

NORTH WESSEX DOWNS LANDSCAPE TRUST

Increasing awareness of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and securing its long-term protection and enhancement.



In pursuing our goal of increasing awareness, the Trust shared a stand with the NWD AONB at the Royal County of Berkshire Show in September. The visiting public showed a keen interest in the Trust's activities and agreed that the message about awareness was paramount.

It was a great privilege to welcome both Rt. Hon. Richard Benyon, MP and Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Crime, Policing & the Fire Service to our stand where they spoke enthusiastically about the countryside, the AONB and the work of the Trust.

Welcome to our first newsletter to keep you up to date with our current projects, their progress and thoughts for the future.



Kit Malthouse MP, Donald Sherlock, Chairman NWDLT & Rt. Hon. Richard Benyon MP with the poem "Fugitives" by the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Access to the Countryside Act (1949).



The NWD AONB covers 668 square miles, taking in 173 parishes and stretches from Swindon and Didcot in the north to Devizes and Basingstoke in the south, Calne in the west and Reading in the east. It is the third largest AONB in the country. Over 80% of the world's chalk streams are in the south of England and the AONB includes the rivers Kennet, Lambourn and mighty Test amongst others.



The name North Wessex Downs is not very identifiable as there is no designated area or place so named. It has been frequently suggested that road signs be placed on major roads alerting the general public to the entry or exit of the North Wessex Downs AONB. A study into this proposal will be undertaken in view of legitimate objections to sign pollution. We will keep you updated on progress and would welcome your views and comments.

At the time of writing, the Glover Report into the future of AONBs and National Parks has just been published. It makes exciting reading with wide-ranging proposals including rangers for the AONBs and the addition of two new National Parks.

As part of the **North Wessex Downs AONB's 2019 Walking Festival**, the NWDLT hosted a walk originating at Ashdown House in June. Walkers enjoyed the magnificent setting of Ashdown House, located in a valley just north of Lambourn – one of the National Trust's little-known gems. It is planned that the Walking Festival will be repeated in 2020.

The NWDLT initiated a course "**Getting to Know the North Wessex Downs**" at the **Marlborough College Summer School** in August, designed to raise the profile of the North Wessex Downs and educate people in various facets of its geology, archaeology, history, economy and geography. Each day had a specific topic and participants were taken to a different site where expert guides captivated them. The course was unanimously well received and plans to repeat it in 2020 are now in hand. If you are interested in taking part, please contact the Landscape Trust.

Course participants at Crofton Beam Engines



Sustainable Development Fund

With the North Wessex Downs Partnership, the Trust manages the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits for our landscape and the people living and working here.

The Fund supports small-scale projects promoted by local communities and charities. For further information on the Sustainable Development Fund, please go to our website www.nwd-landscapetrust.org.uk where details will be found under the tab "Our work". Recent schemes supported include:

Boxford Mosaic

Donald Sherlock presented Joy Appleton, Chairwoman of the Boxford History Project with an AONB plaque at the unveiling of the Boxford Mosaic in Berkshire. The project to reveal the mosaic was supported by a grant from the Sustainable Development Fund.

This breath-taking mosaic was fully uncovered in the summer of 2019 from beneath a field near Newbury, where it had lain for some 1600 years amidst the ruins of its villa.

Dating from around 350AD it has been described as the most spectacular and innovative Roman mosaic ever found in Britain.



Avebury Sports & Social Club



Ted Hiscocks, NWDLT, presented Dominic Fry, Chairman and project leader with an AONB plaque at the opening of the new community sports pavilion at Avebury. The Sustainable Development Grant supported the replacement of Avebury's 90+ year old sports pavilion with a fit-for-purpose facility, combining aesthetic charm with upgraded facilities, reflecting dual use as sports pavilion and community building at this World Heritage Site in Wiltshire.



Action For The River Kennet (ARK)

Sediment is a major issue for the River Kennet and its tributaries. An SDF grant enabled ARK to run a workshop to train river keepers, fishery owners and their own volunteers how to trace sources of sediment pollution from surrounding land. ARK will also extend their development of a data capture system which they have created. This will allow those on the ground to record the exact location of a potential pollution source. The incident can then be allocated for further investigation, potentially with the Environment Agency, Natural England or the relevant landowner.



*Promoting the
care of our
landscape and
heritage for
future
generations.*



Our first 18 months have been challenging but we continue to recruit both parish councils and individuals as subscribers to our cause, for which we are very grateful. We are particularly pleased that we have increased the availability of funds for the SDF and intend to continue that trend in the future. We are planning an events programme for 2020, details of which will be in the next newsletter and on our website www.nwd-landscapetrust.org.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Donald Sherlock', is written over a single horizontal line.

Donald Sherlock
Chairman
North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust

www.nwd-landscapetrust.org.uk
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