

Annex 2 to the current Management Plan 2019-2024.

Background to the National Association for AONBs Arts Strategy

The iconic landscapes in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated for their importance to the nation and have strong emotional connections with many people who love these special places.

In 2019, the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, on behalf of England's AONBs, made a **Statement of Intent** to explore how working with artists could attract first time visitors to our countryside.

First steps for National Association Art in the Landscape project took place on 21 September 2019 with a 'National Moment' with simultaneous events staged in AONBs across the country including the creation of our own apple heart in the grounds at Cotehele.



The National Association secured funding from the Arts Council England to provide a series of workshops for AONB teams exploring how to work with artists and commission artworks. It was an inspirational programme to participate in and share the experiences of AONBs across the country both from past projects and ones in the pipeline for the future.

Art in the Tamar Valley

From the industrial landscapes that inspired Turner to the work of Mary Martin, so evocative of our market gardening heritage, the Tamar Valley provides a rich harvest of inspiration for art. Add to the palette the outstanding work of Drawn to the Valley we have a rich seam of creative talent that brings the history and beauty of the area alive.

The Tamar Valley AONB already has a legacy of arts projects to inspire us moving forward. From the highly successful Diarykeepers project to working with Drawn to the Valley to develop focussed exhibitions celebrating our mining heritage and beautiful local daffodils, there is a strong platform to build on.

Arts and culture are already embedded within the Tamar Valley AONB Management Plan and interweave across our work. However, the National Association Arts Strategy has given this a new focus to look at integrating arts based connections in all our projects going forward.

Delivering the Management Plan

The artistic appeal of the landscape is recognised within the special qualities of the AONB – the aspects of natural beauty that justify the Tamar Valley’s national importance and basis for designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A landscape of artist and public appeal

The area has long been a haunt for artists and travellers. Some notable writers and artists frequented the Tamar Valley, such as J.M.W. Turner, and were as fascinated by the industrial environment as by the picturesque landscapes. Today there remains an active community of artists and craftspeople in the Valley. The strong local identity is perhaps most rooted in the traditional land-based industries – farming, forestry, market gardening, mining and traditional salmon fishing. Local celebrations of the environment, such as strawberry and cherry fairs, daffodil and apple days, survive as important links and reminders. This sense of place remains one of the area’s great strengths and one that needs careful stewardship.

The Art Strategy aligns strongly with the **Communities and cultures** theme within the Management Plan.

Objective

11.4.11 - Encourage and support communities in understanding and appreciating cultural identity and traditional practices within the AONB, and to maintain and enhance these.

Policies

11.5.1 - Work with communities to improve understanding of the AONB’s special qualities and encourage wide communication of these.

11.5.2 - Encourage and support local communities to celebrate their cultural identity and sense of place through events and activities that reinforce the cultural traditions of the AONB.

11.5.3 - Help communities explore and understand the value of the AONB, why this area is special and what they can do to help keep it this way.

The National Association Arts Strategy also has clear alignment with the **Communications, Education and Awareness** theme of the Management Plan.

'It is important to engage and educate as wide an audience as possible with the AONB, to build understanding and awareness of the forces for change, and to encourage debate regarding options and solutions'

Objective

12.4 - Promote a greater understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB landscape and wider understanding of the designation and purpose.

Policies

12.5.1 - Actively promote the importance and value of the natural cultural landscape of the AONB.

12.5.2 - Maximise the opportunity, through events, to promote the purposes of the AONB.

12.5.3 - Engage the public in the enjoyment of the landscape and the opportunity it affords for learning, and to engender a sense of ownership.

Priorities for Action

12.6.1 - Communicate key messages and information via a range of media to local and national audience.

The Tamar Valley AONB is rightly recognised for its rich artist and cultural heritage. However, it is important to look beyond celebrating the past and to interweave art within the shaping and celebration of this special place going forward. Art is a great platform to facilitate debate about the future of the AONB and to develop pathways to respond to forces of change with new and existing audiences.

Update: The Tamar Valley AONB Executive formally adopted the National Association for AONBs Arts Strategy – Statement of Intent, in June 2021.

'When we talk about the value of art and culture to society, we always start with its intrinsic value: how art and culture can illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world. This is what we cherish.

We also understand that art and culture has a wider, more measurable impact on our economy, health and wellbeing, society and education. It's important we also recognise this impact to help people think of our art and culture for what they are: a strategic national resource.'

Arts Council England

Lesley Strong, Tamar Valley AONB
February 2021

