

QUANTOCK LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

# Landscape Conservation Action Plan; Part 1



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# Executive Summary

The Quantock Hills are not well known nationally, but they sit on the skyline for anyone looking north from Taunton or west from Bridgwater. Passers-by heading south on the M5 can mistake them for a first glimpse of Exmoor. But to those who know them, they are well loved.

The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty encompasses a long, irregular ridge, steep sided to the west and shallower, with incised wooded combes, on the east. To the north it meets the sea at the Bristol Channel, a geologically significant part of the Jurassic coastline.

Surrounding the hill is a girdle of villages which are proud of their Quantock identity – they are linked by history, economy, and their own sense of place to the open land above them. The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme encompasses this wider Quantock area, at 194.9sq km roughly twice the 99 sq km of the designated landscape.

For those with eyes to see, the Quantocks are a layered landscape with prehistoric, medieval, and Georgian influences. They are the birthplace of the Romantic poetry movement without which we might have no AONBs or National Parks. The manorial character of the area has lasted a thousand years or more and still binds the different landscape elements together as a unified whole.

Extensive heathland summits and the native woodlands are highlights, but the hedge-bound slopes and commercial plantations attract visitors too. They are a place to walk or ride, to climb up for a view to Wales, to spot red deer or cool by a woodland stream. A place too where some earn a living and so maintain the rest for everyone else to enjoy.

The Hills have a timeless quality, but this is an illusion. Change is coming more rapidly now than it has for at least 200 years. The old manorial estates are starting to break up, the impact of more industrialised agriculture is increasing, and visitor pressure is rising inexorably. Climate change looms over all, and it is already impacting the natural world. The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme was created to address these challenges, to better manage the unwelcome impacts and make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead.



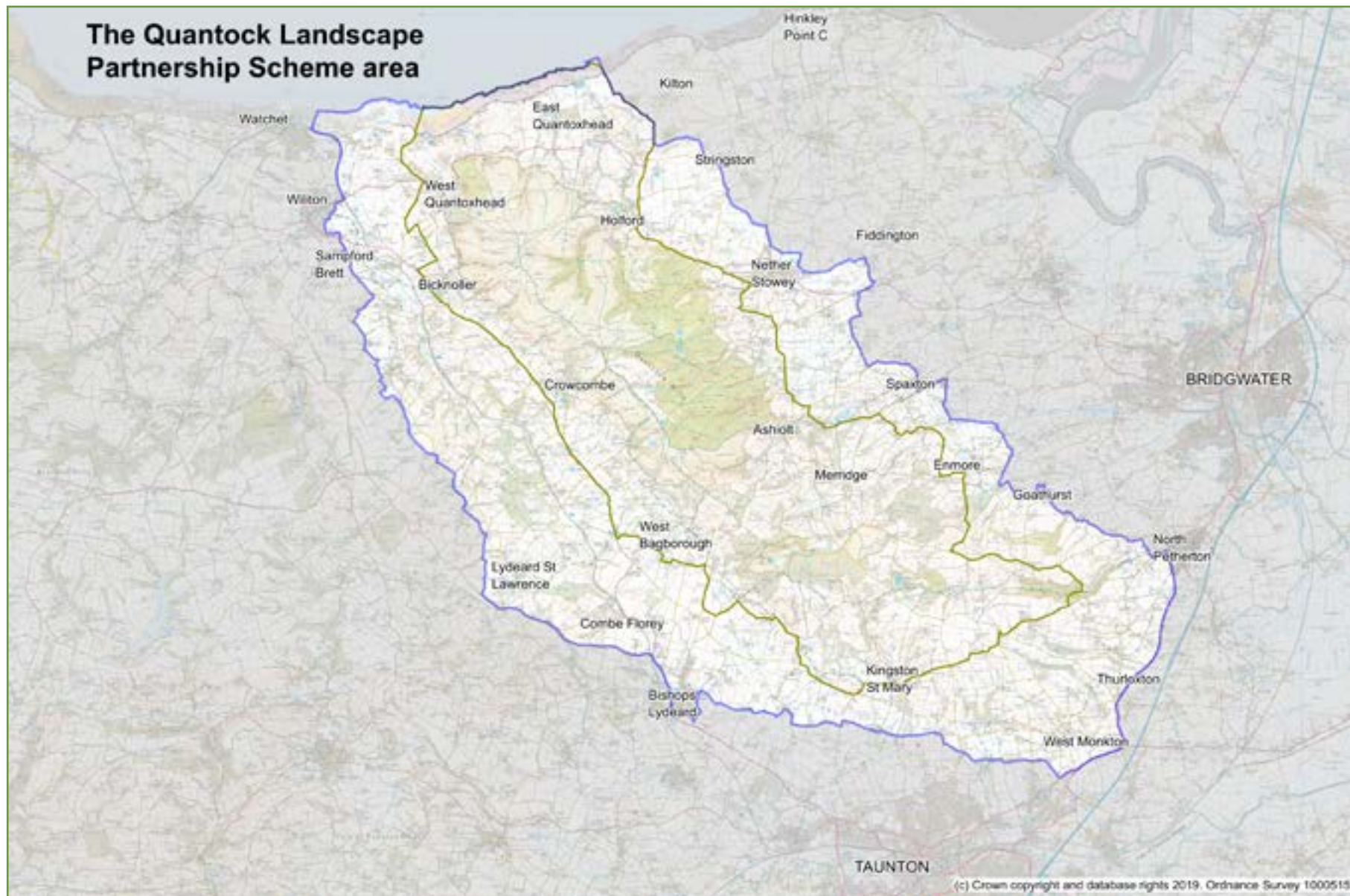
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At the heart of the Landscape Partnership Scheme are a suite of twenty three projects in three themed programmes; *Inspire*, *Live*, and *Learn*. Together these programmes will protect and restore the distinctive features of the Quantock landscape, improve management of the access pressures on the Hills, and make the health and wellbeing benefits of recreation more available to disadvantaged communities in the surrounding towns. They will help people living in and around the area to take a longer-term view of issues such as climate change.

The Scheme will also increase understanding of the development of the Manorial landscape, how it underpins the character of the Quantocks, and of the wider natural, built and cultural heritage of the area.

It will increase the resilience of organisations, communities, and individuals, building the capacity and skills of the volunteer base working in the area, and giving more, and more diverse, people opportunities to contribute.

This document, the Landscape Conservation Action Plan, sets out how this ambitious agenda will be achieved.







Quantocks

# 1 Introduction

**This Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) is the “manual” for the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme. Part 1, this document, sets out the background information about the area, its unique qualities, and the issues and opportunities behind the Scheme. It draws together the information and ambitions that have been developed since planning for the LPS started in 2010.**

Part 2 of the LCAP contains details of all the individual projects that make up the LPS.

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) will be a five year project, supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) and other partners. It aims to bring communities together, strengthen and conserve the landscape character of this distinctive part of South West England, and help to prepare the Quantocks for the challenges ahead.

The subtitle of the Scheme is “Reimagining the Manor”. The Quantock landscape is inexorably bound up with its manorial estate history. As some of the old estates start to fragment, and farming practices change, the area needs a new vision of its future. It’s time to reimagine what this manorial legacy means for us today and to look forwards through the 21st century. The LPS aims to help the local communities do just that.



## 1.1 Location

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme area encompasses the Quantock Hills in Somerset, north of Taunton and west of Bridgwater. The core hill area, some 99 square kilometres, was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1956 (the first in England) but the Landscape Partnership Scheme area also includes surrounding parishes and totals about 194.9 square kilometres.



## 1.2 The Partnership Board

The Partnership Board is the steering group for the LPS, with overall responsibility for ensuring that the Scheme is delivered and that it meets its objectives. Many of the Board members have played important roles in developing the Scheme and all bring their expertise and influence to the table.

The Scheme staff are employed by Somerset County Council and are part of the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team, but they work to the Partnership Board.

At the time of Stage 2 submission, The Board consists of;

- Country Landowners Association (CLA)
- The Forestry England
- Friends of Quantock (FoQ)
- Halsway Manor National Centre for the Folk Arts
- LiveWest Housing Association
- National Trust (NT)
- Quantock Commoners Association
- Quantock Hills AONB (applicant and lead partner)
- Sedgemoor District Council (SDC)
- Somerset County Council (budget holder and host authority) (SCC)
- Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) (formerly the two councils of Taunton Deane Borough and West Somerset District)
- South West Heritage Trust (SWHT)

Further partners can join the Board by agreement.

Somerset County Council, as budget holder, has ultimate financial responsibility.

### 1.3 Vision, Aims, and Objectives for the Quantock Landscape Partnership

#### ***Our Vision of the Quantock Hills for 2025 and beyond***

*The open Common land and the wooded combes, the hedgebanks, the steep sunken lanes and sparkling streams, are valued, understood, and protected. The surrounding parishes feel part of the Hills, linked by a shared history and shared views. People enjoy and respect the area, which welcomes a diverse range of individuals and communities from across North-West Somerset. They come to breathe the clean Quantock air, clear their heads, and fill their hearts with their own Romantic sense of place. Farming adapts and thrives, supported in ways that protect the rich beauty of this landscape and discourage uniformity and intrusive industrial impacts.*

*The flux of seasons, and the dynamism of the evolving habitats, retains a sense of specialness even as society and the climate change. The Quantocks grow another fraction older, but their future remains bright.*

### Aims of the Landscape Partnership

The Quantock Hills are a nationally protected area with a remarkably rich natural and historic environment. Since the Middle Ages landownership has centred on a number of large estates and it is largely the historic management choices of these estates - how they designed, used, and managed the land - that has produced in the Quantocks a landscape of such outstanding qualities. This landscape - full of contrast, detail and surprises - is particularly vulnerable to change. Over the last century increasing changes in land ownership, agricultural practices, development pressures and leisure/recreation have led to a broadened sense of ownership, whether real or perceived, alongside a gradual decrease in the exceptional qualities of this landscape.

The Partnership aims to strengthen and reinstate the farmland fringe and parkland landscape through research, interpretation and enhancement works, and to create opportunities for local communities to manage community spaces such as orchards and woodlands. It intends to increase the knowledge and appreciation of the historic role of the large estates in shaping the special character of this landscape.

### Objectives for the Landscape Partnership Scheme

- **Protect and restore the distinctive features of the Quantock landscape.** Develop and deliver projects and initiatives that undertake physical works across the area to conserve the natural and historic heritage.
- **Better manage the access pressures on the Hills by promoting access opportunities in the farmland fringe and by allowing a closer relationship between urban and rural communities to develop.** Develop and deliver projects and initiatives that increase the physical and virtual access to the Quantock Hills landscape.
- **Make the health and wellbeing benefits of recreation in the Quantock Hills more available to disadvantaged individuals and groups most in need of greater access to nature.** Develop and deliver projects and initiatives that overcome the barriers to access that prevent people from experiencing nature, and empower them to enjoy and understand the natural world in their home communities as well as in the Quantock Hills.
- **Take a longer-term view of likely future changes – including, but not limited to, climate change – to build a consensus about the future for the Hills.** Deliver projects that bring people together in a common view about the direction of travel for the next half century or so, and use that consensus to undertake projects that embrace new opportunities and mitigate any unavoidable adverse impacts.
- **Increase knowledge of the Manorial development, historic parkland landscape, deer parks, early gardens and the link between large estates and the current landscape.** Working with landowners and historic research organisations / groups to research and collate information on the manorial estates and their features.
- **Increase knowledge and appreciation of the farmland fringe, including the vernacular architecture, to engender a sense of ownership and involvement among the local community.** Undertake community engagement, stage events, and create volunteering opportunities to raise awareness of the special nature of the Quantock Hills and the historic role of the estates and farming. Inspire communities and visitors to learn more about this fascinating landscape and become involved in its management and enhancement.



- **Increase knowledge and understanding of the influence of the Quantock Hills landscape on the Romantic movement and how this has changed how we think about nature today.** Develop and deliver projects which use the Romantic poetry movement as a catalyst for exploring individuals' own relationships with the landscape.
- **Increase the capacity and skills of the volunteer base working in the area, and give more, and more diverse, people opportunities to contribute.** Develop and deliver projects that bring new volunteers to existing programmes (such as the AONB and National Trust) but which also help to create new independent community-based initiatives. Reach out to potential new audiences for volunteering.



*Just south of Triscombe Stone*

## 1.4 Development and Consultation

The AONB Partnership first discussed the possibility of a Landscape Partnership Scheme as far back as 2010, as a way of expanding delivery in a tight financial climate. However, there were other more pressing issues, notably the development of the new Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant, that limited the capacity of the AONB to develop such large projects and build the new partnerships that would be required.

In 2015, with Hinkley underway and the AONB Manager returned from secondment, the AONB once again explored the possibility of an LPS. The Friends of Quantock were keen to be involved, as were the South West Heritage Trust who brought valuable experience from the Avalon Marshes LPS. All three parties wanted to increase their levels of activity in response to perceived changes in the landscape and rising demographic pressure from the development underway and planned around Taunton and Bridgwater.

The AONB Partnership had long recognised that the 1956 AONB boundary had been drawn unhelpfully tight to the base of the Quantock Hills. The Quantock landscape as perceived by local communities has always been much wider than the designated area and addressing the issues the AONB was facing would require working in this wider area. The Quantocks have always been much bigger than the designated landscape.

Several workshops were convened, and the interested public was consulted through a Survey Monkey questionnaire. The questions were simple, and essentially comprised a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). The developing partnership particularly wanted to include people outside their usual circle of contacts in these discussions, not least because engaging with new audiences was one of the outcomes the AONB itself wanted from a Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Out of these conversations an application for a Landscape Partnership Scheme was submitted to the then Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2016. This application was unsuccessful but HLF encouraged the partnership to amend the bid and resubmit.



© Rich Hill



There were two aspects of the 2016 proposals that HLF had reservations about. One was a Natural Flood Management Project, which would have duplicated a number of other initiatives already underway by others, and a branding proposal for adding value to local products which was seen both as too commercial and too high risk. These were removed from the list of potential projects.

The developing Partnership, lead by the AONB, has used the time to develop other project proposals further, and to have more discussions with stakeholders including a couple more workshops. The partnership also issued a call for evidence.

In addition to the bodies now making up the Partnership Board, other parties included in these discussions included;

- Somerset Local Access Forum
- Parish Council Representatives (x 4)
- National Farmers Union
- Natural England
- All Parish Councils in or adjoining the AONB (total 21)
- Taunton Deane Bridleways Association
- West Somerset Bridleways Association
- Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society
- West Bagborough Estate
- West Somerset Vale Foxhounds
- Somerset Disability Consultative Network
- Thorncombe Estate
- Lydeard Farm
- Quantock Pony Breeders Association
- Somerset Area Ramblers Association
- Fairfield Estate
- 40 Commando Royal Marines
- Quantock Staghounds
- British Horse Society
- East Quantoxhead Estate
- Quantock Orienteers
- Field Studies Council
- Somerset Wildlife Trust
- Tetton Estate
- Sedgemoor Bridleways Association
- Weacombe Estate
- Historic England
- League Against Cruel Sports (at the time a Quantock landowner)
- SPAEDA (a Somerset arts and environmental education organisation)
- Somerset Rural Youth Project (formerly the County Youth Service)
- FWAG South West

Key issues and observations included;

The need to ensure that 'Quantock communities' – villages outside AONB but that feel Quantock – are included.

The project should look to promote access opportunities on fringe sites rather than sensitive habitats / Concentrate engagement activity on fringe landscape where carrying capacity is higher.

The need to get local communities involved, to raise the profile of the cumulative impact of small scale changes across the area - develop a project to explore views which includes community engagement element.

The Historic Landscape Character element needs to be undertaken as part of the delivery because of the potential for community engagement. Undertaking it on a consultant basis during development phase will not allow engagement of local communities.

The need to approach relevant organisations to fully understand real & perceived barriers.

The need to ensure legacy elements are built in at start of development phase to ensure sustainability of volunteering - look for groups to become self-sustaining.

Mountain biking was identified as an issue to be aware of but which should be tackled outside the LPS.

Several potential practical historic heritage projects were identified, but Kilve Chantry excluded as being far too costly for the LPS.

The Romantic Poets were confirmed as a key theme but one that needs to be made relevant to a 21st century audience.

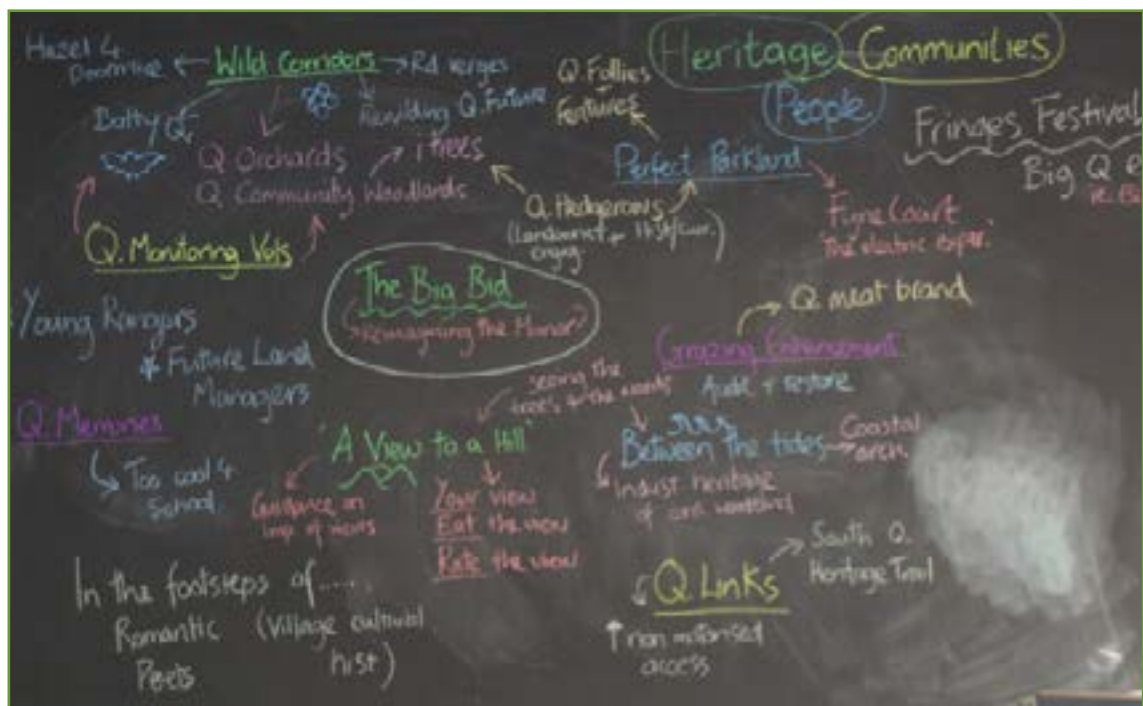
Skills development was identified as an important objective for the future.



A number of pilot projects were undertaken: monitoring of butterflies, reptile, and historic monuments by volunteers, a photographic competition for Quantock views, and some small-scale schools work. The AONB's experience in awarding small grants (from the old Sustainable Development Fund and more recently the Landscape Development Funding from Hinkley C) also helped shape thoughts about possible landowner grant schemes within the LPS.

The AONB was also becoming increasingly involved in working with non-traditional audiences, through projects like the Public Health-funded Nature and Wellbeing Project for people with mental health difficulties. The contacts being made through this project helped to build the evidence base and collective confidence for a more socially inclusive approach to a new LPS. It also gave the AONB the opportunity to ask some prospective partners what their needs were, and what projects would work for them, although capacity issues remained a constraint during this preapplication development.

Out of all these conversations a mind map was produced on the blackboard in the office at Fyne Court, and this map went on to form the basis of the successful revised bid in 2017.



Although the 2017 proposal was approved by HLF, they identified the need for further work during the development phase if the LPS was to deliver a robust socially inclusive engagement programme. With guidance from the HLF mentor Alison Millward, this has been done, and both the proposed work programme and the delivery budget have been extensively modified to incorporate the necessary changes.

During the development phase discussions continued and these are detailed in the Audience Development report. In February 2019 a final stakeholder workshop was held with a wide range of interest groups represented, including some of the urban community and youth groups who had been in discussions with the Development Officer. About 65 individuals representing about 30 organisations took part.



Broadly the workshop confirmed the contents and thrust of the proposed projects, but there was a significantly greater emphasis on the desire for more guided walks and waymarked routes and the project proposals were amended to reflect that feedback. Encouragingly, there was also a strong feeling that the LPS should build better mutual understanding between rural and urban communities which should be developed in partnership with users, not top down.

There were also cautionary notes about the need to preserve the tranquillity of the area and an understandable concern that the LPS might encourage an influx of new visitors.

Participants generated a word cloud of their personal thoughts and meanings about the Quantocks and the project, and the result sums up the ambitions of the LPS quite well;



## 1.5 Structure of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP)

This main body of the LCAP sets out the special nature and history of the Quantocks and the challenges and opportunities the Landscape Partnership seeks to address and why. It is intended as a public-facing document that people may wish to read, at least in part, if they want to know more about the project. In particular it should be read by LPS staff and delivery partners who need to understand how their work fits into a bigger context.

The details of the individual projects are in a separate document, Part 2 of the LCAP. Each project overview may be of interest to particular stakeholders, but whilst not confidential the detailed project plans are not aimed at a general audience.

The appendices contain the supporting detail and evidence behind the project plans and individual project budgets – including costs estimates and references etc. These are not intended for public viewing and some pages include potentially commercially sensitive information about contract values etc. They are there as an “Audit trail” for NLHF and as a reference for use by project staff during delivery.

Finally, there are also a number of supporting studies and reports such as the 2018 Visitor Survey and the Quantock Landscape Character Assessment. These are all in the public domain and can be downloaded from the AONB and LPS website (or if the file sizes are too large, can be supplied via a data transfer website on request). Further reports and publications produced during delivery of the LCAP will be made similarly publicly available.



# 2 The Quantock Hills - Somerset's Secret



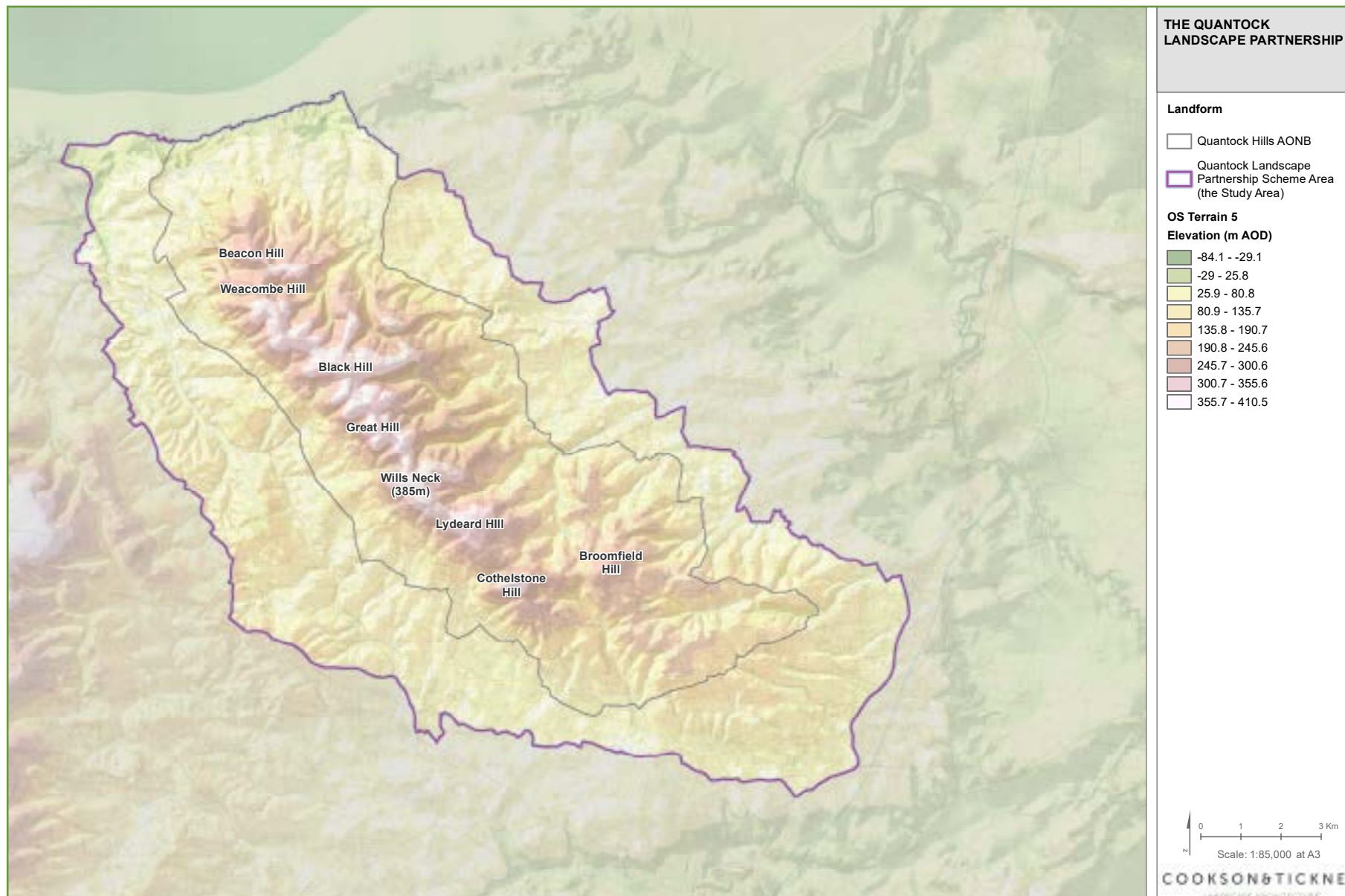
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## 2.1 Introduction to the Quantocks

To most people outside Somerset the Quantocks are largely unknown, perhaps even never heard of. They're one of several ranges of middle-distance hills that you drive past or see from a train window in your way to Exeter or Exmoor. This is, perhaps, a good thing for the Hills – their capacity to host overnight visitors is limited. Limited too is the capacity of the car parks and the choice of roadside picnic spots. Locals like it that way, on the whole. Day visitors are another story but its easy to find tranquillity away from the honeypot sites.

The Quantocks are geologically very similar to Exmoor and share many of the same qualities; wooded combes, high heathy Common land, large commercial forestry plantations, beech hedgebanks and sunken lanes, Bronze Age burial mounds and Iron Age hillforts. They do however have a distinctively different feel, and their history as Estate landscapes is a major driver of local distinctiveness (Exmoor as a former hunting forest has a very different past). There are still fine Manor- and Country-houses spaced around the Quantock range.

From Hestercombe in the southeast to West Quantoxhead in the northwest is only about twelve miles, and the Quantock Hills proper are barely three miles wide. There's huge variety packed into such a small area.



On the east side the land slopes in irregular hillsides down towards more rolling country, but on the west there is an impressive escarpment with villages dotted along its base. The escarpment marks the beginning of the “buffer zone” between the Quantocks and Exmoor; heading west there is a moment when the Quantock escarpment ceases to dominate and the traveller feels they have arrived at the Exmoor fringe; this is the edge of the landscape character area and the LPS.

Between the east and west slopes is the high ground, sparsely inhabited and then only at the southern end. The 385m high point is Wills Neck, but the whole 300m ridge is high enough to often have different weather to the surrounding lowlands. Thick Quantock mist is Taunton's cloudy day.



Wills Neck looking north



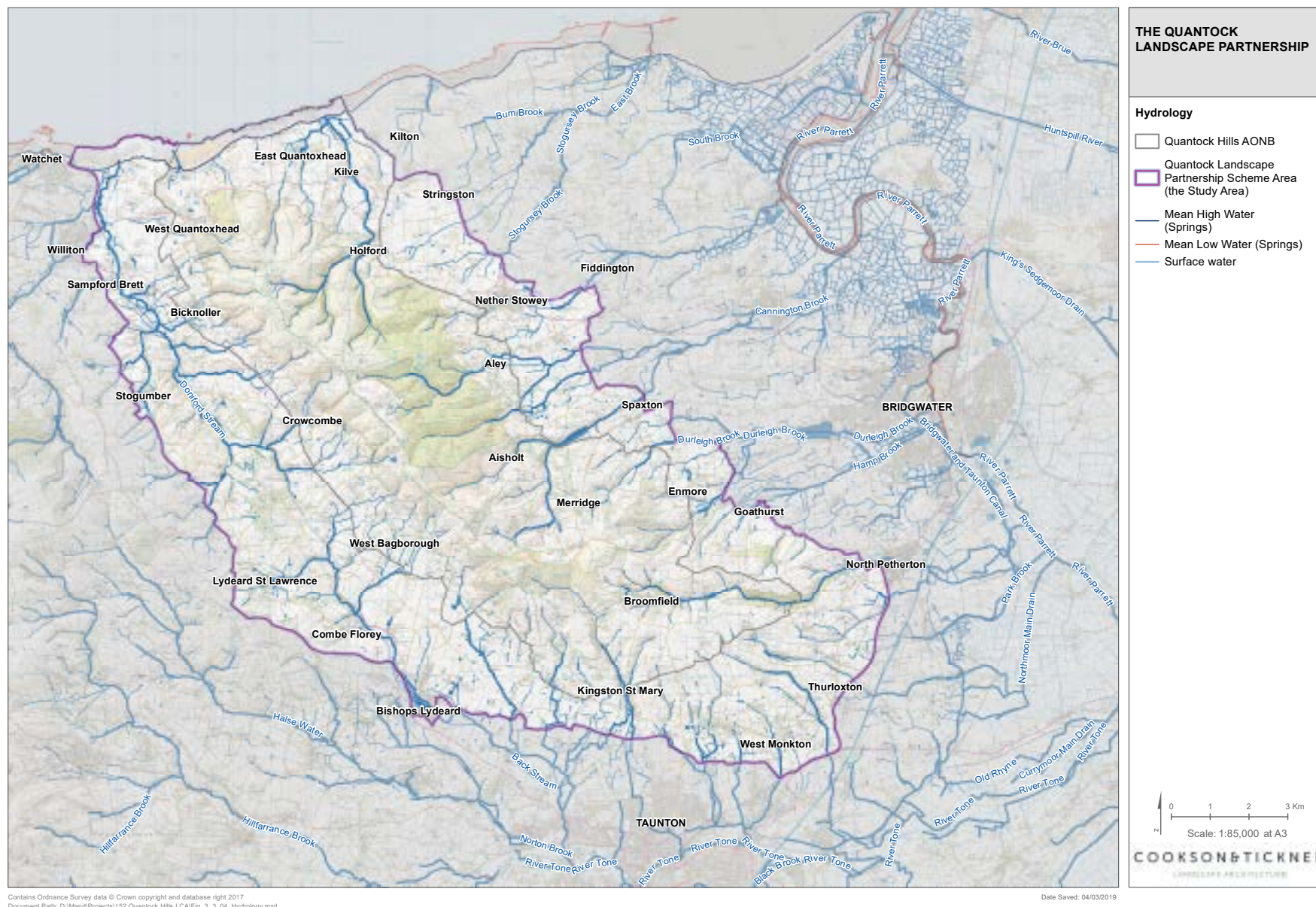
The streams and rivers follow a similarly differentiated path on the two different sides of the hill. In the west the main rivers flow parallel to the Quantock range, to the east the streams disappear away at right angles to it and flow gently towards the Parrett or its tributary the Tone. The water is clean enough that several isolated hamlets have no mains supply and still draw their water directly from the stream.

The two sides of the ridge have a different feel, as does the southern area around Broomfield, and while residents of all three areas would strongly identify as Quantock there is a bit of a three-way division of community affiliation too. Sense of place, sense of belonging, is very local here. That slightly feudal outlook has estate roots too; history, village rivalries, and the physical inconvenience of having a range of hills between an eastern village and its western neighbour make links to your neighbouring village on the same side of the hill much easier to maintain.

So this is the Quantocks, then; a bit of a backwater and proud of it, traditional communities both united and divided by the Hills themselves. Beautiful, varied and tranquil countryside, but right on the doorsteps of Taunton and Bridgwater with all the pressures and opportunities that entails.



Aisholt





## 2.2 Deep Roots; the Geology of the Quantocks

The landscape of the Quantock Hills is shaped by the underlying geology. Rocks from the Devonian period (419 to 359 million years ago) form the long ridgeline of the Quantock Hills proper and without these old acid rocks, resistant to erosion and supporting high heathland, there would be no “Quantock”. There would be no Exmoor either - a significant fault line on the western flank of the hills created the steep scarp slope, and the resulting sunken landform, are all that separates the Quantock Hills AONB from geologically similar Exmoor.

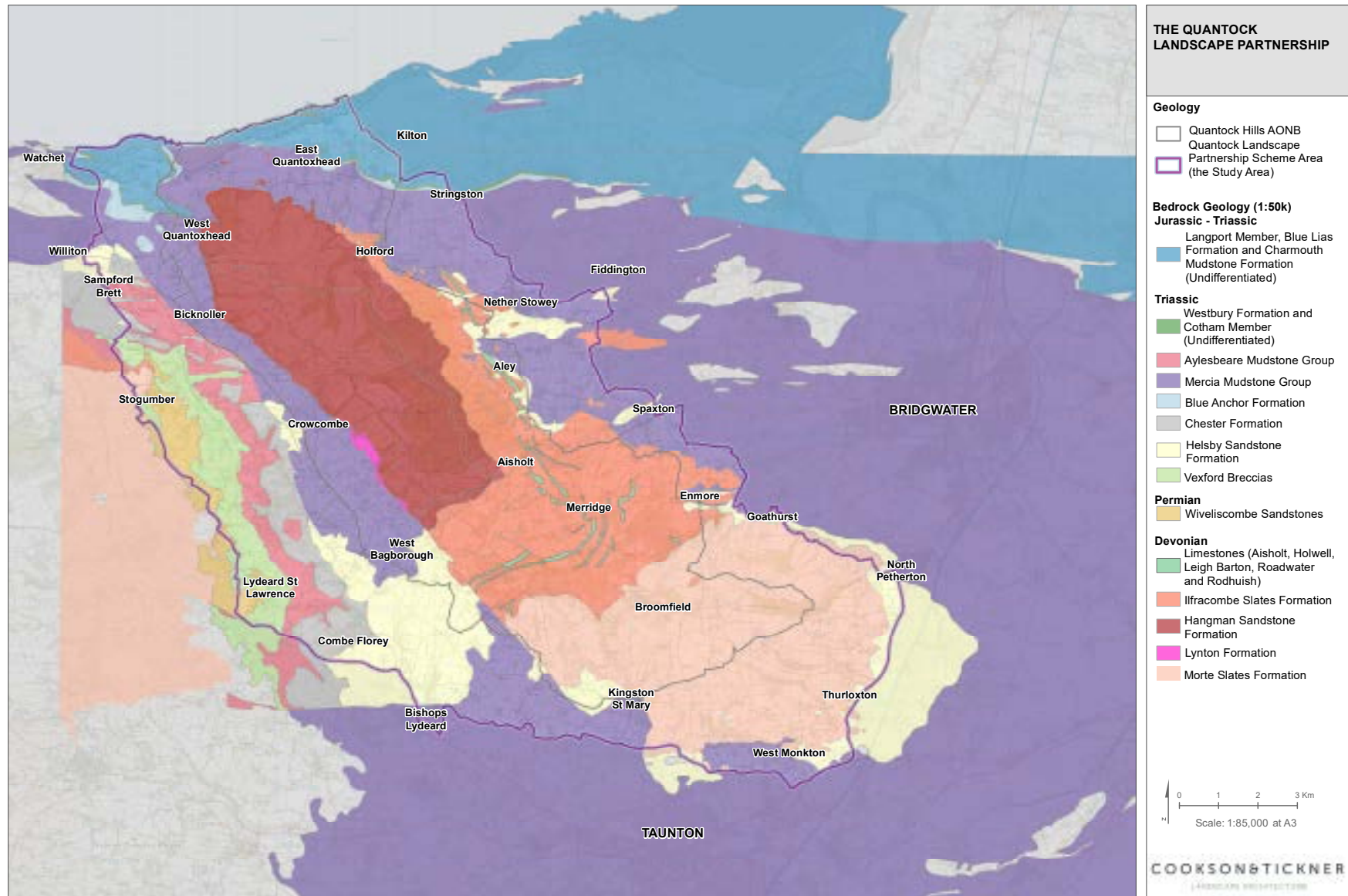
The northwest end of the Quantocks is Lower (older) Devonian Rocks and the south-eastern end of the hills Middle and Upper (most recent) Devonian. These sedimentary rocks were laid down under a shallow sea, compressed into hard rock, folded to a ridge and subjected to hundreds of millions of years of erosion, inundation and deposition.

The majority of the inland area beyond the designated landscape comprises younger rocks of the Triassic period (252 – 201 million years ago) with the landscape running to the coast, and the intertidal zone, defined by rocks of the Jurassic (201 – 145 million years ago).



*Kilve seashore*

The oldest rocks are the Devonian Lynton Formation (previously known as Lynton Slates or Lynton Beds) which are finely laminated sandstones and mudstones, slates and siltstones. These rocks outcrop in a small area between Crowcombe and Bagborough Hill. They are shown in deep pink on the geology map.



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The oldest widespread Devonian rocks are the Hangman Sandstone Formation (previously known as Hangman Grits). This forms the surface rock from West Quantoxhead in the northwest to Lydeard Hill in the southeast. This rock is mainly sandstone - purple, grey and green – with interbeds of cleaved shale, siltstone and very fine-grained sandstone. Historically these very hard rocks have been quarried for hundreds of years for road building material. Triscombe Quarry, where operations ceased as late as the 1990s, has left a major scar on face of the scarp. Today it is fenced off for the safety of both people and the nesting peregrines. The Hangman sandstones are shown in dark red on the geology map.



*Kilve beach in June*

The Lynton and Hangman Sandstone Formations lie at the heart of classic Quantock country. They are associated with the free draining very acidic sandy and loamy soils that have created the characteristic open heathland and plantation landscape of the northern Quantock Commons.

Overlaying the Hangman Sandstone Formation and wrapping around the base of the highest part of the hills (from Holford in the north, stretching beyond Enmore in the east, Broomfield in the south and West Bagborough in the west) the central area of the Quantock Hills is defined by a surface geology of Ilfracombe Slates Formation. The Ilfracombe Slate outcrops across Exmoor, the Brendons and the Quantock Hills and typically consists of greyish or brownish cleaved slates with thin siltstones or fine grained sandstone units. They are shown in peachy-pink on the geology map.

The Ilfracombe slates formation gives rise to loamy, free draining slightly acid soils, predominantly used for permanent pasture with scattered woodlands. The harder sandstones of this formation have historically been quarried for building and sometimes for walling, but there are no active quarries in the area now.

There are some outcropping belts of Roadwater Limestone, shown as strips of pale blue on the geology map, running southwest to northeast from Cothelstone to Merridge and southeast to northwest from Merridge to Bincombe. Historically this limestone was worked for the production of lime and also for use in the construction of local rough walling in farms and villages. There are a number of surviving former limestone workings (quarries and kilns) occurring in intermittent bands within the Quantock landscape, which are an important reminder of the area's industrial past.

Overlying the Ilfracombe Slates Formation, and found to the south of them, is the Morte Slates Formation which also outcrops across Exmoor and the Brendon Hills. It is a thick sequence of silvery green thickly cleaved slates interbedded with occasional fine grained sandstones. They are a frequent local building stone, best seen at Hestercombe House and gardens (a Grade I Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest).



*Hestercombe House*

These are softer slates, which have weathered to create the characteristic, lower-lying rounded, sinuous landscape of the southern Quantocks – the rolling hill country synonymous with the Quantock Hills around Broomfield and Kingston St Mary and extending out to West Monkton and Thurloxton. They are shown in pale pink on the geology map and produce the characteristic red brown soils seen on hedgebanks and muddied roads throughout the area. The Morte Slates soils are used for a mixture of arable and permanent (improved) pasture with woodland surviving mainly on the steeper slopes and wet valley bottoms.

Associated with the Morte Slates at Hestercombe is the Permo-Triassic igneous Hestercombe Diorite (a younger rock formed by magma injected into the slates). It's the only magmatic rock in the otherwise sedimentary Quantock area.

The Triassic Helsby Sandstones, known locally as the Otter Sandstones, are sandstone that weathers to sand near the surface. The formation extends from south Devon coast between Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth northwards to near Minehead. Within the LPS area Helsby Sandstone outcrops in an irregular arc from West Bagborough around the Morte Slates, surfacing at Kingston St Mary and in a larger crescent from West Monkton to North Petherton and Goathurst. They are shown in a very pale sand colour on the geology map.

The Triassic rocks of the Mercia Mudstone Group (deposited between 200 and 250 million years ago) are much more widespread, virtually encircling the Quantock Hills and extending far to the south and east. They give rise to the fertile farmland flanking the hill and ridge landscape of the Quantocks. These are dominantly brown and red-brown (or less frequently green grey) calcareous clays and mudstones. The mudstones are the large swath of purple on the geology map.

The Mercia Mudstone Group gives rise to moderate to highly fertile loamy, sometimes clayey soils with some impeded drainage – good soils for arable cropping, they are sometimes used for grazing where the drainage is poor or the land very low lying.



The most visually striking and dramatic geology of the Quantock LPS area is the Jurassic coastal edge and intertidal zone – designated as a geological SSSI and falling within the AONB landscape. The full extent of the SSSI reaches from Blue Anchor in the west to beyond Lillstock in the east. Some of the best exposures are the layers of yellow – grey limestones and darker mudstones and shales of the low cliff exposures that front the dramatic terraces and ledges of the Lower Lias (harder limestone alternating with softer shale beds). The Lias is shown in sky blue on the geology map.



*The Coast at Kilve*

The Lias has a surprising feature that once seemed to offer the prospect of a lucrative local industry; it contains oil. In the 1920s a Dr Forbes Leslie persuaded investors to sink their money into a scheme to distil oil out of the rocks, effectively an early version of fracking, and an experimental oil retort was built near Kilve Pill which survives to this day. Perhaps fortunately the oil never took off. Extracting the oil was hopelessly uneconomic and the retort was soon abandoned.

The Lower Lias stretches and curves across the foreshore; creating, at low tide, a landscape of great visual spectacle and otherworldly character. This area is important for coastal geomorphology. As a result of wind, waves, currents and sea level changes there are a particularly well-developed series of intertidal shore platforms that vary in width from 20cm to 60cm. These platforms developed in the huge tidal range of the Bristol Channel – the second biggest in the world - and they are among the best examples of these coastal features in Britain.



*Kilve Oil Retort*





*Wave cut platforms*

Kilve and St Audries Bay (Doniford) are both popular beaches in summertime. They offer parking and access to the beach; other stretches are either backed by cliffs or effectively the private domain of holiday caravan sites.

The shore is mainly flat rocks that tend to be slippery when wet; add the heavy sediment load from the Severn and Wye and there's always an element of pot luck visiting the beach. The rocky shore is mixed with patches of harder cobbles and shingle towards the top of the beach and mudflats lower down. It's not a classic holiday resort offer and combined with the powerful tidal currents it's not a good place to swim either. It is, however, a coastline that rewards local knowledge and inventiveness, full of interest if you know where and how to look.



*Children fossil hunting*

There are rockpools to explore and mud to squeeze between little toes, and the grassy areas above the beach make for comfortable picnicking. Both Doniford and Kilve also have refreshments and toilets on offer, an attractive option for family excursions. Doniford/St Audries also has the only large sandy beach in the area and a waterfall to wash the mud off in and play underneath.

The most obvious geology even for the casual visitor is the abundant ammonite fossils, which come in various sizes all along the foreshore. The layering of the cliffs, and the different colours of the different layers, make an attractive backdrop but takes some more informed interpretation. The cliffs themselves are quite crumbly too; not good places to linger under, but fascinating to have a good look at from a safe distance.



Ammonite

The whole coast is largely unmodified, so coastal processes and geomorphology can be seen to their full extent.

The Lower Lias rocks are of international scientific importance with a section of the cliff at East Quantoxhead identified by specialists as a World reference point within the geological time scale marking an internationally agreed division between two parts of the Lower Lias succession (196.5 million years ago). This means that all sedimentary rocks of this age in the world are related back to this Quantock Hills cliff exposure.

The rocks have historically been exploited for lime and there are a number of surviving kilns dotted along the coast. The former pills, or “harbours” at Kilve and Lilstock were created to export the resulting burnt lime.

The Blue Lias gives rise to lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage of high fertility. Typically they are used for arable, with some permanent pasture especially in wetter or low lying areas.

Right on the edge of the LPS area, at Doniford, are more recent Pleistocene (Ice Age) deposits from a cold-stage river valley, superbly exposed in the low sea cliffs. Finds have included stone tools and mammoth remains – a timely local reminder that landscapes and climates can change radically.

The accompanying Landscape Character Assessment for the Quantocks gives several examples of how the various rocks have given rise to locally distinctive building styles. Apart from their contribution to “sense of place” even within the Quantock landscape, buildings like these are often the best way to view samples of the various rocks mentioned.



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Sources;

British Geological Society website - <https://www.bgs.ac.uk>

- Strategic Stone Study – A Building Stone Atlas of Somerset and Exmoor (English Heritage 2011, rebranded Historic England 2017).
- Quantock Hills AONB Service /Geckoella – Geology leaflet.
- The Landscape of the Quantock Hills (Countryside Agency, 2003)
- Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (Quantock Hills AONB Service).





## 2.3 Quantock History; the Development of a Manorial Landscape

This section draws heavily on Hazel Riley's 2006 work, *The Historic Landscape of the Quantock Hills*<sup>1</sup>, published by English Heritage (now Historic England) which remains the definitive account of the prehistoric and historic landscape of the area. For more details of sites and monument types, please refer to her work.

### The Deep Past

*“enchanted musty records of antiquity which have slept peacefully for ages”*

Rack 1782 – 1786, *Topographical Notes for the History of Somerset*<sup>2</sup>

When Edmund Rack spent his last five years surveying Somerset he had no idea how far back antiquity stretched. People – not always people of our kind – have roamed the Quantock landscape further back into the deep past than he can possibly have imagined.

Handaxes found between Doniford and Watchet date back over 200,000 years, probably to a warm interlude in the Wolstonian glacial period. The people who made them would have lived in a landscape with vegetation we would have recognised but populated by the lost lions, elephants, and hippos that once roamed Europe alongside our familiar modern fauna. After that the ice sheets closed in again and genus *Homo* abandoned Britain for over 100,000 years.

<sup>1</sup>Riley, Hazel, 2006; *The Historic Landscape of the Quantock Hills* pub. English Heritage

<sup>2</sup>Collinson, Rev. John, 1791 *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset*. Collinson and Rack collaborated on the survey which was eventually published by Collinson after Rack's death in early 1787



*Ponies in the early light*

We know that Neanderthals were in South Wales, so it seems likely that they were here in the Quantocks too, but the next evidence of occupation is by modern humans a little over 13,000 years ago. Just before the last and coldest period of the Ice Age known as the Younger Dryas they left some fine flint blades at Doniford.

Beyond these occasional finds of worked flint, however, the story of the current human landscape begins only after the end of the last Ice Age. A new phase of woodland hunter-gathers, the Mesolithic, arose as forests replaced open grasslands all around a rapidly warming world.

Extensive scatters of flint at North Petherton and Broomfield speak of the earliest Mesolithic settlers, who no doubt followed a seasonal round of hunting and gathering from the hilltops to the foreshore as they did elsewhere around the Bristol Channel. How much impact Mesolithic people had on the wider landscape has been a subject of some debate<sup>1</sup>. It now seems likely that cutting and burning to encourage game may have been the start of the development of the open heath, perhaps even a means of keeping the ground open in a rapidly reforesting post-glacial landscape.

### Leaving their Mark; the First Farmers

It is with the coming of farming, the dawn of the Neolithic around 4000BC, that we first see both obvious large-scale landscape impacts and the creation of monuments and other earthworks that survive in the visible landscape to this day. These first farmers would have carved a living out of a more wooded landscape, more like a mixture of temperate savanna and dense woodland. Quite how open this landscape was – how much dense forest, how much more park-like – is a matter of on-going research, but woodland would certainly have extended up onto what is now the open heathland hilltops which are well below any natural limit of the treeline.

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<sup>1</sup>Vera, Frans, 2000; *Grazing Ecology and Forest History*

These early farmers set about clearing large areas of land for crops and brought herds of livestock that gradually replaced the original wild cattle and boar. By about 2000 BC, only 80 - 100 generations after the idea of farming arrived in what would become the UK, forest clearance was extensive.

This early agriculture was more nomadic than the idea of fields and farms might imply; it was probably more like the shifting cultivation seen in modern tropical forests, with people following their herds, seeking new fertile ground every few years to maintain the yield of their crops, and continuing to rely on hunting and gathering wild foodstuffs for much of their diet. Shifting cultivation combined with herds of livestock can, over the generations, have a significant impact on the landscape, even if the human population at any one time was quite small by modern standards.

A chambered tomb or cairn outside Williton, just beyond the LPS boundary but well within sight of the Quantock ridge, dates to perhaps 4000 BC. It is one of the earliest surviving monuments and certainly much, much, earlier than its legendary origin as the site of a battle between the Saxons and the Danes which gave rise to its name of "Battlegore". An early megalithic tomb, it served a community of people in the surrounding area.



*Cothelstone Hill flint*

From similar tombs elsewhere, we know that it might better be described as a temple than a tomb – it would have contained the remains of several individuals, or at least parts of them, and served as a community focus in a society where most bodies must have been disposed of elsewhere. Quite where and how most human remains were disposed of is unknown but the chambers can only account for a fraction of the dead.

Surrounding the chambered cairn are the remains of several round barrows – earthen mounds usually surrounded by a ditch – that date from a slightly later period. These too are funerary monuments; "Battlegore" was an important site for ritual and burial for over 1000 years.



On the Quantocks proper surviving megalithic structures are surprisingly rare, even compared to similar areas nearby such as Exmoor. Only the Long Stone at Longstone Hill (between Bicknoller Post and Holford) can be reliably thought of as Neolithic. The striking lack of surviving monuments may be a sign that they were never as frequent as they are in other areas, but more likely it also reflects a long history of cultivation which probably destroyed many monuments before anyone would have thought to record them. Use of timber, rather than stone, for building circular henges and other structures is probably also a factor.

### **Bronze and Beakers**

By about 2300 BC bronze was starting to be used in the UK for the first time. Its introduction was gradual, with flint continuing in use for most everyday tools and valuable bronze often reserved for prestige and ritual objects. Gold ornaments start to appear at about the same time. So did a particular form of pottery vessel known as a “beaker”, hence the shorthand term “Beaker People” still often used for these early Bronze Age inhabitants. This was the time when the great ritual landscapes of Stonehenge and Avebury were at their peak, but there’s no evidence of any comparable sites on the Quantocks; Triscombe Stone may date from this period, but if there were any other megaliths they were lost long ago.

The landscape legacy of the Bronze Age lies not in great stone circles but in later barrows; funerary mounds of which over 120 have been identified. They could be made of earth or stones, often with a ring ditch (occasionally the ring ditch sits alone with no associated barrow). Typically, they contained one, or a few, cremation remains, normally in a pottery vessel of some kind, but some were never used in this way.

They are concentrated on the apparent horizon, on the hilltops and other prominent places especially along the western scarp slope of the Quantock Hills. There are 19 large cairns between Cothelstone Hill and Beacon Hill alone. Often these barrows are associated with other earthworks or are part of a complex cemetery cluster as at Black Hill and Wills Neck. All can be interpreted as marking the territory and status controlled by an individual, or elite group of individuals, unlike the communal nature of the earlier chambered cairns.

### **Barrows and Cairns – the past hidden in plain sight**

#### **■ Round Barrows**

These are circular mounds of stone and earth. On the Quantocks they now usually lack a surrounding ditch. Although any original ditch may simply have silted up over the millennia, it appears that on the Quantocks most of the material to build them was imported from elsewhere rather than dug out on site.

Good examples are the barrows at Wills Neck and Thornbury Hill, both of which have possible ancient quarry sites nearby. Other large examples are at Beacon Hill and near Withyman’s Pool.

#### **■ Stone Cairns**

The stone cairns along the western scarp are some of the largest monuments on the Hills. Those on Great Hill, West Hill, and Fire Beacon Hill are 30m, 28m, and 25m across respectively. They may have been made bigger during much later cultivation of the surrounding area, as convenient dumping grounds during de-stoning of the adjacent arable fields.

A recent problem has been the misguided fashion for building small modern cairns on top of, and built from, the flattened prehistoric stone cairns. Even more damaging has been the practice of digging down into the cairn to create a sort of sunken windbreak or shelter for walkers. Both practices probably seem entirely innocent to the people who carry them out – in their own mind they're simply moving stones and leaving their mark – but the cumulative effect is potentially very damaging and creates quite a lot of volunteer or Ranger work flattening the new cairns or refilling the holes. A challenge for the LPS is to find ways to discourage such activities by increasing the understanding of the significance and age of these sites without cluttering the landscape with intrusive interpretation or "Do Not" notices.



### Satellite Cairns

Some of the larger cairns have one or two smaller cairns, 5m in diameter or less, built on their outer edge. Examples of this can be seen at Lydeard Hill, Beacon Hill, and by Withyman's Pool. It is tempting to imagine these as being burial sites for the founder's descendants, but their true purpose and significance is unknown. It is also unclear how much later in time they were constructed; while the site clearly held long term ritual significance the burials might be many generations apart.

The Black Hill group of cairns and barrows is on the watershed saddle between Dead Woman's Ditch and Hurley Beacon. The 21 monuments form a line 2km long, often hard to see, hidden in the heather and gorse, but the central Black Hill group of a ring cairn, a platform cairn, and a barrow are all well preserved.

Just as the Black Hill group is located on a geographically significant point between two hills and two catchments, Wills Neck is the highest point on the Quantock Hills (386m) and so also a unique site for a group of eight monuments including the barrow now surmounted by the OS trig point.



*Trig point, Wills Neck*

Understanding of the Bronze Age has not been helped by the activities of early antiquarians, who dug into most of them looking for “treasure” and destroying evidence (and presumably human remains) in the process. The depression in the centre of many such barrows is the result of their curiosity.

Another complicating factor has been the use of many barrows as fire beacons. Given that the barrows are often on prominent hilltops they are ideal sites for a signal fire, whether lit in celebration or to pass on messages of threatened invasion. The barrow was often modified, the better to hold the fire, and of course the process introduces a lot of much more recent charcoal and reheats any pre-existing remains which makes dating the site much more challenging.



## Bronze Age Settlements

There are few signs of early Bronze Age settlements remaining on the Quantocks. There are a few hints of what we might call smallholdings at the Greenway and at West Hill, on the northern slopes of the Quantock overlooking the sea, but little else. Probably there were more settlements within what is now the hilltop Common, but unlike the situation on Dartmoor subsequent cultivation appears to have wiped the picture clean so this can only be speculation based on patterns seen elsewhere in the Southwest.

It is also possible that there never were any significant permanent settlements, rather the landscape was used seasonally by the herders moving between summer pastures and more sheltered wintering grounds. Either way high resolution LiDAR imaging would help to find any Bronze Age field systems that might survive under the gorse and bracken.

## Linear Earthworks

From elsewhere in the Southwest we know that linear earthworks of later Bronze and Iron Ages were important features, demarcating territories and ownership, or defining ritual spaces. Often the precise function of a particular earthwork can be hard to determine, and reworking may mean that even the date of original construction is uncertain. On places like Salisbury Plain linear features are common and widespread, so that entire prehistoric landscapes can be reconstructed. On the Quantocks, however, only four linear earthworks are known.

Of these the most famous is Dead Woman's Ditch, a bank and ditch roughly 1 km long, on the top of the hill halfway between Crowcombe and Over Stowey. It is a significant feature on the ground even today, with a 1m high bank and a 3m wide, 2m deep ditch surviving. Quite how old Dead Woman's Ditch is, is impossible to say, beyond that there is every reason to believe it is prehistoric.

### True stories that hide the truth

Popular myth is that **Dead Woman's Ditch** is so-called because John Walford dumped the body of his wife, Jane, there after he murdered her in 1789.

Walford, a charcoal burner, lived in Over Stowey. He was a contemporary of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Poole and known to all of them. He was well thought of, as was his childhood sweetheart Ann Rice who also lived in the village.

Unfortunately John had a liaison with Jane Shorney, whom history has not left us with such a good impression of as it has of Ann. Whatever the truth of the matter, Jane was clearly not thought of as respectable when in 1785 she gave birth to John's son. By the time she was pregnant with his second child in 1789 the pair had been forced to marry. Allegedly, Jane taunted John with talk of his true love Ann, while within days of the marriage John was in the pub discussing plans to disappear to London.

Three weeks later Jane was found dead in the ditch, beaten and with her throat cut, and John soon confessed to her murder. An equally pregnant Ann evidently forgave him and kissed him goodbye on his way to the gallows. His body was then hung in irons for a year and a day at a place since known as Walford's Gibbet, about a mile west of Nether Stowey on the fringe of Dowsborough Hill.

It's a sad story that combines a lurid historical tragedy, and the Romantic Poets, with more contemporary themes such as perpetual social ills (Jane's story is hardly a sympathetic feminist account of the victim) and even forced marriage. It links with the recreational popularity of the area today; for new visitors, at least, the name of the car park must draw the eye when they're thinking of where to stop.

But this true story of John Walford, Ann Rice, and Jane Shorney doesn't explain the name of the Ditch. The problem with this account is that the name appears on a 1782 map, seven years before the murder, and it was clearly very old even then. Maybe the name inspired a desperate man in need of a place to dispose of a corpse, or maybe it is pure co-incidence, but either way after the murder the name Dead Woman's Ditch would forever be associated with the unfortunate Jane Walford.

Perhaps there is some comfort in the knowledge that, for once, it wasn't only the women in this story who paid the price of John's philandering.

The other three linear earthworks are much smaller. There's a very shallow bank, about 95m long, on Higher Hare Knap, and another some 165m long from the head of Cockercombe to the edge of Triscombe Quarry. Both have suffered plough damage at some point in the historic period and both are hard to spot on the ground unless you know what you're looking for.

The final earthwork is on Cothelstone Hill, about 280m long and much more substantial. The bank is up to 1.4m high, capped with the remains of an 18th century folly. It too has suffered historic plough damage.

## A Bronze Age Ritual Landscape

It is clear that, whatever additional features LiDAR might reveal, the gorse and bracken of the open Quantock Hills do not conceal any patchwork of Bronze Age smallholdings and field systems such as those found on Dartmoor. However, there is strong evidence of an extensive ritual landscape of barrow, cairns, and banks and ditch lines which, on the ground, is now hard to see as a unified picture in the way that our ancestors must have perceived it. Interpreting this 15-century span of time – roughly as long a time as separates us from the Romans – is a challenge and an opportunity for the LPS. We can never truly understand our ancestors' spiritual world, but exploring the physical traces they left behind can certainly help us feel more rooted in our place and time, and help to preserve the past as we look to the future.



*Higher Hare Knap, Jane Brayne*



## Iron Age Icons; The Hillforts

Iron started to appear in Britain around 800 BC and had largely displaced bronze by the middle of the millennium. Iron, unlike the copper and tin required to make bronze, is relatively abundant so the Iron Age can also be thought of as the time when metal rather than stone became the main material used to manufacture tools.

Hillforts often have Bronze Age, even Neolithic, origins, and sometimes they were even reoccupied and reused in the early medieval period after the Romans left. They are however far more massive than earlier earthworks and represent a huge investment of labour.

Ideas about quite what they were used for have evolved, but it is clear that the old image of defended fortifications was at best only a small part of the picture. They seem to have had many functions, including prestige meeting places, market places, religious sites, and settlements. Their function in society seems to have varied, too; there is no real modern equivalent, but whatever the function of any particular hillfort at any given time they all served to show power and to lay an unmistakable claim to a territory.

The Quantocks were at the junction of three tribes, the Dumnonii who held what is now Devon and Cornwall into north-west Somerset, the Durotriges of south and west Somerset and Dorset, and the nearby Dobunni of the Severn valley. It is unclear exactly where the boundary between the Dumnonii and Durotriges lay, but it seems likely that being in the borderlands might have been one motivation for constructing hillforts here.

## Dowsborough Hill Fort

Dowsborough is one of the westernmost “univallate” (single banked) hill forts in England. Now almost entirely covered in woodland, it was historically much more open, and commanded the north-eastern approaches to the Quantocks from Holford and Nether Stowey.



*A view from Dowsborough Hill Fort*

*"The fort is oval in shape, with ramparts enclosing an area of 2.7ha. The defences, which follow the natural contours of the hill, include a rampart c.1.5m high and outer ditch forming a drop of c.2m-3m, and a counterscarp bank up to 1.5m high beyond the ditch on all but parts of the north and west sides. The rampart has tumbled into the ditch for a stretch along the south.*

*There are two original entrances to the fort. On the north west is a simple causeway and gap leading from the plateau below. On the eastern tip, approached up the ridge of the hill, is a more complex entrance. The line of the southern rampart is truncated at the end, creating a slight inturned effect. It appears that something similar was present on the north but the rampart has been disturbed in more recent times and part of the ditch infilled. The entranceway leads between these ramparts, inside which are the remains of two flanking stone structures including circular guardhouses, the whole creating an inturned passageway.*

*Just inside the ramparts at the north west end of the fort is a low, round flat-topped mound, ditched into the slope. This has been described as a round barrow, earlier than the fort, though possibly later reused as a post- prehistoric fire beacon mound"*

(From the Scheduled Ancient Monument listing on Historic England's website)<sup>1</sup>.

### An Iron Age venue for village rivalries

*As the wood continues north of Dowsborough it becomes Shervage Wood, and this was the home of the infamous Gurt Vurm - a dragon who used to eat six or seven ponies and sheep at one sitting before settling down for a nap curled around the hills. He was as fat round as two or three great oak trees. Things were fine for a while, but then local people started noticing that their livestock was disappearing. A few went up the hill to see what was going on. They didn't come back. Everyone else was a bit loathe to go up there after that.*

*Every year there was a fair, the Triscombe Revel, and one old lady made all her money for the year by selling wort (bilberry) tarts there. This year she was getting rather anxious as she couldn't go up to check on the berries, and no one was daft enough to volunteer. Eventually a woodsman from Stogumber came by looking for work. She convinced him that he should go up to the wood and packed him off with some sarnies and some cider. After the steep climb he sat down for his lunch, on a comfy looking log. He'd just got nicely started when the log started squirming under him. "Hold a bit!" he said, picking up his axe. "Thee do movey, do thee? Take that, then." And he hit the 'log' so hard, it was cut in two. One end ran off in one direction, the other the opposite way. The two ends couldn't find each other - so the poor gurt vurm died.*

*The woodman made his way back to the old woman, carrying a hatful of worts. "There were a dragon there fust go off," he said, thoughtfully. The woman tried to look innocent - didn't he realise? hadn't anyone told him?*

*"Her were a Crowcombe woman," he said later. (Can this whole story just be an excuse to have a dig at another village?!)*

*Story derived from version by Tongue in 'Somerset Folklore' 'English Folktales' by Briggs and Tongue, 1965.*

<sup>1</sup><https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010494>

In the Quantock landscape it is the great hillforts at Dowsborough and Ruborough, that most obviously mark the Iron Age legacy. The enigmatic hill slope enclosure of Trendle ring has to be mentioned too; a farmstead, perhaps – maybe for an extended family group? Plainsfield Camp and Rooks Castle are similar but less well-preserved examples. More than 2000 years later no-one knows for sure what these features signified.

More subtle, but ultimately more significant however, is the founding of many ordinary farmsteads and settlements. South of Wills Neck and Aisholt the gentler topography meant that small farms and fields could be established on the east and west of the hills, while a combination of good farming land and mineral resources encouraged the growth of a dense population around Broomfield and Kingston St Mary in the 1st millennium BC. Some of these lasted through Domesday until today, or are at least still visible as ghostly cropmarks when seen from the summer air.

Much has changed since the Romans came and prehistory ended, but we have inherited a pattern of settlement with Iron Age roots.



Trendle Ring © Historic England

### The Roman Occupation

Like most rural areas, the Quantocks do not appear to have been heavily Romanised. The remains of a Roman villa have been found on the southeast edge of the Quantock Hills, between Enmore and Charlynch. There was another small villa at Yarford, west of Kingston St Mary, set within an Iron Age enclosure and very possibly a continuation of the same farm. At the start of the 4th Century the site was at its richest, with a fine mosaic, but by 400AD it had tumbled down to a workshop in what was by then a damaged and very neglected shell of the former villa. In the same area several coin hoards have been found, also from the end of the Roman occupation.

407 AD, when the last Legion left, traditionally marks the end of Roman rule but the abandoned villa and end of coin minting suggest that the time when there was a unified authority ruling an orderly province may have already come to an end before then. Its hard to know what effect the end of Roman rule would have had on the Quantock landscape; apart from a few peripheral villas the area had probably continued largely unchanged since Iron Age times, at least in landscape terms, anyway. The end of Roman rule did, however, clearly precipitate an economic collapse that must have led to the major social changes that mark the Early Medieval period.





*Surviving mosaic floor at Yarford Roman villa*

### The Early Medieval Period.

Once known as the Dark Ages, archaeological remains are conspicuously sparse from the period between about 400 and 700 AD and judging from the near-complete absence of archaeological or written records the population of the area seems to have declined significantly.

There is only one known archaeological site in the Quantock Hills from this period, a cemetery at Stoneage Barton Farm near Bishop's Lydeard, but the nature of the burials there suggest that there was an unknown high-status settlement nearby.

Only when west Somerset became part of the West Saxon kingdom in around 680 AD does the area start to reappear in the records<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup><https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010494>

## Development and Expansion: 700 – 1066

The first recorded written mention of Quantock Forest is probably as early as the 7th century, but by the beginning of the 8th century west Somerset was firmly part of the West Saxon (Wessex) kingdom (Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset). The great expanse of Quantock Common in the northern hills was established as part of the Saxon hunting ground and was essentially open heath, but the slopes and combs were more extensively wooded than today.

Although mentioned as a royal hunting ground in 904, the boundary of the forest is unclear with documentary evidence suggesting that it took in the whole of what is now common land and former common land. It may also have been short-lived, and the area was not formalised as a royal forest until after the Norman Conquest.

There is little evidence of any church fabric that can be dated to before the 11th century in and around the Quantock Hills. Several early royal centres or estates can be identified in the lowlands surrounding the Quantock Hills and minster churches were probably built at the royal centres of Cannington, North Petherton, Taunton and at Daw's Castle, Watchet. The pattern of land ownership at the time of the Domesday survey shows that the Quantock Hills were still surrounded by royal land and land owned by the church.

Larger Saxon estates began to fragment in the 10th century, and other centres developed, often with their own parish churches (interpreted as a way the new owners could show their wealth and independence). The precursors to the well documented medieval manors at West and East Quantoxhead, Kilve and Kilton date from this period, for example. Subservient to, and dependent on, the royal estates or independent manors were individual farmsteads and their holdings. These were the precursors of many of the farms that are documented in the medieval period. Some were abandoned in the 16th and 17th centuries, others remained in use until the 19th and early 20th centuries, many remain as farms to the present day.



Birches Corner



## The Manorial Landscape; Feudalism in the Medieval World 1066 - 1540

The medieval landscape of the Quantock Hills has survived in remarkable detail in some places. On the coastal strip the buildings at East Quantoxhead and Kilve and the outbarn at the deserted farmstead of Dens Combe (west of Holford) are visible survivals of a way of life that centred on the manor and its lord which have persisted through the centuries. Life and the landscape of the Quantock Hills in the medieval period were dominated by several manor houses that lay at the heart of large estates. The parishes of West Quantoxhead, East Quantoxhead, Kilve and Kilton roughly equate to the medieval manors of the same names. They erected high status buildings such as castles, manor houses and churches made of timber and stone.

### Stowey Castle

By 1086 the first Norman Lord of the Manor, Alfred d'Espaignes held the whole estate of Stowey, and he probably had a fortified base of some kind in the area. But it was during The Anarchy, the civil war between Stephen and Empress Matilda in the mid-12th century, that the first record of a significant stone building appears.

The site consists of a Motte or mound surrounded by a Bailey or courtyard probably enclosed in a wooden palisade of some kind. The square keep itself had stone foundations which still survive, although it is unclear whether the higher stories were wooden or stone. The castle passed through the hands of several families, but was progressively abandoned and the stone robbed to build some of the houses in the village. By the late 15th century the area was let for pasture – a use that continues to the day.

Rather unflatteringly Historic England's Scheduled Ancient Monument catalogue states that the site is "*an undistinguished castle-mound of no historical importance*". It has good views over the village, though, and is a popular walking spot.



© Historic England, Stowey Castle 1998



They also laid out deer parks, often close to the manor houses, where wood pasture and more open grazing for deer contributed to a managed landscape around the lord's residence. Medieval deer parks have been identified at 12 manors in and around the Quantock Hills. It was usually agriculture that provided the driver for the maintenance and expansion of manorial estates and there is some evidence for open field farming on and around the Quantock Hills.

However, it is the process of creating a farmstead, carving out the fields from woodland or heath, that has left the most lasting impression on the Quantock Hills. Many of the hamlets and farms around Aisholt and Merridge, connected by narrow lanes and tracks, have their origins in the 11th century or earlier. During the later medieval period that this process starts to be seen across large parts of the landscape. Farmstead and hamlets become the dominant form of settlement in and around the Hills, with many of them documented by the 13th century.

Most of the fields that surround the farms and hamlets of the Quantock Hills have their origins in a farming system known as infield/outfield farming where the field closest to the settlement was farmed for arable, often communally, and abundant pasture, common and waste ground was available for periodic arable use further away from the settlement. As early as the 13th century some infields began to be enclosed or consolidated, but the tithe map of 1841 show many more of these strip fields still in existence.

Whilst the centuries following the Norman Conquest were generally prosperous, from the early 1300s increasing population pressure and a deteriorating climate brought famine and disease. The Great Famine of 1315-1317 marked the end of the Medieval warm period, but the Black Death of 1348-9 became the enduring image of the age.

Rich or poor, the 14th Century was arguably the worst period to have been living in England, with death rates that exceeded even the near anarchy of the Civil War three hundred years later. Mass mortality amongst even the richest landowners led to the collapse of the manorial system and often much movement of the remaining people. On the lower part of the hills there is evidence that areas of broadleaved woodland grew over medieval fields. Indeed, much of today's heathland covers the remains of arable fields. Some farming hamlets shrank to individual farmsteads, and strip fields and rough ground began to be enclosed on a piecemeal basis into fields. New small manors developed as the old estates broke up.

### **Industry, Agriculture and Emparkment: 1540 - 1900 (Post Medieval)**

From the later medieval and post-medieval periods (16th and 17th centuries) the system of outfields was used on the Quantock Hills. These were areas of temporary cultivation that were worked either in common, or, where individual farms had access to waste, by individual holdings.

The relict field systems are the remains of these outfields, which mainly grew rye for grain and thatch. Thatch was the most common roofing material for buildings of all kinds until the 19th century and remains a feature of the area today, although wheat or reed straw is now used in place of rye.

Other distinctive features such as water meadows can be seen on the Quantock Hills particularly to the south. In the area around Broomfield nearly every farm had a water meadow. Irrigation of meadows was practised to provide early grass for sheep and lambs in early spring and to boost the summer hay crop.

During this post-medieval period the Quantock Hills further developed as a working landscape supporting many different industries. The presence of a lime industry is documented in the 18th and 19th centuries and as early as 1652 in Aisholt. There is evidence for some 23 lime kilns on the Quantock Hills some of which still survive in various states of dereliction. Substantial limestone quarries existed at Hawkridge Common and at Kiln Close. There were also many smaller quarries that once supplied road stone and building material. The most developed sites are on the western side of the hills, with examples at West Quantoxhead, Halsway and Triscombe. The latter two were created in the 18th century, and Triscombe did not close until the late 1990s.



*Hawkridge Lime Kiln*

There is some evidence to suggest that copper and possibly iron was mined in small quantities in and around the hills in the medieval and early post-medieval periods. Two main areas were around Dodington (where two engine houses are still visible) and in the Broomfield area.

Charcoal burning platforms have also been recorded and documentary evidence suggests that blocks of woodland were sold to itinerant charcoal burners; the Holford combes in particular are likely to be littered with burning platforms that LiDAR could reveal.

Oak bark was used in the many tanneries and there were perhaps as many as 12 tanneries in the Quantock Hills in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The fast-flowing streams that drain the Quantock Hills were also responsible for the growth in the rural textile industry, which was well established in and around the Quantock Hills by the 16th century. Buildings connected with the textile industry remain at Holford and at Marsh Mills, Over Stowey.

The Parliamentary enclosures of the 18th and 19th centuries led to the enclosure of some of the higher land on the Quantock Hills that had not been enclosed during or since the medieval period. These fields are generally larger and more rectangular than the earliest fields and are often hedged with stone-faced banks topped with beech trees. It is these beech hedgebanks, only 200 years or so old, that are now thought of as “traditional” and a fundamental part of the Quantock identity.

Ornamental landscapes were also being developed at this time and substantial deer parks were developed, many of which were the basis of 18th and 19th century landscape parks and still survive as parkland today. One of the most dramatic was the extensive emparking around St Audries which began in the early 18th century after more than 100 years of diverting roads, planting trees and moving the old village of West Quantoxhead from between the manor house and the medieval church to its present site. It was also probably during this time that the tree ring enclosures were constructed on the moorland.

It was also at around this time that landscape started to be valued in more than narrowly economic terms. The Romantic Poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834) and William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850), both had strong connections to the area. The National Trust now owns Coleridge's former cottage in Nether Stowey which is a popular visitor attraction.



*Parlour, Coleridge Cottage*

Many have heard of Kubla Khan or the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner, but few know the actual poems. In contrast how many visitors to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty know that the modern concept of Natural Beauty can be traced back to their time in a couple of Quantock cottages? More enduring than perhaps their poems have proved, their most enduring legacy is arguably the very idea of landscape as we understand it today.



## The Modern Age; Twentieth and Twenty -First Centuries (1900 - Present)

In the aftermath of the First World War the Forestry Commission was established to ensure that the UK would have a strategic reserve of timber for use in future conflicts. In the Quantocks, as in many historically important but agriculturally marginal lands, extensive coniferous plantations resulted in damage to the archaeological landscape as well as changing the habitat balance of the landscape. Ironically as 20th century agricultural intensification gathered pace, afforestation may have saved some sites from even more damaging agricultural operations.

During WWII a large storage depot was located at Norton Fitzwarren, US Army hospitals at Sandhill Park and Norton Camp, and large camps for US troops, housed in huts and in tents, at Crowcombe Heathfield, Doniford Camp, Alfoxton and Hestercombe<sup>1</sup>. Doniford became an artillery range training site and camp in 1925, closing in the late 1950s and the site is now a holiday park. At West Kilton Farm the remains of a WWII tank training range (including brick buildings and concrete bases) can still be seen. The Quantock Hills were also used for training the Home Guard. Prisoner of War camps were located at Bridgwater, Norton Fitzwarren and at Goathurst Camp, Halswell. There were also British anti-aircraft and searchlight batteries associated with the defence of Bristol.

After the 39-45 war there was a great demand for timber and the government encouraged the felling of unwanted trees and the planting of conifers. In 1949 a landowner at the northern end of the hills began to fell the marketable timber in Hodders Combe and at the same time offered the Forestry Commission a long lease of 1200 acres of moorland above East Quantoxhead to plant conifers. This provoked an outcry and following a public meeting called to oppose it, Friends of Quantock came into being. As the objections to the felling grew, the County Council imposed a tree preservation order on Hodders Combe and in May 1951 the landowner at East Quantoxhead withdrew his offer to the Forestry Commission. This episode marked the creation of the "Friends" and the beginning of a much more active public interest in the conservation of the hills.

1949 also saw the legislation creating National Parks and one of the first of these was to be Exmoor. The original proposal included the Quantocks but in the end it was decided that they were too remote from Exmoor to be included and so in 1956 they became the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England (the designation was confirmed in January 1957).

1957 also marked the start of the construction of Hinkley Point A nuclear power station just along the coast to the north-east; the modern age had arrived.



Hinkley A & B from the Quantocks

<sup>1</sup>Mac Hawkins 1996, *Somerset at War, 1939-45*, Hawk Editions

In 1970 another major threat appeared in a proposal to build a championship golf course on the hilltop. Again the Friends of Quantock took a leading part in the successful opposition to the plan.

These proposed or actual major developments grabbed headlines, but at least as significant was the accumulating degradation of the landscape from a thousand minor changes. During and after the Second World War the pressures and incentives for farmers to modernise continued, resulting in the agricultural improvement of grassland and the reduction of permanent pasture. During the latter half of the 20th century there was a shift towards conversion of remaining lowland grassland in and around the Quantocks to arable, leading to the deterioration or removal of hedgerow boundaries. The way the open Common Land is managed also evolved, with generally lower levels of grazing pressure leading to the spread of scrub and increasing concerns about the longer-term implications of the abandonment of management in thecombe oak woods. As mechanisation replaced farm labour, management of the beech hedges largely ceased; leaving beautiful but unstable mature tree lines perched on the Georgian stonewalled banks.

It was increasingly apparent that the administration of the AONB, spread as it was between three different District Councils and the County Council (each responsible for its own planning policy) needed some overall co-ordination. Finally, in 1973, a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was set up consisting of members of all four councils with some officers and representatives of other organisations including Friends of Quantock.

In 1974 the first Quantock Warden was appointed, and by 1988 the AONB service was well established.

More recent pressures on the landscape of the Quantock Hills are subtly changing the patterns of settlement and land use. Smallholdings that are no longer in agricultural ownership have become horse paddocks with pressure for new stabling and ménages. Commuters moving in from Taunton are increasing demand on housing and services. As the nearby population has grown, the Quantocks' popularity as a destination for recreation has also increased.



## 2.4 The Working Landscape

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Area is predominately managed for agriculture and forestry.

There are approximately 150 commercial agricultural holdings. The main land uses are permanent grassland (42% of the farmed area) and arable (38% of the farmed area) with 80% of farms under 100ha in size (41% are under 20ha). Over 80% of the land in the Partnership area (excluding the coastal fringe) falls into agricultural categories 3, 4 or 5 making it moderate to poor land for cropping. 34% of the area is designated a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

The Partnership area includes 2,141ha of broadleaved woodland, 1,039ha of coniferous woodland, and 116ha of mixed woodland, totalling 3,475ha including small additional felled and planting prepared areas. This represents 18% of the Landscape Partnership area with 1,284ha recorded as ancient (over two thirds of this is ancient replanted).

The typology of the Landscape Partnership area has had an obvious influence on the land management / agriculture being undertaken. The main hilltop plateau of the Quantock Hills with its poor soils is predominately permanent pasture, usually rough grazing or woodland, with the fringing slopes an intricate pattern of small irregular fields again managed for pasture. As you descend off of the main hill into the fringing landscape the field patterns are larger, and the use is mixed with more arable especially on the coastal zone at the north of the area and in the southern belt between the Quantock Hills and Taunton.



## 2.5 Quantock Nature

The Quantock Landscape Partnership area contains a superb assemblage of habitats and species that collectively make this area special for nature. The area includes examples of seven different priority habitats, considered national priorities because of their rarity and rate of decline.



### 2.5.1 Priority Habitats within the LPS area;<sup>1</sup>

#### **Upland Heathland, Lowland Heathland, Blanket Bog, and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland (total 2188ha)**

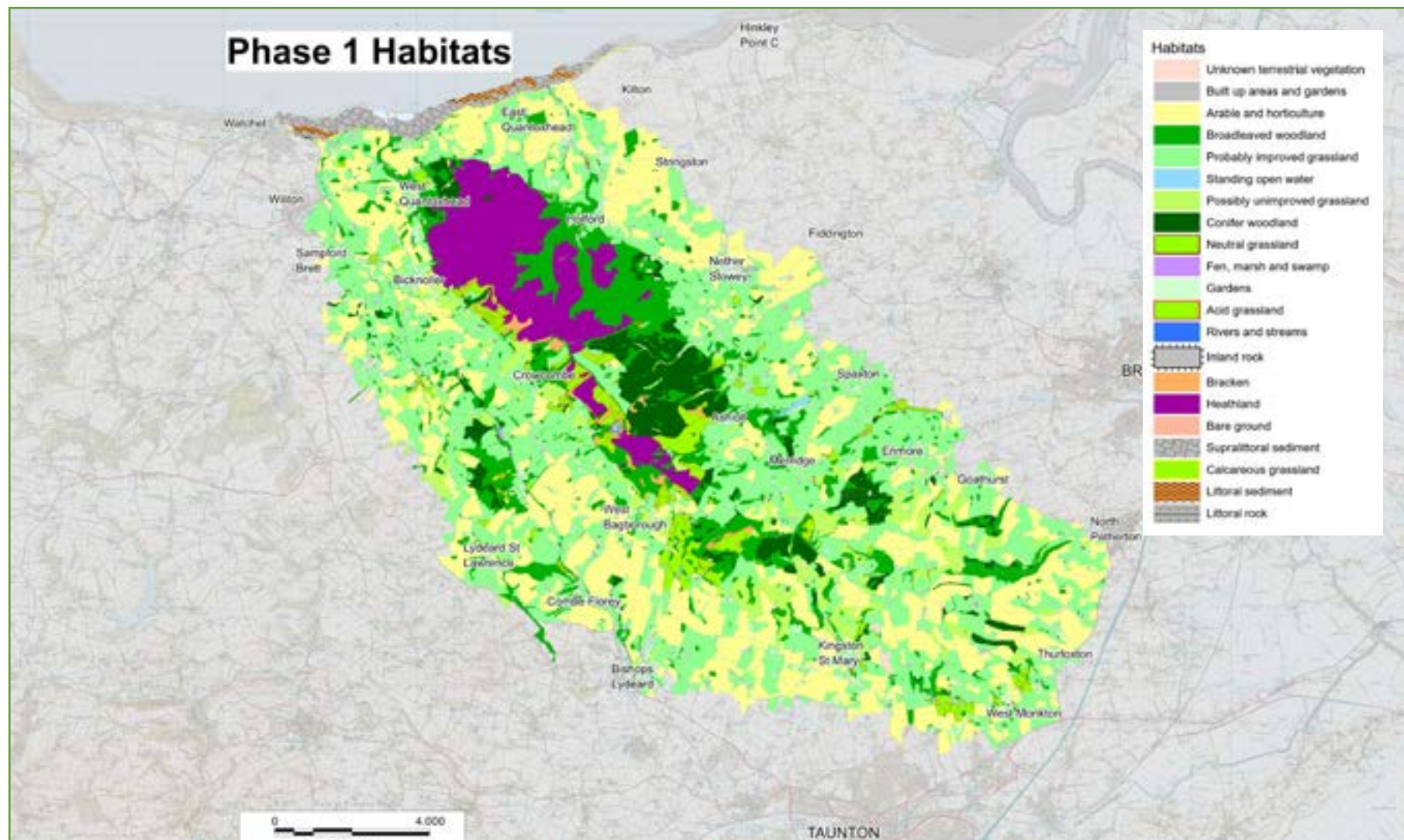
Upland heathland	1,448ha
Lowland heathland	539ha (1% of UK total - 0.2% of global total)
Lowland dry acid grassland	186ha
Blanket Bog	15ha

The most apparent of the priority habitats are the upland and lowland heaths<sup>2</sup>, which grow in a large contiguous block of SSSI designated habitat on the summits of the Quantock Hills. The lowland acid dry grassland, mostly at Cothelstone Hill with a few scattered patches elsewhere, supports a similar range of species to the heather-dominated heathland but the balance of species is different. Within the heath, blanket bog has formed in a few small areas at some stream heads.

The heathland vegetation occurs almost entirely on poor acid soils, prone to drought, and exposed to the most inclement weather. It has survived as a semi-natural habitat because it is such unpromising cropland, but even so it has been periodically cultivated in both prehistoric and historic times when food shortages bit hardest. These interludes of cultivation further denuded the soil nutrients, and even good grass will not now grow without fertiliser.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Natural England (2011) and MAGIC datasets.

<sup>2</sup>The distinction between upland and lowland heath is somewhat academic in the South West, but broadly upland is above the 300m contour. Visually, in management terms, and ecologically the two forms of heathland are very similar in the Quantocks. On the ground there's no real boundary between them.





The heathy habitats survive particularly on the areas of Common Land where no-one had a controlling influence to justify “improvement”. Management by Commoners continues, with a mixture of sheep, ponies, and cattle grazing underpinned by an annual swaling (controlled winter burning) programme undertaken by the AONB. As a result, an outstanding feature of the Quantock heathlands is that the dwarf-shrub communities are represented by a wide range of age classes.

The dry dwarf-shrub heath community on the sandstone is dominated by bell heather, western gorse and bristle bent. Other species include bilberry, the very local but fascinatingly parasitic dodder, heath milkwort, green-ribbed sedge and small quantities of heather. A different dry dwarf-shrub heath community occurs on slightly less drought prone soils. Here heather is dominant, mixed with bilberry and wavy hair-grass. Other species include sheep's cescue and common cow-wheat.

Bracken is common on well drained deeper soils. In the Quantocks as elsewhere, bracken can form extensive stands that exclude other vegetation. Such dominance is unwelcome, from both an ecological and a farming point of view and increases fire risk. Historically the bracken was harvested as a valuable resource for bedding livestock, but nowadays manual control (mowing) is used to keep it in check, along with occasional use of the selective herbicide Asulam. Where it is not dominant it is often associated with bilberry (locally known as whortleberry) and wavy hair-grass, or a more species-rich community that also includes common cow-wheat, sheep's-fescue, common bent, sweet sernal-grass, and heath bedstraw.

Acidic flushes and small blanket bogs have developed at the sources of many of the springs and alongside some of the streams. Species typical of this habitat include: bog pimpernel, round-leaved sundew, common cottongrass, common spike-rush, cross-leaved heath, marsh pennywort, bog asphodel, and star sedge.

Typical birds of the open heath include skylark and meadow pipit, with tree pipit, stonechat and whinchat, yellowhammer and warblers including grasshopper warbler and whitethroat amongst the gorse stands and in the scrubber areas along the woodland edge. Dartford warbler is present in small numbers that fluctuate with the previous winter's weather, but recently only 1 or 2 pairs have bred. Buzzard, kestrel, and raven are common sights, with hen harrier and merlin often present in very small numbers in winter.

Monitoring of the summer breeding birds on Quantock Common has shown that populations have remained broadly stable for the majority of species, bucking the national trend and supporting its inclusion under the Exmoor Coast and Heaths Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA).

The heathland hilltops are also intricately linked to the red deer herd, numbering approximately 500 animals, lower than historic numbers but fairly stable in more recent years. The presence of the Red Deer, the largest free-roaming wild animal in the UK, is strongly supported locally and a draw for many visitors particularly during the autumn rut.

### **Broadleaved Mixed & Yew Woodland (1,084ha)**

The extensive broadleaf mixed and yew woodland forms corridors throughout the partnership area, including the internationally important Quantock Oakwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Sessile oak dominated woodland is present in Holford Combe, Hodder's Combe, Shervage Wood and Five Lords. Understorey species include downy birch, holly, and rowan. The ground flora tends to be dominated by wavy hair-grass, bilberry and common cow-wheat but hairy wood-rush, honeysuckle and heather are also present. These woodlands were managed as coppice for charcoal production and tanning until the early 20th century, but with the exception of the more exposed portions that are severely wind-pruned they are now developing into high forest.



Valley Alder woodland dominated by alder occurs alongside many of the streams. Ash/wych elm woodland is present on more neutral soils in Holford Glen where ash and wych elm form the canopy; it is as yet unclear what impact ash die back disease will have on these stands. Understorey species include hazel, field maple, and blackthorn. The ground flora is dominated in many of the drier areas by dog's mercury or by pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* on wetter soils. Ramsons are present on flushed slopes.

There is a naturally dynamic edge between the woodlands and the open heath, and the scrub has been creeping upslope in recent years. An unusual feature is the way in which holly is colonising some areas of open ground. Scattered bushes of hawthorn, holly, rowan, sessile oak and downy birch are frequent on less exposed slopes.

The Quantock woodlands support a rich lichen flora, although the dense canopy of the unmanaged oak woodlands has been noted by Plantlife's *Building Resilience in South West Woodlands* project as a limiting factor for some of the classic Celtic rainforest species. Many lichen species normally restricted to ancient woodlands occur: Alfoxton Wood is one of only 3 British locations where *Tomasellia lectea* is present. The site also supports a number of flowering plant and fern species that have a local distribution in Somerset. Cornish honeywort, shoreweed, heath pearlwort, deergrass and hayscented buckler-fern are of particular interest. Tunbridge filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* and cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* do not occur anywhere else in Somerset. Cowberry occurs here at its southernmost British limit.

The various habitats together with the wide range of slopes and aspects, provide ideal conditions for a rich fauna. palmate newt, common frog, and common toad live in and around the wetter areas. Reptiles present include adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard.

In total 58 species of breeding bird have been recorded in woods and heaths, grasshopper warbler, wood warbler, redstart, nightjar, linnet, cuckoo, raven and pied flycatcher being of particular interest. The extensive area of semi-natural habitat provides a valuable hunting ground for a number of raptors. Invertebrates of note include the silver-washed fritillary, and 3 nationally rare dead-wood beetles: *Thymalus limbatus*, *Orchesia undulata* and *Rhinosimus ruficollis*.

Barbastelle and Bechstein's bats are both found in these woods, which provide important shelter for the red deer herd and for commoners' livestock.



Pied Flycatcher © John Markham



Scarlet Waxcap at Durborough Farm, Aisholt

### Lowland Meadows (12ha) and Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland

As is typical of England, there is almost no completely “unimproved” (undamaged) flower rich grassland left in the Quantocks. A few fragments totalling 12ha remain at the periphery of the LPS area. However, there are several patches of “Good quality semi-improved grassland” which can still be quite species rich, concentrated around Aisholt, Cothelstone, and along the coast. These include important sites for waxcap fungi, including the pink waxcap (*Porpolomopsis calyptriformis*), a UK BAP Priority Species.

### Mudflats (47ha)

Off the coast are the mudflats, exposed at the bottom of the tide. They are prime feeding areas for birds. The flats off the Quantock coast are only a tiny fraction of the enormous Severn Estuary mudflat system, one of the most extensive intertidal wildlife habitats in the UK, but they do bring added birding interest to the area.

The fluctuating salinity and high turbidity limits the invertebrates to relatively few species but they occur in very high densities. Ragworm, lugworm, and specialist molluscs support wintering and migrating waders such as curlew, redshank, dunlin, and grey plover.



## 2.5.2 Other Significant Habitats and Widespread Species

### Conifer Plantations

There are 943ha of conifer plantation within the scheme area. Douglas fir (357ha) and Sitka spruce (138ha) are the main conifer species planted, with beech (67ha) and oak (31ha) making up a significant part of the broadleaf element. 599ha of the plantations are Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and 66ha of broadleaves is Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ANSW). The remainder was created on formerly open ground, mostly on heathland, after WWI.

The plantations include 93ha of open space, with a further 27ha of treeless terrain planned to be created over the next 3 years. The open space is mostly there for nature conservation reasons, but includes some areas dedicated to recreational use.



Long Eared Owl © Chris Sperring MBE



The conifer plantations have fewer birds than the broadleaf and heathland areas, but lesser redpoll and siskins are common winter visitors with small numbers of both species remaining to breed. Common crossbill winters in variable numbers and may also nest on occasions. European nightjar (over 1% of the total UK population) breeds regularly in the open areas and recently clear-felled areas of the plantations. The conifer plantations are also important habitats for raptors, including goshawk and buzzard. Tawny owls are present in all the plantations with lesser numbers of long-eared owl and barn owls in the larger woodlands.

The different habitats within conifer plantations, such as the scrubby habitats alongside forest roads and rides, provide good sightings of many of the common species of UK butterfly with comma, gatekeeper, meadow brown, ringlet, marbled white, speckled wood and silver washed fritillary being regularly seen. Green and brown hairstreak have also been recorded, usually on the open spaces. Other species of note include dormouse and adder, though these species are not associated with dense block of conifer plantation.

### **Parkland**

Parklands with their wealth of open-grown veteran trees can be expected to host significant populations of uncommon fungi, lichens, and specialist dead wood beetles, but there is a notable lack of available biological data for parks in the LPS area. The contrast with well-recorded places like the Field Studies Council base at Nettlecombe on Exmoor is particularly marked.

### **Farmland**

The permanent improved pasture and arable around the Quantocks support the usual range of farmland species. The network of hedges, although significantly reduced in the 20th Century, remains fairly intact in many places, providing good habitat connectivity.

Due to the nature of the landform the Quantock Hills is the start of many small stream systems, feeding a multitude of small farm ponds. These provide good habitat for newts, along with a host of other amphibian and invertebrate species.

### **Other Coastal habitats**

Although the coast is designated for its geological interest, there is still a wealth of wildlife here. Peregrines and ravens breed on the cliffs, and the cliff-top scrub attracts warblers and other migrant songbirds. Wigeon can also be seen just offshore in wintertime, while oystercatcher and shelduck are present all year.

The most accessible parts of the foreshore is the wave cut platforms, full of small rockpools. The huge tide range, the naturally high silt load, and the shallow nature of the pools limit their interest, but shore crabs, anemones, small gobies, and small shrimps can still be found by a young rockpooling enthusiast.



© Vincent Wildlife Trust/ Henry Schofield. A Barbastelle bat

### 2.5.3 European Protected Species

#### Bats

Hestercombe House SAC in the south of the area is designated because of its maternity and hibernations roosts of lesser horseshoe bats. Other sites, such as Halsway Manor, also have roost sites for lesser horseshoes. Similarly, The Quantock Oakwoods SAC in the north of the area has the presence of barbastelles as a primary reason and Bechstein's as a qualifying feature for selection as an SAC.

Barbastelles from the Quantock Oakwoods are known to forage over the northeast part of the LPS area as a result of survey work undertaken in connection with the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant development, but good distribution data is lacking in the south and west although they are known to be present.

Monitoring undertaken by the Quantock Hills AONB Service has also identified other sites important for bats due to the assemblage of species and roosts. These surveys have identified lesser and greater horseshoe, serotine, noctule, brown long-eared, barbastelle, common, soprano and Nathusius pipistrelle, Daubenton's and other myotis species being present. In total 16 of the 18 bat species found in the UK live in the LPS area.

#### Other

From the scatter of casual records, dormice appear to be widespread but at generally low densities. It is not known how well connected the populations are, but the network of hedgerows should provide good habitat links wherever it has not been too fragmented by field enlargement.

Great crested newts are present at a number of ponds especially in the south of the Landscape Partnership area.

## 2.5.4 Designated Sites and Ancient Woodland Inventory.

The designated sites in the QLPS area reflect the importance of the area for natural heritage.

### **Special Areas of Conservation (309ha)**

The northern wooded combes are part of the Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods SAC. In the south of the area, Hestercombe House SAC is designated specifically for its lesser horseshoe bats.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (2809ha)**

There are five SSSIs.

The Quantocks SSSI accounts for 2474ha of the SSSI total. It covers the heathland heart of the Quantock Hills, as well as the SAC combe oak woods.

Ge-Mare Farm Fields in the northeast is small (4ha) unimproved species-rich flood pasture, probably the largest area of surviving unimproved neutral grassland in the area.

Roebuck Meadows is a 3.5ha fragment of lowland mire near Lydeard St Lawrence.

Like all terrestrial SACs, Hestercombe House also has an SSSI designation.

Finally the LPS area contains part of the Blue Anchor to Lilstock Coast geological SSSI, which covers the whole of the cliffs and intertidal area of the LPS.

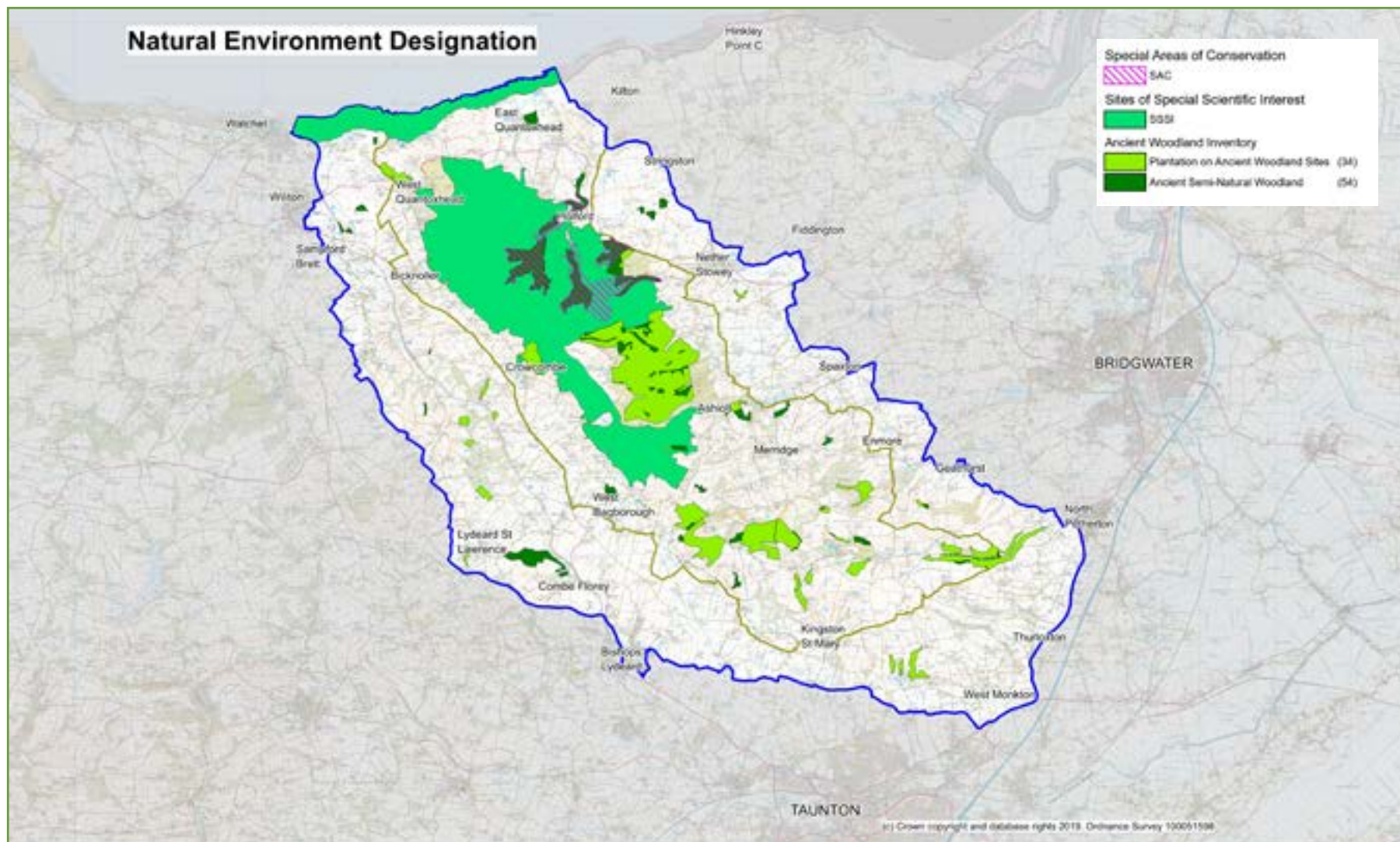
### **Ancient Woodlands**

There are 404ha of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and 880ha of Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). These figures include the areas within designated sites.



*Oak woodland with stream*







East Quantoxhead

## 2.6 Significance of the Built Heritage

The Quantock Hills are an important historic landscape with a wide variety of highly significant heritage features as described in section 2.3 above.

The upland Common, which makes up 11% of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, has particular prehistoric significance with 38 of the 60 Scheduled Monuments within the LPS located here. The majority of these features are associated with Bronze Age funerary monuments such as ring and platform cairns and show the significance of the Quantock Hills ridge to prehistoric people.

The impact of the Medieval period on the built heritage of the Landscape Partnership Scheme area is apparent, even today. The wealth of the landowning families is reflected in the surviving medieval fabric of churches, chapels and manor houses. The manor houses form a ring around the main hilltop and ridge of the Quantock Hills with each having a deer park, good farmland in the vales and upland grazing on the heath.

The pattern of early development has resulted in 542 listed buildings within the Landscape Partnership area. Of these 21 are grade I listed with a further 61 grade II\*.

During the post-medieval period many of the manor houses were rebuilt or refurbished on a grand scale and formal gardens and ornamental landscape parks were laid out. The Quantock Landscape Partnership is exceptionally rich in the remains of 18th and 19th century designed landscapes with at least 12 known ornamental landscape parks of which 5 are registered.

Away from the grand houses and their deer parks the post-Medieval landscape became a busy industrial landscape, with the upland oak woods being used for charcoal and timber production,

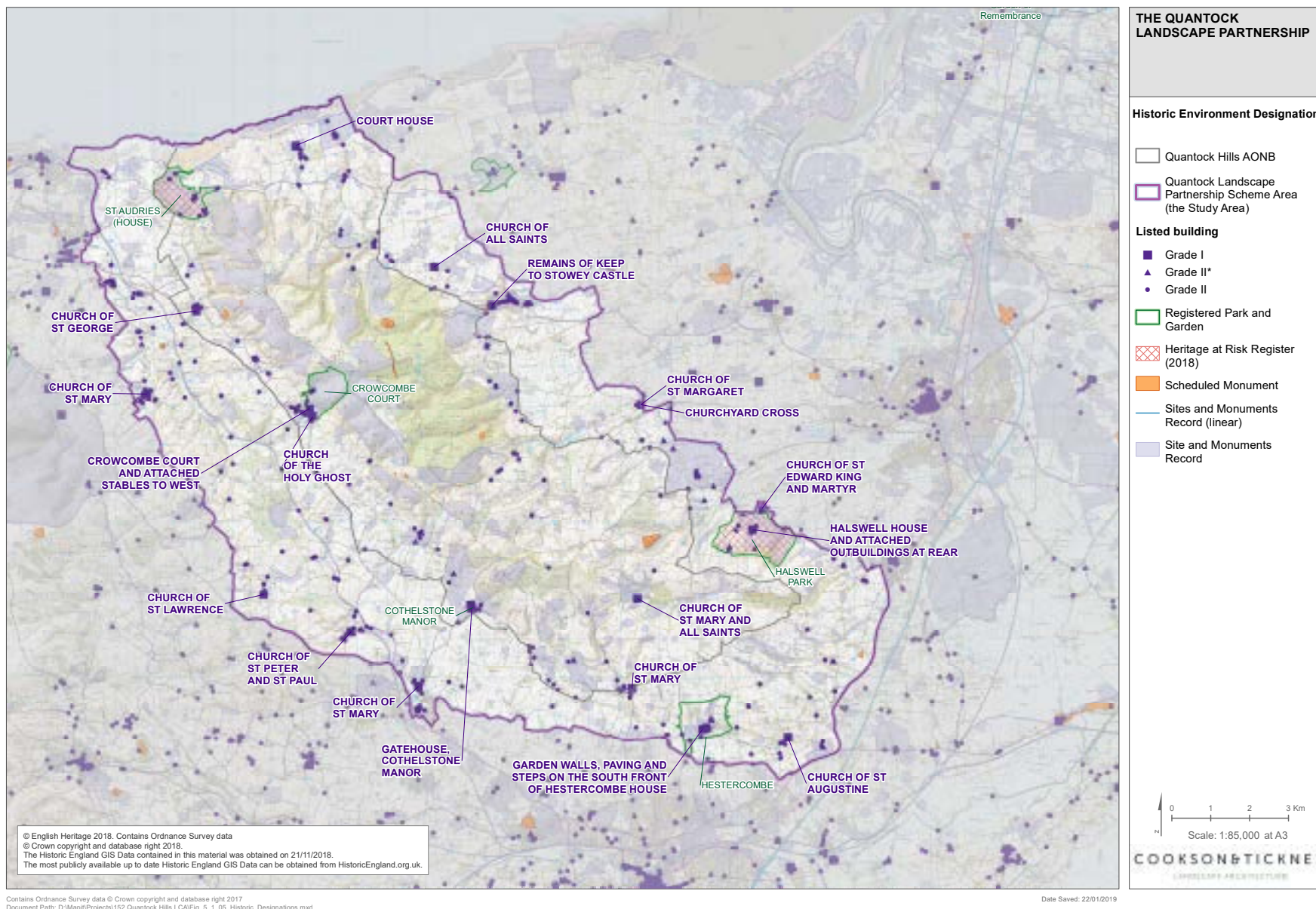


flourishing tanneries and textile mills, and later, around the mid-18th century, iron and copper mining and later still the larger stone quarries. While the parks and big houses largely survive, not only has the industrial landscape almost disappeared but the memory of it has largely faded too. The illusion of permanence can be particularly challenging at a time when significant changes, of land management and habitats, may be necessary if the natural heritage is to be retained in as rich a state as the 21st century inherited from the 20th.



Aisholt Church





# 3 People and the Landscape; Access and Opportunity

This section draws heavily on data from the 2018 *Quantock Hills User Survey*, conducted by the South West Research Company, and the 2019 *Quantock Landscape Partnership Audience Development Report* by Heritage Insider. Both were commissioned during the Stage 1 of the LPS and funded by NLHF. They are available from the AONB on request and included in full as supporting material for the Stage 2 application.



## 3.1 The 2018 Quantock Hills User Survey – who comes to the Hills already, and what do they think of the area?

The previous visitor survey had been undertaken in the Quantock Hills in 2003, and the Partnership were keen to conduct a further visitor survey during 2018 to provide as much up-to-date information as possible to feed into the LCAP process.

The 2018 User Survey largely replicated the 2003 format to make the results as comparable as possible. It was based on face to face interviews and an on line survey. It is important to note that, because it used popular sites as interview locations, it only covered the AONB, not the wider LPS area. The concentration of recreational pressure on the AONB honeypot sites does mean that it still gives a good snapshot of the overall visitor profile however. 416 people were interviewed face to face and another 199 replied to an online questionnaire, giving a total sample size of 615.



It is hard to derive absolute numbers from a summer survey but comparing the 2003 and 2018 day count from the survey period indicates a 25% increase in visits over the 15 years. This indication of significant growth since 2003 chimes with the perceptions of AONB staff, local residents, and landowners and is supported by the obvious growth in mountain biking (a new class of user virtually unknown in 2003) and the large-scale residential developments in nearby Taunton and Bridgwater.

The survey's best estimate of annual numbers is 385,000 recreational visits a year.



#### Headline findings from the 2018 User Survey;

- There is a good age spread amongst the 615 surveyed users; 38% are under 18, 25% 25 – 44, and 14% each at ages 45 – 59 and 60 – 74. The young adult 19 – 24 age range is underrepresented at only 4% but this is typical of countryside settings.
- 9% of users identified as having a significant health problem or disability.
- The area is slightly more popular with females than males (57% vs 43%). This suggests that women feel that the area is a socially safe space to visit.
- Of the 615 people in the survey, 536 (87%) were day users. Day users now account for almost 9 out of 10 users compared with around three quarters of users in 2003 (77%).

The broad picture is of an area that is popular with its users, who return again and again throughout the year to enjoy walking, wildlife, and other activities. Users are overwhelmingly local, in the sense of being day visitors. Tourism is not a strong feature of the area's visitor profile, in marked contrast to nearby Exmoor National Park.

However, the area does not appear to be attracting the new visitors one might expect given the growth of nearby Taunton and Bridgwater. For less affluent residents of these towns, the near total absence of public transport is probably one of the factors. 96% of non-resident visitors arrive by private motor vehicle.



- Despite high levels of satisfaction overall, waymarking/signposting continues to be the main issue amongst the roughly one third of users who do want to see changes, with 31% expressing a wish to see more route guidance.
- 160 of 615 visitors said they would like to see the increased provision of guided walks. At 26%, this proportion has more than doubled since the 2003 survey (12%).
- A desire for more / better waymarking and more guided walks was common across all the sites surveyed except Fyne Court.

Signposting to the site also came up as an issue – it is not one that the LPS can address directly but the difficulty of finding Great Wood in particular, which does not have a postcode for Sat Nav use, is something that Forestry England are aware of.

When asked about things visitors did not like, difficulties with car parking and the perennial concern of dog mess featured strongly.

- 41% of users at Fyne Court, 52% at Great Wood and 32% at Kilve Pill were children aged 16 years or under.
- The majority of users at Cothelstone Hill (56%), Crowcombe Park Gate (64%) and Staple Plain (66%) were aged 45+ years
- 15 of 108 (14%) of users in each case at Fyne Court and 8 of 52 (also 14%) at Crowcombe Park Gate had a long standing health issue or disability which limits their daily activity. This proportion decreased to only one person of 58 (2%) of users at Lydeard Hill and 2 of 61 (3%) at Cothelstone Hill.

The most accessible and best known sites were popular with families and visitors from outside the AONB. In contrast the majority of users at undeveloped sites were aged 45+ years. In general, the more remote the site, the higher proportion of local users, which while unsurprising does suggest that there is scope to spread the visitor load even within the AONB, but a need to do so sensitively.



Upon Cothelstone Hill

Fyne Court is an accessible site, with facilities such as toilets for people with disabilities, so its popularity with that user group is unsurprising. The popularity of Crowcombe Park Gate car park – a very rough parking spot with no facilities of any kind – requires explanation. Local opinion, from AONB Rangers, NT staff, and from the Commoners, is that people like to park there simply to enjoy the view. They don't need to get out of their car to do so, so accessibility is not a constraint for users with particular needs. Plans to relocate the car park (which is in a terrible state) have been modified in light of this finding.

The figure for users with disabilities at Cothelstone is disappointing, and probably reflects the limit of the accessible path there which takes you through woodland from the car park to the main site but no further. Improving the path beyond the entrance gate would open more possibilities for visitors with mobility issues.

It is interesting to compare the results of the User Survey with feedback from the pilot Youth Unlimited camping trip carried out as part of the Audience Development work. YU is a Bridgwater based youth organisation, and most of the young people involved had never been to the Quantocks before – certainly hardly any of them had been camping before.



First time visitors, from an atypical demographic for the Quantocks, enjoyed just the same things about the area as the established users did.

## 3.2 Affluence and Deprivation

The Quantock Hills AONB and the surrounding parishes that make up the LPS area are relatively affluent and walking or driving around the area it is clear that the majority of residents are comfortably off.

There is some obvious significant wealth, for instance in the form of the well-maintained country houses. Traditional agricultural estate finances have been under pressure for some time, but at the least their owners have very considerable capital assets. However, the villages around the Hills speak more of Middle England than conspicuous opulence, and it is very much a working landscape of small businesses and hard-working farmers. All rural communities have their share of hidden working-age poverty and struggling pensioners, but there is not the obvious skewed inequality that mars some holiday areas. Second homes are rare here.

Somerset Intelligence provides a helpful overview of a wide range of social indicators, listed by District and by ward; <http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/community-profiles.html>.

The Quantocks ward covers a large number of the communities in and around the Hills, places like Holford, Nether Stowey, and Spaxton. The ward has more older people – 29.2% of the population compared to the county average of 24.1%, and correspondingly fewer young people (16.8% under 18 compared to the Somerset average of 19.8%). Despite its aging population mortality is low, 681 per year per 100,000 (county average 860).

Quantocks ward has low crime rates, 4,433 recorded crimes a year per 100,000 population compared to the county average of 7,703 per 100,000. Educational attainment is good, 77.78% of pupils gaining GCSE English and Maths, better than the Sedgemoor District average of 68.86%. 66.67% of pupils are on track at KS 2 (county average 61.70%).

8% of household do not have a car; the County average is 15.9%, but then a car is close to essential for anyone who is not housebound. The 18% of residents with a disability of some kind is almost exactly the county average (18.8%) despite the older population. The population is near the centre of the bell curve for deprivation, scoring between 20 to 60% indicating low levels of poverty but also low levels of extreme wealth (although the inaccessible wealth tied up in house values is probably quite high).

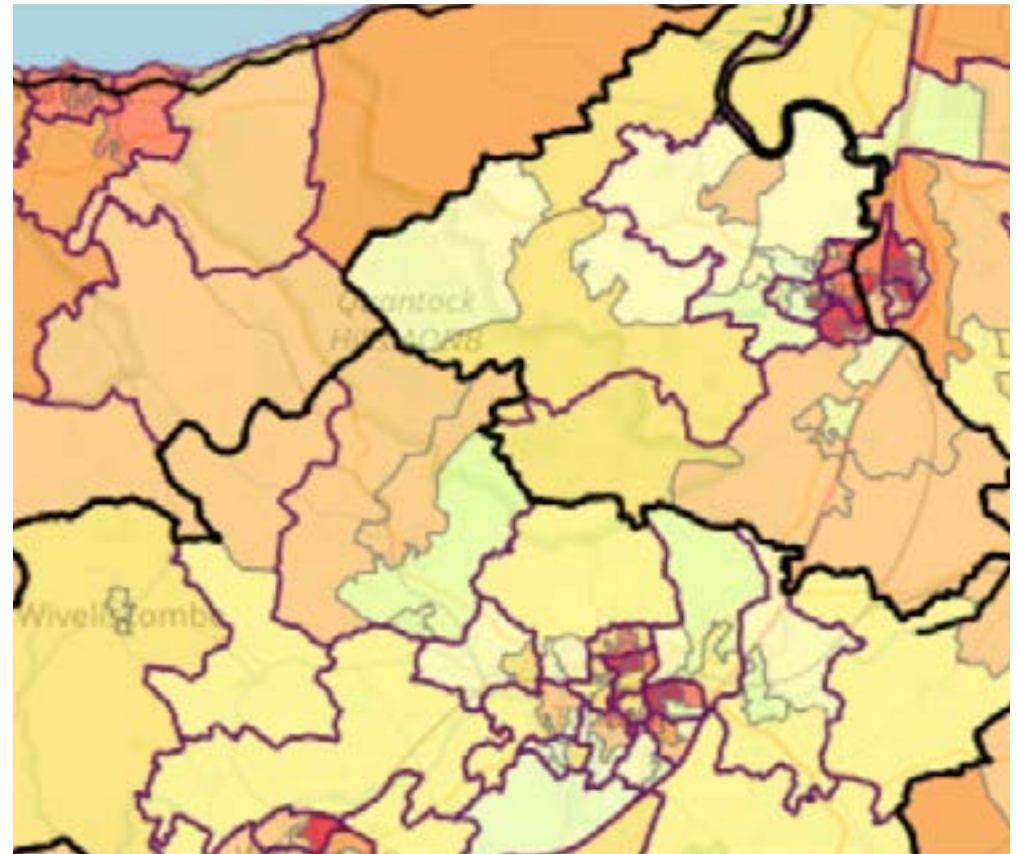


Picnickers at Great Wood



This benign picture does not tell the full truth, however. Some people are excluded from living in the Quantock community they grew up in or work in because of the shortage of affordable housing. During the community consultation events at Priorswood estate in Taunton and at Bowers Park in Sydenham, Bridgwater, some families mentioned knowing the Hills from visiting “Granny” who lived there. Priorswood and Sydenham are not places associated with wealthy offspring who

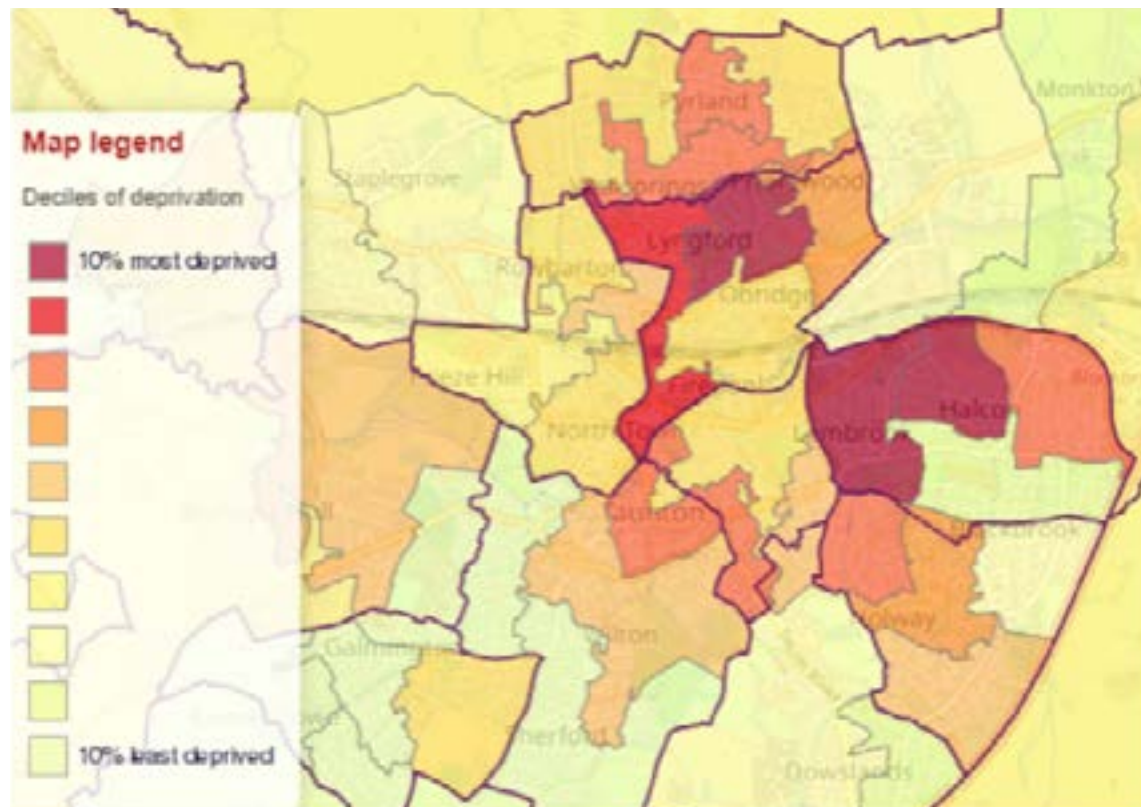
**Overview of deprivation levels around the Quantock Hills AONB, where darker red indicates higher levels of deprivation**



have chosen to live in town. The Quantock Hills have low levels of deprivation, in part, because if you are poor you probably cannot afford to live there in the first place. Market forces alone make them socially exclusive.

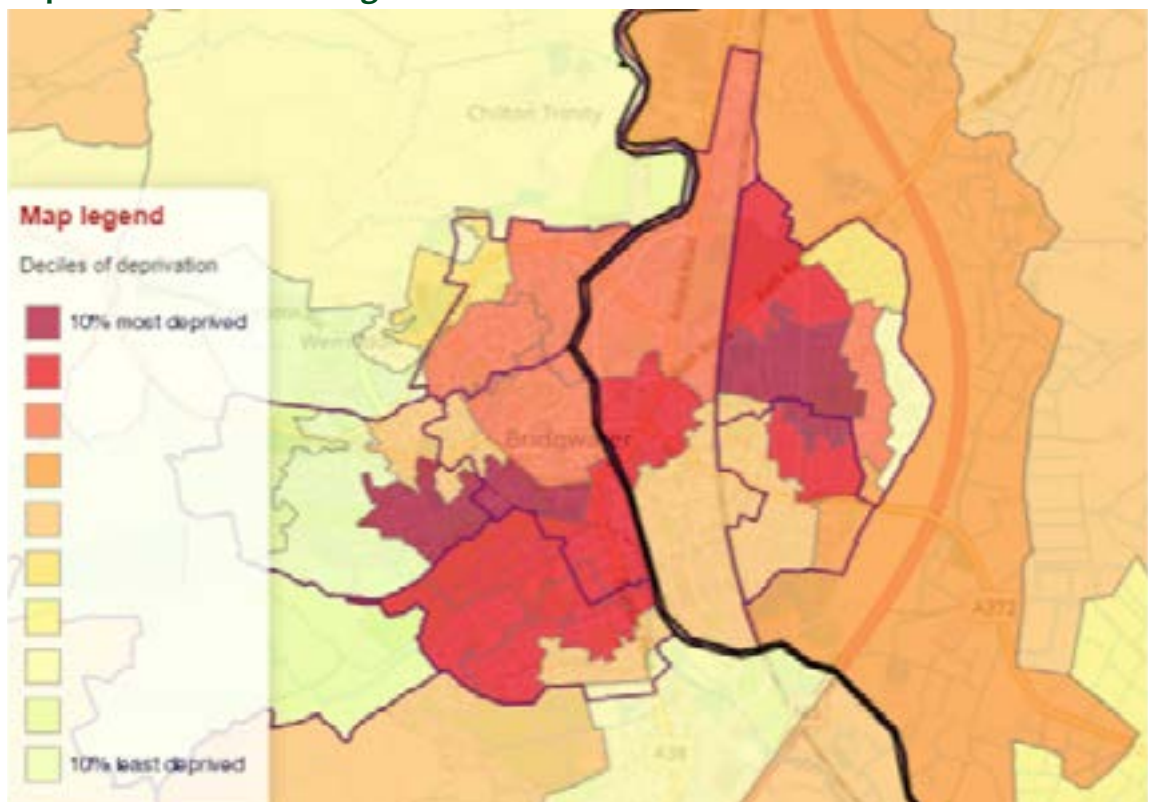
Many people of much more modest means live in the surrounding towns; Taunton, Bridgwater, Watchet, and Williton.

### Deprivation levels in Taunton



A high proportion of lower layer super output areas (LSOA) within Taunton and Bridgwater are categorised as deprived areas – falling into the 30% most-deprived areas. Four areas within Taunton and Bridgwater fall into the top 10% most deprived.

### Deprivation levels in Bridgwater





Hamp ward in Bridgwater is typical of the disadvantaged areas in Bridgwater and Taunton. It has many more young people – 26.0% of the population compared to the Somerset average of 19.8%, and correspondingly fewer people of retirement age (16.7% over 65s compared to the county average of 24.1%). Despite this younger population the mortality rate of 1,178 per 100,000 is well above the Somerset average of 860 per 100,000 – the health inequality is significant.

Hamp has well above average crime rates, around 10,331 recorded crimes a year per 100,000 population compared to the county average of 7,703 per 100,000. Educational attainment is lower than average, with 45.83% of pupils passing English and Maths GCSE (cf. 63.2% in Somerset as a whole), although at KS2 standards are more comparable (57.14% vs 61.70%).

A slightly higher than average proportion of residents have a disability of some kind (21% vs 18.8%), which again highlights the health inequalities affecting this young area. 73% of the population is in the most deprived category, hugely skewed compared to the bell curve Somerset distribution.

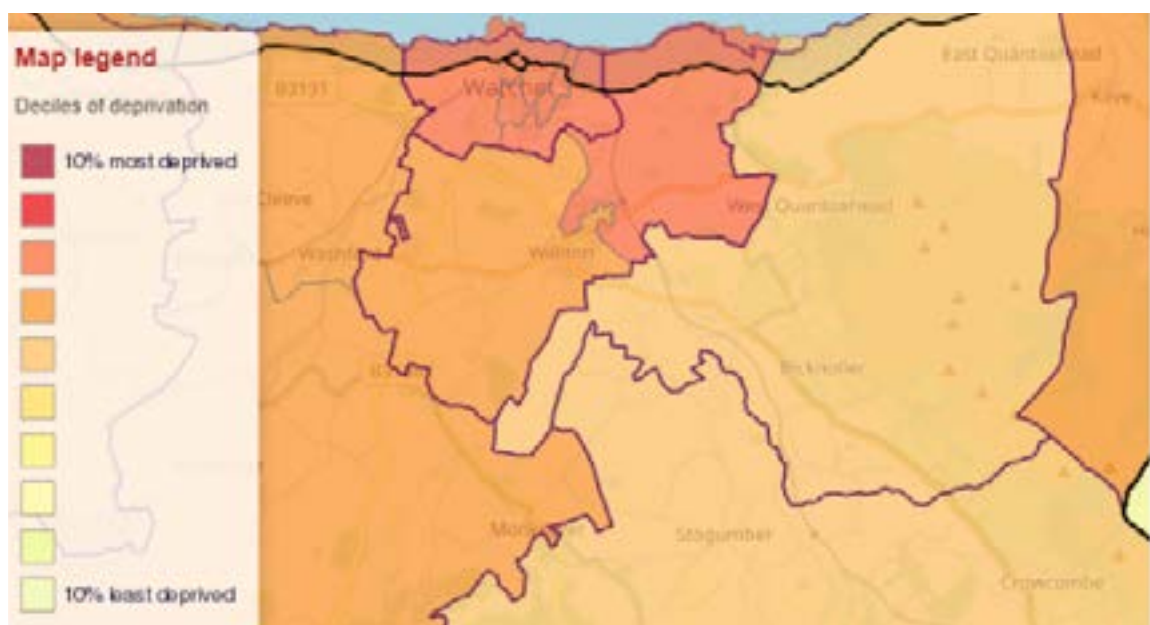
24% of household do not have a car; the county average is 15.9%. Across Bridgwater and Taunton as a whole an average of 19% of households do not have access to a car. That's around 10,000 households.

Watchet is an interesting contrast – casual visitors will enjoy the steam railway and picturesque harbour, and probably never see the poorer housing away from the town centre. Williton is more obviously lacking in affluence, but similarly hides any economic and social problems away from the main roads that visitors have no reason to leave.

Watchet and Williton ward has slightly fewer young people -17.3% of the population – compared to the Somerset average of 19.8%, but many more older people over 65, 33% compared to the county average of 24.1%. Despite its aging population mortality is only slightly above average, 934 per year per 100,000 (county average 860). 66.67% of pupils are on track at KS 2 (District average 59.73).

It has low crime rates, 5,832 recorded crimes a year per 100,000 population compared to the county average of 7,703 per 100,000. The towns struggle with educational attainment, though, only half of pupils gaining GCSE English and Maths compared to the county average of 63.2%, and only 46.76% on track at KS2 compared to a county average of 61.70%.

## Deprivation levels in and around Watchet and Williton





21% of household do not have a car; the District average is 15.9%. This is a surprisingly high figure despite the larger than average range of shops in these small settlements and what passes as a basic bus service. The 26% of residents with a disability of some kind is high compared to the County Average of 18.8%, in line with the older but less affluent population; 96% of the population are in the second most deprived quintile.



Halsway Post © Sally Pryde

### 3.3 Barriers to Access

The User Survey gives a good picture of the existing visitor profile and pattern of use, but by its nature it cannot capture the aspirations and interests of people who do not currently visit the area. The Audience Development Report was commissioned during the development phase to address this. Fundamentally the LCAP needs to understand who is missing, and why, if it is to achieve the LPS Partnership's aim to make the health and wellbeing benefits of recreation in the Quantock Hills more available to disadvantaged individuals and groups most in need of greater access to nature.

As part of the preparation of the Report, an online survey was conducted with 116 people living in or around the Quantock Hills AONB in Autumn/Winter 2018. The survey was distributed via social media and to parties with a potential interest in the Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership – *Reimagining the Manor*.

The survey revealed that most participating local people did have a connection to their local countryside, with 73% stating that they visit their local countryside frequently, and 26% stating that they visit it occasionally (respondents primarily lived outside of the AONB in neighbouring towns).

Reasons for not visiting, or not visiting very often, were generally due to a lack of time (26%) or a lack of confidence in accessing or navigating the Quantock Hills (42%). A few had simply never thought about visiting the AONB (13%).



Results of the survey of “non users” carried out as part of the Audience Development works – n=116.

Lack of transport again came up as an issue, cited by 20% of respondents who do not visit the Hills. Watchet and Williton are right on the border of the LPS area; they are less than two miles from the AONB boundary. Taunton and Bridgwater are only a mile or two further away. For anyone without access to a car, and with so few buses (there is no public transport at all within most of the actual AONB), it might as well be twenty.

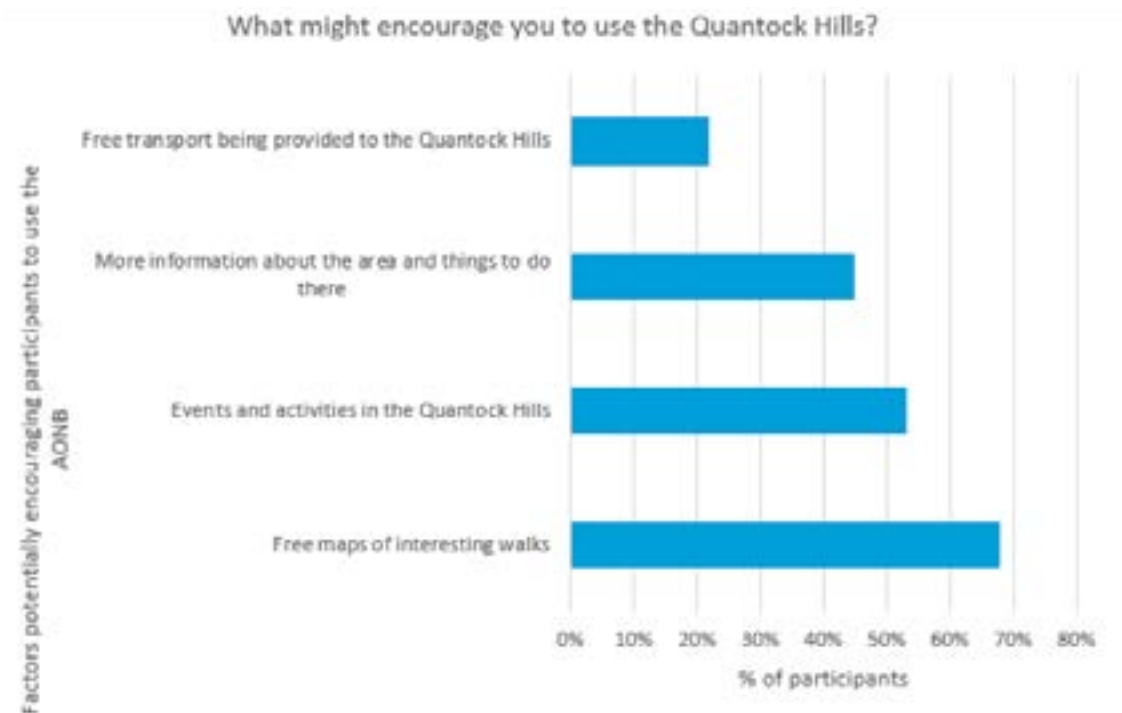
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*“Barriers would be transport, if we would promote Quantocks for families and individuals, the issue would be getting there. There is no public transport network to get out there.”*

*- Together Team representative*

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Following up, participants were asked what might encourage them to visit the Quantock Hills more. For most, it was about boosting confidence in the hills, potentially through having free maps of interesting walks (68%), or more information being provided about the area (45%). 53% would like events and activities in the Quantock Hills, and 22% feel that transport being provided to the Quantock Hills would encourage them to visit. People were interested in general enjoyment, relaxation and wellbeing, and exercise including dog walking. Clearly the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor recreation are instinctively understood, even if they might need some encouragement to walk more often, whereas only 27% explicitly mentioned learning about heritage.



Telephone interviews were also held with 12 “gatekeeper” leaders of community groups locally to the Quantock Hills AONB, particularly in the areas of high deprivation of Taunton and Bridgwater. The organisations to which the interviewees belonged served a variety of purposes, often working to support families and young people dealing with issues such as domestic violence, mental health problems, social deprivation, anti-social behaviour and similar.

Most of the interviewees had not previously visited the Quantock Hills AONB with their community groups.

“

*“I’ve taken a group of residents to the National Trust site on the Quantocks, we provided transport for them, that’s the main barrier. It was a group of 40 people for roughly 3-4 hours and they really enjoyed themselves.”*

*- LiveWest Housing Community Empowerment Officer*

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Those who had not visited the AONB were asked about what had stopped them from going. Seven of the nine who had not visited with their community groups said that a lack of, or high cost of, transport was the primary barrier to visiting. Issues that can be summarised as lack of confidence – concerns about getting lost or not knowing where they were allowed – were nearly as important.

Some further potential barriers were also mentioned by interviewees, including the community group members feeling that the Quantock Hills AONB was ‘elitist’, and ‘not for them’. Others mentioned a need for any walks or activities within the AONB to be physically accessible for people with additional mobility needs.



“

*“I know that there is an assumption from our groups that it is an elitist option for people to go to. It doesn’t feel open to all our groups for them.”*

*- LiveWest Housing Community Empowerment Officer*

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### 3.4 What do people want? What should the Landscape Partnership Scheme do to help disadvantaged audiences overcome the barriers to access?

There are very consistent messages from the two studies and the LPS consultations described in section 1.4;

- The Quantocks are very popular with their current users, who are predominantly local and day visitors who return again and again throughout the year. In contrast first time visitors are relatively uncommon – the area is not attracting many new visitors despite its popularity with the existing audience.
- Activity is focussed on honeypot sites which are in danger of being overused, but away from these there is some capacity for increased levels of use if carefully managed.
- There is demand for better signposting, waymarking, and for more guided walks – measures to increase the confidence of visitors that they are in the right place.
- These sorts of confidence measures would also help to overcome some of the psychological barriers that put some people off visiting an unfamiliar area – users and (currently) non-users want the same things, by and large.
- Both users and currently non-users instinctively understand the wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity in nature – the demand is there even when the opportunity is lacking.
- People who don't currently visit the area are likely to start at the same sorts of sites that are popular with those who already come, and for broadly similar reasons of convenience, access to facilities and the possibility of structured activities, particularly for families.
- People from disadvantaged communities would be interested in exploring the area, but to do so they may require some additional assistance to overcome the practical and psychological barriers that make the area hard for them to reach.

“

*“... will be great to offer as it is something different, meeting lots of new people, gets children some outdoor time, letting children be children and good to encourage precious family time which is happening less and less these days because everyone is too busy...”*

*- Lucinda Spelman-Ives, Director, Wilstock Hub.*

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### 3.5 Potential Audiences; Engagement in the Medium and Long Term

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Audience Development Report commissioned during the development phase confirmed a number of potential audiences that the Partnership had identified from members' own knowledge and from the two engagement workshops. The table below has been drawn from the data set in the report. It shows the potential audiences, the reasoning behind them being chosen and what the LPS will need to do to engage them with the project (the medium term). It also sets out some longer term approaches and objectives to be borne in mind during project delivery so that the LPS can start to secure a longer term legacy from the beginning of the project.

Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Adults in the local community (within LPS) who are not currently engaged</b>	<p>The local community stand to benefit from the improvements to the local area and will have a number of opportunities to get involved with project events and activities.</p> <p>Given the ambition to grow the volunteer pool, this is an obvious potential source of new volunteers</p>	<p>Issues around lack of opportunities for organised, family friendly events</p> <p>Accessibility issues for older people or people with mobility or other disabilities</p> <p>Lack of transport, although only 8% of households do not have access to a car, half the Somerset average</p>	<p>Ensure activities meet the interests of local communities.</p> <p>Engagement should start in their local community as far as possible, building confidence and relationships and building in a sustainable legacy from the start</p> <p>Events programmes should include an attractive family offer</p> <p>Volunteering and events programmes should offer pathways to greater involvement and understanding that can be followed as casually or as in depth as individuals may choose</p> <p>Events and activities should be as accessible as possible and include some events specifically aimed at people who might otherwise be excluded</p> <p>May need to find transport solutions if activities are not within the community itself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to motivate participants to continue their engagement by participating in further events or activities</li> <li>• For some, in time they may become interested in more active volunteering and participation roles with the LPS or with partner organisations. The LPS should signpost opportunities to them</li> <li>• Raise the profile of the AONB and other partners and work with them to develop programmes that will maintain interest and continue to offer new opportunities after the LPS has ended</li> </ul> <p>Note: Many people will enjoy and learn from the LPS on a casual basis. If their involvement does not evolve beyond that – as it won't for many people – the LPS will still have provided a worthwhile experience for them</p>



Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Adults in the local community (within LPS) who are already engaged</b>	Many of this group of people have been committed over many years, and they are likely to continue to be at the heart of volunteering and community action for years to come	<p>They may simply already be too busy to take on more.</p> <p>Of course, many people are engaged simply because it is part of their way of life, rather than as volunteers or members. They live locally and enjoy walking or riding on the hills and may have deep family connections to the area. They may or may not have the time and inclination to participate in more organised activities but are in any case already benefiting from the Quantock heritage</p>	<p>The LPS will need to draw on their existing enthusiasm, knowledge and experience as a vital resource and informal support for new recruits.</p> <p>The retired and early retired are, as usual, well represented amongst this group. However, there is tendency for the overall age profile to rise as time passes; organisations can be good at retaining volunteers, but not so good at attracting a new generation of younger members. A few are literally in danger of dying of old age, others like the Friends of Quantock are anxious to avoid that fate while they still have a healthy membership roll. The LPS should support efforts to refresh the volunteering and membership profiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to move already engaged people into more active volunteering and participation roles where they have the time and interest. The range of new activities and events on offer will be key</li> <li>• Seek to encourage and support voluntary organisations, and the AONB volunteer team, who wish to recruit from an additional and fresh demographic of potential new volunteers and members; younger, perhaps less well off, with more diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• The conscious use of activities and events will be important, but so too will be helping both parties to reach a common understanding of difference and to pool their different forms of knowledge</li> </ul>

Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Adults in disadvantaged communities in Bridgwater, Taunton, Watchet and Williton</b>	<p>These communities stand to benefit from the improvements to the local area and will have a number of opportunities to get involved with project events and activities</p> <p>Given the ambition to diversify the volunteer pool, this is an obvious potential source of new volunteers</p>	<p>Lack of awareness</p> <p>Lack of interest</p> <p>Negative perceptions/ attitudinal barriers / lack of self confidence</p> <p>Lack of transport</p> <p>Other financial constraints</p> <p>Issues around lack of opportunities for organised family friendly events</p> <p>Poor mental health</p> <p>Older people or people with mobility or other disabilities</p>	<p>Ensure targeted marketing to appeal to this audience group</p> <p>Engagement should start in their local community as far as possible, building confidence and relationships and building in a sustainable legacy from the start</p> <p>Events programmes should include an attractive family offer</p> <p>Volunteering and events programme should offer pathways to greater involvement and understanding that can be followed as casually or as in depth as individuals may choose</p> <p>Ensure activities these communities are interested in are included and any negative perceptions are addressed</p> <p>Events and activities should be as accessible and as affordable as possible and include some events specifically aimed at people who might otherwise be excluded</p> <p>Provide transport when it will increase participation</p> <p>Aim to increase confidence and knowledge of the area, empowering them to return independently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there are LPS events within their home communities, helping local partner organisations to build capacity and interest that will sustain engagement after the LPS has ended</li> <li>• Seek to motivate interested individuals from these communities to continue their engagement by participating in further events or activities, either on the Quantocks or in their home communities</li> <li>• Encourage people from these communities to join and add diversity to the membership of Quantock based voluntary organisations and the AONB volunteer team. Encourage and support voluntary organisations, and the AONB volunteer team, to recruit from an additional and fresh demographic of potential new volunteers and members; younger, perhaps less well off, with more diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• Work to further develop the confidence, ambition, and ability of the AONB and other partners to continue engagement with new initiatives as the LPS draws to an end</li> </ul> <p>Note: people may also decide to follow up their time with the LPS by contributing to other unrelated projects and groups; motivating people to be more active citizens will be a valuable part of the LPS legacy whether or not it directly benefits the Quantock heritage</p>

Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Local land managers</b>	Land managers are integral to the project's success. This includes Common Rights holders	<p>Already very busy, and may see LPS-related activities as too similar to their "day job"</p> <p>Brexit and broader Agri-environment uncertainties</p> <p>Reluctance to encourage additional public access</p> <p>Heritage not a priority</p> <p>Greater need to focus on commercial concerns</p> <p>Negative perceptions/ attitudinal barriers</p>	<p>Local land managers have a wealth of local practical, historical, and financial knowledge to contribute.</p> <p>They are often important gatekeepers and opinion formers, and the remaining larger estates still command loyalty from their domestic and agricultural tenants</p> <p>Work on private land will need to be collaborative, and will therefore need to be responsive and seeking opportunities</p> <p>Project will work with established and trusted contacts including peer landowners and Commoners and organisations such as FWAG</p> <p>It is important that the delivery plan retains flexibility both to respond to new constraints but also to take advantage of new opportunities</p> <p>Continue to work with land managers to dispel any negative perceptions/ incorrect information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LPS will continue to build relationships between land managers and the AONB/ FWAG</li> <li>• Benefits of sharing experience and knowledge run both ways - continue to build on current collaborations</li> <li>• Build on experience (+ and -) of LPS access work in future AONB engagement projects</li> </ul>



Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Family groups</b>	Opportunities to increase engagement amongst families and increase confidence amongst a wide range of families in exploring nature	<p>Lack of interest</p> <p>Lack of awareness</p> <p>Perceived lack of time</p> <p>Negative perceptions/ attitudinal barriers</p> <p>Access issues</p> <p>Lack of transport (esp for people living in nearby towns)</p> <p>Other financial constraints</p> <p>Issues around lack of opportunities for organised family activities</p>	<p>Events programme should include attractive and affordable family offer</p> <p>Target marketing, particularly to family groups, community centres/ groups, schools</p> <p>Work to improve negative perceptions and lack of confidence through supporting families and teaching them about local heritage/ providing a variety of ways to get involved</p> <p>May need to provide transport</p> <p>Partnerships with agencies working with disadvantaged families will increase their resilience, support social mobility, and generally offer them new opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there are LPS events within their home communities, helping local partner organisations to build capacity and interest that will sustain engagement after the LPS has ended</li> <li>• Work to further develop the confidence, ambition, and ability of the AONB and other partners to continue engagement with new initiatives as the LPS draws to an end</li> </ul>

Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Groups unable to access Quantock Hills</b>	Chosen due to opportunities for providing access to those unable to engage with the Quantock Hills	<p>Lack of transport, including lack of specialist transport for people with particular needs.</p> <p>Other issues of accessibility such as visual impairment, physical disability, Mental Health issues, caring responsibilities, and broader social exclusion</p>	<p>Transport or other specialist needs will need to be considered when planning projects – the budget includes provision for this</p> <p>Improved welcome information to help people plan their visit and identify the best locations for them to park and take a short walk or join in an activity</p> <p>Delivery includes a mixture of bespoke opportunities for particular target groups and ensuring that as many of the “open” general opportunities as possible are accessible to as wide an audience as possible</p> <p>Most people with disabilities are visiting the countryside in a social group so this social dynamic needs to be taken into consideration when planning activities for this audience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to further develop the confidence, ambition, and ability of the AONB and other partners to continue engagement with new initiatives as the LPS draws to an end</li> <li>• AONB should maintain the relationships with disability groups built up during the LPS</li> <li>• Transport will always be a difficult barrier to overcome without bespoke funding, but solutions may arise through collaboration with new partners</li> </ul>

Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Young people aged 5-16 and Young people aged 16-24 &amp; NEETS</b>	<p>Opportunities to work with schools to link with National Curriculum learning, as well as providing further opportunities to boost the confidence of young people at engaging with nature</p> <p>Opportunities to increase social cohesion, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and support social mobility and skills development.</p> <p>Opportunities to develop the wellbeing and self-confidence of individual participants</p> <p>Opportunities to boost employability/ contribute to qualifications and attainment</p>	<p>Lack of awareness</p> <p>Lack of access including lack of transport and of suitable opportunities for young people with disabilities</p> <p>Negative perceptions/ attitudinal barriers</p> <p>General disengagement with education and learning</p> <p>Lack of social skills, lack of educational attainment as a barrier to formal training</p>	<p>Education projects have been developed in collaboration with schools and PRU. Youth groups and service providers have helped to develop the activity package</p> <p>Need to work in partnership with specialist agencies and individuals with the credibility and life experience to work with more challenging groups of young people (eg at risk of exclusion or excluded from school, with disabilities, or socially excluded for one reason or another)</p> <p>Targeted marketing to schools, youth clubs, children's centres etc. Consultation in project development stage about the best approach to engagement and training</p> <p>Introductory activities to dispel negative perceptions</p> <p>Education about the heritage to dispel negative perceptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to further develop the confidence, ambition, and ability of the AONB and other partners such as the SEND schools to continue engagement with new initiatives as the LPS draws to an end</li> <li>• AONB or other partners may have a supporting rather than a leading role, but can continue to facilitate provision of opportunities</li> </ul>



Audience Group	Why were they chosen?	Potential Barriers	Project Implications	How engagement can be sustained after the end of the LPS
<b>Older generation</b>	Opportunities to increase engagement with the Quantock Hills and improve access for those facing accessibility barriers to enable greater engagement	Accessibility barriers, including lack of own transport  Lack of awareness	Older people are the always the core of volunteering programmes and often very committed and knowledgeable in their own right. LPS will seek to maximise the contribution of traditional volunteers while also reaching out to a wider group of older people to draw on their local knowledge and offer them new opportunities to be involved  Ensuring a number of accessible events and activities, suitable for people with varying physical and intellectual access needs  Targeted marketing, particularly with groups and social care providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with social care providers and others to find affordable ways to continue engagement especially with older people not able to join regular volunteer programmes</li> </ul>



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# 4 Landscape Character

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Definition of landscape;

*“An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.*

- Council of Europe European Landscape Convention, Florence October 2000

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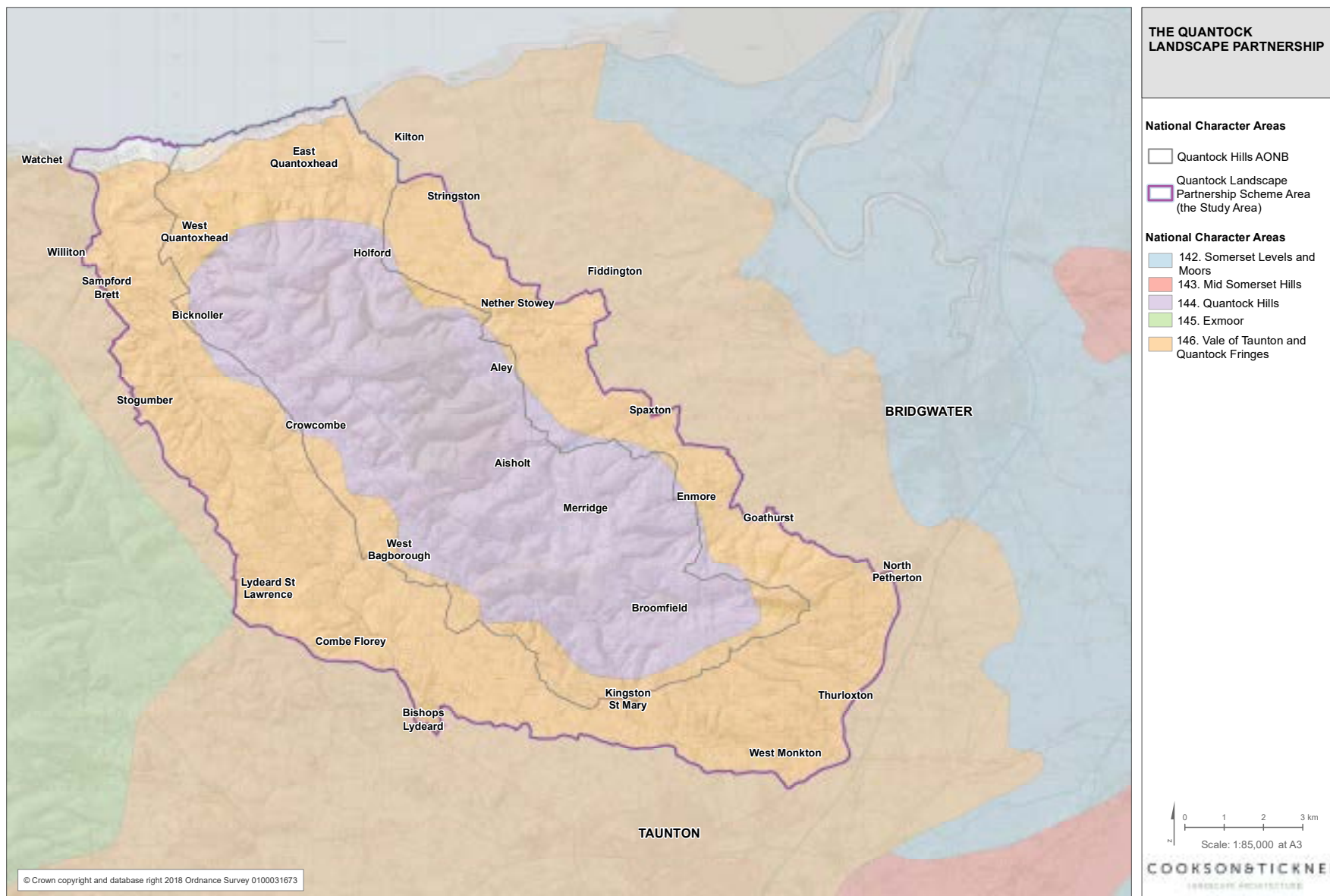
## 4.1 Landscape Character Assessment

A Landscape Character Assessment describes what makes a place distinctive; where one place end and a different place starts. Sense of place is subjective, but Landscape Character Assessment attempts to be as objective as possible.

Assessment is descriptive, it does not say what landscape is “good” and what is “bad”, but it does state whether an area has a strong identity or is not that different to other places, in the same way that a castle might be unique but impractical to live in while modern housing is ubiquitous but convenient. Neither is “better” than the other in any absolute sense, but one is more distinctive.

## 4.2 National Character Areas

Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at various scales from national to local. At a national (England) level, Natural England has divided England into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) each with its key characteristics described and environmental opportunities stated. NCA 144 *Quantock Hills* describes the heart of the hills, but NCA 146 *Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes* also includes large areas that look and identify as “Quantock”.



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### 4.2.1 National Character Area 144 Quantock Hills

#### NCA 144. Quantock Hills - Key Characteristics

- A high heathland ridge below which much of the dip slope, and particularly the valleys and combes, are cloaked in woodland, which in turn is surrounded by a mantle of rural agricultural land.
- The Quantock soils are mainly brown earths but there is a thin layer of peat overlying much of the heathland areas. The area is underlain in the north mainly by Devonian Hangman Sandstone, forming the highest ground of the hills, and in the south by Devonian Ilfracombe Slates (with thin limestones) and Morte Slates.
- A well-wooded landscape with large areas of ancient woodland and coniferous forestry plantation.
- Beech hedgebanks bound the rectangular fields around the edge of the open plateau and on the lower agricultural land in the south. Mixed hedgerows are used elsewhere to enclose smaller, irregular fields.
- Some beech hedges have been allowed to grow into mature trees and these now form a key feature in some parts of the hills, particularly along the Quantock ridge at its southern end.
- The area is predominantly pastoral, the most significant farm type being lowland grazing livestock.
- The NCA has an important role as a catchment both for public water supply through Hawkridge and Durleigh reservoirs which are outside the NCA, and for many private supplies. The area is also part of the upland catchment for the River Parrett.
- The Quantock hill tops provide important habitats of sessile oak woodland with a wealth of lichens and bryophytes; and lowland heath, which includes heather, whortleberry, bell heather, western gorse and cross-leaved heath.
- Iconic species for the area include red deer and buzzards. The NCA also provides habitats for rarer species such as Bechstein's bat, pied flycatcher, Dartford warbler, and nightjar.
- Bronze-age burial mounds, iron-age hill forts, standing stones, medieval manor houses and industrial heritage contribute to a strong historic environment.
- Many farmsteads are built of local slate and sandstone rubble; the Devonian Sandstone of the Quantock Hills is widely used in the area. The design of the church towers is noticeable, with their ambitious, prominent and decorated towers.
- Settlement is sparse, consisting of isolated farms, hamlets and small villages located along the springline or tucked into the narrow combes and valleys.
- Larger villages such as Nether Stowey lie at the junction with the Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes NCA.
- The Quantock Hills are a popular destination for day-trippers from around the region. The upland areas are most popular for visitors who enjoy the natural and historic landscape, the views and heritage assets of the NCA.

### NCA 144 Quantock Hills - Statements of Environmental Opportunities

**SEO1: Protect, manage and enhance the landscape of wild and open summits, wooded combs and rolling fields**, which support a wide variety of habitats and species, helping to regulate water quality and flow, protecting soils structure and storing carbon.

**SEO2: Protect and maintain the many heritage assets, from prehistoric monuments to 19th century farmsteads, the wealth of geodiversity, the dark skies, and the sense of tranquillity and remoteness** found throughout the area, which contribute strongly to the sense of history, recreation and enjoyment of the Quantock landscape.

**SEO3: Reinforce and protect the rural and historic character of the agricultural landscape and its distinctly sparse settlement character, scattering of isolated farmsteads, tiny hamlets and small villages.** Protect and manage the longstanding agricultural land use for its important role in the local economy, for the habitats it supports and to ensure that it contributes to the regulation of soil and water quality.

**SEO4: Sustainably manage the high visitor pressure associated with this distinctive landscape** to ensure that the numerous recreation, education, access and health opportunities continue to be enjoyed by the local community and visitors alike.

## 4.2.2 National Character Area 146 Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes

### NCA 146. Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes - Key Characteristics

- The topography can be divided into four distinct areas: the flood plain; a gentle low vale underlain by Triassic mudstones; a more elevated, undulating vale underlain by Devonian slates and sandstones as well as Triassic sandstones and mudstones; and the open, wind-swept cliffed coast underlain by Triassic mudstones, Jurassic mudstones and limestones and a small section of Pleistocene gravels.
- Open and wind-swept coast with low cliffs, mudflats and wave-cut platforms in mudstones and limestones. The often spectacularly folded and faulted Triassic and Jurassic mudstones and limestones that are visible on the extensive shore platforms and the cliffs are renowned for their fossils, and are of international importance for their stratigraphy.
- A number of tree-lined streams and rivers wind through the area. The River Tone and its tributaries drain the area to the south, while in the north Doniford Stream, fed by tributaries arising from the Quantocks and Brendon Hills, drains into the sea at Watchet. To the east many streams drain off the Quantock dip slopes and flow into the River Parrett. The Bridgwater and Taunton Canal runs across the south of the area.
- Woodland cover is generally low, at 6 per cent, although the area has a wooded feel as there are many hedgerow trees (such as oak), orchards, remnants of parkland, small woodlands with ash and oak and bankside trees such as alder and, rarely, black poplar.
- The area was once characterised by cider apple orchards. Few old orchards survive and are scattered throughout the area, particularly in the south. Modern bush orchards are being planted.
- Lowland mixed farming landscape, with dense hedgerows enclosing rectilinear fields. Permanent grassland characterises the flood plain with arable, pasture, market gardening and orchards in the vales and pasture and arable on more undulating ground.

- Scattered patches of floristically rich lowland meadow and limestone grasslands characterised by lesser knapweed, field scabious, milkwort and thyme; coastal and flood plain grazing marsh; intertidal sand and mudflats; parkland; maritime cliff and slope; and small patches of heath, fen and marsh.
- Scattered settlements of farmsteads, hamlets and villages linked by sunken winding lanes. Distinctive gentry architecture with parkland, local vernacular of red sandstone buildings and prominent Perpendicular church towers to the west and south, and grey Lias along the coast and to the east.
- Sweeping views from the coast across the bay to Wales; to Hinkley Point power station in the east; and to Minehead in the west. Exmoor, the Blackdown Hills and the Quantock Hills provide a backdrop to the area and expansive views from these uplands emphasise the lush pastoral nature of this area.
- The M5 motorway runs east–west (as does the main rail line), linking several of the larger towns, including Taunton and Wellington. Incremental development and industrialisation from the towns are evident, especially adjacent to the motorway.

#### **NCA 146: Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes Statements of Environmental Opportunity:**

**SEO1: *Conserve and promote the geology and geodiversity of the Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes, including the Jurassic Coast***, the suite of national and local geological sites and the distinctive relationship between geology, coastal geomorphology, soils, landform and land use, promoting opportunities for recreation in the area and interpretation of its unique features.

**SEO2: *Protect, manage and enhance the distinctive farmed landscape, while creating a balance of productive mixed farmland and diversity of habitats and associated species***. Create and enhance connecting corridors of hedgerows, orchards, calcareous and flood plain grazing marsh, small woodlands, and hedgerow and riverside trees, and manage parkland and other habitats such as coastal habitats including intertidal salt marsh and mudflats for their contribution to sense of place, and their positive role in reducing soil erosion, enhancing water quality and managing coastal erosion. Promote connecting corridor linkage with the Blackdown Hills, Exmoor and the Quantock Hills.

**SEO3: *Protect and manage the area's historic environment including its rich heritage of hill forts, Roman remains, ridge and furrow, manor houses and vernacular architecture, parkland and distinctive field patterns***, engaging both visitors and local communities in understanding how the interaction of human and natural factors has shaped the farmed landscape of today.

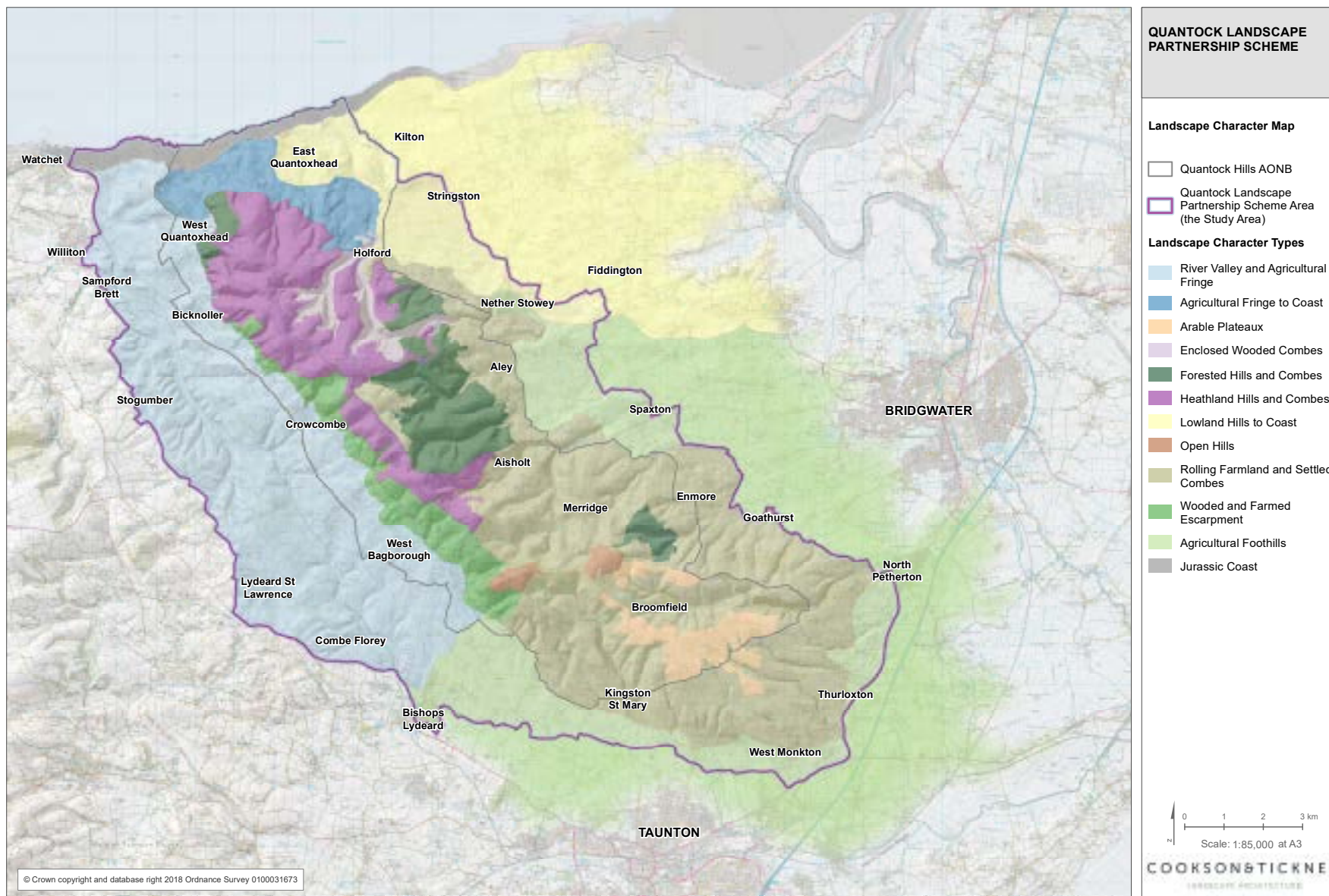
**SEO4: *Safeguard and manage soil and water resources, notably the Rivers Tone and Parrett, as part of the wider Somerset Levels and Moors priority catchment and at the coast***, working with naturally functioning hydrological processes to maintain water quality and regulate supply; reduce flooding; and manage land to reduce soil erosion and water pollution and to retain and capture carbon.



## 4.3 The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Landscape Character Assessment

Because both NCA 144 Quantock Hills and NCA 146 Vale of Taunton and Quantock Fringes include large areas that look and identify as “Quantock”, the 2019 Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) looked at the wider geographical area beyond the prominent hill and ridge landform of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This inclusion of the wider area allows the consideration of landscape sitting beyond the hills, which share many of the same combination of elements, features and characteristics of the hills and are identified by their communities as Quantock country.

The Quantock Hills is a very diverse landscape considering its small extent. The LCA identifies twelve Landscape Character Types (LCT). An overview of each LCT is given in the sections that follow, but see the full Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Landscape Character Assessment for more details of each LCT and how it has been assessed.



### 4.3.1 River Valley and Agricultural Fringe (5,001ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Distinctive agricultural fringe at the foot of the scarp slope - skirting the hills and merging with the undulating valley landscape.
- Scarp slope forms a striking and immediate backdrop – imparting its character on the valley.
- Numerous tributary streams (forming tight combes) run towards the Doniford Stream.
- Convoluted, complex landform of rounded hills, deep combes and flat valley floor.
- Underlain by sedimentary bedrock mudstone, sandstone, breccias and conglomerates (Triassic period) and Permian sandstone.
- Outcropping conglomerate and breccias that have been exploited for their lime component (disused lime kilns survive in the landscape).
- A well-wooded landscape – deciduous, mixed and coniferous plantation bounded in parts by distinctive beech hedgebanks.
- Villages and hamlets nestle at the head of the deep combe valleys, cut by tributary streams.
- Narrow, often sunken, lanes with banks cloaked in ferns.
- Changing landform reveals surprise views of the impressive scarp slope and heathland hills.
- West Somerset Railway line and its numerous stations – popular with tourists and local visitors.
- An enclosed landscape of fields typically bounded by tightly flailed, gappy hedges. In places arable conversion has seen hedges reduced to almost nothing.
- Dairying, stock rearing and ‘horsiculture’ evident as well as arable production – especially on gentler slopes close to the valley floor.
- Prominent country houses with associated designed parkland and pleasure grounds.
- The main arterial route of the A358 runs through the valley.
- Pylons, towers and overhead lines are prominent.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 82.28ha

SAC; Exmoor & Quantock Oakwoods 11.68ha

SSSIs; The Quantocks 16.95ha, Roebuck Meadows 3.55ha, Blue Anchor to Lilstock Coast 13.06ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings;

Grade I (8)

Grade II\* (18)

Grade II (180)

Registered Park and Gardens St Audries (Grade II), Crowcombe Court (Grade II), Cothelstone Manor (II)

**Strength of Character; strong**

**Condition; moderate**



### 4.3.2 Wooded and Farmed Escarpment (689ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Steep scarp slope with areas cloaked in dense woodland – mixed, broadleaf and coniferous plantation.
- Prominent smooth crest skyline with outgrown beech hedges forming striking silhouettes.
- Dramatic landform steeply ascending from the adjacent, lower lying valley and, conversely, dropping sharply away from the upland areas of heath.
- Convoluted and sinuous scarp face – streams having carved combs into the slopes – forming natural hollows where hamlets nestle at the foot of the main break of slope at the transition to the Doniford River Valley.
- Significant variation in elevation reflecting the steepness of the slope – from approximately 100m AOD reaching as high as 350m AOD in places.
- Pasture intersperses the wooded areas, forming areas of enclosed farmland amongst the dense woodland.
- Underlain by a geology of red sandstone (Hangman and Lynton Formations) of the Devonian period; giving rise to freely draining and slightly acidic loamy soils.
- A significant amount of the scarp forms part of the Quantocks SSSI – woodland, scrub and heathland and upland acid grassland.
- Settlement within the landscape is limited to scattered farmsteads with villages and large country houses occurring below the scarp at the break of the slope.
- Vestiges of designed landscapes occur on the scarp where estates extend on to the steep slope to the north of their associated country house.
- Open areas provide extensive views across the low-lying vale and beyond.
- Dramatic views across the face of the scarp travelling along the A358.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 119.0ha

SSSIs; The Quantocks 243.62ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings;

Grade II\* (3)

Grade II (20)

Registered Park and Gardens Crowcombe Court (Grade II), Cothelstone Manor (II)

Scheduled Monuments (1)

**Strength of Character; strong**

**Condition; moderate to good**

### 4.3.3 Rolling Farmland and Settled Combes (4,341ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- A landscape of strongly articulated, rounded hills and long low ridges cut by steeply incised combes.
- Underlying geology of slates, siltstone and sandstones of the Devonian period (Morte Slate Formation and Ilfracombe Slate Formation) with narrow seams of limestone also occurring.
- Broadleaved woodland and coniferous plantations occur on the hills, spilling over and clothing the sides of the combes.
- The agricultural landscape is given over to a mix of pasture and arable cropping (the combes predominantly under pasture) bounded by native hedgerows.
- A series of narrow lanes, often sunken, dipping in and out of the combes and over the hills – connecting the dispersed hamlets and villages.
- Small to medium field units (the combes retaining an older, smaller field pattern of medieval and earlier enclosures).
- Red sandstone villages, hamlets and scattered farms typically occur within the shelter of the combes.
- Country house estates and historic parkland impart a strong sense of designed landscape character.
- Prominent triple line of pylons running northeast to southwest and an awareness in views of the proximity of the urban centres of Bridgwater and Taunton.
- Extensive views both inland and to the coast.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 160.39ha

LNR; Gadds Valley 11.68ha

SAC; Exmoor & Quantocks 54.36ha

SSSIs; The Quantocks 158.70ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings;

Grade 1 (4)

Grade II\* (14)

Grade II (63)

Registered Park and Gardens Hestercombe (Grade I), Halswell Park (Grade II)

Scheduled Monuments (7)

**Strength of Character; strong**

**Condition; moderate**

### 4.3.4 Open Hills (112ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Pronounced and clearly defined rounded open hill landscape occurring between 260m and 332m AOD.
- Land cover of unimproved grassland with areas of bracken, dense scrub and some areas of heather.
- Underlain by sedimentary slates, siltstones and sandstones of the Devonian period giving rise to shallow acidic soils and exposed rock in places.
- Expansive views (some panoramic) – encompassing varied inland and coastal scenery, stretching as far as Wales.
- Ringed successively by scrub, broadleaved woodland and farmland at the base of the hills – the woodland restricting views out from the lower slopes.
- Significant areas of open access land, much used by the general public for recreation.
- Rich archaeological resource.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 4.54ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Scheduled Monuments (4)

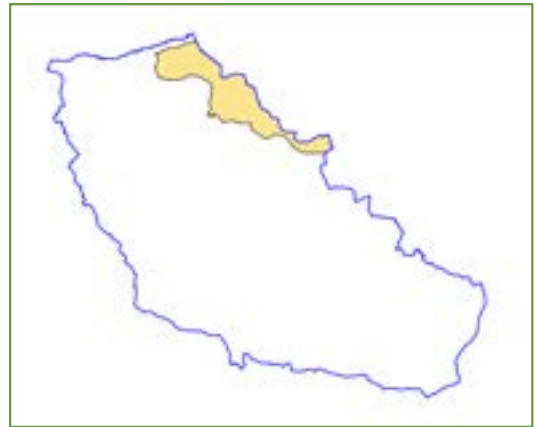
**Strength of Character; strong**  
**Condition; moderate to good**



### 4.3.5 Lowland Hills to Coast (1,151ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Sitting immediately beyond the 'Agricultural Fringe to Coast' and 'Agricultural Foothills', this is a lower-lying farmed landscape, extending down to the cliffs of the Jurassic Coast.
- Visually interesting and varied landform comprising undulating terrain, rounded hilltops and areas of flat land.
- Elevation varies from 15m AOD at the top of the low coastal cliffs, reaching as high as 120m at the base of the Agricultural Foothills.
- Predominantly underlain by a surface geology of mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone (Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation) repeatedly seen in buildings and structures.
- An overtly rural landscape defined by a land use of arable cultivation and pasture with fields still bound by elm hedges close to the coast.
- Varied views – inland to the dramatic heathland hills as well as out to sea; taking in views of the Welsh coastline and beyond.
- Kilve and East Quantoxhead are picturesque villages with a timeless appeal.
- Strong sense of exposure to the elements at the top of the cliffs.
- Views of Hinkley Point power station create a jarring interface between rural and industrial land uses.
- Broadleaved woodland blocks and small copses combine a well-treed landscape in places albeit with a dearth of hedgerow trees across many parts of the landscape.
- Tenanted farmsteads and cottages belonging to the Fairfield Estate and to the East Quantoxhead estate create a consistent vernacular.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 27.73ha

SAC Exmoor & Quantock Oakwoods 0.06ha

SSSIs; Blue Anchor to Lilstock Coast 2.76ha, The Quantocks 0.06ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings;

Grade I (1)

Grade II\* (9)

Grade II (31)

Scheduled Monuments (36)

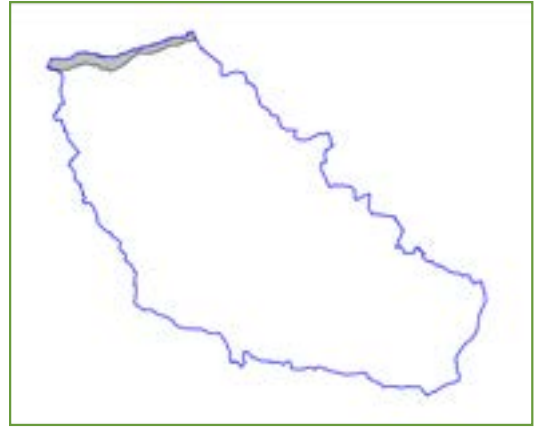
**Strength of Character; moderate**

**Condition; moderate**

### 4.3.6 Jurassic Coast (326ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Intertidal landscape of staggered blue lias limestone terraces and a sandy bay exposed at low tide.
- Backed by low cliffs that reveal layers of the Blue Lias Formation interspersed with Charmouth mudstone (shale) of the Triassic and Jurassic periods.
- Rugged, windswept and exposed landscape with a strong sense of vulnerability to the power of the tide.
- Many fossilised animal remains particularly ammonites, which can be clearly identified.
- Popular with visitors – rock pooling and fossil hunting.
- Strong visual connection to the South Wales coastline across the Bristol Channel.
- Geological SSSI with a cliff section near East Quantoxhead identified as a world reference point in the geological timescale.
- Historic designed landscape features of the St Audries and surviving parkland trees are visible from St Audries Bay.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

SSSIs; Blue Anchor to Lillstock Coast 295.97ha

**Strength of Character; strong**  
**Condition; moderate to poor**

### 4.3.7 Heathland Hills and Combes (1,713ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Open exposed landscape defined by heathland land cover (with areas of heather - ling, bell heather and cross-leaved heath, gorse, grasses, bracken, bilberry and scrub).
- Dramatic landform of an undulating plateau dissected by open combes (carved by the watercourses of issuing springs) creating a strongly articulated landscape of sinuous hills, ridges and valleys.
- Typically occurring above 300m AOD (reaching 385m AOD at the landscape's highest point) and falling away to as low as 150m AOD as the combes meet with the surrounding foothills.
- The heathland is underlain by sedimentary bedrock of Devonian red sandstone – Hangman Sandstone Formation.
- Rare upland and lowland heath habitats - much designated as a SSSI. Together with the adjacent upland oak woods, this landscape forms an extensive area of semi-natural habitat.
- Archaeologically rich – including Bronze Age ritual landscapes, Iron Age fortifications and former medieval enclosures.
- Perceived as a large-scale landscape that engenders a sense of physical challenge and remoteness although never far from settlement and human activity.
- Extensive views (many panoramic) both inland and to the coast.
- Predominantly managed as common land with low levels of grazing stock including sheep and ponies.
- Wild red deer are synonymous with this landscape.
- Beech hedgebanks, created by Parliamentary enclosure, are now linear strips of mature beech trees and are a distinctive boundary feature in places.
- A landscape of mixed recreational use – walking, cycling and hunting.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 7.50ha

SAC; Exmoor & Quantock Oakwoods 11.68ha

SSSIs; The Quantocks 1698.96ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Registered Park and Gardens Crowcombe Court (Grade II)

Scheduled Monuments (36)

**Strength of Character; strong**  
**Condition; variable**



### 4.3.8 Agricultural Fringe to Coast (655ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Dramatic views – inland to the backdrop of purple heather-clad hills of the upland heath and, contrastingly out to sea.
- Undulating landform created where watercourses from springs issuing on the hills have carved a series of small valleys with intervening ridges.
- Underlain by Triassic geology of mudstone and conglomerate (Mercia Mudstone Group).
- 140m AOD at the base of the heathland hills to as low as 30m AOD at the top of the coastal cliffs.
- Land use of mixed farming with pasture typically focussed in smaller fields on more challenging terrain closer to the adjacent heathland.
- The arterial route of the A39 carrying traffic to and from Minehead and beyond to the north Devon coast through the rural landscape.
- Designed parkland landscapes around large country houses/manors.
- Modern day recreational land uses in the form of holiday villages (caravan and holiday parks) on the coast.
- Swathes of woodland predominantly occurring on the higher slopes.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 26.23 ha

SAC; Exmoor & Quantock Oakwoods 0.1ha

SSSIs; Blue Anchor to Lilstock Coast 9.8ha, Ge-Mare Farm Fields 4.04ha, The Quantocks 34.36ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings

Grade II\* (2)

Grade II (22)

Registered Park and Gardens St Audries House (Grade II)

**Strength of Character; strong**  
**Condition; moderate**

### 4.3.9 Forested Hills and Combes (1,025ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- A landscape dominated by productive conifer plantation, interspersed with broadleaf woodland and, in places, Sessile oak woodland.
- Occurring amongst a setting of heathland and farmland on areas of mid to high ground (approximately 115m AOD at St Audries to 320m AOD at Great Wood).
- Blanket forest often disguises the dramatic landform, which is characterised by hills and ridges dropping away into deep combes.
- Underlain by sedimentary bedrock of sandstone and slates of the Devonian period (Hangman Sandstone Formation and Ilfracombe Slates Formation).
- Predominantly managed by the Forestry Commission and the National Trust, the forests are a focus for recreation as well as timber production.
- Significant archaeological value with a number of scheduled monuments occurring within the forest.
- Beech hedgebanks of various stages of maturity and condition within and on the edges of the forests.
- Influence of the surrounding heathland and farmland strongly felt in open views at the edge of the forests.
- Transient forest – timber felling and extraction making previously treed and enclosed landscapes instantly open and exposed.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 518.82ha

SSSIs; The Quantocks 3.42ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Registered Park and Gardens St Audries house (grade II)

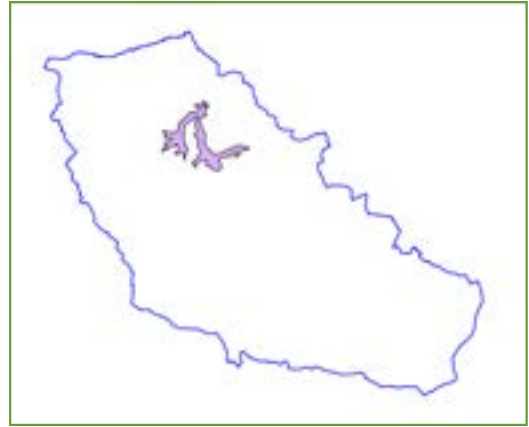
Scheduled Monuments 3

**Strength of Character; strong**  
**Condition; good**

### 4.3.10 Enclosed Wooded Combes (313ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- A landscape characterised by a series of small, deep, narrow combes that together form two valley systems.
- Occurring at a height of between 300m AOD (where the tops of the combes drop away from the open heath) and descending to approximately 140m at Holford.
- Steep valley sides cloaked in woodland, dominated by overgrown coppice of Sessile oak and bounded by wood banks.
- Defined by sedimentary sandstone of the Devonian period (Hangman Sandstone Formation) with superficial fluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel.
- A landscape of significant nature conservation value – forming part of The Quantocks SSSI and Exmoor and Quantock Oakwood SAC.
- A secret, hidden, enclosed landscape in contrast to the adjacent open heath.
- The twisted, sculpted forms of the Sessile oak characterise this ancient wooded landscape.
- From the Heathland Hills and Combes landscape type, the combes appear as visibly striking green fingers pushing through the smooth summits of the heath.
- Small streams tumbling through the combes provide a moist environment teeming with ferns, mosses and sedges with lichen thriving on the ancient woodland.
- Grazed by deer and Commoners' stock (predominantly sheep) creating wood-pasture character in parts.
- A popular area for recreation – horse riders, walkers, mountain bikers making the most of the rights of way and paths cutting across the valley sides.
- Industrial heritage due to tanning, charcoal, silk and woollen industries.
- Cultural value due to associations with the Romantic poets.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 165.0ha

SAC; Exmoor & Quantock Oakwoods 243.27ha

SSSIs; The Quantocks 296.42ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings

Grade II (4)

Scheduled Monuments (4)

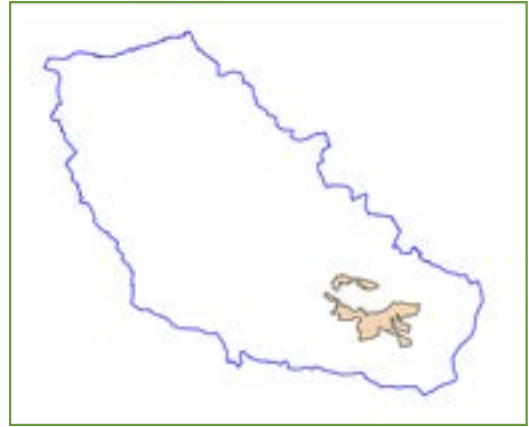
**Strength of Character; strong**  
**Condition; moderate**



### 4.3.11 Arable Plateaux (480ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Elevated hilltops and undulating plateau landform typically occurring around the 200m AOD mark (reaching as high as 228m AOD and as low as 165m AOD).
- Underlying geology of slate with sandstone (Morte Slates Formation) of the Devonian period.
- Farmed landscape characterised almost exclusively by arable production.
- Large geometric fields whose boundaries are typically defined by short flailed and/or gappy native hedgerows with very few hedgerow trees.
- An exposed and open landscape evoking a sense of large scale.
- A simple landscape with few focal points or distinctive features.
- Largely unsettled – farms typically occurring within the more sheltered landscape of the adjacent rolling farmland.
- Some extensive views from the plateau edges.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 0.19ha

**Strength of Character; moderate**  
**Condition; poor**

### 4.3.12 Agricultural Foothills (2,264ha)

#### Key Characteristics

- Large area of gently undulating hills occurring below 100m AOD.
- Farmed landscape – a mix of pasture and arable cultivation.
- Fields bounded predominantly by native hedgerows managed through flailing.
- Underlain by geology of mudstone and conglomerate (Mercia Mudstone Group) and sandstone (Helsby Sandstone Formation) of the Triassic period.
- Drainage ditches align the lanes across the area.
- Views across mixed farmed to urban centres.
- Drained by streams and brooks that rise in the hills of the Quantocks and carve their course towards the Rivers Parrett and Tone.
- Some surviving orchards.
- Remnant parkland of historic 18th century estates.
- Main transport routes and pylons affect levels of tranquillity and quality of views.



#### Nature Conservation Designations

Ancient Woodland; 0.1 ha

#### Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings;

Grade I (4)

Grade II\* (6)

Grade II (86)

Registered Park and Gardens Hestercombe (Grade I)

Scheduled Monuments (4)

**Strength of Character; moderate**

**Condition; moderate to poor**

## 4.3 Summary

The rugged Jurassic Coast with its striated cliff line and blue lias ‘pavements’ stretches into the Severn Estuary. A mantle of farmed hills and combes are dotted with small farm woods, historic parkland, sparse settlement and large country houses that occupy commanding positions. The western side of the hill is flanked by steep wooded and farmed escarpment that gives way to the upper reaches of the Doniford Valley. Whilst, on the northeast side, deep stream-cut combes, dense with Sessile oak woodland, spread like fingers into the almost unbroken expanse of upland heathland hills and combes. Open hilltops of neutral grassland and hills and combes dense with coniferous forests complete the scene.

Although covering a small area the Quantocks encompasses a great variety of different types of landscape; the LCA identifies twelve Landscape Character Types, of which nine are strong in their character and the remaining three are moderate.

Of concern though is the condition of the landscape when assessed objectively. Of the twelve Landscape Types only one is judged to be in ‘good’ condition with a further two judged ‘moderate to good’. A further five are judged moderate and the remaining five are either ‘moderate to poor’ or ‘poor’.





Seven Sisters ring

## 5 Statement of Significance

***The Quantock Hills are a dramatic landscape in southwest England***

*The ridge landform of the Quantock Hills with its deep folds and varied land cover gives the landscape a highly distinctive identity, separating it from the lowlands in which it sits. The narrow upland plateau is imposing above the surrounding agricultural plain and provides a dramatic backdrop feature over a wide area. The foreshore and layered cliffs of the coastal edge add further diversity. The whole area is rich in cultural, historic, and natural heritage.*

## 5.1 Dramatic landscape elements:

- **Hilltop Common** - unenclosed semi-natural grazed heathland and upland oak woods.
  - **Wooded Combes** – unenclosed ancient oakwood lands on steep valley sides, running down to streams in the valley bottom. Together with the Hilltop Commons, these areas are of the very highest landscape and wildlife value.
  - **Unimproved hill land** - rough grazing grassland outside the hilltop Common - a rare resource valued for its biodiversity and wild and open character.
  - **Improved hill land** - green grass areas high in the hills with comparatively low levels of biodiversity.
  - **Farmed combes** - under mixed agricultural management, often hedged pastures with streams, springs and small woodlands, important for biodiversity and landscape.
  - **Lower farmland** - varies from areas of intensive arable to small scale mixed farming with high biodiversity and landscape value.
  - **Farmed coastal strip** - mixed arable, miscanthus and improved grazing with areas being returned to low input extensive grazing. This area is adjacent to a narrow cliff edge zone of unimproved grass/scrubland.
  - **Coastal cliffs and broad wave-cut foreshore** – rich in fossils and carved out by the second-largest tidal range in the world.
- .....

## 5.2 Historic field boundaries that define the landscape:

Field patterns and the hedges that enclose Quantock farmland are important structural and historic features, creating rhythm and form in the agricultural landscape. The combination of topography and landform means that their importance is magnified, as the farmland fringes are often looked down upon, or across to, from the summits and hillsides.

- Saxon or older hedgerows and banks – these hedges are mainly of Saxon-medieval origin, sometimes created directly from woodland and other unenclosed wastes, with possible vestiges of the older Iron Age landscape pattern represented by some smaller enclosures.
- Significant historic boundaries e.g. parish or Common - in the combes, boundary banks are a common feature, often bordering the steep, narrow lanes: earth banks (some stone-faced), with or without a hedge on top.
- Banked beech hedgerows - highly distinctive C18 and C19 features consisting of earth banks topped with a row or double row of beech trees, many surrounding rectangular parliamentary enclosure fields. They create distinctive and visually prominent landscape features on the edges of the central and northern hilltop plateau and on lower ground further south taking in previously unenclosed land.
- Established species-rich hedgerows and new native-species hedges - typically composed of hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, elm, oak and hazel.

### 5.3 Extensive and varied woodland:

Quantock woodlands have very significant wildlife and landscape value while providing other benefits including timber products, local employment, and recreational opportunities. In combination with the extensive hedge lines, woodland and plantations in the LPS area form a multifunctional green network of an exceptionally high standard.

Particular features are;

- Small farm woodlands - in some cases on ancient woodland sites. Small woodlands and copses are important elements in the farmed Quantock landscape, and have significant wildlife interest.
- Ash-hazel woodlands - found in the lower lying areas on the less acid rocks of central and southern parts of the LPS area. The ash-hazel mix allows good light levels at the woodland floor leading to a healthy ground flora sometimes including extensive bluebell cover. Dormice are known to be present at several sites. Likely to be extremely vulnerable to ash dieback disease which may inflict significant and potentially unwelcome change.
- Western sessile oak woodlands – are dominated by sessile oak, with rowan, birch, holly, hazel, alder, willow, ash and hazel also represented. These woods cloak the deep combes cut into the north east hills. The cool, moist conditions support a moss, fern, fungi and lichen community of national (SSSI) and international (SAC) importance.
- Coniferous plantation - largely planted in the early 20th century, plantation dominates a large area of the central upland plateau at Great Wood, with other significant plantations throughout the core AONB. These forests provide an important habitat for red deer and are robust high-capacity sites for access and recreation.



*Sessile oak woodland at Holford Combe*



## 5.4 Spectacular views

Views from the hilltops extend across the wetlands of the Somerset Levels in the east and the Mendip Hills beyond, to the Blackdown Hills in the south and across the Brendon Hills to Exmoor National Park in the west. The coastal boundary of this otherwise predominantly upland area forms a further exceptional landscape feature, looking out to the Bristol Channel and the Welsh coast. Internal views are varied, with the view from the periphery towards the Hills as important to “sense of place” as the views from the tops.



© Sally Pride - Photo competition 2008, Snow in Weacombe Combe

## 5.5 Internationally important geological sites

The Quantocks are the only upland AONB based on sandstone rocks of the Devonian Period and provide great geological interest from the hard sandstones of the hilltops to the Jurassic exposures of the coastal margin.

The Triassic and Jurassic coastal fringes are perhaps the most geologically significant part of the LPS area and the AONB. They are internationally recognised for the Stratotype for the first and second stage boundary of the Jurassic Period and are a Geological Conservation Review site and a designated Geological SSSI.

The exposed coastal limestones are renowned for their fossil remains, particularly ammonites, and blocks of stone have been used locally as a building material. The rocks have also been exploited as a source of lime and a number of limekilns can be found along the coast.

## 5.6 Internationally important wildlife habitats and species

The Quantock Hilltops and upper slopes provide highly significant semi-natural habitats of national and international importance for biodiversity:

Western sessile oak woodlands cloak the steep sided combes which cut into the hard sandstone rocks. They support a distinctive range of bat and bird species including barbastelle bats, wood warbler, pied flycatcher and redstart. The assemblages of lower plants - bryophytes, epiphytic lichens and fungi of these woodlands are of international importance.

Quantock heathland is a combination of lowland and upland types. It blankets the hilltops and includes heather, whortleberry, bracken, bell heather, western gorse and cross leaved heath along with bristle-leaved bent and wavyhair grass. The combined upland/heathland bird assemblage is strong with surveys showing Quantock populations of nightjar are over 1% of the UK population. Within the heath are acid flushes, botanically the richest habitats in the area, with streams flowing from them through wooded combes to the farmland below.

The enclosing mantle of the Quantocks, surrounding the ridge, includes grazed pasture, arable land and historic parkland. In the parklands and the wider farmed countryside veteran trees are an important landscape feature and a significant biological resource.

The extensive intertidal foreshore adds greatly to the area's richness and diversity. The only part of the area to be lime rich, specialists including orchids and invertebrates are found on the cliff tops.

Red deer are the largest wild land animals in the UK, and their continued presence in the Quantocks carries symbolic weight. They are perhaps the most publicly appreciated element of Quantock wildlife.



Hare Knaps

## 5.7 Rich sense of history

This apparently unchanging and ancient place is an important historic landscape with a wide variety of highly significant archaeological features.

The upland Common forms one of the few remaining moorland landscapes in southern Britain of national importance for the legible survival of monuments dating from the Neolithic and especially the Bronze Age. These include numerous cairns resulting from land clearance and bowl barrows dating from around 2400 – 1500 BC, extensive crop mark evidence for settlement and land use and large-scale dramatic examples of Iron Age hill forts and smaller defended enclosures such as Ruborough Camp and Dowsborough Hillfort.

The surrounding farmland, much of which is Saxon in origin and shape, has mainly 17th and 18th century parklands superimposed on it. The enclosures and boundary modifications of subsequent years evolved as marginal land came in and out of production in response to the changing demand for food. “The Manor” has been re-imagined countless times already.

There is considerable interest in Quantock settlements including particular features such as the C14 chantry at Kilve and the early C16 Church House in Crowcombe. The Quantock coastal belt includes important medieval manors at Kilve and East Quantoxhead, and an early 20th century oil retort at Kilve Pill. Abandoned harbours can be found at Kilve Pill and nearby Lilstock and there are a number of lime kilns to be found along the coast.



## 5.8 Distinctive Quantock communities and settlements

The Quantock Hills are a living, working landscape with a distinct cultural heritage and varied village communities connected by narrow roads and country lanes.

The pre-enclosure settlement pattern below the moorland can still be seen today. Settlement within the AONB itself is sparse, consisting of isolated farms, hamlets or small villages located along the spring line or tucked into the narrow combs and valleys. Scarp-foot villages lie along the western edge and there is scattered settlement on the gentler eastern slopes.

The wider LPS area also includes the villages at the foot of the hill, and the scattered settlements on the gentler eastern slopes. It includes the larger communities of Bishop’s Lydeard, Nether Stowey, and Kingston St Mary. The villages in the LPS are surprisingly diverse in character, most having made strong use of varied local building stone.

The small towns of Watchet and Williton are just outside the LPS and the growing urban settlements of Bridgwater and Taunton are nearby.

Large country houses, significant features in their own right, sit within their estates. They are often sited to take advantage of far reaching views out from the lower hill slopes, which in turn makes them highly visible when looking back towards the hills from the surrounding hinterland.



## 5.9 A cultural contribution with global influence

This landscape has been the source of many cultural and artistic contributions. The best known and most significant example is the inspiration it provided to Coleridge and Wordsworth when they lived here at the end of the 18th century and first created the Romantic style of poetry.

More than their poetry, the Romantic Poets' most important and lasting legacy has been to change the way we look at landscape, understanding it in terms of beauty and sense of place and not simply according to its productivity. The very idea of protecting landscapes, all across the world, can be traced back to the Romantic Poets.



Ancient Mariner statue at Watchet harbour



Families take part in a 'wild wednesday' at Fyne Court

## 5.10 Access and enjoyment opportunities

The Quantock Hills offer superb opportunities for quiet outdoor recreation. The AONB proper has 3,000 hectares of Access Land, the most beautiful hilltop and higher wooded areas. There are approximately 192 miles (309 kilometres) of Public Rights of Way in the LPS area, a large proportion of them bridleways, making this an exceptional area for horse riders and mountain bikers as well as walkers. Great Wood offers a network of dedicated mountain bike trails.

Proximity to two of the largest population centres in Somerset, Bridgwater and Taunton, makes the Quantocks very popular with day trippers and according to the most recent visitor survey the hills receive over 385,000 recreational visits a year. The fact that over half of Quantock visitors come to the hills 10 or more times each year indicates the loyalty and appreciation the area inspires.

.....

## 5.11 Tranquillity and sense of space

The Quantock combes, hilltops and coast are places where a large proportion of the visitors come to find tranquillity.

The hilltop area in particular has a sense of space, wildness and seclusion that is perhaps unexpected in a comparatively small range of hills close to urban Taunton and Bridgwater. It is a place people value for inspiration, spiritual refreshment, exhilarating views, dark skies at night and unpolluted air.

## Quantock Impressions; some reflections collected during consultations;

“

*Open spaces, moorland and coasts, friends, family, dog walks, wildlife, wellbeing* - Tiffany Wood

*A familiar and reassuring presence on the NE horizon* - Gwil Wren

*If you don't know where you are going it can be easy to get lost in hidden combs*  
- Sally Mann

*Small but perfectly formed jewel of southern upland landscape, lovely mix of natural, human, and cultural landscapes*

*Memories of my life, where I get to unload life's pressures, it defines my sense of place* - Martin Lewis

*Home* - Hugh Warmington

*A place for children and young people to learn, thrive, feel, grow, and have fun,  
A place for grown-ups to feel like children* - Craig Lloyd

*Family time, walking, dens, dams, dogs and picnics* - Robert Semple

*Space and peace* - Jo Chesworth

*Me, my camera, my dog and my wheelchair in the Quantock Hills*

*Woodlands, bats, Jurassic coast, adders, cream teas and steam railways*  
- Leanne Butt

*Wide open spaces to get away in* - Alan Hughes

*Quiet walks and woodland*

*Tranquillity, wilderness, close to home*

*Open skies, freedom*

*Freedom, fresh air, peace*

*Childhood Picnics, long walks grandparents, views, memories*

*God's Country* - Paul Trolley

”



# 6 Risks and Opportunities

In many ways the Quantocks have been less affected by the agricultural, social, and economic changes of the last 60 years or so than many other rural areas. Nevertheless, the pace of change has been quickening. In the short term Brexit, whatever shape it takes, will bring some particular challenges while the potential impacts of climate change seem to grow with each passing year. At the same time there are real opportunities too; the greater understanding of the importance of the natural environment to health and wellbeing, more awareness of the value of allowing room for natural processes to operate and less emphasis on “static” nature conservation management, perhaps greater recognition of the financial value of the public goods provided by farmers. The next few years are going to be interesting.



*Timber Harvesting in Great Wood*

## 6.1 Loss of key habitats, species and landscape character

The Quantocks are rich in biodiversity and in many ways due to their topography and historic land use have maintained a lot of priority habitat and associated species. However, like much of the UK, there has been degradation of these habitats whether through intensification of agriculture during the post-war era, increasing disturbance through recreational use and climatic changes.

During the last 60 years one of the biggest issues has been the loss of economic drivers for the management of marginal land such as Quantock Common. During the 1950s and 60s it became uneconomic for local landowners / farmers to manage the common through running stock and coppicing and traditional land management such as swaling (the winter burning of heath). The resulting reduction of management led to increasing scrub encroachment, degeneration of the heath species such as the crossed leaved heath and ling heather, and increased dominance of gorse leading to increased summer fires. The fire in summer 1976 burned for three weeks and covered approximately 120ha.

The Quantock Landscape Partnership area is visually very vulnerable, with much of the landscape having a pronounced physical form – the open slopes, prominent ridgeline and exposed summits are visible from considerable distance. Equally the more intimate landscapes such as the combes, foothills and coastal areas and landscape features such as irregular hedged fields and small stone-built hamlets and villages, can be stripped of their special character by insensitive development and the cumulative effect of smaller changes over time.

Particular threats to the landscape include conversion of pasture to arable cultivation leading to the decline / loss of hedgerows and a resultant weakening of landscape pattern. Soil erosion can also be a problem, sometimes all too visible in the narrow lanes. Further pressure on the agricultural land is from the change of use to horse keeping and associated paraphernalia, such as taped fields, field shelters, jumps, as well as increased overgrazing leading to poaching. There is increasing construction of large agricultural buildings the size and siting of which does not respond to the small-scale character of the farmstead or the scale of the intricate landscape, whereas conversion of traditional agricultural buildings is often not sympathetic to the agricultural history and character.

Pressure from highways, such as the A358 and A39, with increased signage, lighting and other cluttering infrastructure detract from the rural landscape. To the north and south of the Landscape Partnership area pylon lines dominate views and detract from the scenic quality. Economic activity through tourism has the potential to impact negatively on the landscape. To the north the presence of static caravan / mobile home parks on the sloping foothills affects the scenic views and introduces an almost industrial feel to a largely agricultural zone, whereas on the scarp slopes to the west and south the introduction of camping / glamping has the potential to increase light pollution and reduce tranquillity at the edge of the semi-natural heathland and woodland.

Fragmentation of the large farms and estates can potentially lead to the loss or decline of features in the historic parkland landscapes which fringe the Quantock Hills. Standard parkland trees along with tree clumps strengthen the fringing and agricultural landscape. Many of these features are in decline due to age and without a holistic approach planting of replacements does not occur leading to the loss of these features. Together with the parklands and ornamental tree clumps, beech hedgebanks create a repeating but varied structure that defines the Quantock Hills. A 2005 Land Use Consultants Report identified an estimated 760km of hedgerows of which 37.2km are beech hedgebanks, the majority of which are considered to be mature, with 21% senescing (ie over-mature, and starting to fall apart). The implication of this being that management is required in the short term to ensure the beech hedgebanks survive into the future.

The manorial landscape of the Quantock Hills has suffered from a large decline in the number and coverage of orchards, another key landscape feature. The 'Fallen Fruits Project: Mapping Orchard Decline in the Quantock Hills', identified that c1840 there were 1,401 confirmed orchards covering an area of 643ha. By 2007 there were 15 orchards covering 35ha, a decline of 95%.

## 6.2 Changes in land management

Over the last 60 years there has been an increased intensification of agriculture with loss of field boundaries and loss of pasture through conversion to arable and more recently the introduction of energy crops such as *Miscanthus* and maize.

Conversion of pasture to arable cropping in areas that were historically grazed is continuing to change the character of the higher, steeper slopes of the rolling farmland. In the period 2000 - 2009, there was an increase in cereal cropping by 82 percent. While the rate of grassland loss has declined since 2003 the extent has not recovered to 1990 levels.

There has also been a degradation of the associated landscapes, such as widening of country lanes to accommodate modern farm machinery and removal and widening of field gates. Management of hedgerows is now predominantly through flailing, creating short and tight hedgerows that are gappy and in many cases lacking hedgerow trees. Travelling through the manorial landscape there is now a sense of 'industrial' agriculture with the loss of characteristic features which weakens the strength of the landscape.

A focal point of the Landscape Partnership area is Quantock Common, an area of over 2,700ha of which 1,790ha is registered Common. The main right associated with the common is that of pasturage (grazing of livestock) and this has been practised by local farmers for hundreds of years. During the post war era the drive for food production and intensification of agriculture meant the management of the common became a lower priority and while grazing was maintained it was at lower levels and much of the associated management, such as swaling (the controlled burning of heather and grasses), was lost. During this period, it was also apparent that farming the commons was not an economically viable activity.

The wooded combs that intersect Quantock Common have had a long history of industrial use, at times quite intensively. The harvesting of the sessile oak for timber and the bark for tanning was undertaken alongside coppicing for the production of charcoal since the beginning of the 19th century.

During the late 1980's and 90's interest in the management of Quantock Common increased and the with availability of agri-environment funding an opportunity to actively manage the common presented itself. Under the Quantock Commoners Association lead grazing management has been enhanced, a swaling programme was re-introduced and significant invasive species control has been undertaken.





## 6.3 The growth of Taunton and Bridgwater

Development within the Quantock Landscape Partnership area is a particularly sensitive issue as new development can so easily change the character and landscape beauty of the area. Of equal sensitivity is the growth of Taunton and Bridgwater, the largest and third largest settlements in Somerset respectively.

### 6.3.1 DCLG Household Estimates and Projections

In July 2016 the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) published projections for the numbers of households in each local authority area to the year 2039. The projections were based on the 2014-based population projections published in May 2016 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

A household is defined as one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area. A household can consist of more than one family, or no families in the case of a group of unrelated people.

#### Number of Households

- From its 2015 projection of around 236,500, the number of households in Somerset is projected to increase to nearly 250,000 by the year 2020 to reach 278,000 by the year 2035.
- Highest long-term rates of growth are projected to be in Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane, while West Somerset is projected to see the lowest growth in numbers of households (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Projected household numbers (in thousands)**

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	% change 2015-2035
Mendip	47.9	50.2	52.3	54.4	56.2	+17.3%
Sedgemoor	51.5	54.6	57.5	60.3	62.9	+22.0%
South Somerset	72.1	75.2	78.0	80.8	83.1	+15.2%
Taunton Deane	49.2	51.9	54.3	56.6	58.7	+19.2%
West Somerset	15.7	15.9	16.3	16.7	17.1	+9.4%
<b>Somerset</b>	<b>236.5</b>	<b>249.7</b>	<b>258.4</b>	<b>268.8</b>	<b>278.0</b>	<b>+17.6%</b>

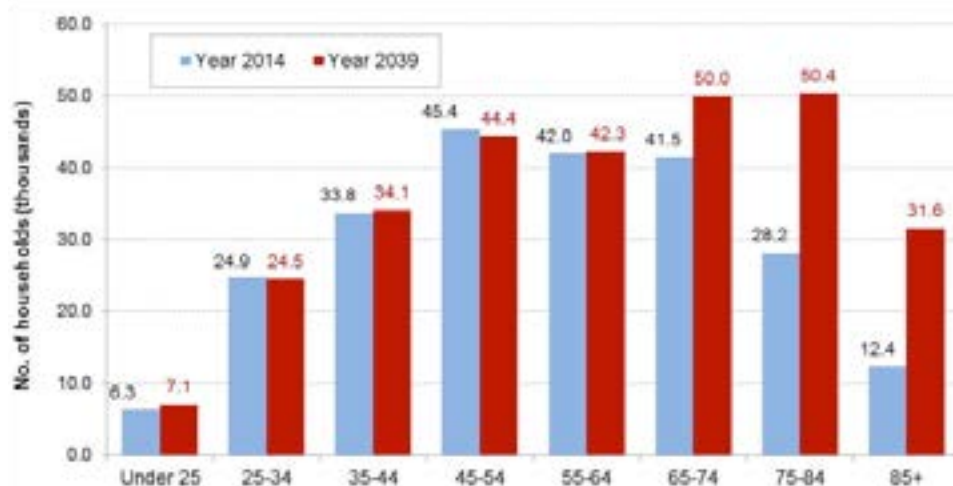
Source: DCLG

## Age of Household

The DCLG has also published projections for 2039 related to the age of the ‘household representative’, usually the oldest economically active adult living in a household.

- In Somerset, there are projected to be substantial increases between 2014 and 2039 in households where the representative is aged 75 or more.
- In 2014, it was estimated that there were more households where the representative was aged 45-54 than any other age group. By 2039, it is projected that the largest number of household representatives will be aged 75-84 (see Chart 1).
- The number of households where the representative is aged 85 or more is projected to rise by more than 150% to 31,600.

**Chart 1: Projected households by Age of Household Representative (in thousands)**



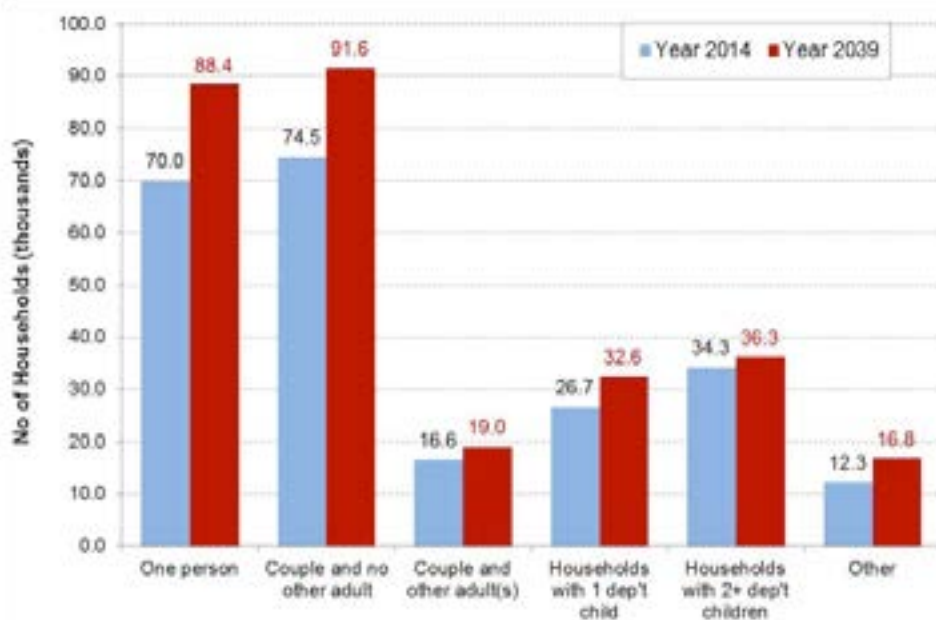
Source: DCLG

## Household Composition

The 2014-based projections also incorporate 2011 Census data on household types; for instance, whether they contain one person, couples, families and so on.

- The largest projected increases between 2014 and 2039 are for single and adult couple households (see Chart 2).
- Most of the projected growth in households containing at least two dependent children will be in Sedgemoor.
- In West Somerset the average household size is projected to dip from 2.12 to 1.99, one of only six local authorities in England whose average size will be under 2 per household.

**Chart 2: Projected households by Household Composition (in thousands)**





### 6.3.2 Local context – Taunton and Bridgwater

Over the past decade Bridgwater has developed significantly, mainly in response to the development of a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C. Much of the associated infrastructure such as park and rides, material holding and transit sites plus a 1,000-person accommodation site have been built to support the main site development. Other than the accommodation centre the development has occurred on the urban edges next to the existing transport routes.

The current Local Plan for Sedgemoor (2011-2023) adopted in February 2019 proposes nearly 3,000 new houses are built in and around Bridgwater mainly to the west and south of the town. There is also a further 175ha of employment land identified. Much of the new allocation is linked to existing industrial development forming a linear expansion to the east (A39 – Highbridge corridor) and to the west (Bridgwater – North Petherton corridor). The western corridor will impact greatly on the Landscape Partnership area where it will bring the built-up urban area to within 1.5km of the LPS. Not only will the close proximity impact on the visual aspect of the LPS area it will change the character of the journey from Bridgwater to the Quantocks. The current experience of leaving the medium / high density housing, passing through dispersed industrial development interspersed with open country and views into the Quantocks will be lost. Instead you will travel from housing into a continual industrial zone until you emerge into open country. Many of the long and medium distance views into the Quantocks will be lost and no longer will there be an anticipation in the journey, instead there will be a hard juxtaposition from an industrial to a rural landscape.

In the latest spatial plan (2016-2028) for Taunton the emphasis is on housing with a proposed 9,000 new homes to be built and to also provide over 40ha of employment land and 5 new schools covering 15ha. Two of the development zones are on the north of Taunton accounting for 6,000 houses. The West Monkton development will mean that the urban area will abut the Quantock Landscape Partnership area and the Staplegrove development will bring the urban zone to within 1.3km of the LPS boundary. Current proposals and policies allow for a softer urban ‘edge’ interface between Taunton and the open countryside. Both developments have greenspace plans including a new country park, offering greater potential for linkages between the urban areas and the Quantock LPS.



View to Hinkley

## 6.4 Health and Wellbeing Agenda

The importance of the natural environment to health and wellbeing has been increasingly recognised over the last decade. Mental health benefits in particular have had an increasingly practical profile with public health funding for nature based interventions now common. Despite supportive policy statements this is still usually in the form of contributions to project funding rather than viewed as a core service however. A review of nature based interventions for mental health by Natural England in 2016 is only one of the recent studies making the case for mainstreaming this approach.



Wordclouds of the young people's feelings towards the countryside vs the town taken from the Audience Development Report. Words which were discussed in a 'positive' light are coloured green, and words which were discussed in a 'negative' light are coloured red. Black words were discussed neutrally.

Informal activity as a basis for good physical health has also been increasingly recognised alongside more traditional forms of exercise such as participation in organised sports.

Health inequalities have also been increasingly recognised as an important facet of disadvantage for geographic communities and individuals. A study undertaken for the South West Protected Landscapes Forum in 2007 identified that the catchment of the Quantock Hills contained settlements with high proportions of under-represented groups. Specifically:

- Taunton has twice the regional average of young people
- Taunton has twice the regional average of older people
- Disability – Taunton and Bridgwater both have areas with the 20% highest ratios of people with a disability in England
- Mental Health – Taunton and Bridgwater have at least one area within the 10% highest ratio of people with poor mental health in England

As illustrated in section 3.2 above, Taunton and Bridgwater contain multiple wards in the worst 20% for indices of multiple deprivation and some areas in the worst 10%.



Bushcraft Day

For adults, the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2018, which has not yet been replaced, set out the shared vision for health and wellbeing across the whole of Somerset. See [www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alld=45804](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alld=45804)

The priorities for the plan followed three themes:

**Theme 1:** People, families and communities take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

**Theme 2:** Families and communities are thriving and resilient.

**Theme 3:** Somerset people are able to live independently.

There is clearly a role for the LPS to contribute towards the achievement of these objectives. It can:

- Encourage and empower individuals and families to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor exercise and relaxation
- Build resilience of families and communities by providing opportunities for shared experiences and learning
- Contribute towards the creation of support networks for isolated and vulnerable individuals
- Improve children's health and wellbeing through improving connectedness with nature and helping to instill skills for life within the area's children and young people

The new **Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy 2019-2028**, which will replace the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy, is currently only a consultation draft, but the proposed Priority two is *Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment*. One of the consultation comments received and quoted in the consultation summary was *"A thriving healthy natural environment (essential to the health and well-being of people and communities) needs to feature prominently in this vision"*.

Clearly spreading the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment remains high on the Public Health agenda, particularly for disadvantaged individuals and communities.



## 6.5 Climate Change

Climate change is now an unavoidable consideration in any long term planning. Particularly for environmental and landscape strategies, measures to reduce the extent of climate change and mitigate the impacts which cannot be avoided are essential.

For the Quantocks, a temperature rise of at least 1.5 degrees by the end of the century, probably significantly more than that, will directly impact on the natural world, agriculture, and human health.

It is not yet possible to make site specific predictions, but the general pattern of hotter drier summers and milder wetter winters, combined with more extreme weather events (storms, exceptional rainfall, droughts) will present significant challenges to the status quo. So too will the indirect economic consequences – climate change is as big an economic and political challenge as it is an environmental one.

Impacts include;

- A combination of changing agricultural pressures and the direct impact of a changing climate cause some habitats to expand and others to be threatened
- Changes in species composition within habitats
- New species may colonise the area or indeed the UK; some will be welcome additions, but others may be more problematic
- Similarly, some existing crops will cease to be viable, but new crops will be introduced
- Some established tree species will increasingly struggle to reproduce or even survive
- There will be an increased risk of summer wildfires
- Traditional controlled burning (swaling) practices may come under increasing scrutiny
- New diseases, of plants, wild animals, livestock, and people, are likely to arise, perhaps with new vectors such as mosquitos
- Carbon budgeting may offer new economic and habitat creation opportunities but equally it may constrain some current activities
- There may be greater pressure for intrusive renewable energy developments – industrial solar farms just beyond the AONB fringe are already a concern
- Food security might become a more pressing concern. The conversation to date has largely focussed on apparent choices between nature conservation and agricultural productivity, but it is notable that horse keeping, golf courses, and commercial pheasant rearing do not yet feature in the discussion
- Sea level rise will have minimal direct impact on the Quantocks but a very significant impact on the adjacent Somerset Levels. Knock on effects are therefore likely
- There will be impacts on housing, health, and life expectancy – how these might affect the Quantocks is as yet unclear

The legacy of any LPS has to be mindful of climate change impacts and do what it can to chart a sustainable course into an uncertain future.

## 6.6 Brexit

At the time of writing (summer 2019) the consequences of the UK leaving the EU, or indeed whether it will happen at all, are far from clear and largely a matter of political speculation.

For the LPS, it is this very uncertainty that is the most significant factor. Farmers (and businesses generally) are reluctant to make long term decisions. There are huge short to long-term uncertainties around the impact on the agricultural economy that are unlikely to be resolved for several years, and the familiar if flawed Common Agricultural Policy will almost certainly disappear for British farmers.

At the same time leaving the EU does offer more flexibility to pay farmers for the public goods that the right land management can provide. There may be more money for “ecosystem services” such as nature conservation, public access, maintaining valued views, carbon storage, and flood protection. In the end political and market realities will decide if these potential benefits come to pass, but there is perhaps a window of opportunity to influence the decision makers.



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# 7 Addressing the Threats, Realising the Opportunities

The Quantock LPS has been created to address the threats and opportunities identified in section 6. Obviously, a project of this nature can only contribute to solutions – modestly in the grand scheme of things, but seeking to make a real difference locally and in individual peoples' lives.



*School visit to Ramscombe*



## 7.1 Programme Strands

There are three programme strands, Inspire, Live, and Learn;

### 1 *Inspire*

**Inspire** consists of eight projects (two were merged and one was dropped during development) all focussed on public engagement of one kind or another. Interactive digital interpretation, community engagement, schools work, social inclusion, formal training, events, and consensus building about the future of the area all sit here.

### 2 *Live*

**Live** collects ten projects all involving working in the wider landscape; woodland and hedgerow management, verge management, dormouse conservation, heritage monitoring, bat survey, plus promotion of recreational walking (which will emphasise the attractions of visiting places other than the honeypot sites, and so also indirectly contributing to practical conservation).

### 3 *Learn*

**Learn** consists of five projects (one was dropped during development) bringing together historical heritage projects of one kind or another, bringing the past alive. It includes archive-based research, oral histories, folk tales, and archaeology.

The project codes indicate which programme thread each project belongs to;

1.1 - 1.8; *Inspire*  
 2.1 – 2.10; *Live*  
 3.1 - 3.5; *Learn*

For ease of navigation, public – facing summaries of all the projects are in Appendix 1 of this LCAP.

Detailed Project Plans, which contain more details including financial breakdowns, are in a separate document. Whilst not confidential the detailed Project Plans are not intended for public distribution.

## 7.2 How the projects will address the threats and opportunities

Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
Loss of key habitats, species and landscape character	1.1	A View to a Hill	Raise awareness of the importance of views amongst community stakeholders, create mechanisms to protect them
	1.2	Digital landscapes	Heritage App, Poetry Trail, Photo competition all celebrate local distinctiveness
	1.3	In the footsteps of the Romantic Poets	New generation educated in impact of changing landscape and how to protect wildlife
	1.4	Quantock Connections	New audience aware of the impact of changing landscape and of how to protect wildlife
	1.5	Young Rangers	Young people help to protect species, habitats, and landscape character
	1.6	Quantock Apprentices	Young people help to protect species, habitats, and landscape character
	1.7	Quantock Events	Raise awareness of the Quantocks and of heritage generally amongst a wide audience
	1.8	Quantock Futures	A wide spectrum of stakeholders come together to understand the nature and impact of change and chart a better future of the area, its wildlife, and its people
	2.1	Quantock Follies & Features	Locally distinctive historic structures conserved for the future
	2.2	Quantock Hedgerows and Veteran Trees	Hedgerows restored and recreated, iconic beech hedgebanks managed and conserved
	2.3	Quantock Meadows	Areas of new flower rich grassland created. Increase understanding of management for rare habitat
	2.4	Wild Verges	Surviving flower rich verges conserved
	2.5	Hazel for Dormice	Important coppice habitat for dormice and other species brought back into active management. Increase understanding of management for rare species.
	2.6	Quantock Orchards	New traditional orchards created, and existing ones brought back into active management
	2.7	Quantock Community Woodlands	Traditional coppice area brought back into active management
	2.8	Quantock Monitoring Volunteers	Populations of key species monitored and understood, informing better management
	2.9	Batty Quantocks	Bat populations monitored and understood, informing better management. Increase understanding of management for rare species.
	3.1	Trees in the Landscape	Changes to the park and farmland treescape quantified and understood, a Strategy for the future developed with stakeholders
	3.4	Unlocking the Archives	Changes to the park and farmland treescape quantified and understood

Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
Changes in land management	1.1	A View to a Hill	Raise awareness of the importance of views amongst community stakeholders, create mechanisms to protect them
	1.3	In the footsteps of the Romantic Poets	New generation educated in impact of changing landscape and how to protect wildlife
	1.4	Quantock Connections	New audience aware of the impact of changing landscape and of how to protect wildlife
	1.5	Young Rangers	Young people help to protect traditional habitats and landscape character
	1.6	Quantock Apprentices	Young people help to protect traditional habitats and landscape character
	1.7	Quantock Events	A wide spectrum of stakeholders come together to understand the nature and impact of change and chart a better future of the area, its wildlife, and its people
	2.1	Quantock Follies & Features	Locally distinctive historic structures that no longer have any direct economic purpose are conserved for the future
	2.2	Quantock Hedgerows and Veteran Trees	Hedgerows restored and recreated, iconic beech hedgebanks managed and conserved
	2.3	Quantock Meadows	Areas of new flower rich grassland created by NT, land managers encouraged and supported to undertake similar projects themselves
	2.4	Wild Verges	Surviving flower rich verges conserved
	2.5	Hazel for Dormice	Traditional coppice area brought back into active management
	2.6	Quantock Orchards	New traditional orchards created, and existing ones brought back into active management
	2.7	Quantock Community Woodlands	Addresses the progressive loss of traditional commercial woodland management on the sites in question
	2.8	Quantock Monitoring Volunteers	Populations of key species monitored and understood, informing better management
	2.9	Batty Quantocks	Bat populations monitored and understood, importance of habitat connectivity graphically illustrated, informing better management and Planning decisions
	3.1	Trees in the Landscape	Changes to the park and farmland treescape quantified and understood, a Strategy for the future developed with stakeholders
	3.4	Unlocking the Archives	Changes to the park and farmland treescape quantified and understood
	3.5	Understanding the Landscape	Historic heritage protected from the incidental impacts of changes to land management



Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
The growth of Taunton and Bridgwater - increasing demand for outdoor recreation	1.1	A View to a Hill	Encourages people to explore away from the honeypot sites
	1.2	Digital landscapes	Photo competition encourages people to explore away from the honeypot sites
	1.3	In the footsteps of the Romantic Poets	New generation educated in impact of changing landscape and how to protect wildlife
	1.4	Quantock Connections	New audience aware of the impact of changing landscape and of how to protect wildlife, greater social cohesion
	1.5	Young Rangers	Young people gain skills and confidence contributing to conservation
	1.6	Quantock Apprentices	Young people gain skills and confidence and the opportunity for a career in countryside management
	1.7	Quantock Events	Raise awareness of the Quantocks and of heritage generally amongst a wide audience, people learn how to enjoy the area while reducing impacts. People encouraged to explore away from the honeypot sites
	2.1	Quantock Follies & Features	Major improvements to one of the most important access points on the Quantocks while reducing adverse landscape impacts of the Crowcombe Gate car park
	2.10	Quantock Walking	Recreational load spread away from honeypot sites, walking opened up to a much wider audience in a sustainable way



© Dave Pusill, Halsway Manor

Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
Health and Wellbeing Agenda	1.2	Digital landscapes	Heritage App, Poetry Trail, Photo competition all engage different and new audiences with the outdoors and encourage physical activity
	1.3	In the footsteps of the Romantic Poets	Young people gain skills and confidence, are encouraged to seek health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with nature. Inclusive activities for SEND, PRU, and Hospital School pupils
	1.4	Quantock Connections	New audience encouraged to seek health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with nature. New audience gains confidence and life skills. Families participate in activities together. Young people, incl some at risk of offending, gain better life chances. Older people in retirement and nursing homes stimulated mentally and (re)connected to Quantock heritage
	1.5	Young Rangers	Young people gain the personal, health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with nature
	1.6	Quantock Apprentices	Young people gain the personal, health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with nature
	1.7	Quantock Events	A wide variety of people gain the health and wellbeing benefits of engaging with heritage and spending time in nature, and gain confidence and skills
	1.8	Quantock Futures	A wide variety of people including local landowners are more aware of the health and wellbeing benefits of engaging with heritage and spending time in nature
	2.2	Quantock Hedgerows and Veteran trees	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature
	2.3	Quantock Meadows	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature
	2.4	Wild Verges	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature
	2.5	Hazel for Dormice	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature
	2.7	Quantock Community Woodlands	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature

Continued on p125

Continued from p124

Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
Health and Wellbeing Agenda (cont.)	2.8	Quantock Monitoring Volunteers	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature
	2.9	Batty Quantocks	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature. Active inclusion of visually impaired community
	2.10	Quantock Walking	Volunteers gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and contact with nature
	3.1	Trees in the Landscape	Opportunities for the mobility disabled to contribute to landscape understanding and conservation
	3.2	Quantock Memories	Older people feel valued and included
	3.3	Stories of the Hills	People are encouraged to be physically active through dance and other folk heritage
	3.4	Unlocking the Archives	Opportunities for the mobility disabled to contribute to landscape understanding and conservation
	3.5	Understanding the Landscape	Volunteers, incl some from disadvantaged communities, gain the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity and enhanced local identity



Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme participants



Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
Climate Change	1.2	Digital landscapes	Photo competition encourages people to explore away from the honeypot sites, closer to home and to remaining public transport
	1.3	In the footsteps of the Romantic Poets	Young people gain a greater understanding of potential local impacts of climate change
	1.4	Quantock Connections	Wider audience, incl those most in need, gain resilience from the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with nature
	1.5	Young Rangers	Wider audience, incl those most in need, gain resilience from the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with natureXXX
	1.6	Quantock Apprentices	Wider audience, incl those most in need, gain resilience from the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activity and contact with nature
	1.7	Quantock Events	A wide variety of people gain resilience from engaging with heritage and spending time in nature
	1.8	Quantock Futures	A wide spectrum of stakeholders come together to understand the nature and impact of climate change and chart a better future of the area, its wildlife, and its people
	2.2	Quantock Hedgerows and Veteran Trees	New and restored hedgerows and hedgebanks designed to survive in the late 21st century climate
	2.7	Quantock Community Woodlands	Woodlands made more resilient against climate change, impacts of ash die back mitigated
	2.8	Quantock Monitoring Volunteers	Will monitor impacts of climate change on sensitive indicator species
	2.9	Batty Quantocks	Bat populations protected and made more resilient
	2.10	Quantock Walking	Will provide new opportunities for walking without using a private car
	3.1	Trees in the Landscape	Longer term understanding helps to make treescape more resilient against climate change, impacts of ash die back mitigated

Threat / Opportunity	Ref	Project	Response
Brexit	1.5	Young Rangers	Young people gain transferable employment and life skills at a time of economic uncertainty
	1.6	Quantock Apprentices	Young people gain transferable employment and life skills at a time of economic uncertainty
	2.2	Quantock Hedgerows and Veteran Trees	Hedgerow management and re-creation encouraged at a time of huge economic uncertainty for landowners
	2.3	Quantock Meadows	Surviving flower rich verges protected from any adverse economic impacts on public finances



Young apprentice coppicing

# 8 The Landscape Partnership Scheme



© Frank Clatworthy, Aisholt Sunset

## 8.1 The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme's Boundaries

Landscape Partnership Scheme boundaries are drawn based on landscape character, but the context relies heavily on the heritage and social issues the project seeks to address.

From the beginning, the Quantock LPS was intended to meet the practical challenges to the heritage of the Quantock landscape, to better manage the growing access pressures by diverting visitors away from the honeypot sites as much as possible, and to make the use of the area more socially inclusive. The partners never felt constrained by the formal AONB boundary.

Including a “halo” of parishes around the hill enables nearly everywhere that identifies as “Quantock” to be included, so there was a strong community driver when AONB and early project partners were scoping ideas about where the proposed boundary should lie. Also, partners were conscious that it is often in the areas surrounding the AONB proper that an LPS could bring most added value. A wider boundary brings many more rural settlements into the LPS area, facilitating projects where Quantock people actually live.



In terms of managing recreational pressures, having room to spread demand is also essential. Current demand is mostly concentrated in places with good views but no requirement to hike up a steep hill to enjoy the experience – i.e. around the hilltop car parks. In contrast the surrounding parishes mostly have little or no wider recreational profile at the moment, despite offering great views of the Quantock Hills without a hill climb, and they are generally very attractive in their own right. They provide the space the LPS requires if it is to manage recreational demand more effectively.

The LPS boundary is close to the key disadvantaged audiences in Taunton, Bridgwater, Williton and Watchet. Being able to work with people from those communities in places close to their homes is most likely to engender a sustainable commitment and sense of engagement after the LPS itself has ended.

With these practical and social considerations all clearly pointing at an LPS much bigger than the AONB, the question becomes how far beyond the AONB boundary – beyond the actual Quantock massif – should the LPS boundary be drawn?

The initial draft boundary was created by drawing on existing landscape character studies done for other purposes and as a desk exercise, and it encompassed 193 square kilometres. Fortunately, the “social” landscape and the physical geography are largely congruent, so the detailed Landscape Character Assessment undertaken during the development phase was largely a matter of refining detail rather than redrawing the area wholesale.

Based on the 2019 Quantock Hills LCA, the final area includes slightly more land to the south of the Hills proper, and slightly less to the north east near the coast, than the draft boundary did. The boundary was drawn to provide the best possible objective reflection of landscape character as seen on the ground, but helpfully the result is also an accurate reflection of where communities consider themselves to be “Quantock”.

In the end the physical Landscape Character, community identities, and the objectives of the LPS did not prove difficult to reconcile, perhaps because they are all so intimately related anyway. A landscape is, after all, *“An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*.<sup>4</sup>

The final LPS project area covers 194.9 square kilometres.



© Dawn Mahoney, Bluebells at Cothelstone

<sup>4</sup> Definition of landscape (Council of Europe ELC, Florence October 2000)

## 8.2 Lead partner

The lead partner is the Quantock Hills AONB Service, who will line manage the staff, provide administrative and other support, and generally actively support delivery day to day. The AONB led the partnership that developed and submitted the Stage 1 bid and hosted the Development Officer during Stage 1.

## 8.3 Accountable body

The AONB is hosted by Somerset County Council, who employ the staff and provide financial management. The Landscape Partnership Scheme will be managed as an AONB project, and so ultimately therefore the County Council is also the underwriter of the LPS. It bears ultimate legal and financial responsibility.

## 8.4 The Core Staff Team

Over its five year delivery period, the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme will have a core team of five posts;

- Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager with overall responsibility for delivery of the LPS and line management of the other staff, reporting to the Board and line managed by the AONB Development Officer
- A Community Engagement Officer, also the lead person for recruiting and co-ordinating volunteering for the LPS
- A Natural Heritage Project Officer (0.6 fte), responsible for the nature based activities and projects
- A Historic Heritage Project Officer (4 year full time post) responsible for the historical, archaeological, and archive based activities and projects
- A Project Support Officer (0.6 fte), responsible for day to day financial management and procurement, events bookings, website and social media content, and generally doing the behind the scenes work needed to keep the project running

Under Somerset County Council policies, none of these posts require a DBS check as they do not fulfil the criteria for *Regulated Activity relating to Children or Vulnerable Adults*. Checks may not be made on staff who do not meet these criteria.

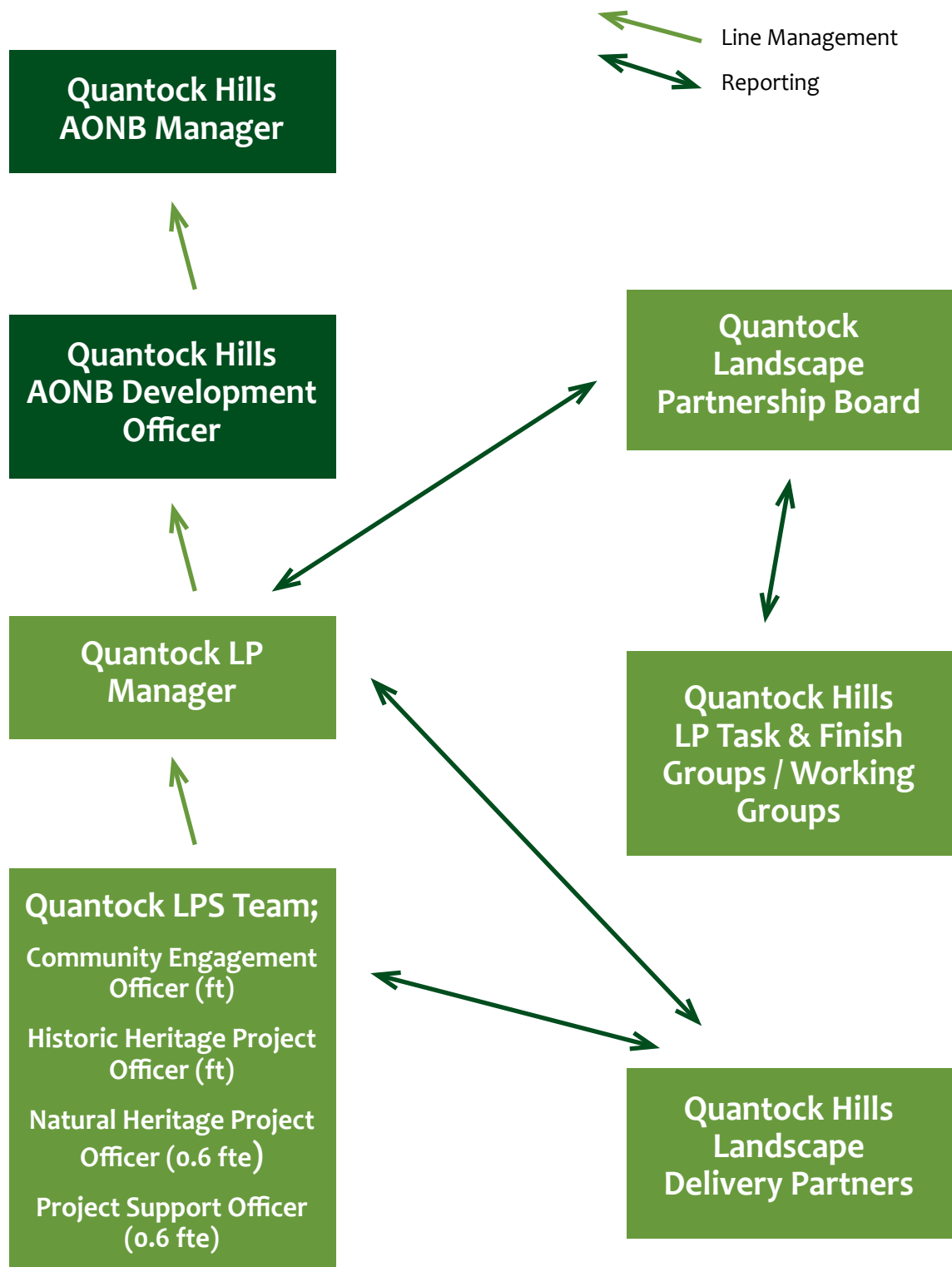
Copies of the decision flow charts have been provided to NLHF as part of Appendix 3 supporting documents.

## 8.5 Reporting Structure

The LPS team will be managed by the Landscape Partnership Scheme Manager who will in turn be line managed by the AONB Development Officer.

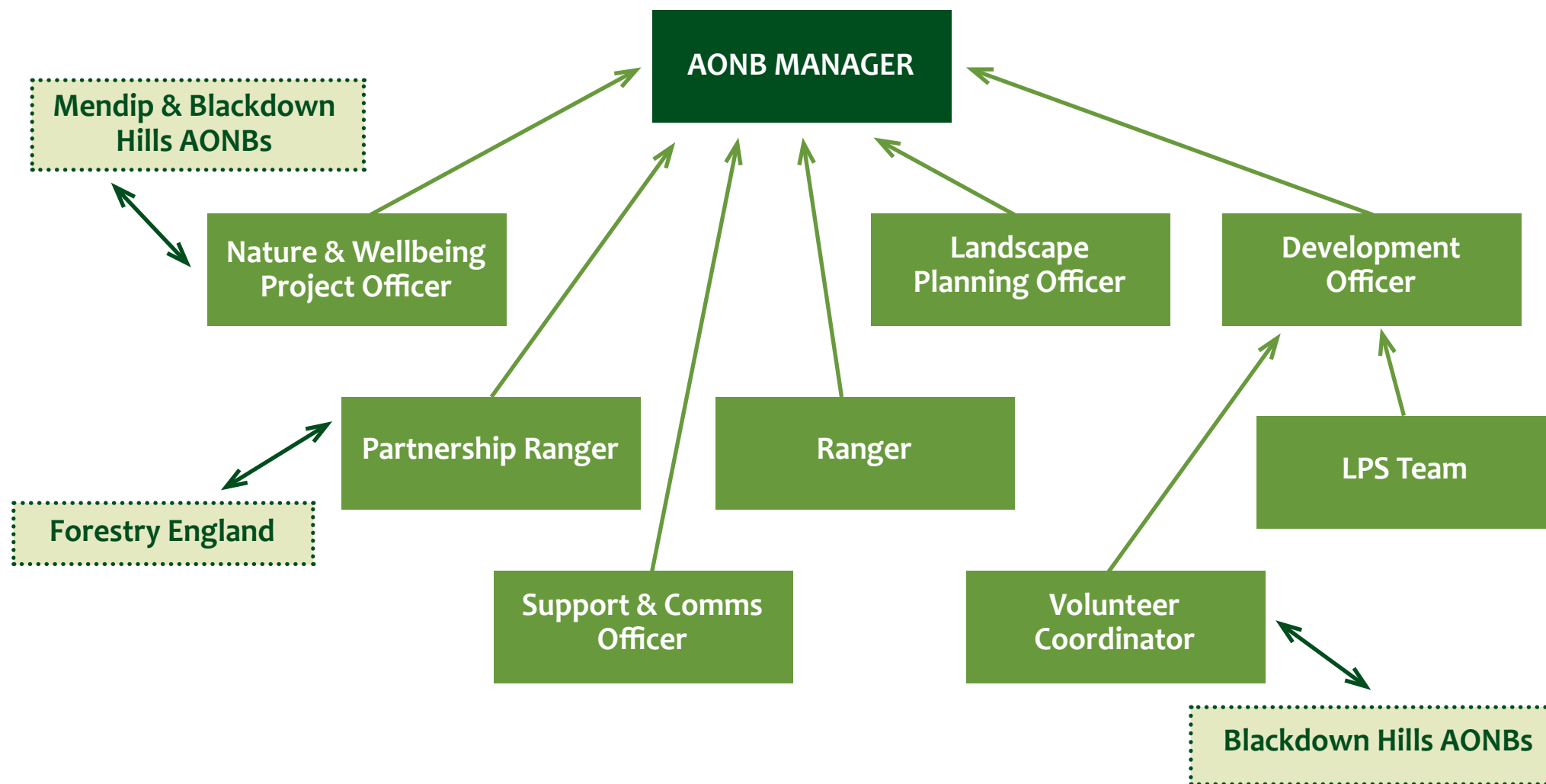
Governance and strategic direction is provided by the Partnership Board to whom the LPS Manager will report. The Board, which has an independent chair, will meet at least quarterly. Their agreement will be required before any request for significant budget or programme changes is made to NLHF.

### 8.5.1 Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Organisational Chart – Line Management and Governance





### 8.5.2 Organogram of the whole Quantock Hills AONB Service (including project and partnership posts), showing how the LPS team relates to other AONB staff



## 8.6 Risk management

Day to day project risk management will be the responsibility of the LPS Manager. A risk register will be maintained and updated as required; any updates will be reported to each Board meeting and to NLHF with each quarterly claim.

A copy of the initial Risk Register forms part of the Stage 2 application to NLHF.

Health and Safety and safeguarding risk management will follow normal AONB/SCC procedures. Risk Assessment and incident recording for the LPS will be part of the regular AONB system. The LPS Manager is the responsible person for Health and Safety Risk management.

## 8.7 Practical Delivery

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme is planned as a five year programme. Individual projects have been scheduled within that period with a view to evening out the workload as far as possible.

As is usual with LPS, there will be a mid-project review, including a “health check” by external evaluation consultants and a full budget review. A website refresh is also planned. It is likely that some projects will be delivering far more than anticipated, one or two others may be disappointing or have hit unexpected difficulties, and some new opportunities will have opened up – this is normal for such a large and multi-faceted project. After discussion by the Board, and with the agreement of NLHF, it is expected that the programme and remaining project budgets will be amended and updated at this stage to reflect the conclusions of the review.



Kilve Chantry

## 8.8 The QLPS Office

The LPS team will be part of the Quantock Hills AONB team, employed by Somerset County Council, but based at the Thomas Poole Community Library in Nether Stowey.

There were a number of drivers behind this decision; desk space is limited at Fyne Court and the mobile phone and broadband connections are both poor at best. The office and IT simply couldn't accommodate five more staff working on peak days. The final catalyst was the news that the long-promised cable connection had been postponed indefinitely, but once thoughts turned to finding an alternative office location for the LPS team the many positive advantages of being based in our own room at Nether Stowey became clear. Stowey is in the heart of the Quantocks, a centre of the visitor economy and more accessible for business visitors than Fyne Court (which is down narrow backroads and which can get very busy in school holidays or when events are on). Having a separate office will also help to establish a distinct LPS identity without sacrificing any of the advantages of being part of the AONB staff.

The LPS staff will remain embedded in the wider AONB team, able to work flexibly from the AONB office at Fyne Court and from County Hall (and home), just as some AONB staff now work between Fyne Court and the Forestry England office at Cockercombe or between Fyne Court and the Blackdowns and Mendips AONB offices on joint projects. Shared or split work locations are normal within the Somerset AONBs.

LPS staff will attend monthly AONB staff meetings, as well as AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meetings when appropriate. It is expected that AONB staff with an interest in delivering LPS projects will come to Nether Stowey (which will often be a more convenient location) as often as LPS staff meet with them at Fyne Court. Maintaining informal day to day contacts with colleagues will be essential.

There will also be a hot desk available at the Somerset Heritage Centre (the County Records Centre) for the Historic Heritage Project Officer to assist in the effective delivery of the archive-based projects.



## 8.9 Volunteer Management



### 8.9.1 LPS/AONB Volunteers

The LPS Community Engagement Officer will be responsible for coordinating volunteering across the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme, working with partners and others to ensure the successful recruitment, training and management of volunteers and recording of volunteer activity.

Any volunteers recruited by the LPS will be inducted as AONB volunteers, coming under the AONB insurance, communication and support, and risk management systems. These are maintained by the AONB Volunteer Co-Ordinator (a post shared with the Blackdown Hills AONB) with whom the LPS Community Engagement Officer will liaise closely. This will provide continuity should there be staff turnover within the LPS team and, more importantly, after the end of the LPS itself. A larger, better skilled, and more diverse volunteer pool for the AONB will be an important part of the LPS legacy.

Several of the more specialist projects with a strong volunteering element will be led by other LPS staff. Where the volunteers are directly recruited and supervised by the LPS, the relevant staff member will provide day to day supervision and training, within the overall support system described.

### 8.9.2 Volunteers from other organisations

Where the volunteers work for a partner organisation or delivery contractor the LPS staff will provide informal advice and direction where appropriate, but each partner organisation will have primary responsibility for managing and supporting their own volunteers.

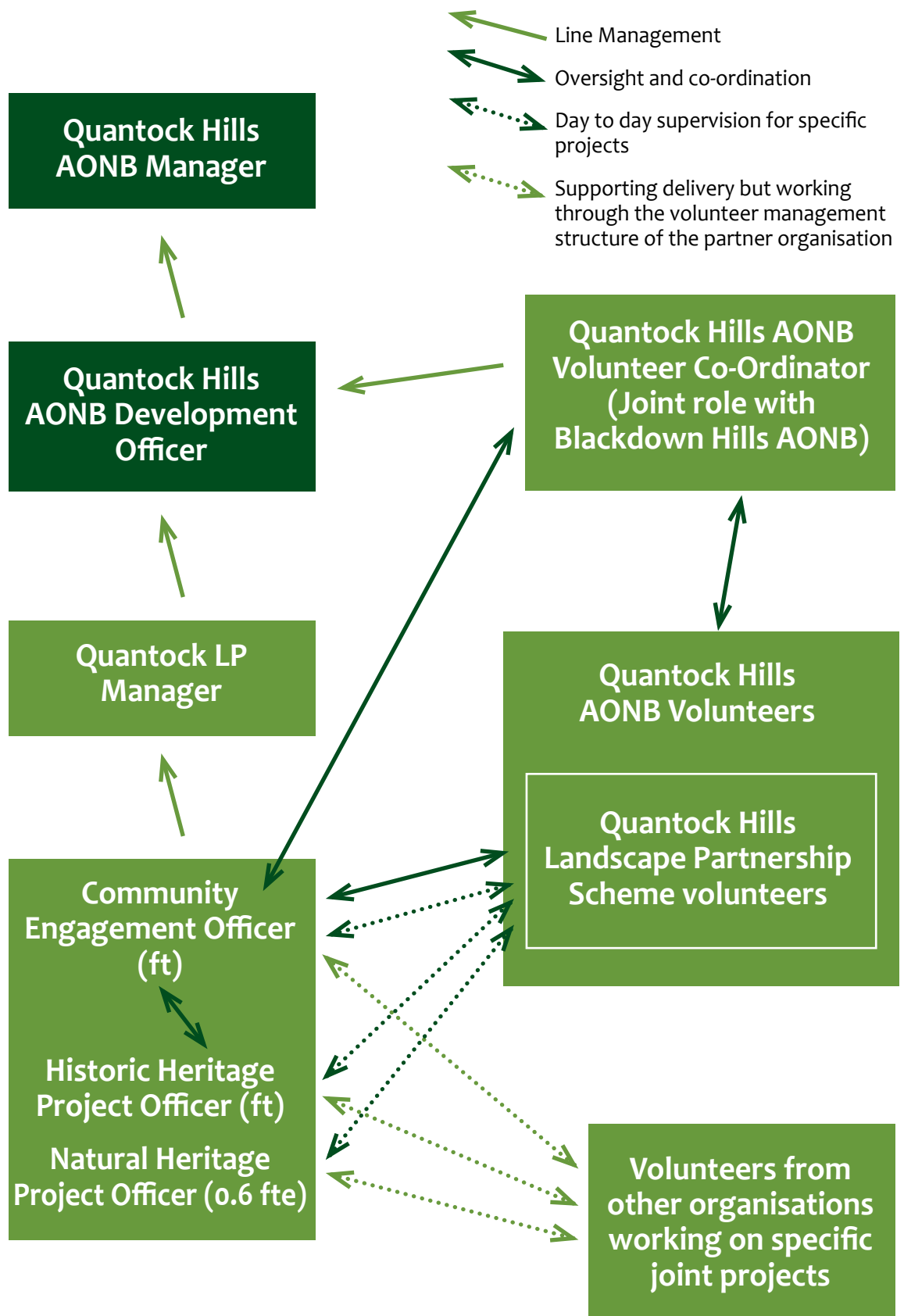
However, the AONB and National Trust already share a lot of conservation volunteers and run a joint task programme and volunteer social and training events. There will be further cross fertilisation between these organisations over the course of the LPS.

The LPS Community Engagement Officer will also develop a structured programme of training for community volunteers (people leading independent groups outwith the LPS/AONB volunteer management structure) to help them to continue to deliver outdoor activities for their communities after the LPS itself ends.



Clare Viner, Storyteller

### 8.9.3 Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Organisational Chart – Volunteer Management and Support





# 9 Procurement and State Aid



Cockercombe morning

## 9.1 Procurement

The Quantock Hills AONB Service is hosted by Somerset County Council and adheres to their Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders. In some cases, the NLHF thresholds for tendering requirements are lower than SCC's, and in those cases the LPS will adhere to NLHF thresholds.

The LPS will define award criteria appropriate to the procurement which will secure an outcome that will provide the best value for money for the LPS. This will usually be the ‘most economically advantageous’ (aka “Best Value”) tender, which will deliver the lowest overall cost (rather than just price) to the LPS, as considerations other than price also apply. With regards to purchase of goods or services SCC and the LPS operate the following procedures at the different cost thresholds:

Somerset County Council Thresholds	Quantock LPS Thresholds
0-£25,000: obtain at least 1 quote or costs from sources such as websites and demonstrate Best Value by following the procurement process for lower value purchases.	0 - £9,999: Obtain at least 1 quote or cost from sources such as websites and demonstrate Best Value by following the procurement process for lower value purchases. £10,000 - £24,999: Obtain a minimum 3 written quotes from local suppliers (where appropriate)
£25,000 - £75,000: Minimum 3 written quotes through local suppliers and the Council’s Electronic Tendering System using Quick Quote.	£25,000 - £50,000: Obtain minimum 3 written quotes from local suppliers (where appropriate) and the Council’s Electronic Tendering System using Quick Quote.
Over £75,000: Invite Tenders from any and all qualified candidates by advertising the opportunity via the Council’s Electronic Tendering System and in Contract Finder.	Over £50,000: Invite Tenders from any and all qualified candidates by advertising the opportunity via the Council’s Electronic Tendering System and in Contract Finder.
Over approximately £140,000 (current EU Threshold): Invite Tenders from any and all qualified candidates by advertising the opportunity via the Council’s Electronic Tendering System, in Contract Finder and in the JOEU (Open Journal of the European Union)	Over approximately £140,000 (current EU Threshold): Invite Tenders from any and all qualified candidates by advertising the opportunity via the Council’s Electronic Tendering System, in Contract Finder and in the JOEU (Open Journal of the European Union)

Note 1; “where appropriate” in the context of seeking local suppliers means “where there is a locally competitive market with several potential contractors”. If this is not the case, for example when seeking specialist evaluation consultants, then bids will be sought regionally or nationally as required.

Note 2; where at least three quotes are required by this policy, but nevertheless only one or two quotes are submitted by potential suppliers, exceptional permission to proceed may be granted by NLHF on a case by case basis.

In line with SCC Best Value policy, LPS staff may always choose to use the procurement process for a higher budget value when it appears to them that this will realise best value. In particular, multiple quotes may well be sought for contracts under £10,000 where there is a competitive local market and/or the contract is for the first of what are likely to be multiple purchases of similar items. Obvious examples include leaflet printing or production of interpretation boards.

During the Development Phase partners who might have an interest in bidding for project contracts under the Landscape Partnership Scheme have understood they will be required to adhere to the same requirements, and that in an open tender process their bids will be objectively assessed alongside all others that are received and may therefore be unsuccessful.

The AONB experience of running a Landscape Development Fund has informed this procedure.

## 9.2 State Aid

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme will operate under the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Technical Support Scheme (Ref 47712) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Protection and Enhancement Support Scheme (Ref 47713). These Technical Support Schemes are legal recognition by the EU that AONB activities including the Landscape Partnership Scheme are exempt from State Aid rules.



Cothelstone Bluebells



# 10 Monitoring and Evaluation



## 10.1 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy

Evaluation is the process by which the success or otherwise of a project is assessed – what impact did it have, and what lessons may be learned and shared? Monitoring is the continuous collection of data to support evaluation, as well as for other purposes such as reporting and record keeping. This chapter covers both activities.

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy will be commissioned as an early priority during delivery as soon as permission to start has been obtained. The chosen consultant will work with the Scheme throughout its life. The Strategy must be ‘owned’ by all partners (the LPS team, Board members, and contracted delivery partners), because it will be central to the delivery both of individual projects and of the Landscape Partnership Scheme as a whole. Wherever possible evaluation will be embedded in project delivery and will engage project participants in such a way as to enhance outcomes.

The full project plans include details of activities, output targets and anticipated outcomes. These are summarised together with associated indicators and relevant baselines as a separate document. This will be revised on the start of delivery to provide an ‘at-a-glance’ updateable summary of project progress which, with the addition of further columns (e.g. financial data, milestones, ‘achieved to date’, risks etc.), can be used as the basis for periodic reporting to the QLPS Partnership Board and NLHF. This summary will also enable targets and timelines to be updated when necessary during the five year delivery period.

Most projects have multiple outputs and outcomes, some of which (such as those relating to habitat enhancement) are specific to particular projects whereas others (for example volunteer time and participant numbers) are common to several projects.

All projects (not just those specifically aimed at people) will deliver benefits for individuals, communities and/or organisations.

## 10.2 Evaluation of individual projects

Each QLPS project has clear target outputs as set out in the Project plans. These may be reviewed during the delivery phase, particularly at the midway point, but any significant changes must be approved by NLHF.

Some outcomes (for example those related to the benefits of physical work to natural or cultural heritage) can be captured objectively, often through quantitative measures (e.g. area taken under management, surveys of habitat condition). Others will require proxy indicators, which may be as simple as 'before' and 'after' photographs. Yet others, particularly those related to 'people' benefits, may be less tangible, requiring a mix of qualitative approaches including interviews, focus groups, case studies, expert testimony, anecdotal and other evidence.

Contracted delivery partners will be asked to report on progress in delivering output targets and in identifying and capturing outcome evidence on a quarterly basis.

All project delivery contractors will be asked to submit an end-of-project evaluation with their final invoice. In addition to final output data this will include a narrative 'story' of their project together with quantitative and qualitative evidence of outcomes including case studies and other illustrative material.





Freddie Chester and Max Stanilan discover wildlife

### 10.3 Scheme-wide outcomes

A key element in the QLPS funding from NLHF is the expectation that the Scheme will deliver outcomes that go beyond the outcomes of individual projects. Where those outcomes endure beyond the end of HLF funding they contribute to legacy. Part of the challenge of evaluation will be to demonstrate to what extent this has been achieved.

Formal Scheme-level evaluation will take place at the mid-delivery point, and towards the end of the Scheme. However, it will be important to ensure that alongside the outputs and outcomes of individual projects, a shared vision of the overall benefits of the Quantock Landscape Partnership remains part of the focus of the Partnership as a whole. Through workshops and consultation with individual project leads, the longer-term outcomes and legacy ambitions of the Scheme will be assessed and reported to NLHF.

### 10.4 Baseline data

There is a good quantitative baseline data about the profile of existing users of the Quantock Hills AONB, collected through the 2018 Visitor Survey during the development phase (see section 3.1). Robust quantitative data about non-users is inherently harder to collect except at a very general (county or regional) level, but the Audience Development Report gives a range of qualitative information that, although not from a statistically valid sample, chimes with the experience of partner organisations and indeed of other similar projects elsewhere – see section 3-2 – 3.4.

The collection of some additional baseline data, particularly about the attitudes and confidence of participant groups, will be required at the start of delivery as part of the Evaluation and Monitoring contract. It is important that this is an interesting and valuable part of participants' experience rather than a bolt-on means of data collection.



## 10.5 Measures of success in achieving the Vision as set out in section 1.3

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### ***The Vision of the Quantock Hills for 2025 and beyond***

*The open Common land and the wooded combes, the hedgebanks, the steep sunken lanes and singing streams, are valued, understood, and protected. The surrounding parishes feel part of the Hills, linked by a shared history and shared views. People enjoy and respect the area, which welcomes a diverse range of individuals and communities from across North-West Somerset. They come to breathe the clean Quantock air, clear their heads, and fill their hearts with their own Romantic sense of place. Farming adapts and thrives, supported in ways that protect the rich beauty of this landscape beauty and discourage uniformity and intrusive industrial impacts.*

*The flux of seasons, and the dynamism of the evolving habitats, retains a sense of specialness even as society and the climate change. The Quantocks grow another fraction older, but their future remains bright.*

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Measures of success;

- Quantocks valued by surrounding communities and residents of nearby towns as much as by people who live there
- Users, including new users, wish to protect the area from harm and feel a responsibility to play their part and have the knowledge and understanding to do so
- Quantocks perceived as welcoming by a diverse range of individuals and communities
- Farming has a viable and environmentally sustainable future
- There is recognition of the impact of climate change and a willingness to adapt as well as mitigate
- The special qualities of the area are maintained and strengthened, even as the landscape itself may evolve



Fyne Court

## 10.6 Measures of success in achieving the detailed objectives as set out in section 1.3

- **Protect and restore the distinctive features of the Quantock landscape.**

Measures of success; Features protected and restored (numerical outputs) compared to targets

- **Better manage the access pressures on the Hills by promoting access opportunities in the farmland fringe and by allowing a closer relationship between urban and rural communities to develop.**

Measures of success; Shift in balance of access pressure away from the honeypot sites to less well used areas; outcome measures like awareness of alternative recreational opportunities, feedback from users of new parish path routes, and the visitor demographic of different access areas will all be relevant alongside numerical outcomes such as the number of downloads of new parish path routes

- **Make the health and wellbeing benefits of recreation in the Quantock Hills more available to disadvantaged individuals and groups most in need of greater access to nature.**

Measures of success; numerical information about new users from target communities, including the extent of independent follow up visits, training opportunities taken up and qualifications achieved, but also qualitative outcomes around self-confidence, wellbeing, and sense of belonging alongside important personal stories of change.

- **Take a longer-term view of likely future changes – including, but not limited to, climate change – to build a consensus about the future for the Hills.**

Measures of success; if it can be achieved, a consensus about the desired direction of travel arising from the Quantock Futures project will clearly be a significant step forward, but greater awareness of how the issue might impact the future of the area will be a positive outcome even if agreement is not reached. Assessing how the project goes on to influence decisions personally, locally and nationally will also be important.

- **Increase knowledge of the Manorial development, historic parkland landscape, deer parks, early gardens and the link between large estates and the current landscape.**

Measure of success; Numeric information such as numbers of people engaged in historic heritage projects who continue to volunteer and / or be engaged in historic research beyond the LPS as well as use of historical records made available as part of this scheme. Number of documents from estate record collections catalogued and made publicly available by the Somerset Heritage Centre

- **Increase knowledge and appreciation of the farmland fringe, including the vernacular architecture, to engender a sense of ownership and involvement among the local community.**

Measure of success; Numeric information such as number of individuals and community groups actively engaged and contributing to the View to a Hill project with further measure being the use of assessment in Planning responses. Participation in the landscape photography competition featuring farmland fringe subjects. Number of historic farm and other buildings surveyed.

- **Increase knowledge and understanding of the influence of the Quantock Hills landscape on the Romantic movement and how this has changed how we think about nature today.**

Measure of success; Use of scheme outputs, such as the digital teachers' packs, continues beyond the end of the scheme. This can be measured through monitoring of the download and page landings along with continued engagement of education establishments by LPS partners after the end of the scheme. Subjective feedback from engagement projects.

- **Increase the capacity and skills of the volunteer base working in the area, and give more, and more diverse, people opportunities to contribute.**

Measures of success; quantitative measures include the increase in the number of volunteers working in the area, increase in in hours contributed, and increases in the diversity of the volunteer workforce (as measured by age and post code as a proxy for socio economic status) but at least as important are the outcomes of increased satisfaction, increased self-confidence and sense of achievement, and personal stories of changed perspectives.



## 10.7 The QLPS approach to Monitoring and Evaluation

The QLPS will procure an independent evaluation specialist to create a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy to allow progress towards the measures of success described above to be assessed.

It is recognised that many of the “measures of success” listed above are qualitative rather than quantitative, and it will not be possible to report on all of them with statistically valid objectivity. The evaluation consultant will be expected to bring their skill and experience to bear to find meaningful ways to assess the important outcomes of the LPS which cannot be captured by simple data collection.

The Evaluation consultant will;

- Create the **QLPS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy** to provide the LPS with a mechanism which will inform and support scheme management and scheme governance on an ongoing basis
- Advise the LPS and put in place activities to collect any additional baseline data identified as required for the evaluation
- Help to turn the desired outcomes described above into things that can be objectively assessed, and put in place ways to do that during or after the activities and projects take place
- Put systems in place to easily keep count of outputs during project delivery
- Provide training for delivery partners to collect their own data and advise on the best ways to conduct monitoring activities
- Help the LPS to commission and create a film following the personal development of the Young Rangers through to the end of the Apprenticeships – or maybe the consultant will have a better idea
- Make assessing outcomes as interesting and engaging part of the experience for participants as possible – evaluation is not just about data collection and analysis, it should also aim to engender a feeling of participating in a joint endeavour to deliver the best project possible
- Look forward as well as backward – in particular helping the QLPS to plan project and scheme legacy
- Produce a **Mid-Delivery Review** to take stock of progress and provide a critical assessment which will identify what has worked well and what has worked less well and why, across the breadth of QLPS activities. It will feed in to QLPS’ own planning for legacy.
- Produce a Final Evaluation, at least part of which will be interesting enough for other projects to share and learn from. It must also enable the QLPS to claim the last 10% of grant

??Insert diagram adapted from p107 of Chilterns LPS LCAP

# 11 Legacy



Durborough Farm

## 11.1 Starting with the end in mind

The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme sets out to deliver a wide-ranging and exciting set of outcomes that will achieve a step change in the number and nature of people engaged and caring for the heritage of the Quantocks, and to take a significant step forwards in increasing the resilience of the physical landscape. It seeks to engender greater knowledge and appreciation of the landscape historical manorial roots, as a way of informing future management at a time of unprecedented social, economic, and climatic change.

The previous section on monitoring and evaluation set out how the outcomes of all the projects together will deliver more than their individual contributions towards meeting the LPS objectives and realising the Vision for the Landscape Partnership Schemes. This section looks at how the long-term legacy of the Scheme will be secured.

Each project will carry its own legacy as set down in the individual project plans in Part 2 of this LCAP. These legacies are tailored to each project and audience and will build on the enduring benefits that the QLPS will leave.

The overall digital legacy has also been considered, as best it can be so far ahead in such a fast changing medium. The resources and digital media produced by the LPS will continue to be accessible to a wide audience via the website (which will remain on line for at least 5 years after the LPS ends) and from the AONB.

A principle scheme wide legacy will lie in developing and embedding genuine commitment to partnership working between the AONB and community groups, NGOs, and statutory agencies working in disadvantaged communities. A diverse range of partners, each with a shared commitment, have worked collectively to develop a package of interconnected projects, and this collaborative approach will be driven throughout the delivery phase. The LPS will help partners to develop their organisational capacity and ambition.

## 11.2 Summary of the legacy vision

The following offers a summary of the legacy vision for Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme

### **Building on relationships with landowners**

The AONB already has a good relationship with the Quantock Commoners Association, sharing responsibility for delivering the Quantock SSSI Stewardship Agreement for instance. The AONB also supports the FWAG-led Farmer Facilitation Group offering advice to other local agreement holders. There is however considerable scope to develop these relationships further, particularly to encompass climate change adaptation and a more inclusive approach to access management.

### **Transforming volunteer engagement**

By providing a partnership-led and collective approach, the offer made after the delivery phase will ensure continued commitment and growth of volunteering across all areas of heritage.

By supporting existing and/or new groups, their capacity will be increased so they can continue to engage volunteers.

Traditional volunteering organisations, including the AONB itself and the National Trust, will be able to widen their recruitment pool to create a more diverse volunteer workforce more reflective of the wider Quantock catchment.

### **Agreeing a common vision for the future of the Quantocks, including the best approach to managing access pressures**

The Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) has been developed in tandem with the QLPS and sets a strategic framework for the designated landscape and its fringes. The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme will bring to life the aspirations of the Management Plan, increasing commitment to creating and tackling shared priorities on a landscape scale, by engaging with a wider range of partners, stakeholders, volunteers and new audiences.

The experience and legacy from the LPS as a whole will inform the next 2025 - 2030 AONB Management Plan, and the Quantock Futures project will extend the shared vision for the future into the second half of the 21st century.

### **Building self-sustaining networks**

The LPS will bring together diverse interests – land owners and youth groups, artists, Rangers, and school teachers and experience of other LPS shows that, with a little encouragement from an honest broker like the AONB, these will endure long after the LPS has ended.

### **Developing local Community Groups**

Practical support will be offered to Community Groups to strengthen their organisational capacity and help them to continue their engagement with the natural environment.

### **Working from a clear evidence base**

The heritage survey and monitoring programmes will provide a wealth of new detailed information to assist managers and decision makers. The monitoring programmes are designed to become largely self-sustaining, with a little central coordination from an organisation like the AONB, so that this legacy will continue to accrue long after the LPS has ended.



### Quantock heritage for a new generation

User research has highlighted high levels of engagement in the Quantock landscape from traditional sections of communities and in established activities. However, there are low levels of engagement among specific younger and more diverse demographic groups and in population centres such as Taunton and Bridgwater, particularly amongst disadvantaged communities.

The Scheme will work in innovative ways to engage a broader and more diverse audience who will develop a greater awareness, appreciation and understanding of the area's heritage. It will equip them with new skills, knowledge, confidence and opportunities to engage practically with the landscape and become custodians of it.

New and exciting partnerships will be established by working with non-traditional community groups, to create a wider platform for future projects – changing forever the range of people who benefit from and value the Quantock Hills.

## 11.3 Building the Legacy as delivery unfolds

It is important that all staff and partners are mindful of the potential legacy from the start, and actively seek to create it as projects unfold. The Mid Project Review will be an important opportunity to take stock and make adjustments or amend priorities if necessary.

As each project nears its end, and as the LPS as a whole nears completion, planning for and facilitating legacy will become an increasingly important part of the work of the LPS team and Partnership. How successful this process has been will be a key part of the final evaluation. Experience of other LPS is that while legacy planning is essential, the actual legacy of many LPS is far greater than could have been planned.

# 12 Summary of Plans and Costs

	Project	Cash Budget	Volunteer Time	Total
	<i>Inspire</i>			
1.1	A View to a Hill	19,745	0	19,745
1.2	Digital landscapes	26,327	4,000	30,327
1.3	In the footsteps of the Romantic Poets	112,202	9,900	122,102
1.4	Quantock Connections	98,067	7,000	105,067
1.5	Young Rangers	86,440	0	86,440
1.6	Quantock Apprentices	140,958	0	140,958
1.7	Quantock Events	38,393	7,200	45,593
1.8	Quantock Futures	54,848	0	54,848
	<i>Live</i>			
2.1	Quantock Follies & Features	171,124	2,400	173,524
2.2	Quantock Hedgerows Project	176,609	42,000	218,609
2.3	Quantock Meadows	35,102	0	35,102
2.4	Wild Verges	4,497	1,000	5,497
2.5	Hazel for Dormice	27,698	24,000	51,698
2.6	Quantock Orchards	17,551	0	17,551
2.7	Quantock Community Woodlands	95,600	37,500	133,100
2.8	Quantock Monitoring Volunteers	48,156	60,000	108,156
2.9	Batty Quantocks	26,546	14,400	40,946
2.10	Quantock Walking	49,911	6,000	55,911
	<i>Learn</i>			
3.1	Trees in the Landscape	1,645	24,000	25,645
3.2	Quantock Memories	10,202	0	10,202
3.3	Stories of the Hills	39,017	3,600	42,617
3.4	Unlocking the Archives	35,980	64,800	100,780
3.5	Understanding the Landscape	163,193	14,100	177,293
4.1	Programme Management	70,130		70,130
4.2	Office	66,509		66,509
4.3	Staff - Salary & on costs	696,734		696,734
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,313,186</b>	<b>321,900</b>	<b>2,635,086</b>

See Appendix 1 for summaries of the individual projects. The details of the individual projects are in a separate document, part 2 of the LCAP.

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## Key Websites

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- Cranfield University 2018. The Soils Guide - <http://www.landis.org.uk>
- Historic England website - <https://historicengland.org.uk>
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee – <https://www.defra.gov.uk>
- Quantock Hills AONB - <https://www.quantockhills.com>
- National Character Area profiles – <https://www.gov.uk>
- Natural England website - <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk>
- The Landscape Institute - <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org>



# 14 Glossary

## Above sea level

Technically, this means AOD – Above Ordinance Datum – as per any Ordinance Survey map. If you're measuring height you have to have a point above which you are measuring it. Is it the lowest point of the lowest tide or the highest point of the highest? Or the average mid-tide? And all these vary day to day, year to year and across the UK anyway. Plus some parts of the UK are sinking every year and others rising because the land is still adjusting after the end of the last ice age and the loss of billions of tonnes of ice from Scotland. So the standard reference used by the entire UK mapping system is Ordinance Datum, an actual mark at Newlyn which is the mean sea level at Newlyn in Cornwall as measured between 1915 and 1921.

## Common Land

Common Land as defined in the Commons Registration Act 1965 and subsequent legislation. Essentially Common Land is land owned by one person or body over which certain other specified people have specified rights, generally to do things like graze a specified number of livestock or collect wood. Contrary to popular myth, it does NOT mean “owned by everyone/owned by the Council” or “ownerless”. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 all Common Land is Access land open to people on foot (only – not bikers, riders, campers, etc.).

## Index of Multiple Deprivation Common Land

Indices of Deprivation are fundamentally a measure of relative deprivation, calculated for each **lower layer super output area**. Deprivation can be measured in many ways; in England these are statistics about Income, Employment, Education Skills and Training, Health and Disability, Crime, Barriers to Housing and Services, and the Physical Environment. These factors are given weightings to make up an overall score between 1 and 10, where 1 is in the 10% most deprived and 10 the least.

## Landscape Character Areas (LCA)

A term used in Landscape Character Assessment; geographically unique areas defined on the basis of a combination of physical, natural, and cultural landscape features.

## Landscape Character Type (LCT)

A term used in Landscape Character Assessment; generic landscape type which can occur in different places. Use of an LCT label allows different landscapes to be compared. LCTs have a descriptive name e.g. Saltmarsh and Mudflat.

## Lower Layer Super Output Area

A technical term for the smallest area for which the Govt has the range of statistics needed to consistently assess deprivation across England – it is defined by population, not land area, and equates to a community of around 1,500 people. Other countries in the UK have a similar measure but the way deprivation is calculated varies slightly. Each lower layer super output area can be given a rating on the **Index of Multiple Deprivation**.

<b>NEET</b>	A young person 16 – 18 who is Not in Employment Education or Training.
<b>Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)</b>	<p>PRUs are a type of school that caters for children who aren't able to attend a mainstream school. This can be for a wide range of reasons; they might be permanently excluded from their mainstream school, or at risk of permanent exclusion. They might be experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties, including mental health issues, or experiencing severe bullying. They may be suffering from a short- or long-term illness that makes mainstream school unsuitable.</p> <p>Generally, the objective of the PRU is to get the young person back into mainstream education as quickly as possible.</p>
<b>Public Health</b>	The Public Health team of the County Council. They deal with population level and healthy living issues such as obesity, smoking, mental wellbeing, and epidemics, rather than with an individual's medical needs.
<b>Public Right of Way (PRoW)</b>	A route where the public have a right to pass and repass, created under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Most such routes are much older than that, however; some have been used since deep prehistory, and the majority have medieval origins. PRoW are shown on Ordinance Survey maps, but the "Definitive Map" is held by the Highways Authority at the County Council. If a route is on the definitive map, then by definition it is a public right of way, and can be used by right 24/7 just like a car driver can use a public road. Public Footpaths are open to walkers, Bridleways are also open to horse and bike riders.
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)</b>	A nationally important archaeological site or historic building, given protection against unauthorized change under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability (normally in the context of school provision, for young people with educational, behavioural, or physical needs too demanding to be accommodated in a mainstream school).
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b>	Designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, as a series of sites that form a representative sample of the best UK wildlife habitats and geological sites. All SACs in the AONB are also designated as SSSIs under UK national legislation.
<b>Special Area of Conservation (SAC)</b>	Designated under the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) as areas of European importance for nature conservation. Translation – internationally important wildlife site designated under EU and UK law.

# I Summaries of the Project Plans



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# Inspire 1.1 View to a Hill

## National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Project Manager

## Project Summary

The project will produce an overview of what aspects of the views of the Quantock Hills are most valued and why, and where those views can be obtained. It will engage with local groups and individuals to inspire people to understand and appreciate the views that frame their communities, and to take action (practical and procedural) to protect and enhance those views.

Depending on the chosen consultant's proposed methodology, it is likely to include;

- A preliminary Desk Study and discussions with key stakeholders
- GIS-based computer modelling to determine zone of visibility
- Fieldwork

## Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Local people
- People passing by on the A39 and A358
- Recreational users generally
- Local Parish Councils and residents considering development proposals

## Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Project report and monitoring toolkit	Greater awareness and appreciation of views towards the Quantock Hills and a better understanding of how they create sense of place in surrounding communities.
At least 10 Parishes and 5 groups engaged, 100 responses to on line survey, and at least 100 individuals attending community events	Better informed promotion of alternative recreational provision in surrounding area
A new monitoring programme, details to be determined as part of the contract	Improved awareness and management of key viewpoints by individuals and communities

## Legacy

- Awareness of importance of views raised, influencing practical decision
- The special character of the Quantocks beyond the AONB boundary better conserved
- Viewpoints identified and monitored so better protected against future threats.



# Inspire 1.2 Digital Landscapes

## National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Project Manager/ HHPO/ POS

## Project Summary

This project brings together several digital interpretation elements, creating new ways to access the area (physically and virtually), explore its historic and literary heritage, and put them into a modern context.

- A Heritage App – digital interpretation contrasting modern and historic views
- A poetry Trail celebrating the legacy of the Romantic Poets by encouraging modern passers-by to leave their own poems and so create a new collection
- An annual photographic competition

## Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Local people and visitors (Heritage App)
- Anyone with an interest in words and how they are used (Poetry Trail)
- Wide appeal, provides images for the LPS generally (Photo competition)

## Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Heritage App	Greater awareness and appreciation of the changing historic landscape and architecture, and greater awareness of the literary heritage of the Quantocks
Poetry Trail resulting in a new collection available on line	Greater appreciation of the literary heritage of the Quantocks and an opportunity for people to contribute their own work to the collective understanding of the landscape
Landscape photography competition – providing images for the LPS	Increasing the awareness and appreciation of the diversity of Quantock landscapes, particularly those outside the core AONB.

## Legacy

- The Heritage App thread will include a maintenance contract for at least three years.
- The Poetry Trail contents will be maintained on line for at least 5 years, through the LPS website.
- The Photographic Competition will not be continued in the same form after the end of the LPS, but by then it will have created a significantly enhanced image library for the AONB and NLHF to draw on.

# Inspire 1.3 In the Footsteps of the Romantic Poets

## National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Project Manager and Contracted Delivery Partner

## Project Summary

This project will use a wide variety of hands-on art forms to engage school children in the landscape of the Quantock Hills. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) schools and Musgrove Hospital School will be included alongside mainstream primary and secondary schools and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). At primary level classes will visit the hills and explore their reactions and understanding through artwork. At secondary level there will be opportunities to go camping while classwork will focus on creating a digital product for public performance.

## Beneficiaries and key audiences

- SEND schools serving the Taunton and Bridgwater area
- Musgrove Hospital School
- Primary schools in the LPS area and in disadvantaged parts of Taunton and Bridgwater
- Taunton PRU
- Danesfield Middle School, Williton
- Audiences for the final digital presentation

## Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
8 Primary Schools learn about the Quantocks Hills through art – 460 pupils participate directly through 60 sessions	A culture of outdoor learning is embedded in the schools.
5 Secondary schools learn about the Quantocks Hills through art work with an external expert to produce a digital product for wider presentation - 90 pupils participate directly through 50 sessions	An inclusive culture fostered by co-operation between mainstream and SEND, and rural and urban, schools
At least 50 young people gain creative and digital skills.	Children and young people and their families have increased awareness of their own and others impact on environment
13 whole school presentations about the Quantocks	Young people experience enjoyment through playing, exploring, making outdoors
New on line teachers pack available	Young people experience increased ownership of their locality and the outdoors
	Young people gain digital skills
	People viewing the product have improved engagement and increased awareness. Pupils involved gain recognition

## Legacy

- Ongoing engagement by the AONB and art organisations with a new audience of formal education settings.
- The teacher's pack to ensure that activities can continue

# Inspire 1.4 Quantock Connections

## National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Community Engagement Officer

## Project Summary

This project will create opportunities for people from disadvantaged communities to learn about the heritage of the Quantock Hills and surrounding areas, gain experience, skills, and self-confidence, and generally be empowered to fully participate in the Landscape Partnership Scheme.

It includes working with;

- Youth Groups
- Dedicated activities for people from disadvantaged area of Taunton and Bridgwater
- Dedicated activities for people with disabilities
- Dedicated activities for people with mental health issues
- Reward activities for people who've been committed to initiatives like Health Walks, community litter picks, healthy eating groups, etc
- Visits to residential and nursing homes
- Transport to enable people to access other projects

## Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Young people and community groups from disadvantaged urban areas around the AONB
- Families from disadvantaged urban areas around the AONB
- People with disabilities
- People with mental health issues
- Other people receiving support to improve their health and wellbeing

## Inspire 1.4 Quantock Connections *continued*

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
At least 8 camping trips for at least 12 young people each	Improved self-confidence and social skills, improved life chances, and more knowledge of about heritage for the participants
130 activity sessions for young people	Presence of people with disabilities becomes perceived as routine by other users of the venues
8 large family activity days for ~40 people	Children and young people and their families have increased awareness of their own and others impact on environment
24 smaller activity days for ~12 people	Improved levels of mental health
Transport provided to at least 2 large excavations for up to 12 people for 3-4 days as required	People experience increased sense of ownership of and responsibility for their locality and the outdoors
At least 4 bespoke fully accessible family event for <10 people with mobility restrictions/ wheelchair users	Effects of spending time in nature spread amongst a wider population particularly those most in need of its health and wellbeing benefits
At least 16 visits to retirement/ nursing homes LPS staff	
36 half day “reward” activities	
60 monthly activities for people with MH difficulties	
25 Family activities at Halcon, Wilstock, and Sedgemoor estates	
5 stands with family activities at Pride of Priorswood events	

### Legacy

- The principle legacy will be in the lives and ambitions of the people involved
- AONB and other LPS partner organisations will be in a better position to seek resources to seek funding to continue this sort of work in an evolving form



# Inspire 1.5 Young Rangers

## National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Manager and Contracted Delivery Partner

## Project Summary

This project will enable two groups of young people, aged 12 – 16, from less affluent urban wards in Taunton and Bridgwater to gain a practical understanding of the natural environment and to develop a wide range of countryside management and personal skills, contributing to the management of the Quantock area. It will be a four year project with opportunities after two years for three young people to progress into apprenticeships.

The project will be delivered by qualified youth workers able to provide the appropriate level of pastoral care.

The Young Rangers will help to deliver to a wide range of other LPS objectives by participating in, and contributing towards, several other projects

## Beneficiaries and key audiences

- The young people involved
- The communities they come from
- Wider LPS beneficiaries of their practical work on site

## Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
2 Young Ranger teams (10 young people in each, probably 30 in total each over the 4 years allowing for turnover) recruited from disadvantaged communities in Bridgwater and Taunton. Each team will have a task or training every month.	Improved self-confidence and social skills, improved life chances, and more knowledge of about heritage for the participants
	30 young people will have gained a significant range of social and practical skills which will enhance their life chances and employability. This will include entry level nationally recognised vocational qualifications

## Legacy

- The principle legacy will be in the lives and ambitions of the people involved
- AONB and other LPS partner organisations will be in a better position to seek resources to seek funding to continue this sort of work in an evolving form

# Inspire 1.6 Quantock Apprentices

## National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Manager and Contracted Delivery Partner, Cannington College

## Project Summary

This project will enable three young people aged 16 – 18 recruited from the Young Rangers to work with the contracted delivery partner and other organisations on the Quantocks as apprentices and gain a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Land and Wildlife Management.

The project will be delivered by qualified youth workers able to provide the appropriate level of pastoral care.

The Apprentices will help to deliver to a wide range of other LPS objectives by participating in, and contributing towards, several other projects.

## Beneficiaries and key audiences

- The young people involved
- The communities they come from
- Wider LPS beneficiaries of their practical work on site

## Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
3 Apprentices recruited from disadvantaged communities in Bridgwater and Taunton through the link with the Young Ranger programme	3 young people will have gained a significant qualification and a range of social and practical skills which will substantially enhance their life chances and long-term employability
3 Young People will receive a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Land and Wildlife Management and learn a wide variety of practical countryside management skills and tasks	

## Legacy

- The principle legacy will be in the lives and ambitions of the people involved
- Significant contribution to achievement of LPS practical tasks

## Inspire 1.7 Quantock Events

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Community Engagement Officer

### Project Summary

This project will increase engagement of local communities and residents from nearby towns, promoting the special qualities of the scheme area through a wide range of walks, talks and events.

It will increase understanding of the area and build the profile of the LPS, acting as an introduction and a pathway to greater involvement.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Adults, living locally, or nearby towns, and day visitors
- Families
- People with keen to learn more about a particular topic such as in fungi or fossils

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Events aimed at a general audience, including guided walks - At least 1600 places at 150 events (full or half day) for at least 1200 people	People learn about heritage, engage in outdoor activities, learn new skills, and improve their wellbeing
Events aimed at Families - At least 2400 places at 110 sessions concentrated in school holidays for at least 2,000 individuals	More capacity for walks, and for providing a wider variety of walks, by the AONB during and after the LPS
4 Larger scale events for 120+ people	
25 Talks to local groups	
15 Volunteer Walk Leaders trained	

### Legacy

- The principle legacy will be in the lives and ambitions of the people involved
- Greater capacity and confidence of the AONB and other partner organisations to maintain a higher level of volunteer-led activity after the end of the LPS.
- With the experience of the LPS, partners will be in a better position to seek funding for new programmes.

## Inspire 1.8 Quantock Futures

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Manager

### Project Summary

This project will hold a professionally facilitated, wide ranging and inclusive consultation and discussion about the future for the Quantocks over the next 50 years or so, arriving at a strategy to adapt to and manage change.

Stakeholder representation will encompass landowners, Commoners, statutory agencies, and local Parish Councils but also wider recreational users, other business interests, and community representatives and service providers from surrounding areas including disadvantaged communities.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Everyone living in and around the Quantocks with an interest in its future.
- A nationally relevant process and conclusions

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
An inclusive stakeholder collaboration producing a vision for the future of the Quantocks and a strategy for achieving it – at least 3 workshops for 30 people	A shared vision for the future of the area and a joint commitment to practical steps to achieve it.

### Legacy

- One of the objectives of the workshops and consultations will be to agree how to continue working after the end of the project.
- The conclusions reached will have wider implications for the country as a whole and the LPS will therefore seek to publicise the conclusions as widely as possible.



## Live 2.1 Follies and Features

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓

**Lead** LPS Manager (Crowcombe Gate car park) and Historic Heritage Officer (others)

### Project Summary

This project will conserve and enhance a number of historic sites and structures in the Quantocks.

Some have been identified in advance, but there will also be a small grant fund to assist landowners who come forward with new proposals during the LPS.

Also included in the project is the creation of a new car park at Crowcombe Gate, and the restoration of the existing intrusive and severely eroded site back to heathland.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Local people and visitors with an interest in history
- Anyone wishing to use the Crowcombe Gate Car Park, and anyone looking at the current eroded site

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
At least 15 historic structures restored/ conserved (including Hayman's Pond at Holford, Dead Woman's Ditch, Dowsborough Hillfort, Sty Audries Park Fence, Castle Mount Nether Stowey, and Kilve limekiln)	Historic features and structures conserved
Four interpretation boards erected	Heritage better appreciated, damage reduced
2 dig open days	Car park in good condition, damage to SSSI from displaced off road parking reduced
6 Fingerposts on traditional road signs repaired/ replaced	Traditional rural road signs continue to be important and living local features
Crowcombe Gate car park relocated, and current site restored, net gain of 2000 sq m of heathland	Enhanced ability of public to see and understand local heritage
Other minor structures conserved by volunteers	

### Legacy

- Several distinctive local moments will be left in much better condition.
- Maintenance of any item funded through this project will be a condition of the grant.
- The new Crowcombe Gate carpark will be leased by Friends of Quantock for 15 years.

## Live 2.2 Quantock Hedgerows and Veteran Trees

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Officer

### Project Summary

The project will survey and record, conserve, and restore hedgerows across the LPS area, including the iconic beech hedgebanks of the hilltops.

In doing so it will strengthen landscape character and increase resilience against future threats including climate change. It is the practical compliment to the desk based Parkland and Hedgerow Tree Project 3.1 Also included within this project is funding for practical work to replace and maintain significant hedgerow and parkland trees, completing the link with the Parkland and Hedgerow Tree Project.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Will strengthen landscape character and enhance biodiversity across the LPS area, including along The Drove, one of the most popular visitor sites in the Quantocks
- Young Rangers and Apprentices involved in the project will have the opportunity to learn important survey and practical skills, including Quantock walling techniques.

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
12km sample survey of Quantock hedgerows undertaken by volunteers	Good condition assessment of LPS hedgerows, data to add to historical information to support production of a management strategy for the future
At least 300m of beech hedgebank restoration	An iconic landscape feature back in active management, wider interpretation and engagement in landscape history and climate change adaptation
8km of hedgerow restored or planted, supported by LPS grants	Landscape character strengthened, historic and biodiversity heritage conserved and made more resilient
100 new significant parkland and hedgerow trees planted individually	Significant trees retained in landscape
Tree surgery for at least 10 of the most important trees in the landscape	

### Legacy

- Landscape character strengthened, historic and biodiversity heritage conserved and made more resilient
- Beech hedge banks at The Drove in secure NT ownership
- Landowners required to maintain other grant aided hedge restoration and planting

## Live 2.3 Quantock Meadows

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Officer and The National Trust

### Project Summary

This project will enrich two species-poor meadows with native and local wildflowers, restoring some of the lost biodiversity and cultural heritage of the old Quantock farmed landscape. It will use these projects on National Trust land to raise awareness of flower rich grasslands amongst landowners and the public.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Visitors to NT Fyne Court
- Other landowners
- Nature conservation in the Quantocks

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Two grassland restoration projects, total 8ha of grassland enriched with wild flower seed, positive impact on a further 16ha	More species rich grassland
4 training and awareness events for farmers	More landowners have a good practical understanding of the costs and benefits of meadow restoration

### Legacy

- Land in NT management will be actively managed to maintain the flower rich sward indefinitely. The longer-term objective is to use these meadows and green hay seed sources for further projects in the Quantock area.

## Live 2.4 Wild Verges

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Officer

### Project Summary

The project will enhance the management of flower rich verges in the Quantocks at a time when Highways management is being drastically cut back. It will assess and report on the biodiversity benefits of improved verge management and look for opportunities to expand good practice.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- The project will be of wide benefit, retaining some of the special places and accessible wildlife-rich patches across the area.
- Volunteers, Young Rangers, and Apprentices will have the opportunity to participate. There will be informal opportunities to learn and practice plant ID skills alongside the contract botanist.

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Management of the 13 known surviving flower rich verges of the Quantocks	Sites in better condition, local distinctiveness preserved
Botanical survey of sites	Better informed management

### Legacy

- The objective is to find long term local management solutions for these sites, but AONB support will continue to be available if required (e.g. for mowing).



## Live 2.5 Hazel for Dormice

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Officer

### Project Summary

This project will restore rotational coppicing of the over-mature hazel at Cothelstone Hill, creating a skilled and experience cadre of volunteers to continue the work after the LPS has ended. The site is known to have a resident Hazel Dormouse population, but monitoring shows that the population is not doing as well as it might. With climate change coming, and the hazel getting continuing to get older, action is needed soon to conserve the population at this ecologically well connected site.

The project will also create the opportunity for more people to learn about and, for a lucky few, even to see this charming but elusive species.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- The Dormice
- Other species
- The volunteers involved with the project
- Other visitors to Cothelstone (a well-used recreational and dog walking area for Taunton)

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Coppicing 15 x 0.25 ha hazel coupes	A richer dormouse habitat, a more resilient population, and benefitting other species and making Cothelstone a richer and more interesting place to visit.
Felling of larger trees in 27 x 0.25 ha coupes	Greater awareness of protected species requirements
2250 trees and shrubs planted	More robust monitoring programme, added capacity
30 people trained in EPS	
2 people gain EPS licences for small mammals	

### Legacy

- A more resilient dormouse population in a better managed habitat
- The project will establish a cadre of skilled volunteers who can maintain the site in rotation, and undertake Dormouse monitoring, indefinitely after the LPS ends

## Live 2.6 Quantock Orchards

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Officer

### Project Summary

The project will raise the profile of traditional orchards, an important cultural and landscape feature in the farming fringe, especially around settlements. It will provide advice to orchard owners on all aspects of management, through targeted workshops and visits. It will seek new solutions to ensure that more of the produce is harvested and used. The project will also have a small grant fund to assist with the creation and management of new traditional orchards.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Owners of traditional orchards and people who would like to create one – individuals and community groups
- Young Rangers and Apprentices involved in the project

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
At least 3ha of traditional orchards restored or recreated	Traditional orchards remain a living part of the landscape character of the area
4 awareness and training workshops for owners and community groups	Orchards retained in the landscape and actively valued and managed
Networking and facilitation to restore traditional orchards into production	

### Legacy

- Orchards better managed and more highly valued

## Live 2.7 Community Woodlands

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Officer

### Project Summary

This project will support the creation of two new community woodlands at Broomfield and Cothelstone and support the established Stowey Green Spaces community group. It will give the two small woodlands, typical of the area, a more sustainable future in active management. Both are being already being significantly affected by ash die back disease.

The project will share best practice and experience, and give many more people a hands-on opportunity to get involved in protecting nature.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Visitors to Cothelstone, a popular site, and to Nether Stowey, a tourist destination
- Residents of Broomfield
- The volunteers involved
- Young Rangers and Apprentices involved in the project

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Management of Broomfield Common woodland, 19ha	Three sites in secure long term management, local people skilled and empowered to look after them into the future
Management of 13ha of Cothelstone woodland	Orchards retained in the landscape and actively valued and managed
Roadside tree safety works at both sites	Well trained volunteer force for future management and monitoring of the sites
Management and interpretation of Stowey Wood – 100m path repairs, 6 x interpretation boards	Right equipment available to work sensitively in small woodlands
Volunteer training; 12 x LANTRA courses attended by volunteers, 10 other training events with at least 8 people per course	
Purchase of Alpine Tractor and kit	

*Note; The alpine tractor is also important for other projects, notably 2.4 Wild Verges and 2.5 Hazel for Dormice*

### Legacy

- Three sites in secure long term management
- Local people skilled and empowered to look after them into the future
- AONB better equipped to support community woodlands in future

## Live 2.8 Quantock Monitoring Volunteers

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

**Lead** LPS Community Engagement Project Officer

### Project Summary

This project builds on the existing volunteer monitoring programmes at the Quantock Hills, some of them established as pilots on HLF advice following the unsuccessful 2015 LPS application. The programmes will include;

- Farmstead and historic buildings recording
- LiDAR interpretation
- Survey and recording of parkland and hedgerow trees
- Butterfly monitoring
- Reptile and amphibian monitoring

Supported by;

- A significant volunteer training programme
- Specialist ecological and arboricultural advice where required.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- The AONB and other statutory agencies and NGOs
- Landowners of the features surveyed
- Interested members of the public
- The volunteers involved

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
LiDAR results analysed, newly discovered historic features mapped and recorded	Historic landscape and landscape features much better understood, Increased capacity for building recording
At least 8 people trained in historic building recording, at least 16 historic buildings recorded	Better record of structures, some of them at risk of loss, better understanding of vernacular buildings and other historic structures in LPS area
At least 12 people trained in surveying and recording veteran trees, at least 80 trees surveyed	Accurate understanding of current tree resource outside woodlands
At least 2 new transects set up and 16 volunteers trained in butterfly ID	Better data on local butterfly populations, more opportunities to raise awareness and influence land management
At least 5 other wildlife ID courses with at least 50 places	Better data on local reptile and amphibian populations, more opportunities to raise awareness and influence land management
28 days of specialist ecological and arboricultural advice as required	A more skilled and motivated volunteer team

### Legacy

- High quality building records available at SWHT
- Well established biological monitoring programmes with the skilled volunteers to continue them
- AONB and others better informed when taking management decisions or giving advice



## Live 2.9 Batty Quantocks

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Natural Heritage Project Officer

### Project Summary

This project will increase understanding of Quantock bat populations, giving opportunities for many new people to learn about bats and their habitats. The full range of bat species (potentially up to 16 of the 18 UK species) found locally will be covered, but there will also be a focussed attempt to fill some of the gaps in knowledge of Barbastelle bat distribution through radio tracking and roost identification.

The project will be delivered alongside Somerset Sight, the county umbrella organisation for people with visual impairments.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- People with an interest in bats
- People with visual impairments interested in taking part in an active rural survey
- The AONB and statutory agencies (incl Planning Authorities) and NGOs in need of better bat data
- Landowners with Barbastelle roosts
- Other interested members of the public

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
2 general introductory bat survey walks per year, starting in year 2, plus 2 new survey transects per summer for 4 transects, and 6 targeted roost emergence surveys in addition, total 16 events per year from year 2	Greater understanding and knowledge of bats in the Quantock area, leading to better land management and development control decisions
6 Bat volunteers trained in working alongside people with visual impairments (and vice versa)	Increased knowledge and self confidence amongst participants
A data set of bat records for the LPS area that will add significantly to current records	Better understanding between the sighted and visually impaired communities
New survey information about Barbastelle roosts in the south and west of the Quantock Hills; at least 3 new maternity roosts identified, and flight lines tracked	Better knowledge of Barbastelle distribution in the area – more effective conservation
	Keen participants from less formal survey work will have a chance to progress and gain hard technical and scientific skills
	Importance of habitat connectively graphically illustrated and used in wider LPS delivery and interpretation

### Legacy

- Many people, including people with visual impairments, have been inspired by bats
- High quality bat records publicly available from SERC
- Better informed land management and development control decisions, - AONB and others better informed when taking management decisions or giving advice, better bat conservation
- Importance of habitat connectively graphically illustrated
- A cadre of local people with at least a basic knowledge of bat habitats and bat survey techniques, and some with more advanced skills, who can assist in survey work into the future

## Live 2.10 Quantock Walking

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Project Manager, Stowey Walking

#### Project Summary

This project will provide more guided walks and more waymarked walks, improve sections of path that are currently eroded or excessively muddy, and help to spread the recreational load away from the honeypot sites.

It will support the local Stowey Walking group and the Quantock Hills Walking Festival, helping them to achieve the “critical mass” needed to establish the Walking Festival as a financially sustainable annual event with at least a regional profile.

It will help to support the small Quantock tourism industry.

#### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Local people seeking new walking opportunities
- People who feel excluded from the current walking offer, who need more assurance or assistance within their capabilities
- Quantock accommodation providers and the small associated service industry
- People from Somerset and beyond looking for ways to enjoy longer linear walking routes at an affordable cost

#### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
About 250m of path repaired or upgraded per year, total 1.25 km	Routes made more accessible, eyesores removed, damage from diversions around obstacles avoided
At least 10 new waymarked circular routes in parishes surrounding the AONB, each with downloadable route guidance	Easier and more confident access to less busy parts of the LPS area, pressure diverted away from honeypot sites
5 annual walking festivals offering at least 12 walks, including a multi-day challenge walk, an accessible walk, and transport from Bridgwater and Taunton	Quantock Walking Festival established at a regional level, able to break even (with ad hoc grant support).
	A broader audience engaged in the Festival – more people encouraged to move on to ordinary recreational walking for recreation
	A modest boost to visitor economy

#### Legacy

- Path network in better condition and more accessible
- 10 new Parish path circular routes adopted by PCs
- Quantock Walking Festival established on a sustainable financial footing, with the profile to attract walkers from across the SW region and beyond

## Learn 3.1 Trees in the Landscape

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Historic and Natural Heritage Officers

#### Project Summary

This project is the archive and outreach-based part of the LPS work on significant trees in the Quantock landscape. It will work with, and is closely linked to, contemporary field recording and survey undertaken as part of 2.2 Quantock Hedgerows and 2.8 Quantock Monitoring Volunteers.

The project will employ a team of volunteers, led by the LPS Historic Heritage Officer, to catalogue mid- 19th century parkland and hedgerow trees as shown in contemporary sources (1st edition OS mapping, tithe maps, and estate records) at the Somerset Heritage Centre (County Record Centre) in Taunton.

Using the comparative data generated by the archive sources and modern survey, a strategy for the future of the Quantocks' parkland and hedgerow trees will be created by the LPS Natural Heritage Project Officer in collaboration with estate owners, farmers, and other stakeholders.

As it is a desk-based project in a fully accessible building, less active people, or people with mobility disabilities, will have no barriers to participation. The opportunities to be involved will be promoted through Compass Disability as well as general volunteer recruitment media.

#### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Anyone with an interest in parkland and hedgerow trees, and their landscape history, be they landowners/tenants, or other people living in or visiting the area
- Generations to come, helping to ensure that the inheritance and legacy of significant landscape trees is continued.
- The volunteers involved, including any undergraduate researchers for whom this may offer an interesting dissertation project

#### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
Historic estate and farmland trees catalogued - at least 4 sample parishes and 4 sample estates covered with other additional smaller areas covered	Accurate and detailed picture of historic parkland and hedgerow trees 200 – 150 years ago readily available to land managers and to the public
6x evening presentations for the general public about the history of trees in their area	Significance of parkland and hedgerow trees, both historic and contemporary, better understood by the public, building support for their future conservation
A Parkland and Hedgerow Tree Strategy for the 21st Century, written with broad support from stakeholders	Parkland and hedgerow trees continue to have an important place in the changing Quantock landscape

#### Legacy

- The project will give lasting insight into the landscape and social importance of parkland and hedgerow trees from the mid-19th century.
- By creating a Strategy shared with a wide circle of stakeholders it will help to ensure the future of parkland and hedgerow trees in the changing economic, climatic, and social landscape of the 21st century.

## Learn 3.2 Quantock Memories

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Community Engagement Officer

#### Project Summary

The project will start with an Oral History training session for the Engagement Officer and volunteers. Using contacts made during the LPS, they will then interview older residents likely to have interesting perspectives on how the area has changed.

The information gathered will be used for interpretation during the LPS, made accessible through the LPS website, and deposited at the County Records centre at SWHT.

The project also includes new permanent interpretation at the Thomas Poole Community Library at Nether Stowey, to be produced in partnership with the Friends of Coleridge.

#### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- The oral history project will specifically target older rural residents, older people in care home settings, etc.
- 12 volunteers will receive oral history collection training.
- The resulting accounts will enhance the overall LPS interpretation.
- The interpretation at the library will be for a general audience. The library building is on the short visitor route around the village, next to the car park and public toilets.

#### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
12 volunteers trained in oral history collection	Personal stories made available to a wide audience at a time of social and landscape change
At least 10 high quality oral history accounts collected and conserved at SWHT	Older generations engaged with the LPS. Social and landscape history of the area recorded as personal stories and interpreted for the future audiences
3 new interpretation boards outside the Library, plus a set of Friends of Coleridge panels inside	An addition to the visitor offer at Nether Stowey, and Friends of Coleridge's material made available to a wider audience. General awareness raising of LPS at the site of the LPS office

#### Legacy

- Oral histories conserved as part of the SWHT record centre and be available to future researchers and members of the public for decades to come.
- The interpretation panels will interpret the landscape and social history of the area and the Romantic Poet's role to visitors in the tourist destination of Nether Stowey, Coleridge's Quantock home. They will be maintained by the library and Friends of Coleridge thereafter, with an expected design life of around 10 years.



## Learn 3.3 Stories of the Hills

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Community Engagement Officer

### Project Summary

There are two parts to this project, community events and printed and archive resources for the future. There will be a series of community events over a period of one year, the legacy of which will continue into subsequent years of the project. They will include:

- Initial folk heritage taster talks
- A schools workshops with a folk musician
- A community social dance
- Workshops and events such as walks, exploring the wider creative intangible heritage, including the lesser known writers of the Quantocks
- A celebration event at the end

And the project will also produce;

- A new printed creative “map” containing folk traditions, songs and their collectors, stories, forgotten writers
- An inspirational children’s booklet, full of creative ideas and activities located in and inspired by the Quantocks
- A digital resource: hosted within a high profile recognised website, a collection of materials relevant to the Quantocks to download and print at home or in class, both sheet music, lyrics, information about folk stories, and audio recordings.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- People living locally
- People with an interest in folk arts
- Visitors looking for a different take on the what the Quantocks have to offer

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
10 x schools workshops reaching approximately 300 pupils	People will have fun – and know about their local folk history
8 community workshops, for a total of 400 people	Schools will be engaged with the intangible heritage of their area and have the skills through the legacy of the workshops and have the resources to develop and continue connected activities
4 seasonal walks for a total of 60 people	People will come together as a community
A printed creative “map” with links to further digital information.	Visitors and locals will explore the area through new eyes
An inspirational children’s booklet	
A digital resource: a collection of materials relevant to the Quantocks to download and print at home or in class	

### Legacy

- Greater knowledge of and confidence in local folk history
- A digital resource for the future

## Learn 3.4 Unlocking the Archives

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	

**Lead** LPS Historic Heritage Project Officer, SWHT

### Project Summary

The South West Heritage Trust holds 19 Quantock record collections from estates and businesses from the 17th to the 20th century– boxes of material - which have not yet been catalogued or conserved. This project will provide the staff and volunteer time to make these records available physically and digitally to the public and to the LPS.

The resulting resource will be essential for the 3.1 Parkland and Hedgerow Trees project, but will also be of immense value in wider LPS interpretation and promotion – for instance using them to reveal the “record of the month” through the LPS website.

It will increase the capacity of the SWHT by training volunteers in archive management. As it is a desk-based project in a fully accessible building, provided they have access to transport less active people, or people with mobility disabilities, will have no barriers to participation. The opportunities to be involved will be promoted through Compass Disability as well as general volunteer recruitment media.

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Supports other LPS work
- Volunteers learn new skills
- More local history made available to anyone with an interest

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
8 Volunteers trained in archive conservation and management	Project and LPS achieves its objectives
At least 10 historical collections, plus FoQ and Kingston Historical Society collections, successfully catalogued, archived, and conserved	SWHT has a larger and more robust cadre of skilled volunteers for the future
2 “Introduction to the archives” sessions for the public per year, av 5 people per session, total 50 people	Large amount of new historical material made available to the LPS and the public, better understanding of Quantock economic, landscape, and social history
	Records Centre made more accessible and better understood, better used by the public

### Legacy

- The project will significantly expand the available Quantock archive records which will be available indefinitely as part of the Somerset County Records Centre collection at the Somerset Heritage Centre.
- It will create a larger and more robust cadre of skilled archive management volunteers for the future.

## Learn 3.5 Understanding the Landscape

### National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes

Heritage is			People have			Communities		
better managed	in better condition	better identified / recorded	developed skills	learnt about heritage	volunteered time	negative env. impacts reduced	more people and a wider range of people engaged with heritage	local area / community a better place to live, work, or visit
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Lead** LPS Historic Heritage Project Officer

### Project Summary

This project will involve the local community in improving our understanding of the landscape history of the Quantocks through archaeological fieldwork.

Volunteers will be trained in the archaeological techniques of fieldwalking, field survey, test pitting and excavation. The project includes two small and two large archaeological excavations with many opportunities for people to get involved. Linking up with Project 1.6 Quantock Connections will ensure that these opportunities extend to residents of the disadvantaged areas of the nearby towns.

The results will be brought to life through a film and recreations of parts of the landscape at different periods and will contribute to the range of talks, walks and events and the website content and final Scheme Exhibition

### Beneficiaries and key audiences

- Local people living in the project area
- Residents of the disadvantaged areas of the nearby towns
- A wider LPS audience of people interested in Quantock landscape history

### Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	Outcomes
25cm LiDAR coverage of the entire LPS area	LiDAR Data set will be used for interpretation and targeting investigations within this project, but also for a wide range of other LPS activities covering both natural and historic heritage
At least 180 local people and at least three primary schools engaged in five test pitting projects	Children and adults gain experience of archaeological fieldwork techniques and their local heritage
Four archaeological sites investigated by Geophysics, total 16ha	Knowledge and understanding of the development of the surveyed villages is increased
8 fieldwalking locations investigated, at least 70 individuals participating	Unique opportunity for residents of disadvantaged communities
At least 90 people participate in four excavations, including at least 18 from disadvantaged communities.	Enhanced ability of public to understand local heritage
One film and 3 landscape recreations produced	

### Legacy

- Many people, and a large variety of people, will be able to get their hands dirty with genuine field archaeology
- More and better archaeological records available
- LiDAR will have many uses for a wide variety of heritage and commercial interests
- More skilled volunteers for future fieldwork

# II List of Supporting studies

**State of the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2018** - David Dixon and David Partridge 2018

**Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024**

**Quantock Hills LP Audience Development Report** - Heritage Insider 2019

**Quantock Hills User Survey - Final Report** - The South West Research Company Ltd. 2018

**Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme Landscape Character Assessment** - Cookson & Tickner Ltd 2019