

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Annual Review 2019/20



Chair's Foreword

Welcome to the annual review for the AONB Partnership for 2019/20. This is the first review to be produced under the 'new' AONB management plan for 2019-24 and we are trialing a shorter, snappier way of summarising some key achievements. Please let us know what you think.

2019/20 marked 60 years since the designation of the Malvern Hills AONB. We celebrated in a number of ways, including with a photographic exhibition of stunning images of the area and by planting 60 trees across key habitats including parklands, traditional orchards, woodlands and hedgerows. The 60 trees project - along with other initiatives during the year - is evidence of an intention to work even more closely with landowners and managers to help to bring about positive change in the special places of the AONB.

In truth, it is difficult to focus on the past when the present is so challenging. The coronavirus is touching all of life and will clearly add to the trials facing the AONB. As I write, lock down measures have been eased and it is lovely to see people returning to the countryside that they love. But many local communities are reeling, conservation effort has been put on hold and the local income that underpins much important management is being badly hit. I suspect we won't know what all this means for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB for some time to come. However, the need for the whole AONB Partnership to be working together and supporting each other seems more acute now than ever before.

Please stay safe and well.

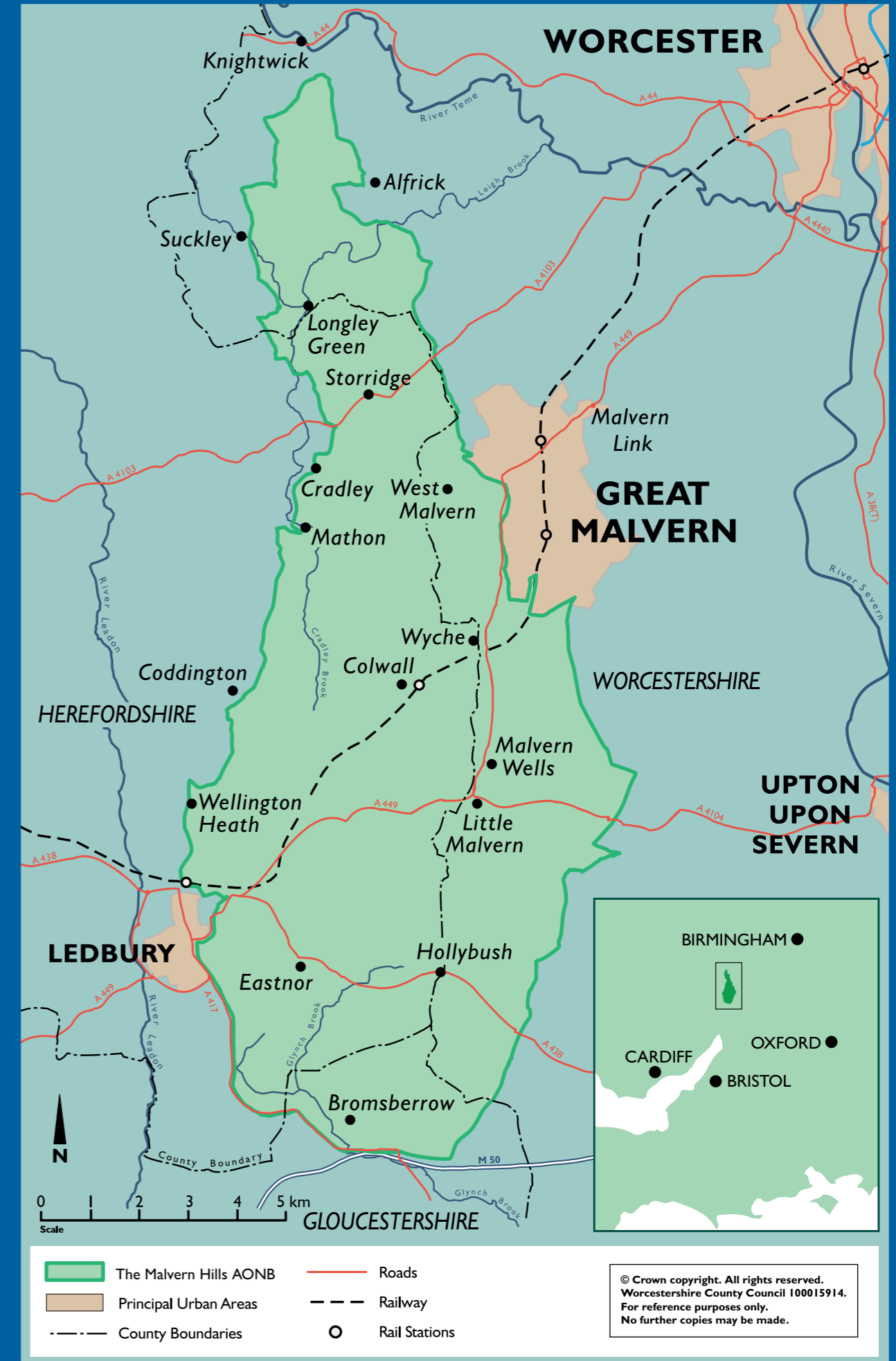


Gwyneth Rees
Chair, Malvern Hills AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

The AONB Partnership is an umbrella term comprising all of those bodies and individuals that work together to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB. More information on the Partnership can be found at: www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/aonb-partnership

Front Page Image: © Jan Sedlacek

Location of the Malvern Hills AONB



An overview of key points



10 advisory visits to support AONB landowners

5 partnerships supported by the AONB Team



Over £20,000 awarded to **21 projects** through the AONB Sustainable Development Fund

195 planning applications made in the AONB, the AONB Team **commented on 76 (39%)**



£32,366 the value of **volunteer time** given to AONB projects



9 draft strategies or plans appraised by the AONB Team



7 Parish/Town Councils made a **financial contribution** to the work of the AONB Partnership



276 volunteers actively supported the work of the AONB



A snapshot of activity highlights

112 people attended **AONB supported health walks** organised by Freedom Leisure

2 Dark Sky Discovery Sites launched celebrating the dark skies of the AONB - a launch event was attended by **70 people**



1 dovecote and scheduled monument in Colwall underwent repair



64 children attended AONB events in the AONB



52 people attended training events on managing land for wildlife and landscape (as part of the AONB Facilitation Fund)



3 roadside verges improved for wildlife in Malvern Wells, Little Malvern and Castlemorton (this included scraping off topsoil, preparing subsoil and reseeded with wildflower seed)



1 ancient semi natural woodland brought back into management in West Malvern

2075 trees of different varieties planted in a young woodland in Mathon to combat tree disease



1 Natural Capital Assessment completed at Bromesberrow (the first ever completed in the AONB)



2 housing developments refused at planning appeals, protecting the setting of the AONB near Ledbury and Cradley



5 Community Action bus trips to places of AONB interest for those without their own transport



1 Forest School supported in Eastnor



1959-2019 Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the designation of the AONB



1 photographic exhibition staged



1 'explore and read' book loan scheme launched



60 trees planted in special places in the AONB including parklands, orchards, fields and hedgerows



12 stunning new AONB cards and postcards produced



Finding Rare Species – a 2 year citizen science project completed in 2019, engaging local people to find and record rare wildlife



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund



3,444 new
wildlife
records
collected



£64,700 project value



29 training/
outreach events



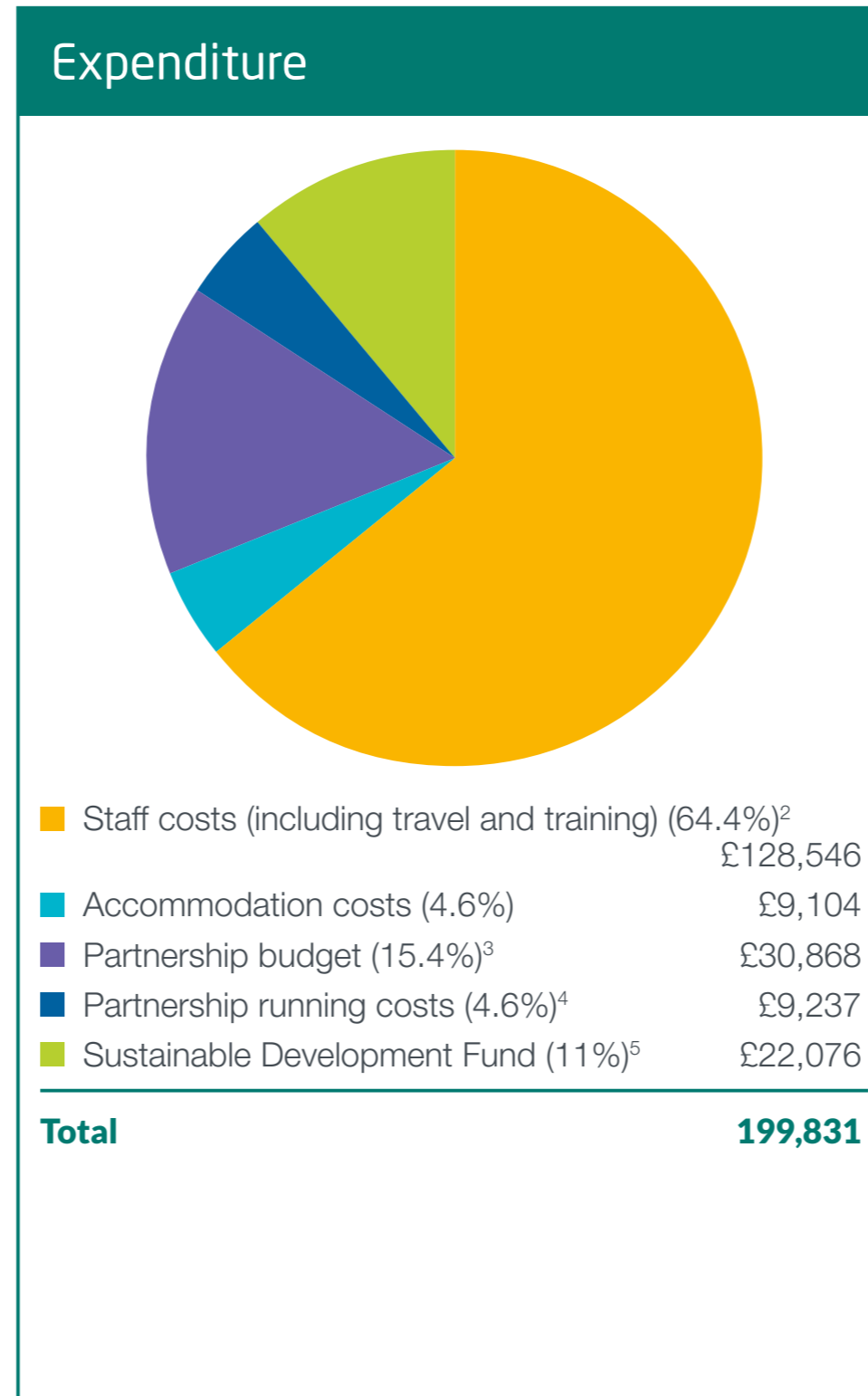
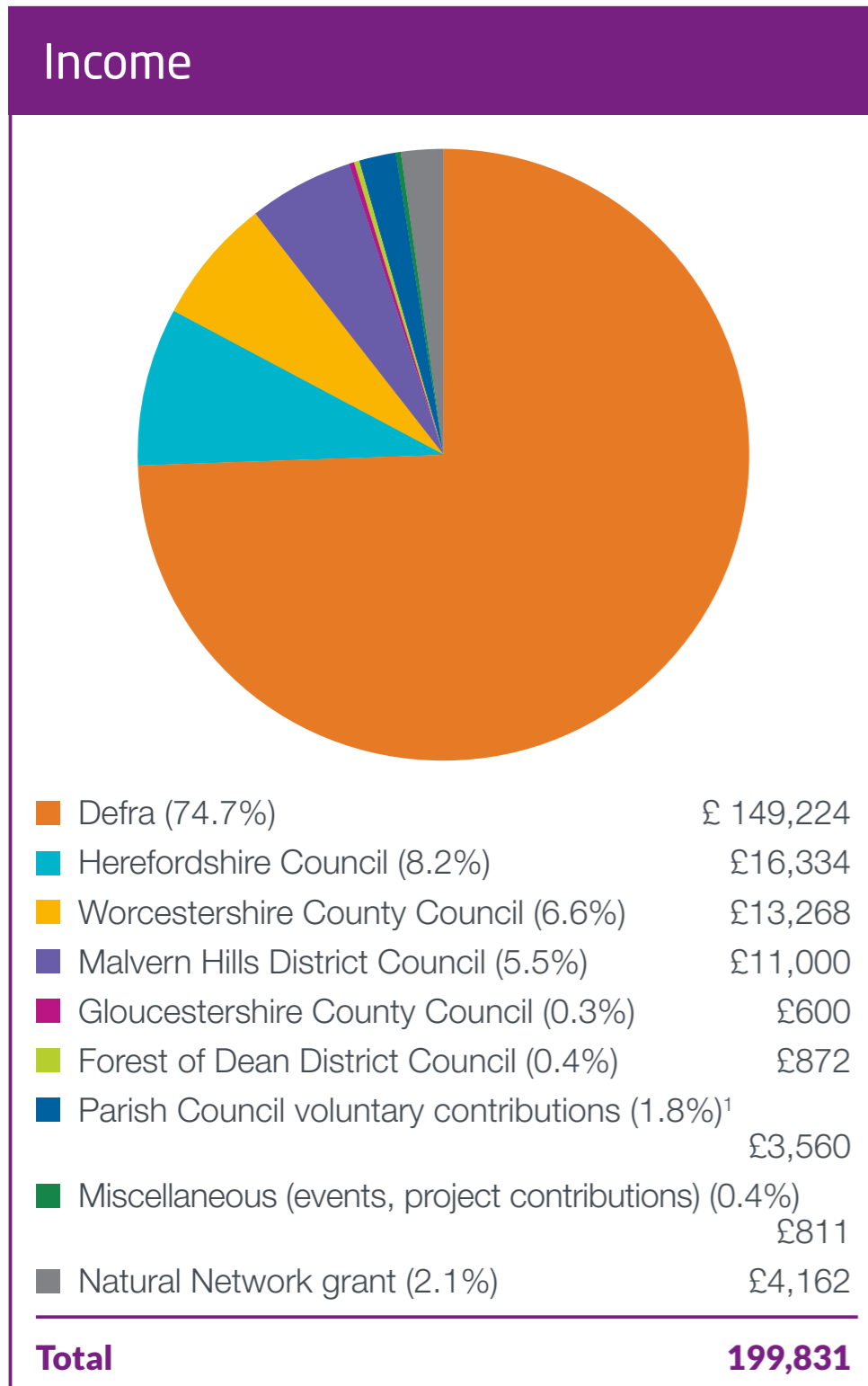
133 volunteers
took part



13 new landholdings
surveyed for wildlife
in Suckley, Alfrick
and Storrige



AONB Unit Financial Structure



Additional project income (and expenditure)

Malvern Hills AONB Facilitation Fund	
Total	£3,505

¹ Warm thanks are due to Colwall, Cradley, Ledbury, Little Malvern and Welland, Malvern Wells, Wellington Heath and West Malvern Parish/Town Councils for their contributions

² Includes Facilitation Fund staff costs

³ This supports a wide variety of projects and initiatives undertaken by partners and the AONB Unit'

⁴ This is paid to our host authority - Worcestershire County Council - in return for services such as HR, Finance and IT support.

⁵ This supports projects that bring economic, social and environmental benefits to the AONB.

The Unit staff structure for the year was as follows

AONB Partnership Manager:
Paul Esrich

AONB Partnership Assistant Manager:
David Armitage/Karen Humphries

AONB Partnership Support Officer:
Sarah Jones

The following bodies provide core grant support to the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership:



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