on the area's landscape and the AONB Management Plan consultation and launch.

Social media activity on facebook and twitter was increased, following Unit staff training.

**www.highweald.org was maintained and developed receiving 31,000 visits from 21,200 visitors with an average time on site of 1.20 minutes.**

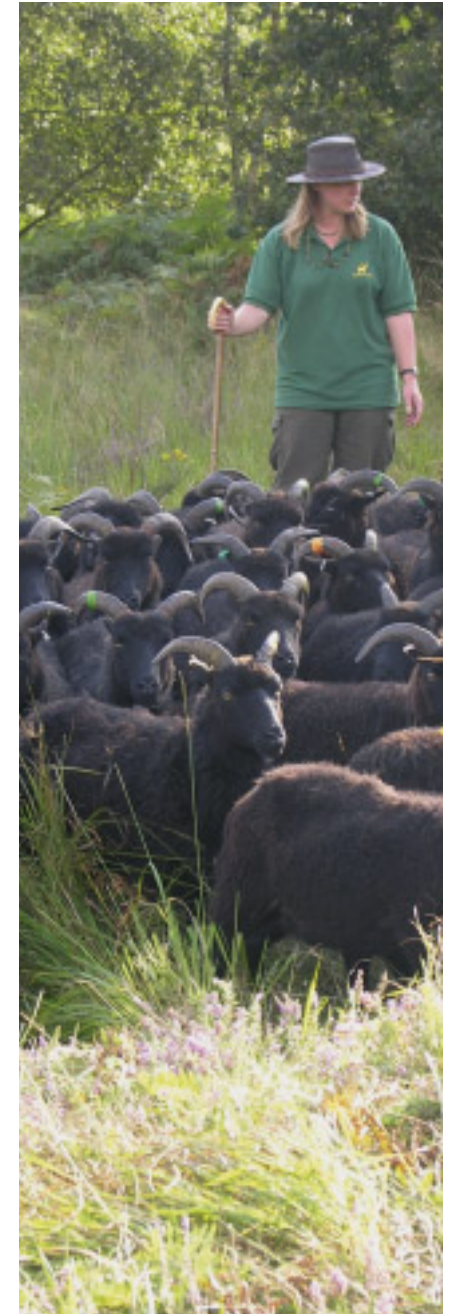
- Developments included the upgrade of the site's content management system to make it more user-friendly on hand-held devices.
- The most popular section was the Out and About section and the top pages were: High Weald boundary, Walks and Rides, High Weald Landscape Trail and the Management Plan draft consultation page.

The Eastbourne and Wealden and 1066 Country walking festivals 2014 were initiated and support provided with their development.

**The Battle and Brede Landscape Partnership Scheme evolved into a smaller project, the Brede Valley Farm Habitat Pilot Project.**

Key activities were:

- Production of a Community Consultation report.
- Production of a Landowner Consultation report.
- Resubmission of a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in May 2013 (unsuccessful).
- A tour and presentation of the Scheme for Heritage Lottery Fund assessors.
- A consultation meeting with farm/landowner representatives and organizations and others.
- A Farm Habitat Advisor recruited.
- Establishment of a Habitat Grants Award panel.



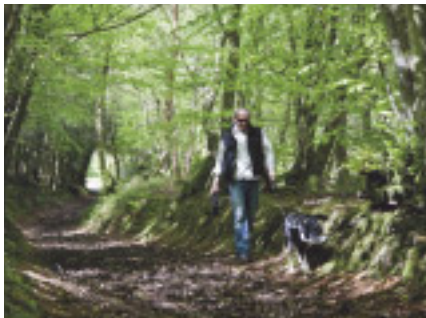


Tour of the Brede Valley

### 3

#### Championing the High Weald and AONBs

Routeways a focus of fundraising



#### **5 additional funding bids were submitted/contracts awarded to support the JAC's work.**

Bids were made to:

- Defra for their 2013-2014 contribution to the JAC's work.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund's Your Heritage Programme for a primary school education project Revealing the Weald's Routeways (unsuccessful).
- The EU as a partner in Responsible Travel-led project 'Walking in the Footsteps of Shepherds' developed in response to a call for pan-Europe schemes to develop sustainable tourism.

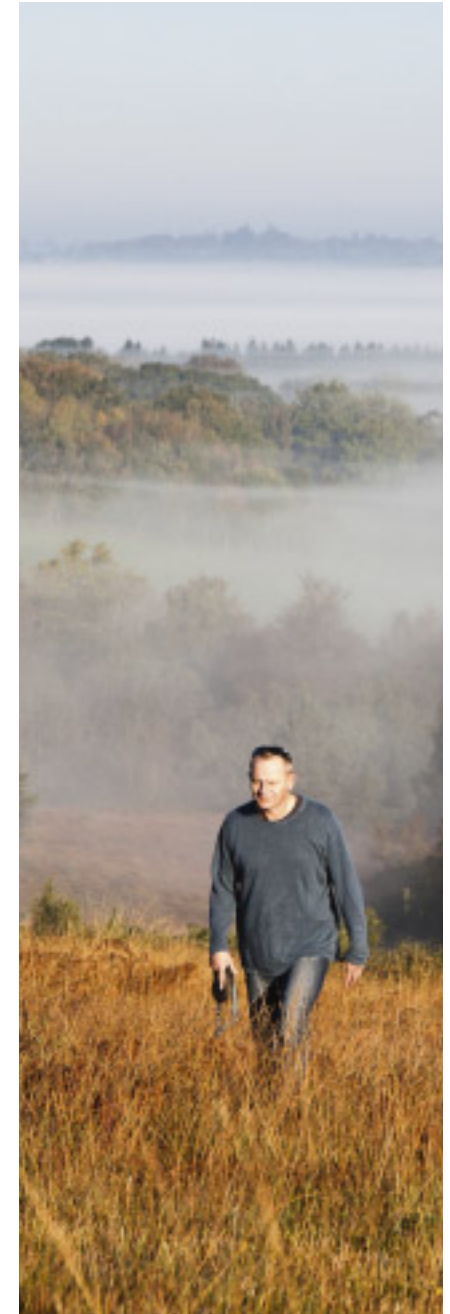
Contracts were awarded from:

- B&Q's Goods Woods programme to enable woodland advisory visits
- Wealden District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council to produce a Walking Festival website.

#### **2 JAC meetings, 3 JAC Management Board meetings, 3 OSG meetings and 2 Sustainable Development Fund panel meetings were held.**

Key outcomes were:

- Sign-off of the statutory accounts.
- Sign-off of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 and supporting documents.
- Initiation of a Planning and Design subgroup.





Water resources a focus of consultations

Raising awareness of the value of the livestock sector



# 4

## Providing advice and guidance to our partners on CRoW, Section 85

**Advice was provided to the officers within the area's 15 local authorities and a further 30 organisations and local partnerships.**

### National and regional

**Natural England:** a meeting with the Land Use Director and numerous meetings with the Area Manager. **National Farmers Union (NFU):** a meeting with the Director General, NFU England & Wales. **British Association for Shooting & Conservation:** meeting with South East Regional Director and SE Regional Officer. **Country Land and Business Association:** attendance at 3 CLA events – South of England Show, Kent Agricultural Show, CLA Game Fair. **English Heritage (EH):** national settlement projects and the development of historic enclosures joint programme. **Farming and Rural Issues Group for the South East:** a presentation to FRIGSE on work to revitalize the livestock farming sector of the High Weald. **Forestry Commission (FC) and Forest Research (FR):** A meeting with new FC Commissioner and SE Regional Director. **The Prince's Charities' International Sustainability Unit:** a meeting with the Director of the ISU to discuss the options for the revitalization of the livestock farming sector in the High Weald. **Water Companies:** 2 meetings with South East Water on their water resource plan consultation. **Wild Trout Trust:** meeting with South East Conservation Advisor and a meeting with the Director. **Woodland Trust:** meeting with South



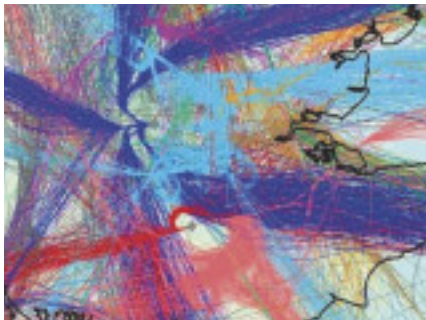


Timber industry needs a focus of advice

## 4

Providing advice and guidance to our partners on CRoW, Section 85

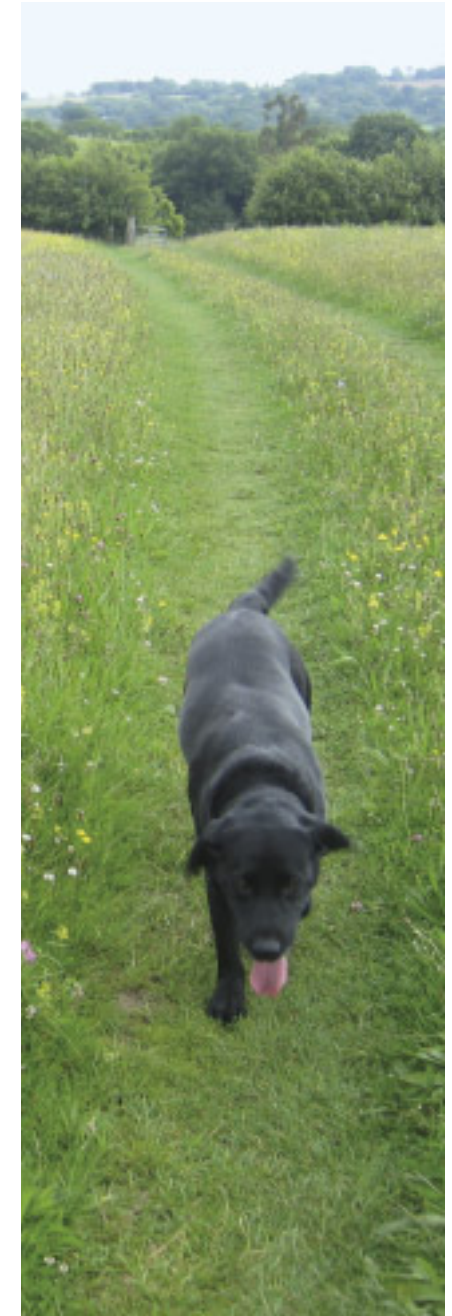
London Airspace Consultation



East Director on opportunities for working collaboratively and meeting with the South East Regional Manager on opportunities for collaboration.

## Local

**Adur and Ouse Stakeholders' Liaison Group** and **Rother Water Catchment Partnership**: 5 water catchment partnership meetings. **Ashdown Forest Visitor Management Partnership** 2 meetings. **Environment Agency**: 2 meetings on the Battle and Brede project. **Countryside Management Projects**: attendance at 1 Kent countryside management services event and 2 Kent High Weald Partnership meetings. **Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC)**: meeting to discuss flight paths and second runway. **High Weald Network**: 4 meetings. **Kent County Council Highways** (Tunbridge Wells area): historic routeway management. **Knepp Castle Wildland Advisory Group**: 1 meeting. **Local Economic Partnerships**: meeting with South East LEP Rural Group and meeting with Coast to Capital LEP. **Leader Partnerships**: 2 meetings with the Wealden and Rother Rural Partnership Executive Board; a meeting with Peter Simpson, West Sussex Leader; and a meeting with Stephen Chalk to encourage the extension of West Sussex LEADER areas to cover the West Sussex part of the AONB. **Pestallozzi**: meetings and support to develop joint programmes. **Produced in Kent**: meeting with Director. **Sussex Local Nature Partnership**: 3 Executive Board meetings.



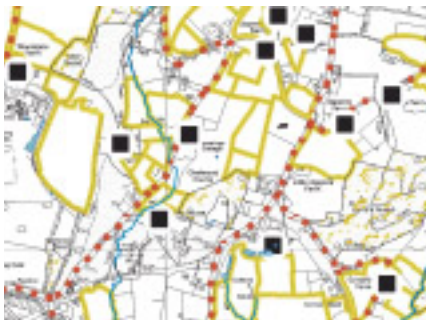


London Airspace consultation significant for the AONB

## 4

Providing advice and guidance to our partners on CRoW, Section 85

Character component data



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**Advice was provided on 80 planning applications and 21 Local Development Frameworks (Plans), local policy documents and national policy consultations.**

- **21 national and local policy consultations** were responded to: 11 local development framework/local plan reports and site allocations Development Plan Documents (DPDs); and 10 national consultations. Significant consultations included: the London Airspace consultation; Green Paper on Biodiversity Offsetting; the DCLG Greater Flexibilities Change of Use Permitted Development Rights; and the draft High Weald National Character Area Statement.
- **80 planning application consultations** were received during the year, including three appeals, and significant or major applications at: land at rear Police Station, Heathfield; James Avenue, Herstmonceux; Cumnor House School, Danehill; Lower Stumble hydrocarbon exploration site, Balcombe; Highgate Hill, Hawkhurst; Steel Cross, Crowborough; land south of Buchan Hill, Crawley; Wadhurst College, Mayfield Lane; and two significant setting applications at Penland Farm Haywards Heath and land west of Knights Way.
- **10 pre-application discussions and consultations** were received, including water mains and drainage improvements; sports facilities and a burial ground.
- Three rights of way diversion consultations were responded to.
- Responses to **25 minor and informal planning matters**, public enquiries and local issues over and above actual planning application responses were made.
- **8 neighbourhood plans** were engaged with: Slaugham; West Hoathly; Herstmonceux; Cuckfield; Sedlescombe; Bolney; Balcombe; and East Grinstead; involving liaison with neighbourhood plan teams, providing AONB character data and mapping, as well as commenting on various drafts of the plans.





Historic Landscape  
Characterisation map

## 4

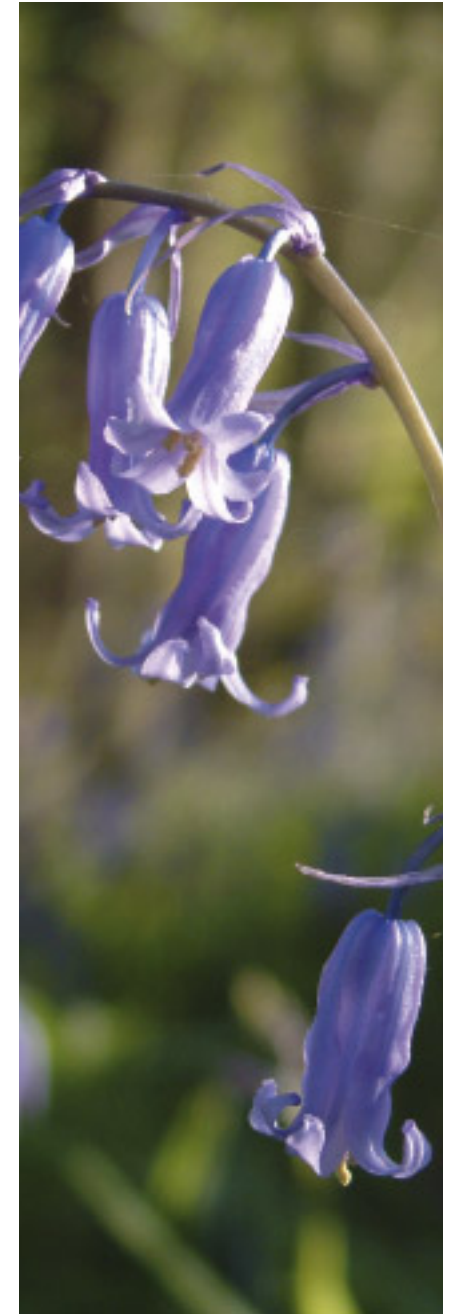
Providing advice and  
guidance to our partners on  
CRoW, Section 85

Fracking – a new issue for  
the area



### Projects to enable the development and assessment of development proposals included:

- **A 2-day design workshop** with a range of specialists to explore using the understanding of the historic character of settlements and routeways as part of the design process for new developments.
- **Parish-scale Historic Landscape Character assessment and report** for the parishes of Hawkhurst, Cranbrook and Goudhurst: a pilot approach to updating existing assessments using the latest methodology and data.
- Production of **Historic Settlement Development Summaries** for the parishes of Hawkhurst, Cranbrook and Goudhurst.
- **1 research note on Fracking:** how it works, its application and potential in the UK and its environmental and public health impacts. This involved summarising relevant information from the latest literature and drawing out any issues/concerns of relevance to the High Weald.





Housing number allocations

Advice provided on wildflower grassland status



# 5

## Adding value to our partners' wider landscape and environmental objectives within the High Weald AONB

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### Data services were provided to 5 organisations.

- AONB component data was supplied to Wealden District Council, Horsham District Council and Ashford Borough Council and updated for Rother District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- Data supplied to 3 neighbourhood plan processes: Herstmonceaux; Sedlescombe; and Balcombe.
- A statistical analysis of the potential increase in housing numbers in and around the High Weald arising from the use of 2008 household projections was produced for the High Weald Officers Steering Group.

### Support was provided to Natural England with:

- Completion of a draft High Weald National Character Area profile for editing by Natural England.
- The national roll out of Ancient Woodland Inventory Survey methodology.
- Provision of expert woodland advice to Natural England to deal with planning enquiries related to the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Weald and Downs local authorities.
- Assessing a grassland site in the High Weald – using data on the High Weald GIS system to advise on the presence/absence of notable species and/or features at the site.





Ancient woodland

## 5

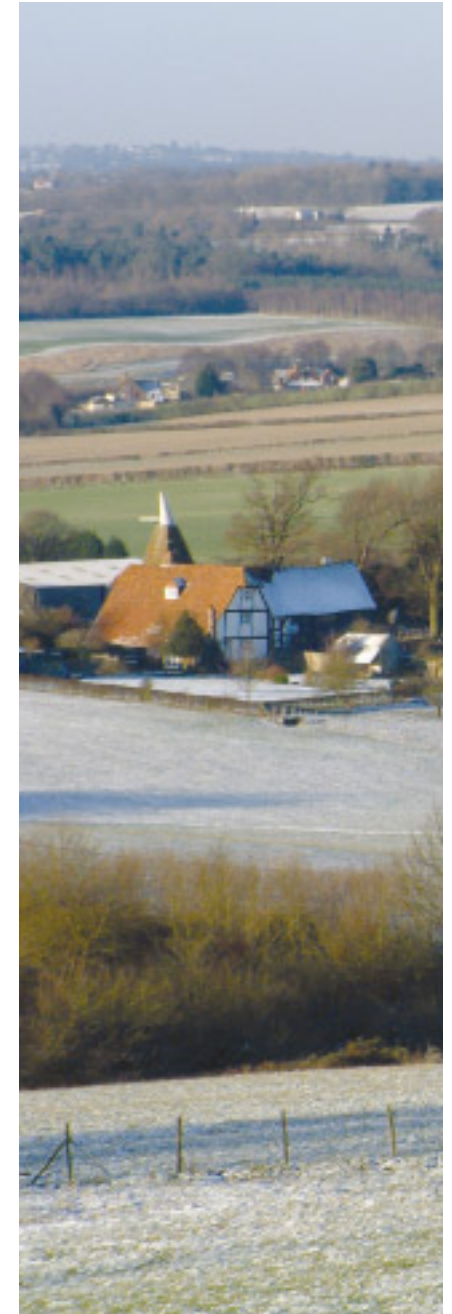
Adding value to our partners' wider landscape and environmental objectives within the High Weald AONB

Parish settlement development a focus of support



Collaboration with English Heritage on the production of guidance for the analysis of historical settlement form and built design by parish communities was undertaken involving 6 steering group meetings.

Support was provided to the Woodland Trust for a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a national programme of Ancient Woodland Restoration work (successful). From January 2014 the Unit provided office accommodation for the new Low Weald PAWS Officer.



# Financial summary

1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

The Joint Advisory Committee received its income from Defra, Natural England, local authorities and other bodies as follows:

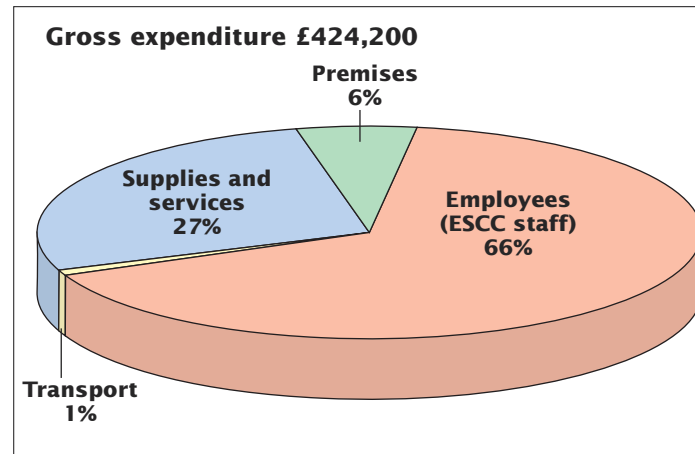
DEFRA and Natural England	£281,711
Local Authority partners	£100,584
Other bodies	£31,697
Heritage Lottery Fund	£18,683

Other bodies included English Heritage and the Woodland Trust.

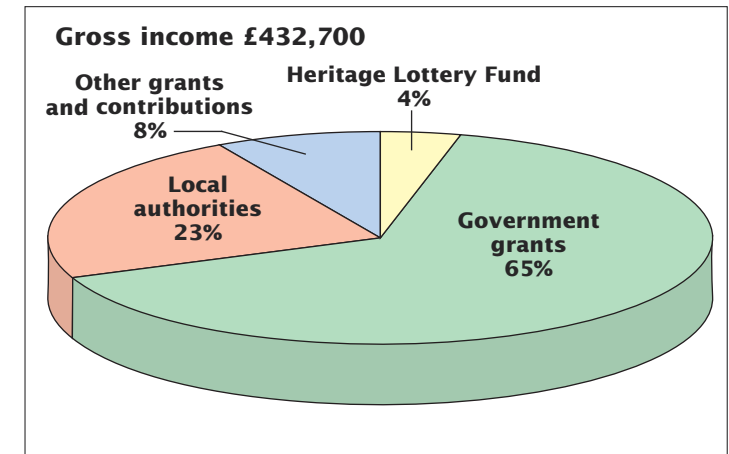
## Key

- 1 South East AONB Regional work
- 2 Sustainable Settlements
- 3 High Weald Management Plan
- 4 Our Land
- 5 High Weald Heroes
- 6 Battle & Brede Landscape Partnership Scheme
- 7 Sustainable Development Fund
- 8 Ancient Woodland Restoration Project
- 9 Living Woods
- 10 Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme
- 11 Restocking the Weald Feasibility Study

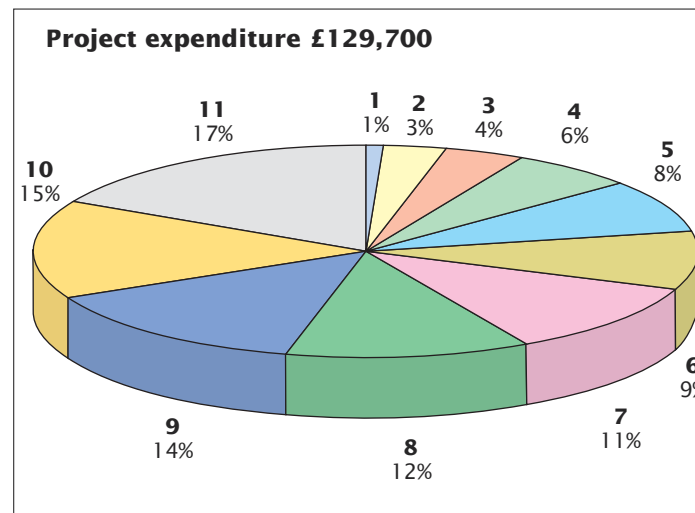
## Total expenditure



## Total income



## Expenditure by project



The final position for the year was a reserve of £97,717 at 31 March 2014, which includes the £8,484 surplus for 2013/14.

# High Weald Joint Advisory Committee

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*Working together to care for one of England's Finest Landscapes*

The primary purpose of the JAC is to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.

The JAC will also:

- increase understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the AONB
- seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the AONB.

The High Weald AONB Unit works on behalf of the JAC to achieve these purposes, guided by the High Weald AONB Management Plan and in accordance with the Unit's 3-year business strategy. An Officer's Steering Group (OSG) advises the Management Board and JAC.

Representatives of the JAC, Management Board, OSG and staff team for 2013/14 were as follows:

## **Joint Advisory Committee and Officers Steering Group**

### **Chair**

Councillor B Kentfield

### **Vice-chair**

Councillor C Hersey

Councillor Mrs J Davison (from November 2013)

### **Officers Steering Group Chair**

David Marlow

### **Natural England**

Nicola Davies

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High Weald  
Joint Advisory Committee

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**East Sussex County Council**

Councillor Mrs S Tidy  
Virginia Pullan

**West Sussex County Council**

Councillor K Blake  
Councillor B Acraman (from October 2013)

**Kent County Council**

Councillor R Bullock  
Councillor M Balfour (from June 2013)  
Ruth Childs

**Surrey County Council**

Councillor M Sydney  
David Greenwood

**Wealden District Council**

Councillor Mrs R Moore  
David Phillips

**Rother District Council**

Councillor B Kentfield  
Tim Hickling; David Marlow

**Hastings Borough Council**

Councillor Richard Street  
Murray Davidson

**Mid Sussex District Council**

Councillor C Hersey  
Jennifer Hollingum

**Horsham District Council**

Councillor Mrs E Kitchen  
Aeron Rees

**Crawley Borough Council**

Councillor Mrs S Blake  
Councillor Mr K Blake (from September 2013)  
Tom Nutt

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**

Councillor Mrs J Soyke  
David Scully

**Sevenoaks District Council**

Councillor Mrs J Davison  
Helen French; Kirsti Johnson (from September 2013)

**Ashford Borough Council**

Councillor R Taylor  
Brenda Fazzani

**Tonbridge & Malling District Council**

Councillor Mrs S Murray  
Jenny Knowles; Ria Hotchin (from September 2013)

**Tandridge District Council**

Councillor M Sydney  
Paul Newdick

**JAC Co-optees**

**Recreation/Leisure**

Mrs A Field, Forestry Commission

**Community/Economy**

Mr J Leggett, Action in Rural Sussex

**Landowners**

Mr R Edwards, Country Land and Business Association

**Farming**

Mr W White, National Farmers Union

**JAC Management Board**

Councillor Mrs S Tidy  
Councillor B Kentfield  
Councillor Ms J Davison  
Councillor Mrs E Kitchen (until November 2013)  
Councillor C Hersey  
Councillor M Balfour  
Councillor B Acraman (from November 2013)  
Natural England representative

**Clerk to the JAC**

Samantha Nicholas

**Treasurer to the JAC**

Mo Hemsley

## High Weald AONB Unit Staff

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*Advising on the management of one of England's Finest Landscapes*

### Core

**Co-Directors** – Sally Marsh (0.62FTE)/Jason Lavender (0.62FTE)

**Business Manager** – Gerry Sherwin (0.8FTE)

**Policy and Research Officer** – Andrew Shaw

**Assistant Research Officer** – Charles Winchester (0.8FTE)

**Administrator** – Kerry Baldwin (0.5FTE)

**Team Support Officer** – Samantha Nicholas (0.8FTE)

**Communications Officer** – Peter d'Aguilar (0.6FTE) from

February 2014

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High Weald  
Joint Advisory Committee

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### Projects

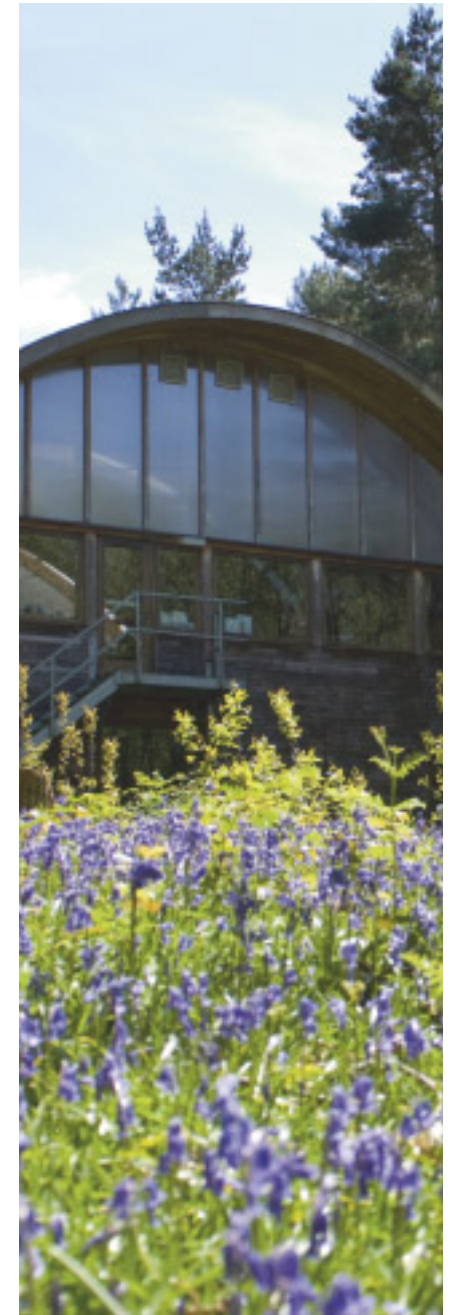
**Development Manager** – Simon Aguss until November 2013

**Cultural Heritage Adviser** – Matt Pitts (0.4FTE)

**Woodland Adviser** – Matt Pitts (0.6FTE)

**Education Officer** – Janice Cooper (0.6FTE) from February 2014

2 new officers (part time) were recruited between November and January.



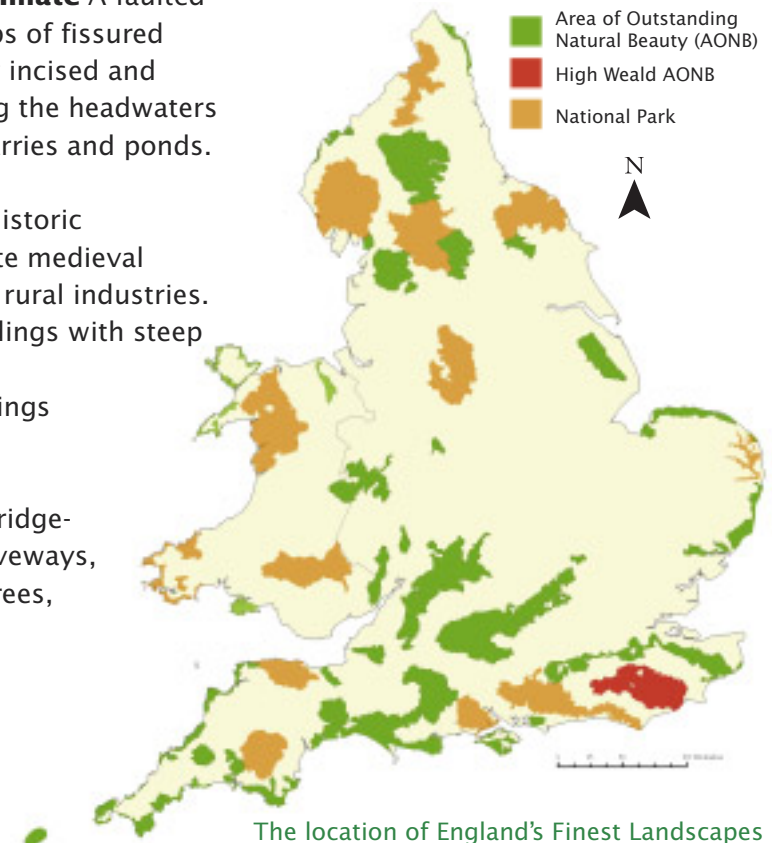


# The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The essential character of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was established by the 14th century and the area is therefore considered to be one of the best surviving, coherent medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. The five key components of its character are:



- **Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate** A faulted landform of clays and sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east-west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of rivers. A high density of extraction pits, quarries and ponds.
- **Settlement** A very high density of dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets with late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries. A dominance of traditional timber-framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped and an extraordinarily high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.
- **Routeways** Ancient routeways in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.






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## The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

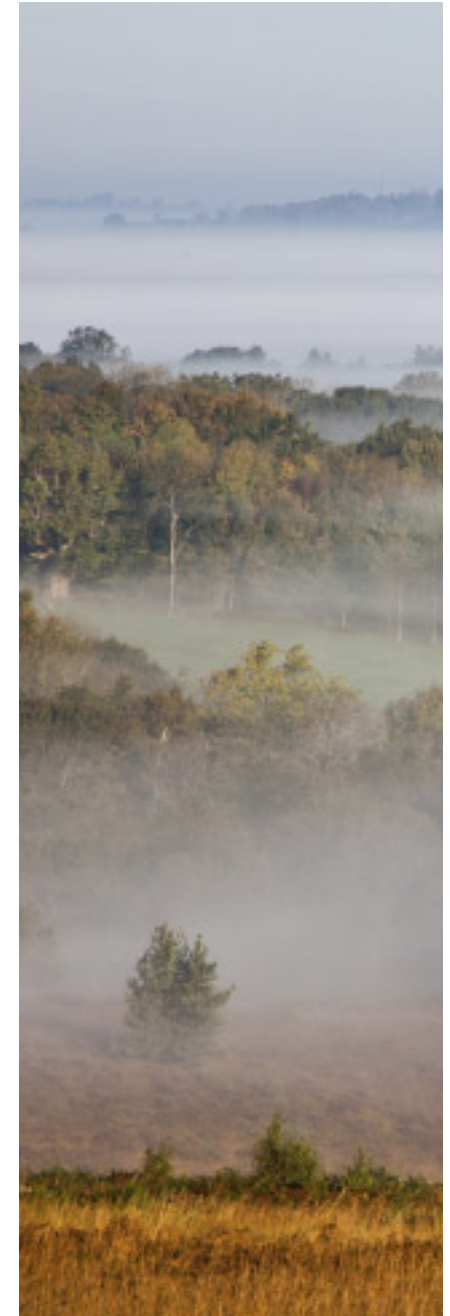
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- **Woodland** A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws, generally in small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long term management.
- **Field and Heath** Small, irregularly-shaped and productive fields bounded by hedgerows and small woodlands predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing. Distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.

These fundamental characteristics of the High Weald AONB are enriched by locally distinctive and nationally important details. These include castles, abbeys, historic parks and gardens, hop gardens and orchards, oast houses and parish churches, veteran trees and local populations of key threatened species.

Visit [www.highweald.org/learn-about/about-aonbs.html](http://www.highweald.org/learn-about/about-aonbs.html) to watch the High Weald Story and learn more about the five components.

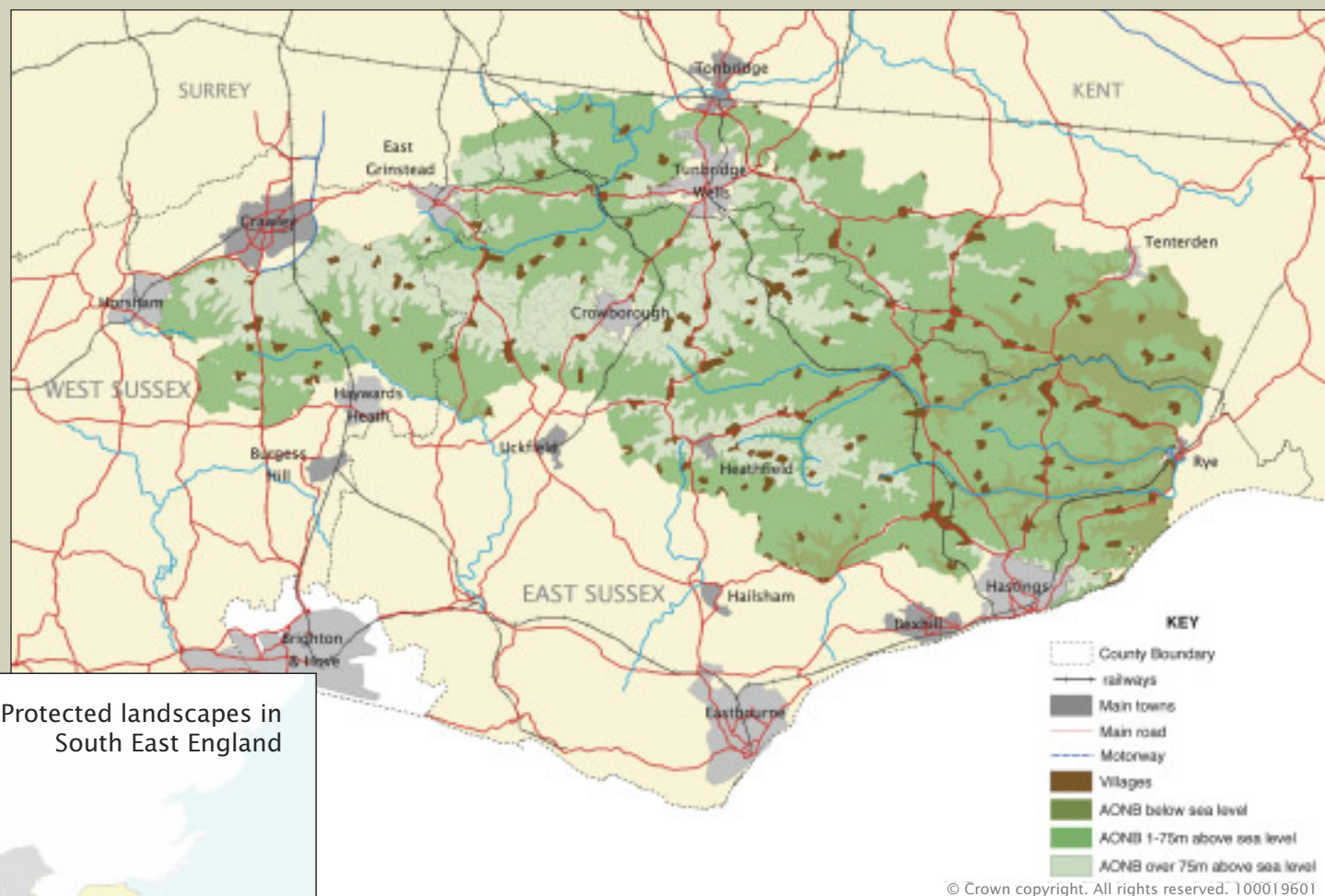




## High Weald AONB Unit

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The annual review is published by the High Weald AONB Unit on behalf of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC).



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Facts and figures about the High Weald can be found at  
**[www.highweald.org/home/about-aonbs/512-facts-and-figures.html](http://www.highweald.org/home/about-aonbs/512-facts-and-figures.html)**

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