



Managing

## SECTION FOUR

# MANAGING THE CLWYDIAN RANGE AONB

This section looks at the State of the AONB Report and addresses the pressures on each Special Feature identified within it. In order to do this it is necessary to look at these pressures at all levels, from action required on the ground to the policies that will underpin our approach to the management of the AONB. The objectives from which the actions stem identify targets and aspirations for the future with the Action Plan setting our agenda for reaching these targets.

## UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Underlying the whole plan are a number of principles upon which our approach to the management of the AONB is based. These principles, reflected in the policies for the AONB, make up a general approach to fulfilling our objectives and provide a series of cohesive threads that ensure a holistic approach throughout.

### Sustainability

In order to make a difference we need to make sure that not only will the positive actions we take today still be having an impact tomorrow but also that the decisions we make will not negatively affect the environment we are seeking to protect in the long term. To truly understand the impact of our actions we must first establish an understanding of all the processes impacting on the landscape. Only then, against a clear picture of its changing state, can we attempt to predict impact. We need to have a clear picture of the landscape's special qualities; an understanding of capacity for change and an agreement on limits of acceptable change. This lies at the heart of sustainability and we need to ensure that the solutions we seek in the conservation of the special features of the AONB are lasting.

The Countryside today is a product of the economic development of land use and the changing make up of rural communities. This has not always had a positive influence on many of the things we value in the landscape. Wildlife habitats have diminished, rural skills have declined, many landscape features have been swallowed by development and cultural identities have struggled to survive.

This management plan offers an opportunity to identify those special features that make up the landscape and to ensure that future development recognises their importance and place in rural life. This management plan will seek to engage communities and land managers in the active conservation of these features, to take responsibility and to ensure their survival for the future.

The following principles will be observed throughout the plan.

- UPS1** To involve communities in the protection and management of their green spaces and countryside sites.
- UPS2** To make the conservation of the uplands an integral part of agricultural management and demonstrate the benefits of this in economic terms. Examples may be forthcoming from the Heather and Hillforts project.
- UPS3** To demonstrate value for money in project delivery.
- UPS4** To seek partnerships with the farming community in developing lasting programmes for conservation management.
- UPS5** To enhance the economic potential of the area, whilst reconciling the need to protect the environment, for example through cultural tourism opportunities.





## Awareness and Understanding

The provision of information and interpretation are important tools for implementing this strategy. 'AONB' is specialised countryside jargon that is not understood by the majority of people. Many people are unaware that they are living in or visiting a nationally protected landscape. The main challenge in interpretive terms is to make the concept of 'landscape' relevant and in doing so make the AONB designation and the need for a strategic approach to its management a public priority.

Raising awareness of the AONB lies at the heart of conserving the Clwydian Range and safeguarding the future of its Special Features. Involvement is the best form of education and leads to a lasting awareness. Involving those who live and work in the AONB, as well as visitors to the area in its management and the decision making process will lead to a greater level of understanding and appreciation of the area's special qualities. Opportunities will be provided for community groups, schools and individuals to take part in the work of the AONB both on a practical level and at the planning stage.

The production of interpretative material and public events are important tools for raising the profile of particular aspects of the AONB and will play a central role in delivering many of the objectives for the Special Features.

The following principles will be observed throughout the plan.

- UPA1** To provide an opportunity to involve people in the work of the AONB through an annual events programme and run a minimum of 20 events every year.
- UPA2** To provide opportunities for communities and individuals to take the lead in the conservation of features within the AONB by making the Sustainable Development Fund available for community led projects.
- UPA3** To raise the profile of the AONB at Countryside Service and Forest Enterprise sites and at main access points.
- UPA4** To raise the profile of the AONB among those living and working and visitors to the area.

## Involving Others

The Clwydian Range AONB is managed through a series of Partnerships. The Clwydian Range is governed by a Joint Advisory Committee, which represents the two local Authorities, landowners, farmers, and conservation and recreation interests. It is a powerful resource in the range and depth of its political and professional expertise. Together with a number of agencies and local groups, work is done to achieve the objectives of the AONB Management Plan.

Approximately 70% of the AONB lies in the County of Denbighshire with the remaining 30% in Flintshire. This means that Denbighshire County Council takes the lead in delivering a programme of management and provides the administration for the JAC.

### Farmers and Landowners

Human influence has been instrumental in shaping the unique landscape we have today and will continue to mould it. Most of the AONB is in private ownership so it is essential that the goodwill of the landowners is retained as it is largely their actions that will conserve and enhance the character of the landscape. AONB officers will strengthen the partnership between themselves and the farming community and landowners to retain this goodwill.



## Forestry Partnership

While number of national agencies are represented on the JAC, the Clwydian Range has fostered a specific partnership with Forestry Commission Wales in order to help deliver a programme of community projects and to develop an Education programme through the Forest Education Initiative – FEI. The focuses for these projects are the three main forestry blocks at Moel Famau, Llangwyfan and Nercwys.



## Countryside Council for Wales

CCW are a vital link between the AONB and the Welsh Assembly Government. Through advice on National policy as well as providing core funds for staff and project work it plays a central role in both developing and delivering the management plan. AONB staff meet regularly with CCW officers both nationally and regionally in developing all aspects of AONB work.

## Heather and Hillforts Partnership

The aim of the Heather and Hillforts Project is to develop a landscape scale initiative to conserve, enhance and raise awareness and understanding of the special upland heather habitat and historic heritage of the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio Mountain in North Wales.



The Heather and Hillforts Partnership Board was established in 2002 to help guide and inform this project.

## Friends of Moel Findeg

An inclusive approach to developing a practical programme of projects has led to the establishment of a number of key partnerships with local community groups. In particular Moel Findeg Local Nature Reserve is managed in partnership with the Friends of Moel Findeg and the Maeshafn and District Rural Association not only through a steering group for the site but also through practical and financial support.

## Volunteering

Denbighshire Countryside Service also works with a well-established group of volunteers across the County and the AONB. There are over 70 individuals who give up their time on a regular basis to get involved in the work of the Service

## Other Partnerships

- Black Grouse Recovery Project
- Cadwyn Clwyd
- Prestatyn Environment Association
- Deeside Urban Wildlife Group
- North Wales Wildlife Trust
- Coed Cymru
- Dyserth Environment Group
- Gwaenysgor Conservation Group
- Llysfasi Agricultural College





- Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council
- Flintshire Voluntary Services Council
- Heather and Hillforts Partnership

This partnership approach will be extended and widened following the CRoW Act that encourages an integrated approach to land management and requires all public bodies to demonstrate their commitment to AONB purposes in their plans and activities. AONB officers will ensure that partners have a shared commitment to implement the action plan.

## Protecting our Heritage

Limestone grassland, upland heath and upland mixed ash woodland are UK Priority Habitats as outlined in CRoW Act 2000. It is important that the Clwydian Range AONB recognises this and works towards meeting the UK priority targets for these Special Features. In a number of cases these habitats are notified Sites of Special Scientific Interest or are Candidate Special Area of Conservation and as such are priorities for conservation management.

A number of the UK's priority species are also found within the Clwydian Range, most notably otter, water vole, black grouse, nightjar and juniper. These species are associated with habitats that are recognised as Special Features of the AONB and as such may prove to be important indicators of change. Management should focus on meeting the UK priority targets for these species.

The following principles will be observed throughout the plan.

- UPB1** To ensure that national targets for habitats and species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan are translated into effective action at the local level.
- UPB2** To achieve the overall objectives and targets as specified within the Denbighshire LBAP Habitat and Species Action Plans
- UPB3** To ensure AONB Management Plan contributes to the delivery of the UK and local BAP targets, and CRoW Act section 74 list.
- UPB4** To protect and encourage management of County Wildlife Sites within the AONB which with SSSIs will represent the best examples of semi-natural habitats.
- UPB5** To increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues through education, public events, media coverage etc.



## Policies

The policies laid down in this document will guide our approach to the management of the AONB. They are the basis upon which our objectives have been set and will define our approach in the future.

- Pol 1** To ensure that within the AONB landscape protection and enhancement is the primary consideration.
- Pol 2** To safeguard and protect sites and zones of archaeological interest and importance.
- Pol 3** To conserve the variety of natural and semi-natural habitats within the AONB
- Pol 4** To protect and retain all registered common land.
- Pol 5** To involve communities in the protection and management of their landscape.
- Pol 6** To promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of the landscape of the AONB in a way that contributes to local prosperity and social inclusiveness.
- Pol 7** To retain and improve essential facilities and services for local people.
- Pol 8** To ensure that development complements the landscape and character of the area through the highest standards of design.
- Pol 9** To resist developments within and adjoining the AONB that will damage the special character of the area.
- Pol 10** To ensure that the Rights of Way Network is managed to the highest standards reflecting its status as an AONB.
- Pol 11** To ensure that the AONB is a focus for public enjoyment and appreciation of the countryside.
- Pol 12** To increase awareness and understanding of the landscape and its conservation.

