



Memorandum of Understanding

between

The National Association for AONBs

and

The Arts Council of England

in respect of strengthening collaboration between the cultural sector and the landscape sector 'Art in the Landscape' through partnership between the Arts Council and the National Association for AONBs

from 23 September 2022

to 31 March 2025

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (“**MoU**”) is dated the day of 2022

Between:

1. **THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND** (Royal Charter Company 000742 and Registered Charity Number 1036733) of 2nd Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3HF (“**ACE**”)
2. **THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY** (a registered charity number 1158871) (“**NAAONB**”)

and collectively referred to as “the Parties”.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Parties have agreed to work together on the project detailed in this MoU and wish to record the basis on which they will collaborate with each other.

2. The Parties:

2.1 The Arts Council of England

ACE is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England, distributing public money from Government and the National Lottery. Our 10-year strategy ‘Let’s Create’ sets out our ambition: “By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.”

We will seek to achieve this through three outcomes:

1. **Creative people** – everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life
2. **Cultural communities** – villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture
3. **A creative and cultural country** – England’s cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international

These outcomes will be realised through the application of four investment principles:

1. **Ambition and Quality**
Artistic excellence, supporting artists, developing skills, being ambitious, across the art forms.
2. **Inclusivity and Relevance**
Engaging people across geographical areas, encouraging diversity in participation and leadership.
3. **Dynamism**
Good governance, forward thinking, a collaborative approach, knowing our audiences and embracing new technologies.
4. **Environmental Responsibility**
To work with artists in response to the climate crisis to promote pro environmental behaviour.

2.2 The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB)

The NAAONB is a charity dedicated to valuing and securing the natural beauty of areas of outstanding natural beauty (“AONBs”), forty-six designated landscapes in total. These are some of the nation’s most cherished landscapes. From the uplands and remote villages of the North Pennines, through the chalk grasslands and beech woodlands of the Chilterns, to the cliffs and fishing villages of Cornwall; all are different; all are special. AONBs cover 15% of England’s land area, just under a fifth of England’s coast and are home to over 1 million people across England and Wales with 66% of people in living within half an hour’s travel time from an AONB. Just under 160 million people visit AONBs in England and Wales each year.

The **vision** of the Charity is that the natural beauty of AONBs is valued and secure.

The NAAONB Strategic Objectives are to:

- Support policies for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs
- Maintain an understanding of AONBs and the issues they face
- Advocate for AONB partnerships and their teams
- Sustain a collaborative culture across the AONB Family.

A critical delivery theme is to **create opportunities for people to connect with landscape**. The Charity will promote inclusivity and seek to better understand and address the challenges around diversity and inclusion for AONBs. It will actively promote the relationship between landscape and art and optimise our engagement with artists and producers in order to ensure AONBs are more accessible and more widely understood and appreciated by everyone. In 2020 the NAAONB adopted an Art in the Landscape Strategy:

Vision

People experience a deeper connection to the nature and beauty of the landscape through the arts.

Aims

1. **To connect** people to nature and the natural beauty of the AONBs – increasing creativity, wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviour.
2. **To challenge** perceptions of access to the landscape in order to diversify engagement.
3. **To broker** new trusted relationships with the arts and cultural sector to co- create new programmes.
4. **To celebrate** the existing creativity in the AONB teams and the local community.
5. **To work** with arts and culture to understand and directly address the climate emergency and nature recovery.
6. **To welcome** provocations and questions in exploring ways that arts can change perceptions.
7. **To inspire** ambition by sharing exemplary projects of all scales.
6. **To capture** the public’s imagination through engaging them in creative responses to the landscape.
9. **To raise** the profile of the landscape and the AONBs and the purpose of the AONB teams.
10. **To lever** in resources and relationships at all levels for an ambitious programme.

3. Background to this partnership The ‘National Moment’ in September 2019, of which the centrepiece was a newly commissioned poem by poet laureate Simon Armitage, was a high-profile stage to launch the Art in the Landscape Statement of Intent which coincided with the publication of the Review of Designated Landscapes by Julian Glover.

This commitment grows from years of dedicated work by AONB officers, artists and arts organisations in delivering projects that creatively connect people to these landscapes. Interest amongst AONBs has steadily grown with an increase in art focused sessions at NAAONB national conferences and other symposia delivered by specific AONBs. All of these indicated a positive way forward and identified the need to bring an Arts Strategy into being that can be embedded at the heart of the strategic plans of both the NAAONB and the AONB network.

A new national steering group with terms of reference specifically for the project was established comprising representatives from the NAAONB and seven of the AONBs. This group guided and acted as a core consultative group for the consultants Kate Wood and Bill Gee of Activate Performing Arts who were appointed in December 2019. The strategy **Art In The Landscape: Connecting People to Nature** was launched and endorsed by the Board of the NAAONB in 2020.

4. The ambitions of this partnership

4.1 The NAAONB and ACE believe that by working in partnership under this MoU they will be able to help deliver their own organisations’ priorities. The following ambitions should underpin this and create the basis for collaboration between the two organisations, and the sectors they represent. Our ambitions are to:

- see more people engaging with culture, and more people engaging with landscape. This promotes personal and community wellbeing, a connection with place and community, and opportunities for fulfilment. We believe that there is great potential for people to engage with the landscape through culture and will develop opportunities to achieve this,
- explore the cultural opportunities from engaging artists and creatives with landscape to enhance practice in both sectors, and promote engagement,
- harness cultural engagement to promote pro-environmental behaviours, contribute to sustainability and tackle the climate emergency,
- generate greater collaboration between the landscape and cultural sectors to promote wellbeing, strengthening communities and helping build prosperity in rural communities,
- build on the ambitions of the NAAONB and across the AONB family to embed culture in the future of the AONB sector.

4.2 What outcomes do we want this MOU to contribute to?

The NAAONB and ACE want this MOU to have a tangible impact, and for their shared ambitions, through the actions identified, to deliver the following:

1. Greater understanding amongst AONBs of the potential for culture to help people engage with landscape, and to promote each AONB's wider goals
2. Greater engagement between cultural organisations and creative practitioners with AONBs,
3. An increase in the number of cultural projects and the scale of cultural activity in AONBs, with an increase in the number of visitors to AONBs engaging with culture,
4. Embedding a long term relationship between ACE and the NAAONB.

5. How the Parties will work together

- 5.1 NAAONB is committed to supporting and enabling this work with dedicated staff resource to facilitate this vision. ACE will welcome applications from NAAONB and the AONB network into its Project Grants Programme and strategic funding programmes as relevant, subject always to the proviso that ACE cannot fetter its grant making discretion and therefore cannot guarantee that any such bid will be successful.
- 5.2 ACE is committed to working directly with the NAAONB to build greater links over time between the cultural sector and AONBs. The NAAONB will utilise this connection to develop high quality proposals for ACE consideration.

The Parties will work together in collaboration to make decisions on any external communication and publicity about the programmes if necessary.

5.3 NAAONB will:

- Deliver a National creative programme focused on their priorities of engagement, diversity and sustainability,
- Deliver regular training of staff to increase knowledge and activity in creative engagement,
- Create a core national resource to lead the creative activity,
- Develop the programme in consultation with ACE and the AONB family,
- Strengthen our partnership with ACE through inclusion on the Rural Stakeholders Group, quarterly updates on the programme and advocacy events.

5.4 ACE will:

- 5.4.1 Commit to meet with the NAAONB twice a year, to review progress, identify new opportunities and to plan new actions – particularly regarding those which will help the NAAONB deliver its National Arts Strategy,
- 5.4.2 Ensure that the AONB voice is heard within ACE policy making by inviting the NAAONB to nominate a representative to join ACE's Rural Stakeholders Group,
- 5.4.3 Engage with AONB structures, with representation on (or observer status) on the NAAONB National Arts and Culture Steering Group.
- 5.4.4 Identify opportunities to develop cultural engagement in partnership with AONBs by:
 - 5.4.4.1 Undertaking a mapping exercise of cultural engagement, funding and infrastructure in AONB areas, and to facilitate a strategic conversation with Arts Council Area Teams where opportunities are identified,

- 5.4.4.2 Creating a baseline of ACE funded AONB activity to identify good practice and to share this across the AONB family –potentially as an online publication,
- 5.4.4.3 Conducting strategic dialogue with the NAAONB about how the Arts Council’s new delivery plan commitments might present opportunities for AONBs, with reference to ACE priority places.
- 5.4.5 Help build capacity in AONBs by:
 - 5.4.5.1 Supporting AONBs to identify opportunities to increase cultural engagement within their areas (building on above) and how to access resources to support this:
 - 5.4.5.2 Providing a funding surgery at AONB annual conference,
 - 5.4.5.3 Facilitating engagement with Arts Council art form and other specialist teams to help develop thinking behind NAAONB National Creative Projects Programme or other potential artistic commissions,
 - 5.4.5.4. Providing point of contact for NAAONB to discuss applications for funding to the Arts Council¹.

6. Action Plan

Following completion of this MoU, ACE and NAAONB will draw up an action plan in line with the shared Vision, Aims and Principles outlined above and both organisations’ strategic planning processes. This action plan will progress the recommendations stated in the Art and Landscape Strategy. It shall be attached as an Appendix to this MoU and should be considered an integral part of it.

- 6.1 This MOU will be in place from the date inserted at the top of it until 31 March 2025.
- 6.2 The Parties will review the MoU no later than 30 September 2023 and annually thereafter.

7. Variation

- 7.1 Amendments to this MoU may be proposed at any time by either Party and will take effect when agreed. Amendments will be expressly agreed in writing and signed by both Parties. Any agreed amendments will be appended to this MoU.

¹ This MOU is not dependent upon funding applications to ACE, although the NAAONB and individual AONBs will of course be encouraged to consider whether applications to ACE for funding may help them deliver their ambitions, including those set out in this MOU.

8. Status

- 8.1 This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MoU.
- 8.2 The Parties agree that they shall enter into this MoU intending to honour all of their obligations and both agree to act in good faith and work collaboratively to achieve the purpose of this MoU.
- 8.3 Nothing in this MoU is intended to, or shall be deemed to, establish any partnership or joint venture between the Parties, constitute either party as the agent of the other party, nor authorise either of the Parties to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other party.
- 8.4 This MoU replaces and supersedes any existing MoUs between the Parties in relation to the project explained above.

9. Dispute Resolution

- 9.1 The Parties will in good faith attempt to negotiate a resolution to any matter of dispute between them. In the event of a difference or dispute about any matter relating to the operation of this MoU which cannot be resolved at working level, the matter will be referred to appropriately senior officers in each organisation. Finally, it will be referred to the ACE Chief Executive and [NAAONB Chief Executive] for resolution.

10. Counterparts

- 10.1 This MoU may be signed in any number of counterparts, each of which when signed shall constitute a duplicate original, but all the counterparts shall together constitute the one MoU.

11. Electronic Signature

- 11.1 The Parties agree that signature of this MoU by electronic signature shall have the same effect as if signed by each party's manuscript signature.

Signed for and on behalf of **THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AREAS OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY:**

Signature:

Name: Philip Hygate

Position: Chair

Signed for and on behalf of **THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND:**

Signature:

Name: Sir Nick Serota

Position: Chair

Annex 1

The Action Plan

