

Winter 2021/22

The Valley

News from the Tamar Valley AONB



Focus on Farming and Nature Recovery in the AONB



Dan Cooke
Manager, Tamar Valley AONB

As we moved from autumn into winter, the diverse woodlands of the Tamar, Tavy and Lynher valleys put on a spectacular display of autumn colours. With communities finding their feet again after almost two years of COVID-19 impacts, being able to enjoy our local special places and the beauty and inspiration we get from nature has never been more appreciated.

The nature of the Valley changes and adapts as the seasons turn. I'm personally looking forward to seeing the nationally important numbers of avocets and other wading birds return to their wintering grounds on our estuaries.

The AONB is involved in two pieces of work aiming to better define the value of nature, and to identify how we can protect and improve some of our most important species and habitats. Our Tamar Valley Nature Enhancement and Recovery Plan, which will complement the work of our partners, will help us raise and direct

resources to future activities that will maximise the benefits to nature and our wonderful wildlife.

We've also just started our Defra-funded 'Making the Case for Investment in Intertidal Habitats' project, looking to establish the true value of our natural capital, and to attract more private sector investment into our landscapes. We look forward to sharing details of these projects soon.

There's plenty of other inspiring stuff happening across the AONB, which we hope you'll enjoy reading about in this issue. Whether it's the fantastic River Tamar Walkway & Wetland Project in Calstock or the superb initiatives now getting up to speed in the Tamara Landscape Partnership, it's all designed to make a real and lasting positive difference to the environment and communities of the Tamar Valley. Importantly, there are lots of ways that volunteers and partners can get involved and be part of the positive change in 2022 and beyond.

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More from us...

Sign up to receive monthly ebulletins from the Tamar Valley AONB - a great way to keep up-to-date with progress on projects and calls for volunteers in between issues of The Valley newsletter. Please visit: www.tamarvalley.org.uk and scroll down to 'bulletins'. Alternatively, email Charlotte at cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk

Follow us:





Chair's Welcome

Farming, food production and land management remain foremost in the minds of many. Not least due to the fact that over 75% of our UK land mass is under agricultural production. Here in our beautiful Tamar Valley, the backdrop of patchwork quilt fields and hedgebanks in all four seasons reflects a hive of activity, from traditional family farmsteads through to the most modern of agricultural units. Add to this, semi-abandoned parcels of woodland and market gardens of a previous era, each still contributing to the biodiversity, then we can truly boast a special countryside worth celebrating.

However, with all eyes on Glasgow and COP26 last year, the recent declaration signed by many world leaders to enhance the 2015 Paris Agreement and limit global warming rises to 1.5° by 2030 is welcome news. The impact upon us locally, with an intertidal estuary and many vulnerable steep farmland valleys, in terms of cropping and livestock production and land management remains to be seen as the years unroll. Equally, how our scattered rural communities adapt to climate change and lifestyle choices could hold sway on our rural economic wellbeing.

So, welcome news of the 10 projects within the Heritage Lottery funded Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme, along with further funding from Defra towards greater biodiversity creation along the

Tamar and Lynher estuaries through the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund and environmental support for mainstream agriculture in the form of Farming in Protected Landscapes. A true recognition of three excellent projects, each with additional staffing support within the Tamar Valley AONB team, most worthy of championing our valued natural capital and special community. Clearly, the next five years and beyond are set to be both challenging and exciting times for everyone, but by working together in meeting carbon neutrality targets, we surely can all play our part in halting the problems and creating solutions.

Martin Howlett,
Chair, Tamar Valley AONB Partnership

Staying social...

We want to make sure that we're keeping you as up-to-date as possible with news of project progress, volunteering opportunities and events and activities for you to join in with. If you haven't yet signed up for our monthly ebulletin, please get in touch (details below).

We're also interested to hear which social media platforms you use regularly to find out about community events near you. Perhaps you browse specific Facebook sites, prefer Twitter, or are an Instagram or YouTube fan? Please let us know, as it will help us to focus our efforts to ensure we're communicating with you as best we can.

Contact:
Charlotte Dancer
Information &
Communications
Officer
e: cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk



Farmers and growers have helped to shape the glorious landscape of the Tamar Valley AONB over hundreds of years, and trends and methods have come and gone. Whether it's rich pasture-fed beef and dairy products, or the fresh and fantastic fruit and veg for which the Valley is famous, farming and food production really are at the heart of this place.

Challenging Times and Exciting Opportunities for Tamar Valley Farmers and Land Managers

The wider legislative and economic landscape that farmers work in is now changing rapidly, and this brings challenges and opportunities to our important farming and horticultural communities.

The Agriculture Act and the Environment Bill will fundamentally change the way that we manage our land. This will include a shift away from the Basic Payments Scheme, towards the Environmental Land Management scheme (ELM) that will make payments for more sustainable forms of land management – incentivising payments for 'the public good' and to support the production of high-quality food.

The agricultural transition to ELM will have three important aspects: The Sustainable Farming Incentive; Local Nature Recovery, and; Landscape Recovery.

As part of this transition, the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has been developed by Defra, along with the UK's Protected Landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the agricultural sector. The programme will support farmers and land managers to deliver more for nature, climate, people and place, in preparation for the wider changes required.



We're pleased to report that there has already been enthusiastic take-up and strong demand from farmers and land managers across the AONB and adjacent areas for funding from the Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

Launched in July 2021, the programme offers the farming and land management community access to significant grant funding via a straight-forward application process. The funding is targeted to deliver on-farm improvements in four key criteria. Projects must:

- Support nature recovery
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- Support resilient, nature-friendly and sustainable farm businesses.

The AONB has been allocated over £700,000 of funding over three years to March 2024. Applications are considered and grants are awarded by a panel of local farming community representatives who meet every eight weeks. So far, 13 projects have been approved, with more in the pipeline. The projects already show the breadth of the outcomes supported by the programme and demonstrate the passion and innovation in our local farming community.

Some of the inspiring projects that have been awarded funding so far include:

- A new demonstration market garden with shared machinery pool for use across a number of local agricultural businesses
- Enhancing access and visitor education and experience at a tenanted farm
- Wooded swales to increase biodiversity, and prevent polluting field run-off into important Tamar water courses
- Meadow creation and herbal leys for improved grazing and wildlife benefits
- Orchard planting and hedgerow repairs
- Woodland planting and woodland management plans.

Watch this space for more details as these projects are delivered in the coming months.

As well as landowners and land managers, the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is open to tenant farmers, groups of farmers and other organisations partnering with

farmers, so we are looking forward to working on innovative projects as we move into our 2022/23 funding awards.

To find out more, or to get support with your application, please visit www.tamarvalley.org.uk, click on Our Work, Current Projects and follow the link.

(Background image)
Soil sampling above
St Germans, courtesy
A Bebbington

Ground-breaking grant shows government commitment to valuing protected landscapes

£99,000 has been awarded to the Tamar Valley AONB to determine the value of nature-based services in its protected landscape.

The money, approved by the Environment Agency's Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund, will be used over the next 12 months to calculate the worth of goods and services at four sites across the Tamar Valley AONB, and to find innovative ways to attract long-term investment for their future care, tackle climate change and redress

biodiversity loss.

The project, *Making the Case for Investment in The Tamar Valley's Nature-Based Services*, which will focus on Calstock, South Hooe and other sites on the Tamar and Lynher, began in the autumn with the first phases of research and contacting potential investors now underway.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment
Agency

**NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT
INVESTMENT
READINESS
FUND**

Tamar Valley AONB awards Sustainable Development Fund to grassroots projects

Despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, last year's Sustainable Development Fund awarded £4,100 to five projects in the area.

The Fund, accessed through the Tamar Valley AONB team, was created for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to encourage individuals, community groups and businesses to work together to develop practical and sustainable solutions to managing their activities.

Dan Cooke, AONB Manager says, "Despite a notable reduction in applications as a result of the recent lockdowns, Tamar Valley AONB is pleased to be able to support a good range of grassroots projects helping communities, local wildlife and some of our special places."

The projects supported include a wildlife pond, volunteer training programme and teaching people about plant identification.

The Tamar Valley AONB team hopes to offer the Sustainable Development Fund again later this year. Keep a close eye on our website (tamarvalley.org.uk), Facebook & Twitter (@TVAONB) and local press for more details.



(Above) St Sampson's Church
(Top right) One of the bats discovered within the church roof. Image © Chris Damant



Project helps keep bats safe

South Hill Bat Project has been nominated for an award from the Bat Conservation Trust for its campaign to help local bats keep the roof over their heads.

Just before repairs to the roof at St Sampson's Church, South Hill began, two families of bats were discovered and so work was temporarily suspended to accommodate the legally protected animals.

To help raise the additional £6,000 to keep the bats safe, a 'sponsor a bat' campaign was launched. This has had an amazing response, with supporters from across the globe. Urgent roof works have now begun and bat boxes have been sited to house any further bats found in the roof.

For further details of the Project or to sponsor a bat, contact **Judith Ayers** judithayers@yahoo.co.uk or St Sampsons Unlocked | Facebook or St Sampson's, South Hill - A Church Near You

Sustainable Development Fund Projects 2021/22

Project	Applicant	Allocated
Wildlife Pond	P.S. & J. Bruna	£1,000
Learning about local plants – foraging at East Kit Hill Mine Site	East Cornwall Mining History Association	£500
South Hill Bat Project	South Hill Parochial Church Council	£1,000
Chat Bench	Buckland Monachorum Parish Council	£600
Training programme for Tamar Community Trust volunteers	Tamar Community Trust	£1,000
Total		£4,100



(Above) The breach and new bridge
(Top right) Greenshank images © Peter Thompson



Step closer for bridge and River Tamar Walkway & Wetland Project

The River Tamar Walkway & Wetland Project, in Calstock, is progressing well, with the bridge now complete and due to be opened by the end of February.

Tamar Community Trust is a partner in the £2.2 million Environment Agency flood-bank realignment scheme in Calstock. TCT was provided with funds to complete the construction of the new footbridge that will ensure the 1.2km stretch of the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail is maintained, alongside the fantastic new

inter-tidal habitat.

To be kept up-to-date with progress on the project, please see Tamar Community Trust or the Tamar Valley AONB websites, check @TVAONB (Facebook and Twitter), or look out for updates on the public notice boards neighbouring the site.

It is very exciting to see the project nearing completion. I would like to thank all the volunteers involved who have and continue to work really hard on the project.

Jane Kiely, Chair of Tamar Community Trust

The National Trust, the Environment Agency and Natural England have completed the first part of a project to create a new and rich intertidal wildlife habitat near Cotehele quay.

Project to provide richer environment at Cotehele

The project, part of a much larger programme of improvement works to the River Tamar, aims to create a system that is more resilient to the challenges posed by climate change and to provide a richer environment for people and nature.

Visitors to Cotehele last summer will have noticed channels dug through the field and a new bund created alongside the car park. In early September, excavators dug a breach into the riverbank that allowed the river to once again flood into the two-hectare field.

It's been exciting to see how quickly nature has started to use the site, with herons, egrets and kingfishers visiting within a week of the water flooding in.

Over the coming years, the Partnership will be watching the development of the new habitat, monitoring the changes in plant species, observing what wildlife is using the area, and how the topography of the area changes with the inflow and outflow of the river water.

For more information see www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cotehele



Breaching the old bank on the River Tamar. Photo courtesy Steve Haywood

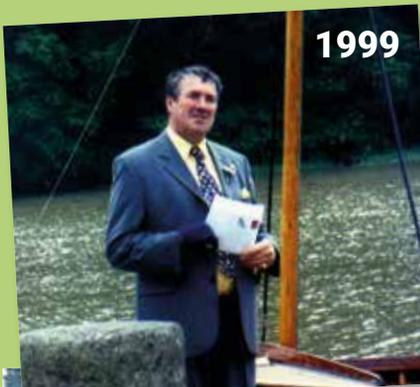


Lead ranger George Holmes in the middle of 15-metre breach. Photo courtesy Steve Haywood

25 Years' Outstanding Contribution

Many of our regular readers will be aware that, last year, Cllr Neil Burden reached the milestone of 25 years as Chairman of the Tamar Valley AONB Partnership.

Here, we would like to express our thanks to Neil, who has made a remarkable contribution to the life and work of the Tamar Valley AONB over the past quarter of a century.



(Above) Summer 1999 - launch of Tamar Passenger Ferry between Cotehele, Calstock & Ferry Farm, to link up the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail (pictured above, 1998).



(Top, 2000) - first Management Plan launch for the Tamar Valley AONB, held at Cotehele.
(Above, 2004) - launch of 2004-2009 Management Plan at Morwellham Quay.



2004

(Above, left) May 2004 - launch of Sovereigns, Madams & Double Whites book, resulting from market gardening oral history research work. (Above, right) Tamar Valley Strawberry Run, taking Tamar Valley strawberries by train to Covent Garden Market. Photograph courtesy Chris Saville.



Neil has been an invaluable support to the team and a constant reminder of our 'can do, will do' culture. He has attended countless AONB Annual Forums, Partnership and Executive meetings, as well as National Association for AONBs' Conferences, and many, many other events.



2005

(Above) May 2005 - press launch held at Morwellham Quay to celebrate £5.8million awarded from Heritage Lottery Fund, to conserve and tell the story of the Tamar Valley's rich mining heritage (Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project).



2009

(Above) 2009 - Tamar Valley Centre officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal.

At the end of last year, we warmly welcomed Martin Howlett as the new Chair of the AONB Partnership, and Cllr Philip Sanders as Vice Chair. We look forward to working with them both, as they steer and support the work of the Tamar Valley AONB over the coming years (see page 18 for further information on the work that has taken place to refresh and rebuild the AONB Partnership).

(Right) 2015 - Celebrating 20 years of the Tamar Valley being designated as an AONB.



2015



2018

(Left) 2018 - award received from South West Tourism, for Tamar Valley AONB's 'Outstanding Contribution to Tourism' - all South West Protected Landscapes received a trophy. Neil recognised the effort put in by a number of other organisations, including TAVATA (now Visit Tamar Valley), Drawn to the Valley, Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, Tamar Community Trust, Tamar Valley TLC and many others who help to keep the Valley special.



Focus on St Erney

Starting a new regular feature for *The Valley*, shining the spotlight on some of the lesser-known gems of the AONB, this issue we turn our attention to the tranquil hamlet of St Erney.

A haven of peace and tranquillity, you will find St Erney just over a mile from the busy A38 and the village of Landrake.

Over the years, the numbers of people walking the lanes has increased dramatically as they marvel at the many wildflowers along the way. Daffodils, primroses and violets give way in their turn to pink campion, bluebells, stitchwort, cow parsley, valerian, foxgloves and ferns.

With its landmark 12th-century church nestling between fields on the way to Markwell, legend has it that the monks from St Germans Priory would come across the estuary and use the St Erney church as a stepping off point on their travels up to Tavistock. The name of the church comes from the patron saint St Terney and at one time there was said to be a holy well near Markwell.

Church services are usually held at 11:15am on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month and you are assured of a warm welcome from the regulars who continue to keep it going. A creative team of lovely people ensure that there are always fresh flowers for church services and it is a delight to behold the seasonal colours and fragrant displays. Such a spiritual space for quiet contemplation, the stained glass is especially delightful, and there is a seat in the gardens, so even if the church is shut you can always enjoy the outside views.

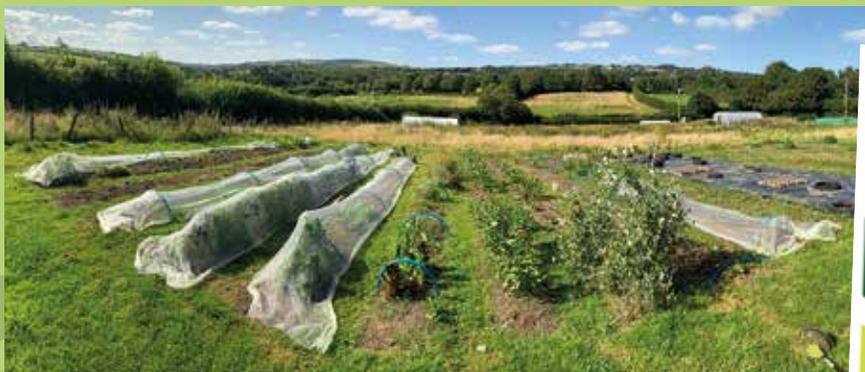
The candlelit Christmas service is not to be missed and often includes scones with cream and jam as well as mulled wine, so why not pay a visit to this beautiful small church, whatever the season?

By Penny Mathers, St Erney Cottage

Above: Walking along the lanes at St Erney near Landrake



Stunning views across the river and the viaduct



(Above) Some of the produce being grown by Natasha and Ralph from Mighty Harvest



Growing Businesses – Mighty Harvest

Mill Lane Acres is Tamar Grow Local's farmstart project for new entrants into horticulture. It currently has seven tenants all running their own micro growing businesses. We caught up with Natasha and Ralph from Mighty Harvest to find out about their new business.

Who makes up your team and what has led to setting up Mighty Harvest?

We are a team of just two right now, exploring organic growing techniques on a larger scale and very much learning as we go. We started learning about the effects of diet on mental and physical health, and the importance of nutritional value in food with the advent of COVID-19. We became acutely aware of the importance of short food supply chains and localism and both of these factors led us to setting up Mighty Harvest.

What's the ethos behind the business?

Food as medicine! Growing food free from pesticides and fungicides and using regenerative techniques that focus on soil health. We're also promoting the importance of seasonal eating and localism as a lifestyle change to become less reliant on global supply chains.

What are the key crops you're looking to grow?

We'll be focusing on rhubarb, tomatoes, garlic, onions and salads, which we've had success with in 2021.

What have the highs and the lows of your first year?

Our first year has been very educational, we have learned a lot about the site and its challenges. We currently live in Plymouth and want to move closer to the area to dedicate more time to the site.

Our tomatoes and peppers were very productive last year, whilst our brassicas suffered from slug damage, but it's all a great learning experience.

How are you hoping your business will develop?

Long term, we hope to be able to utilise all of the space we have available and create a productive and biodiverse space, adding value to the community.

We also hope to develop relationships with like-minded people and contribute to the local community with fresh produce. In the future, we'd like to potentially promote, through education, the importance of food as a key part of general health.



Ralph from Mighty Harvest



**When and where
can we buy
Mighty Harvest
produce?**

We will definitely have some produce available at Tamar Valley Food Hubs by the spring.
www.tamarvalleyfoodhubs.org.uk

Follow us on Instagram to keep up with our progress,
[mightyharvestuk.](https://www.instagram.com/mightyharvestuk)

Events

Here's a selection of guided walks and events for you to enjoy throughout the Tamar Valley. New events and activities are added regularly to our online Events Calendar. Visit tamarvalley.org.uk/events for your up-to-date guide.

Please note: events may be subject to change, particularly as a result of Government guidance with COVID-19. Please contact the event organiser in advance, to check if plans have changed.

Persons who participate in events do so at their own risk. Neither the Tamar Valley AONB team, other organisers, nor landowners shall be liable for any death, loss or damage sustained. Participation in events is at the discretion of the leader. Whilst every care has been taken, no responsibility can be taken for inaccurate information in the newsletter.

January

Friday 14th – Sunday 27th February, 10:30am – 3:30pm

Snowdrop Festival

Annual Snowdrop Festival. The Garden House has a large collection of over 350 varieties on display. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Venue & Organiser: The Garden House, Buckland Monachorum, PL20 7LQ

Information: www.thegardenhouse.org.uk/events

Sunday 30th, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Wacker Quay

Join the Valley Volunteers at Wacker Quay. Numbers are limited, so please email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Wacker Quay

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

February

Tuesday 1st, 10am - 12noon

Travel Exchange Great British Workshop

Join Visit Tamar Valley to find out more about TXGB - what it is, why it's great for your business and how you can use it to manage your bookings. Presented by Jo Butler.

Venue: Tamar Valley Centre, Drakewalls, PL18 9FE

Booking: book your free place by following the links from the event - tamarvalley.org.uk/event/travel-exchange-great-britain-workshop/

Organiser: Visit Tamar Valley

Wednesday 9th, 7pm

Kit Hill - Online Talk

Part of the Winter Talk Series, discovering more about the Tamar Valley AONB from the comfort of your home.

Information: for further details and how to join please email Samantha.Fraser@cornwall.gov.uk or call 07522 709428

Organiser: Tamar Valley AONB (Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme)

Wednesday 9th, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Tamar Trails

Join the Valley Volunteers at the Tamar Trails. Numbers are limited, so please email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Tamar Trails

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

Friday 11th, 7:30pm – 10pm

The Secret World of the Undergrowth

A chance to learn more about the wildlife in the undergrowth. Online Talk.

Booking: www.devonwildlifetrust.org/ events and follow the links.

Organiser: Devon Wildlife Trust

Monday 21st, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Wacker Quay

Join the Valley Volunteers at Wacker Quay. Numbers are limited, so please email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Wacker Quay

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

Saturday 26th, 10am-12noon

Coffee, Cake, Conversation & Craft

The first of our monthly, themed pop-up cafes (theme tbc). Local cakes, tea and coffee will be served.

Venue: Tamar Valley Centre, Drakewalls, PL18 9FE

Information: Alison.Bartlett@cornwall.gov.uk

Organiser: Tamar Valley AONB

Saturday 26th, 10:30am – 2:30pm

Butterfly Conservation Work Party

Continuing the essential winter clearance work for the Heath Fritillary and other butterflies.

Notes: please bring lunch, a drink, waterproof clothing, stout footwear/boots and gardening gloves.

Venue: Lydford Old Railway Reserve (meet at the National Trust's waterfall car park – SX 500 832)

Booking: essential – 01822 810433, colin@colinsargent.co.uk

Organiser: Butterfly Conservation

Saturday 26th, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Tamar Trails

Join the Valley Volunteers at the Tamar Trails. Numbers are limited, so please

email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Tamar Trails

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

March

Friday 4th, 10:30am – 3:30pm

Natural Dyeing & Tie Dye Workshop

A workshop with Gill Cairns, to create vibrant tie dye designs and explore natural dyeing techniques using vegetable skins, berries and modifiers to create a wonderful range of colours.

Cost: £30, including basic materials

Venue: The Printworks, Pym Street, Tavistock

Booking & Information: 07784 925683, westdevonartworkshops@gmail.com

Organiser: West Devon Art Workshops

Wednesday 9th, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Tamar Trails

Join the Valley Volunteers at the Tamar Trails. Numbers are limited, so please email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Tamar Trails

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

Thursday 10th, 7pm

Heritage Talk – Pop in Tavistock; the town's mineral water makers

A talk by Roderick Martin about the water makers of Tavistock during the late 19th and early 20th century, including the Mackey, Armes and Williams families.

Cost: £5

Venue: Tavistock Guildhall, Court Gate, Tavistock, PL19 0AE

Booking/Information: www.heritageintavistock.org/events/ and follow the links.

Organiser: Tavistock Guildhall

Friday 18th, 10:30am – 3:30pm

Mixed Media Collage & Painting Workshop

A workshop with Gill Cairns, to create textured landscapes & seascapes,

incorporating TYVEX. Learn how to build up a textured surface and explore layering, paint and inks to create exciting images.

Cost: £30, including basic materials

Venue: The Printworks, Pym Street, Tavistock

Booking: 07784 925683, westdevonartworkshops@gmail.com

Organiser: West Devon Art Workshops

Sunday 20th, 11am-4pm

Pentillie Gardens Open Day

Cost: tbc

Venue & Organiser: Pentillie Castle & Estate, St Mellion, PL12 6QD

Information: 01579 350044, contact@pentillie.co.uk

Saturday 26th, 10am-12noon

Coffee, Cake, Conversation & Craft

The first of our monthly, themed pop-up cafes (theme tbc). Local cakes, tea and coffee will be served.

Venue: Tamar Valley Centre, Drakewalls, PL18 9FE

Information: Alison.Bartlett@cornwall.gov.uk

Organiser: Tamar Valley AONB

Saturday 26th, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Tamar Trails

Join the Valley Volunteers at the Tamar Trails. Numbers are limited, so please email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Tamar Trails

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

Sunday 27th, 11am-4pm

Pentillie Gardens Open Day

Cost: tbc

Venue & Organiser: Pentillie Castle & Estate, St Mellion, PL12 6QD

Information: 01579 350044, contact@pentillie.co.uk

Monday 28th, 10:30am

Valley Volunteers Day - Wacker Quay

Join the Valley Volunteers at Wacker Quay. Numbers are limited, so please email Phil to book your place, and also for confirmation of times and where to meet.

Notes: please bring your own lunch & refreshments, wear sturdy boots and dress for the weather

Meet: Wacker Quay

Booking: 07971 768147, greenwood.music.plus@gmail.com (Phil Harwin)

Organiser: Tamar Community Trust

April

Sunday 3rd, 11am-4pm

Pentillie Gardens Open Day

Cost: tbc

Venue & Organiser: Pentillie Castle & Estate, St Mellion, PL12 6QD

Information: 01579 350044, contact@pentillie.co.uk

Thursday 7th, 7pm

Heritage Talk – Rewilding Pine Martens

An introduction to pine martens and discussing whether or not they could be a good candidate for reintroduction on Dartmoor. A talk by Peter Burkill.

Cost: £5

Venue: Tavistock Guildhall, Court Gate, Tavistock, PL19 0AE

Booking/Information:

www.heritageintavistock.org/events/ and follow the links.

Organiser: Tavistock Guildhall

Saturday 23rd, 7:30pm-10pm

Company B

A rowdy 7-piece jump jive band with a solid reputation as one of the county's most entertaining live acts.

Venue: Harrowbarrow Village Hall, PL17 8BQ

Tamar Valley Centre – weekly local produce

The Tamar Valley Centre will once again be a collection point for Tamar Valley Food Hub orders*. You can choose to collect your delivery from the Centre on Fridays from 1:30pm - 1:45pm. Tamar Valley Centre, Cemetery Road, Drakewalls, nr Gunnislake, PL18 9FE *starting 28th January 2022, depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

Walking in the Tamar Valley

There are three walking groups in the Tamar Valley that meet weekly. All are free and are a great way to explore your local area and meet new people.

Mondays - Saltash Walk & Talk

Wednesdays - Tamar Valley Walk & Talk

Thursdays - Tamar & Bere Wellbeing Walks.

All programmes can be found here - tamarvalley.org.uk/explore/walking/



Image © Tobi O'Neill/TON Drone Services

Tamara Landscape Partnership project hits the ground running

In May 2021 we announced the launch of the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme - a £3.2 million five-year partnership project which will help to conserve and enhance the Tamar Valley, whilst improving the wellbeing and connection of local people to this special place through new events, training and volunteering.

Since the launch of the Scheme, a number of farming events and pilot community events have taken place; new team members have been recruited; training opportunities have been developed and progress made on the protection of heritage sites in the Valley. Read on to find out more...

Get involved – events, volunteering and training

A full events programme is being developed alongside a host of volunteering and training opportunities. Opportunities will include wellbeing events, wildlife surveys, walks and wildlife spotting, as well as a variety of apprenticeships, intern schemes and ways to gain additional skills. Details will be published in this newsletter, on the Tamara website: www.tamaralandscapepartnership.org.uk the Tamar Valley AONB social media channels and the monthly ebulletin (sign up on the homepage of the AONB website tamarvalley.org.uk).

Farming and land management

Since last spring, two Tamara farming events have taken place, which gave local farmers the chance to meet each other and find out more about the Scheme and the support available. In total, we have spoken to over 70 interested landowners, groups and individuals who have shown an interest in the Tamara Scheme and the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (see pages 4-5 for further information on the programme).

The Valley's heritage

Over the last few months, we have been working with Historic England on conservation management and scrub clearance plans at five sites - Gunnislake Clitters Mine, New Consols Mine, Okel Tor Mine, Holmbush Mine and Tamar Canal Lock. These plans will provide a prioritised and costed list of actions that are needed to care for these sites and provide opportunities for people to get involved with scrub clearance events.

The Scheme – a reminder

The Scheme will run until 2025, working for a brighter future for the Tamar Valley and its communities by creating opportunities and positive change through a programme of these 10 exciting projects:

- Small detail, big difference
- Heritage of innovation
- New approaches/ Making connections
- Accessible Tamar
- Come, visit & stay awhile
- Celebrating Tamara
- Tamara trainees
- River explorers
- Natural connections
- Promoting our produce

For more details on each of the projects, visit the Tamara website: www.tamaralandscapepartnership.org.uk

We have also been working with Calstock Parish Council to include details of heritage features in the first review of its Neighbourhood Development Plan and consultation with local people will take place in the near future.

Meanwhile, we have been looking into the best way to capture and tell the story of the Tamar Valley's mining, forestry and market garden history.

Meet the team

Since the last edition of *The Valley*, some new members of staff have joined the team; namely Sammy Fraser and Sabina Eberle (see below). Recruitment is currently underway for the Programme Manager and Land Management Officer and we hope to introduce you to them in the next edition. If you have a question, or would like to discuss the Scheme, please get in touch with the relevant team member. We would love to hear from you.



Recruiting - Programme Manager



Gary Lewis - Senior Heritage Officer

Gary is the lead for the Heritage-focused projects.

gary.lewis@cornwall.gov.uk



Chris Harris - Finance and Monitoring Officer

Chris is responsible for managing the finance and monitoring. He also leads on the Tamara Trainees project which is creating foundation, internship and apprenticeship training opportunities.

christopher.harris@cornwall.gov.uk



Recruiting - Land Management Officer



Sammy Fraser - Community and Volunteering Officer

Sammy is leading on the community-focused projects and she is also managing the recruitment, training and development of our amazing volunteers.

samantha.fraser@cornwall.gov.uk, 07522 709 428



Sabina Eberle - Communications Officer

Sabina is leading on delivering the Scheme's communications strategy.

Members of the media can contact Sabina on:

sabina.eberle@cornwall.gov.uk, 07522 709 302

TAMARA

LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP



Spotlight on Community and Wellbeing Events

Here, Sammy Fraser, the Community and Volunteering Officer explains a little bit more about the events that will take place and why.

Over the next five years, there will be a wide variety of opportunities for local people and visitors to get involved. The events will help to connect people with the Tamar Valley, its wildlife, heritage and history and will include everything from large celebration events, forest bathing, river-based activities and volunteering days. Because water is one of the unique features of the Tamar Valley, river events and activities will play a huge part. Local school children will have the opportunity to learn more about the river environment and volunteers can sign up to be Citizen Scientists to monitor water quality, wildlife and pollution. Public events will also take place, so people can learn more about the unique wildlife found in them.



One of our main aims is to reach people who may traditionally find it hard to get involved and this could be for a variety of reasons, including a lack of transport or challenges with mental and physical health. So, we are developing a host of wellbeing events to help people connect with the landscape, creatively and therapeutically. The events will help to improve people's physical health and mental wellbeing and overcome social isolation. We're partnering with link workers, the social prescribing network and other specialist organisations to create opportunities for local people who would benefit. These opportunities will vary from walking groups to art therapy. If you are a group or an individual who would like to get involved, please do get in touch with me.

Sammy Fraser
Community and
Volunteering Officer
samantha.fraser@
cornwall.gov.uk
07522 709428





Gary Lewis (Senior Heritage Officer for Tamara), Anne Preston-Jones and Andy Crabb (both Historic England) at Gawton Mine, June 2021

Current opportunities

Volunteering

Event Assistant - help us run our five-year event programme. Get involved in anything from festivals, nature walks, art and heritage events, wildlife recording and more.

Wellbeing Assistant - work with our Community and Volunteering Officer to support our Natural Connections programme sessions. Providing a friendly and welcoming face to the sessions and supporting different user groups.

Wildlife Recording and Citizen Scientists - we are looking for people living within the

Scheme area to get involved in the Westcountry Rivers Trust's Citizen Science Investigations www.wrt.org.uk/project/become-a-citizen-scientist/. Our River Explorers project is looking for 250 more people across the five years of the Scheme to get involved in monitoring the health of their local river. Training and resources will be provided through the project and family friendly events will be run to get everyone involved.

Practical Volunteering - everything from hedge laying to helping manage cycle trails.

Wellbeing events – sign up

If you live within the Scheme area and suffer from physical or mental health issues, isolation or loneliness, then please get in touch to find out how we can support you. Our Natural Connections project focuses on improving people's physical and mental wellbeing. Events will also be advertised through social prescribers, community wellbeing groups and GPs.

Call for event providers

We're looking for local people to help us run the following activities during the five years of the project. If you feel you have something to offer, please do get in touch:

- Wellbeing activities- forest bathing, yoga, bushcraft, immersive nature sessions etc
- Event managers
- Local food caterers
- Outdoor education and activity providers.

Contact: Sammy Fraser, Community and Volunteering Officer
samantha.fraser@cornwall.gov.uk 07522 709428

Any successful organisation or business is based on key elements of good governance, talented and engaged people, strong partnerships and good products or services.



Refreshing & Rebuilding a Strong Partnership

The quality of the ‘products or services’ of the AONB, i.e. the place itself and our activities that help to protect or enhance the beautiful Tamar Valley landscape, is obvious. Within our teams and our partner organisations we also have an array of skilled and dedicated people. There are explicit aims and objectives within our five-year Management Plan to review our governance and structure to ensure an ‘effective, responsive, relevant and respected AONB Partnership that will sustain and promote the core purposes of the AONB’.

Like many organisations, our Partnership and governance had become in need of some care and attention, having reached a point in late 2020 where the cracks were beginning to show, based on some tensions, mistrust and misunderstandings between a few important parties involved. We therefore firstly commissioned an independent review that was conducted and completed early in 2021.

There were some clear recommendations from the review, including ensuring that our terms of reference (a key document that sets out our governance structure and relationships) were updated and made fit for purpose, and this has now been completed.

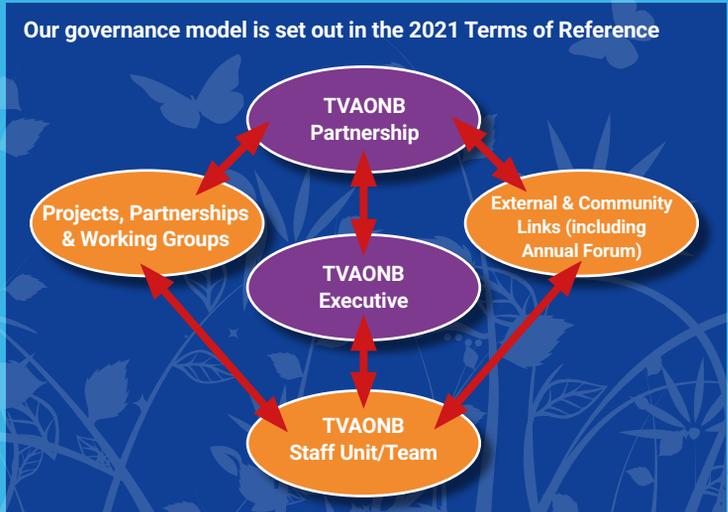
Another key recommendation was for a ‘refresh and rebuild’ exercise for our Partnership and we quickly commissioned Irene Evison of Resources 4 Change, an expert in this field to help us. Over the course of the summer, Irene conducted interviews and conversations with Partners and employees and held two well-attended workshops to discuss what it means to be an AONB Partner, the application of our new terms of reference and to build a closer understanding

between all Partners. She also designed a skills matrix, helping to build a picture of the skills already in place among our Partners and to identify potential new Partners that will add to the strength of our Partnership, such as Parish Councils, rural business and organisations better representing youth and young people.

Tamar Valley AONB Partnership Chair, Martin Howlett: *“Our thanks to Irene for a useful review. This is an ongoing process – we’ve clearly addressed past issues and will continue to work to address any issues as they arise in future. Lots of hard work has been done to improve our processes and strengthen the Partnership, we now have a better understanding of the respective roles and positions of other Partners.”*

Vice Chair, Councillor Philip Sanders said: *“This has been a thorough and useful exercise. Now is a good time to move forward and focus on excellent opportunities before us.”*

Irene commented: *“It feels as if the Tamar Valley Partnership is in a good position, and this refresh and rebuild process has helped to confirm and consolidate thinking about where it could be strengthened. Think very openly about which organisations/individuals could fill any gaps and weaker areas; be adventurous in your thinking, try out new directions, think about what the best fit with your Management Plan is. There seems to be plenty of goodwill amongst Partners to drive the AONB forwards, to build on its strengths and successes, and to make the most of new opportunities such as the Tamara Landscape Partnership Scheme, Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF). I wish you all the best for the future.”*





Gunnislake Community Matters

As we all learned to adjust to the 'new normal', COVID-19 effectively wiped out most of our plans for events in 2020 and 2021. However, while much of the country was in lockdown, we did manage a couple of projects.

Project highlights

- The red telephone box has successfully been converted into a book, CD and DVD library
- The village map with history timeline adjacent to the bus shelter
- The William statue has been refurbished and is now graced with a mine train wagon planted with flowers and standing on authentic wheels, kindly donated by Launceston Steam Railway
- The village was inspected by representatives from the Royal Horticultural Society under the "In Your Neighbourhood" scheme and was awarded 'Outstanding'
- The Gunnislake Community Matters garden stall has been maintained and a

gardening club set up, meeting on the last Saturday of each month to maintain the community garden in The Orchard

- A second bench has been added in The Orchard, and the number of planters in the community garden increased, along with an attempt to create a wildflower area on Foster's Field.

Please keep a look out for future events on the Village noticeboards, the Gunnislake Community Matters Facebook page and Gunnislake.org website.

David Adams
Vice Chairman
Gunnislake Community Matters



Walk and talk

A talk was given by Dorothy Kirk in St Anne's Church, followed a week later by a community History Walk "In Turner's Footsteps" between Cotehele and Newbridge, which highlighted the great artist's work during his time in our beautiful Tamar Valley.

We also completed four community walks and two guided evening bat walks along the banks of the river Tamar.

In other news

- The village market has now been relocated to the Village Hall.
- The Community Bus is now fully up and running

You can view the timetable at [Gunnislake.org/transport](https://gunnislake.org/transport)

The year ahead

Here's hoping for a safe 2022 and a return to more activities in our beautiful Tamar Valley.



(Above left) Bere Alston signal box in December 2020 before work started
(Above right) The restored signal box with its new sign in place

Following a year-long journey, the refurbishment of the old railway signal box at Bere Alston station has now been completed.

New lease of life for Bere Alston signal box

Led by the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership, and made possible thanks to the Railway Heritage Trust and Community Rail Development Fund, the work has truly been a team effort, involving a number of experts as well as Tamar Valley residents.

There was a potentially sticky start to the project when, back in July 2020, a colony of around 60,000 honey bees was discovered, having made the box their home for a number of years.

Tamar Valley beekeeper, Dale Wood, spent a day in the signal box, successfully removing the colony and its queen, while Partnership Development Officer, Rebecca Catterall, photographed and filmed the process.

Once the bees were removed, the box was safe to start the renovation works on this historic structure, which was first opened back in 1890.

The signal box windows needed replacing so wooden ones, just like the originals, were made by joiner Stephen Carr from Tavistock.

The rest of the work was carried out by Sam Probert of SBP Carpentry and Construction of St Ann's Chapel.

Chris Grove, of the Tamar Belle Heritage Centre in Bere Ferrers, assisted throughout, especially when it was found that the bit of old rail holding up the signal box floor was corroded. Chris had another bit of rail exactly the right length and donated it to the project.

A carefully researched replica of the original name board was made by Brian Oldford of Wellington, Shropshire.

The box will now be a very useful potting shed for Bere Alston Scouts when they are at the station tending the planters.

”

I am really delighted with the great restoration of the old signal box at Bere Alston. Many thanks to all those who have made it happen, including our funders and contractors

**Richard Burningham,
Devon & Cornwall Rail
Partnership**



Bee colony found within the signal box at the start of restoration

First daffodils, then cherry blossom followed closely by ice cream vans. Before the 2nd World War cherry blossom in the Tamar Valley was so magnificent that people took paddle steamer trips up the Tamar just to catch glimpses of 'Paradise'. There were cherry orchards and avenues of cherry trees on both sides of the river. Until the First World War both sides of the valley yielded 30 tons or more, with one tree in Bere Ferrers said to have yielded 1,000lb of fruit.

Tamar Valley Cherries

Book review by James Crowden

But where have all the cherries gone? Cherry orchards like apple orchards are vulnerable to predators and economics. Birds, chainsaws and south west gales as well as cheaper imports from France and Spain have also eclipsed the trade. But thankfully over the last forty years, two people have painstakingly researched cherry trees, discovered 'new' varieties and helped replant them. James Evans and Mary Martin, well known 'Cornish Apple people', from near Cotehele, have just published a book with their findings. 'Tamar Valley Cherries - Forty Years Hard Graft' - very apt. James, ace grafter, is an engineer and Mary a 'plein air' artist who has recorded the beauty of the Tamar fruits with her paintbrush all her life.

In their book, there are descriptions of old varieties such as Birchenhayes, Burcombe, Rumbullion, Fice, Upright, Halton Black, Smutts, Brandy Mazzard and many more. All recorded from the villages of St Dominic, Botus Fleming, Cargreen and Calstock; and on the Devon side Bere Ferrers, Bere Alston and Slew near Lamerhooe. What is equally gratifying is the replanting of cherry orchards.

James Evans is a very skilled grafter and they have two or three mother cherry orchards of their own. Look out for cherry trees both in blossom and in fruit. If you are very lucky you may even get to taste Tamar cherries in the summer.

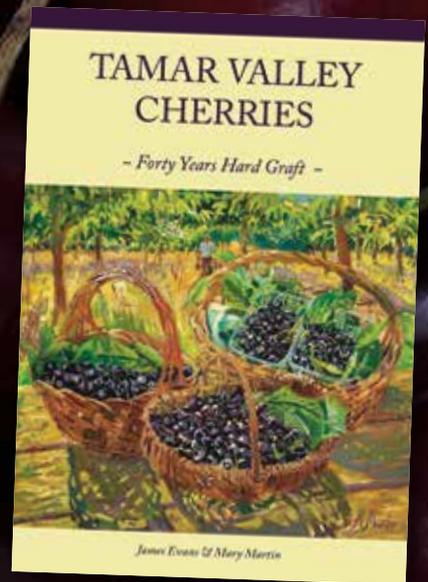
Reproduced by kind permission of The Western Morning News.

Availability

Tamar Valley Cherries by James Evans and Mary Martin is available from:

- **Book Stop, Tavistock**
- **The Book Shop, Liskeard**
- **Harrowbarrow Village Post Office/Shop**
- **St Dominick Village Shop**

or direct from James Evans
jame77@phoncoop.coop
 Price £10 + £2 p&p.



Forest for Calstock Parish Needs You

The Forest for Calstock Parish is appealing for volunteers to help maintain the trees and fruiting bushes it began planting last autumn.

An exciting project set up by the Parish Council, the Forest for Calstock Parish's aim is to create a positive natural environment to combat the devastating effects of climate change.

With an award of £1,000 from Cornwall Council's Forest for Cornwall, which aims to re-forest 2% of the Duchy, and £2,500 from a Crowdfunding project, the project will plant a rich diversity of trees, hedges and wood, encouraging nourishment and safe spaces for wildlife including pollinators, and helping to give something back to the local ecosystem.

The project has had two rounds of consultations with the community and key organisations within the Parish, initially supported by Lesley Strong and subsequently by Stuart Wood from the Forest for Cornwall and the Tamar Valley AONB. The chosen sites, all on Parish Council owned land, are Calstock Playing Field, St Ann's Chapel Playing Field and the Millennium Green at Albaston.

If you can offer support with ongoing maintenance, please contact the Forest for Calstock Parish at clerk@calstockparishcouncil.gov.uk or on 01822 748847.

Tree Wardens Wanted

Do you have a love of trees and your local environment?

If so, you may be interested in becoming a tree warden.

There are currently 82 tree wardens across Cornwall, working within their parishes to protect, conserve and plant trees in their community.

There are no formal requirements for becoming a tree warden, apart from a passion for nature and an enthusiasm to enhance your local natural world.

If you think you might be interested, please email Forest for Cornwall (Cornwall Council) - forestry@cornwall.gov.uk



Ali Humphreys with The Citizen of The Year shield for her volunteer work promoting recycling presented by Cllr. Mike Tagg

SHARE Recycling for Charity

The SHARE recycling project is helping to save the planet, whilst raising much-needed funds for nominated charities.

To date, SHARE has generated £5,400 from recycling everyday items such as empty bread bags to toothpaste tubes, sponsored by manufacturers including Hovis, Walkers and others.

Volunteers have collection points throughout the area and, once a month, the Recycling project trailer calls at different locations, including the Tamar Valley Centre car park, for people to drop off their items. On average every month, 28 boxes (290kg) of items are sent to Terracycle for recycling into new products like picnic benches and water butts.

Please visit www.south-hill.co.uk/charity-recycling or www.facebook.com/groups/recycling.for.charity for more information.



Albaston Church and Cemetery

In January 2021, Calstock Parish Council announced plans to phase out plastic in the parish's cemeteries at Albaston and Calstock, with effect from 1 July.

Graveyards go green

Wind-blown plastic debris is an increasing problem in these cemeteries. Notices have been put up around the sites informing people of the new 'No plastics' rules and the regulation has been widely publicised.

The Parish Council continues to welcome ornaments made from natural materials and fresh flowers, but the ban includes plastic ornaments and artificial flowers, which will no longer be permitted and will be removed.

The Diocese of Truro bans plastic and artificial flowers and this initiative is also supported by the Tamar Valley AONB, which recognises the detrimental effect of plastic debris on wildlife and the environment.

In November, wreaths continued to be laid for the War Memorial in Albaston, then removed in January. Wreaths can also be laid on graves at the time of burial until a non-plastic alternative can be found. A ceramic and wood wreath was commissioned from local artist, Rosie Fierek.

To find out more, and to check what items are allowed, please contact the Calstock Parish Clerk at clerk@calstockparishcouncil.gov.uk or call 01822 748847.



Two typical examples of plastics set to be phased out from cemeteries at Albaston and Calstock



Ceramic wreath



We are wholly supportive of any initiative which helps remove the risk of potentially damaging litter, which not only spoils the local landscape and natural environment but could find its way into watercourses, polluting river and marine life

Dan Cooke, Manager of the Tamar Valley AONB

We appreciate people's support with this sensitive issue. We do not wish to cause any upset or offence, however it is everyone's responsibility to do what we can in this climate emergency

Jim Wakem,
Calstock Parish
Council Chairman

About Us

The Tamar Valley AONB Partnership helps to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, by offering advice and assistance to community groups, landowners, farmers, residents and visitors.

There are 38 AONBs in England and Wales. The Tamar Valley itself covers an area of 75 square miles (195 sq km) and is the youngest of all AONBs, designated in 1995.

Tamar Valley AONB
Tamar Valley Centre
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Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9FE

t: 01822 835030
e: enquiries@tamarvalley.org.uk
w: www.tamarvalley.org.uk

Help us keep the AONB special

We hope you enjoy exploring the Tamar Valley. Please follow the Countryside Code when you're out and about, to keep this living, working landscape special.

Your Valley, Your News

If you have a story that you would like to be considered for the next issue of The Valley (summer 2022), or would like to discuss advertising opportunities, please contact Charlotte Dancer, Information & Communications Officer for the Tamar Valley AONB – cdancer@tamarvalley.org.uk

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Image © Tobi O'Neill/TON Drone Services

National Association for AONBs welcomes Government's response to Landscapes Review, but urges ambition

On Saturday 15th January, the Government published its response to the Landscapes Review, an independent review led by Julian Glover and published in 2019, and opened a consultation enabling the public to express their views.

The National Association for AONBs welcomes the Government's long-awaited response, particularly the opportunity to reinvigorate the status of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with new purposes, powers and resources for the teams charged with conserving and enhancing these special places. However, they believe the proposals as currently presented fall short of the ambitious, transformational change that Glover and his team envisaged.

The Review recognised the enormous potential and frustrated ambition of the AONB network – 34 designated landscapes, covering 15% of England's land area – to deliver so much more for nature, climate and people, at this critical time.

Despite the chronic underfunding cited in the Landscapes Review, AONB teams are at the forefront of combatting climate change and restoring nature. Our joined-up approach to nature restoration is captured in the Colchester Declaration.

Have your say

The Government's response is accompanied by a 12-week consultation to seek views on the Government's proposals. The National Association for AONBs will be submitting its views and members of the public are encouraged to do the same. The consultation closes on 9th April 2022.

This is an opportunity for people to shape how protected landscapes will deliver benefits for people and nature for years to come. These are national landscapes, have your say, get involved.

Links to the Government's response and the consultation can be found at www.tamarvalley.org.uk/tvaonb-news/