



# Woodlands for People, Landscape and Wildlife in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A National Accord between  
**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AONBs**  
and **THE WOODLAND TRUST**

## THE PARTIES

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) is an unincorporated controlled company limited by guarantee whose membership includes all but one of the AONB partnerships and Conservation Boards of England and Wales and the trust that manages three AONBs in Northern Ireland, as well as local authorities, voluntary bodies and individuals with an interest in the future of these iconic landscapes. The NAAONB has established itself as the national voice for AONBs and for those responsible for supporting the planning and management of over 8000 square miles of our finest landscapes.

The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading non-governmental woodland conservation charity. For 40 years the Trust has been protecting and restoring existing ancient and semi-ancient woodland and creating new native broadleaved woods for everyone to enjoy. The Trust also works closely with landowners to encourage them to establish and restore their own woodland, with the overall vision of doubling the UK's native tree cover.

The accord focuses on stating our shared objectives and setting out collaborative ways of working, including practical actions to ensure we make the most of resources and opportunities for taking forward an integrated landscape-scale approach to woodland creation, management and restoration in AONBs.

## CONTEXT

People love trees and woodlands. They are vital and beautiful parts of our landscape, and the range of ecosystem services they provide – fuel, timber, carbon storage, soil stabilisation, wildlife habitat, opportunities for spiritual renewal and connections with nature and more – places on them an enormous environmental, social and economic value. However, for historical reasons the UK is currently one of the least densely forested countries in Europe. The UK Government and the devolved administrations recognise that woodland and landscape trees deliver a host of benefits, improving the environment for people and wildlife, absorbing and storing carbon, improving water catchments, sheltering crops and buildings as well as providing a renewable source of fuel and timber for construction and other beneficial uses.

Government has called for a major increase in woodland to counter climate change and to support the move towards a low carbon society. Recognising that many AONBs have the potential for significant additional woodland, discussions were undertaken as to how our two organisations might work together.

## OTHER CURRENT DRIVERS FOR THIS ACCORD INCLUDE:

The new environmental framework emerging from Government through the Ecosystem Services Assessment, The Lawton Report – ‘Making Space for Nature’, The Natural Environment White Paper (England)/The Natural Environment Framework (Wales), The England Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and The England Forestry Strategy

The current IUCN Category V debate as to whether UK protected landscapes are giving sufficient priority to wildlife conservation

The renewed energy around localism and interest in pursuing social enterprise approaches to woodland management

Tight financial settlements that demand smarter working and greater collaboration between environmental partners.

## SHARED OBJECTIVES

AONB Family headline objectives:

- Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future
- Support the economic and social well-being of local communities in ways which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
- Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and encourage people to take action for their conservation
- Value, sustain, and promote the benefits that the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty provide for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and well-being.

The Woodland Trust headline objectives:

- To enable the creation of more native woods and places rich in trees
- To protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- To inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.

Our two organisations have a shared desire to restore ecological networks and promote public understanding and enjoyment of a healthy natural environment. Both sets of organisations also provide well-established and respected mechanisms for localism to operate in practice.

## WAYS OF WORKING

Our ways of working together will:

- Be inclusive and collaborative, with a culture of ‘no surprises’
- Include collaboration on both strategy and delivery
- Have a presumption that the Woodland Trust is engaged in AONB Management Plan development and delivery
- Have a presumption that large-scale initiatives are jointly discussed and progressed as part of AONB Management Plan delivery.

## SPECIFIC AREAS OF COLLABORATION

This agreement is primarily concerned with the appropriate management of woodland assets and the creation of new woodland where this is consistent with the interests of conserving and enhancing landscape character and compatible with the interests of agricultural land owners, tenants and licensees.

The NAAONB (through its member AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and the Woodland Trust agree to collaborate specifically to:

- Encourage the engagement of local people in caring for and enjoying their woodland assets
- Encourage the creation of appropriately-sited new woodlands in AONBs
- Facilitate positive engagement with all interested parties over the management and creation of woodland in AONBs
- Identify sites that appear to provide woodland creation opportunities to the maximum benefit of both organisations’ principal interests and the long-term interest of the UK environment and a low carbon economy
- Identify and source funding for woodland management and creation, seeking opportunities for collaborative working
- Share our complementary expertise and resources in all matters relating to woodland creation, management and restoration, especially in ensuring our activities are compliant with the UK Forest Stewardship standards for Biodiversity - formalising this practice will improve effectiveness and provide a platform for interaction and relationship development.

## COMMUNICATION

We will communicate our respective visions for people, wildlife and the natural environment in protected landscapes in a manner that reflects this accord – i.e. explicitly promoting our joint and complementary contributions – rather than promoting our individual ‘brands’.

We will do all we can to ensure external perception of AONB partnerships and the Woodland Trust is as collaborators rather than competitors.

We accept that publicity and media interest relating to actions arising from this agreement will be handled jointly, with both parties agreeing any material for publication. News Releases may be issued by either partner subject to prior approval. Both parties permit the use of the Landscapes for Life logo, the Woodland Trust logo and the logo of relevant local AONBs on co-branded News Releases prepared by either party and jointly agreed.

The Directors of each party will ensure that the content of this Agreement is communicated within their respective organisations.

## DISCLAIMERS

This Agreement does not create any formal legal partnership between the two organisations. It does not confer any preferential status on The Woodland Trust or imply that The Woodland Trust has any exclusive rights in relation to the provision of advice or other services to the NAAONB. It does not imply any financial obligation unless this is specifically authorised by the relevant Directors of both partners.

Both parties will provide advice to NAAONB in good faith but will not be held legally responsible for that advice unless this is specifically agreed between the parties.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS AGREEMENT

Both parties agree to a formal annual meeting between senior staff to monitor the operation of this Agreement and that they will keep the terms of the Agreement under periodic review.

*Signed for the National Association for AONBs:*

Peter Stevens, Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

*Signed for The Woodland Trust:*

Sue Holden, Chief Executive \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

