

Lincolnshire Wolds
Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty

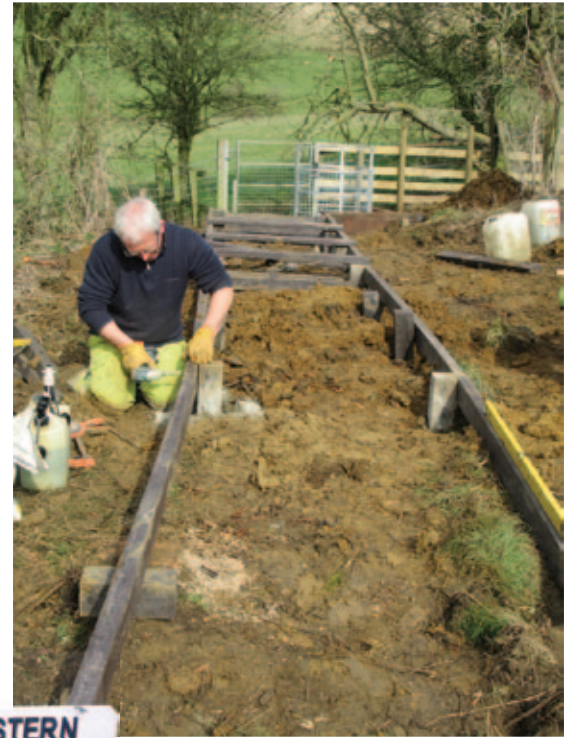
ANNUAL REVIEW
2022 - 2023



Key Highlights

2022-2023 The Best Bits

- We helped more people access and enjoy the Wolds by delivering projects via the government's Access For All scheme.
- Finally the opportunity to fully discover and enjoying the special qualities of the AONB, following the relaxation of Covid restrictions, including all partners stepping up to help deliver the first ever five week LWOF.
- A year of celebration and events marking the 50th Anniversary of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was launched.
- The ongoing roll-out of and local interest in the FiPL Programme – very welcomed news on this package of tailored funding for all protected landscapes to help support farmers with projects focused on Climate, Nature, People & Place.



Access improvements on the Viking Way



Eight fingerposts were repaired out of the 72 surveyed.



The JAC launching the start of the 50th Anniversary celebrations in March 2023.

Chairman's Foreword



As we celebrate during 2023, fifty years of the designation of the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with the roll-out of our forthcoming event and activities programme (50 for 50), this e-publication provides a timely precise of just some of the

activities that have taken place to protect and enhance the nationally important Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) during the twelve-month period from 1st April '22 to 31st March '23.

We wish to express our thanks to the core staff of the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service, and the small project teams coordinating the work of the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project and the national Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL) respectively. Personnel as always have been adept at listening and responding to the many challenges facing the living and working landscape of the Lincolnshire Wolds and the often-complex issues surrounding the protection, promotion and management of its special qualities.

As you read through the e-publication it is clear that partnership working and collaboration remains key to the success of delivering positive outcomes for the area. Work typically involves linking with local landowners, community groups, local businesses, and wider

stakeholders and interest groups; helping to promote and further the Lincolnshire Wolds distinctive sense of place for all who live, work and visit this unique landscape. We hope you find the review of interest and please do make contact if you want to find out more, have a future project idea or just want to get more directly involved in the work of the staff and the wider AONB Partnership.

Finally, if you do have any personal stories, experiences or photographs regarding the working history and landscape of the Lincolnshire Wolds at the time of the designation, or subsequent 50 years of the AONB that you think might be of interest and you would be happy to share more widely, we would really love to hear from you. We have also just launched our Have Your Say questionnaire:

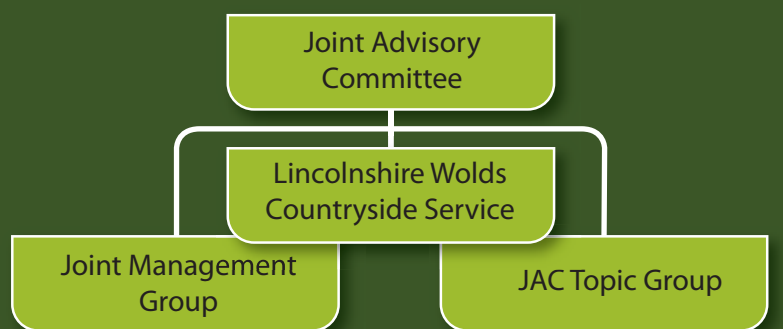
(<https://www.lincswolds.org.uk/our-work/have-your-say>) inviting comments to help aid and inform the next 5 year Management Plan for the Lincolnshire Wolds so please spread the word – we welcome your views.

Cllr Richard Avison - Chair,
Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee

Steve Jack - Manager
Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service

Working in Partnership

The Lincolnshire Wolds has an established Joint Advisory Committee (JAC): a partnership of public, private and voluntary organisations and representatives who have a special interest or working knowledge of the area. The JAC acts as a forum to advise and guide activity on a wide range of issues across the Wolds and is instrumental in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the AONB Management Plan.



Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service - LWCS (AONB Unit) as at 31st March 2023:

- Stephen Jack**
LWCS Manager
- Helen Gamble**
Project Officer
- David Rodger**
Project Officer
- Ruth Craig**
Project Officer (Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project - LCSP)
- Will Bartle**
Monitoring Officer (LCSP)
- Claire Harrison**
Administration and Technical Assistant
- Sarah Weller**
Business Support Assistant
(Farming in Protected Landscapes - FiPL)
- Steve Scoffin**
Project Officer (FiPL)

Protecting the Lincolnshire Wolds

Geodiversity

During 2022-23, work on geodiversity issues has continued, including leading a Geology event for Alford WATCH Group, hosting one site visit by the Ice Age Research Group, engaging with people at Lincolnshire Show, and the review, refresh and reprinting of the Geology of Greater Lincolnshire leaflet.



Biodiversity

Work has continued apace on utilising the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership's Biological Records Centre to review and refresh the environmental data for the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB. Important work that will help us as we further develop the Lincolnshire Wolds Nature Recovery Plan.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

8 projects delivering for climate



- 2 projects where more carbon is stored and/or sequestered
- 2 projects giving better understanding among farmers, land managers and the public as to what different habitats and land uses can deliver for carbon storage and reduced carbon emissions
- 8 projects making the landscape more resilient to climate change



We've been able to do this by **working with a range of partners**

- 25** farmers
- 1** farmer who the Protected Landscape body has not engaged with before
- 1** existing farm cluster supported

Our **Local Assessment Panel** has met 5 times in the second year of the programme. The Panel has included representatives from:

5

- NFU • CLA
- Local Farmers in the Lincolnshire Wolds
- Natural England
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service
- Lincoln University
- Rural Payments Agency
- Anglian Water
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Environmental Consultant

6 projects delivering for people

- 2 projects with more opportunities to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- 1 project to make the landscape more inclusive for visitors

12 projects delivered for nature

- 8945 ha for habitat improvement for biodiversity
- 8945 ha for improved habitat connectivity
- 8 projects delivering an increase in biodiversity
- 12 projects where existing habitat is better managed for nature

8 projects delivering for place

- 8 projects reinforcing or enhancing the quality and character of the landscape
- 5 projects increasing the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, contributing a more thriving local economy

Access for All:

Defra provided additional grant support for capital projects to help improve access within our nationally protected landscapes. Some £47,651 was provided to the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB as part of a three-year funding programme from 2022-2025, with payments in year one and year three. The grant has been used to help with improving access along the Viking Way and to create a plastic matting reinforced grassed area for cars in Claxby village.



Protecting the Lincolnshire Wolds

Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project (LCSP)

Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Trust

Volunteers have been contributing their time to looking after Lincolnshire's precious chalk streams and blow well springs over the last year, with a regular crowd of helpers turning up to the LCSP's Chalk Streams Conservation Group volunteer days.

The LCSP were therefore incredibly pleased to be bought new tools for the group by the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Trust, thanks to funding through the Catchment Based Approach. This has made a real difference!

If you would like to join the group or like to find out more about how you can help our Lincolnshire chalk streams look out for upcoming events on our webpage and get in touch.

<https://lincolnshirechalkstreams.org/events/>



Tackling Climate Change on the River Rase

With thanks to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant funding the LCSP has been busy in the River Rase catchment installing Natural Flood Management (NFM) interventions to help slow down the overland flow into this chalk stream. The LCSP employed the services of an NFM specialist to help work with four fantastic landowners and two contractors to complete the installation of over 30 leaky barriers in place across several channels in the upper catchment along with several field bunds, an attenuation pond and swales. Lincoln University has installed equipment to help monitor these features to learn more about how they work in this landscape.

As part of this Defra funded grant scheme, the LCSP have also been able to engage the community in Market Rasen. Working closely with local Councillor Stephen Bunney, the Rasen Area Environment Group and RiverCare the LCSP organised six well-attended events to help promote and care for the River Rase chalk stream. The funding enabled the purchase of essential tools for the Rasen Area Environment Group.



Visit the LCSP 'Contact Us' page for social media links

Living & Working in the Lincolnshire Wolds

Advisory visits and landowner liaison

48 visits were undertaken to view plans and proposals on site. For all consultative work, the LWCS look at key issues relating to landscape, nature conservation and access, often complementing advice from other key partners, relevant authorities and organisations. During 2022-23, the LWCS commented on one Woodland Management Plan, 11 Felling Licence Applications and four Environmental Impact Assessments (Agriculture) Regulations. The LWCS and the Forestry Commission hosted a Lincolnshire Wolds Woodland Event for farmers and landowners on the opportunities for managing and creating woodland across the Wolds, with carbon credits, adding value to timber and landscape issues all discussed. (see photo)



Wolds Hedgerow Survey

19 volunteers have braved all weathers to survey over four kms of hedges this year. This data can be used to inform landowners about the condition of their hedgerow resource, from which management advice is compiled.



Tree planting guidance and grant funding can be sought through the LWCS.

Farmstead Assessment Project:

We continue to gather information to help identify and record the condition and character of farm buildings in the Wolds. Information is being collected to help inform a future publication to raise awareness of the historic buildings and their vernacular styles and encourage future sensitive restoration as appropriate.

If you own a farm building and would like to know more about its history or wish to find a new use for it, please contact us.



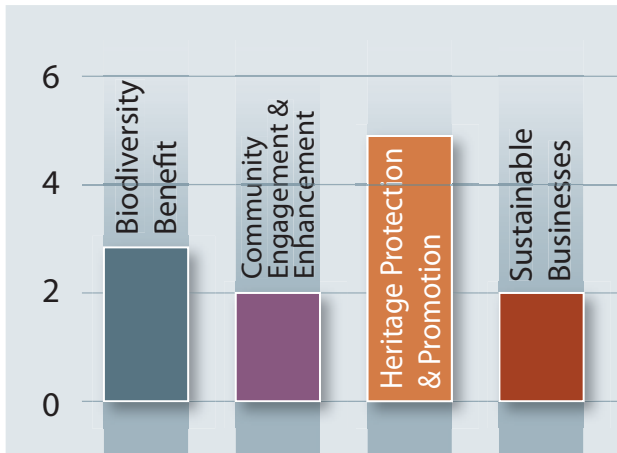
Community

A significant part of the LWCS work is to provide encouragement and support to communities who are exploring ways to help protect, enhance and promote the AONB. Support during 2022-23 has been via telephone, email, and site visits, with 35 meetings undertaken to provide advice and planning, funding and delivering projects.



Living & Working in the Lincolnshire Wolds

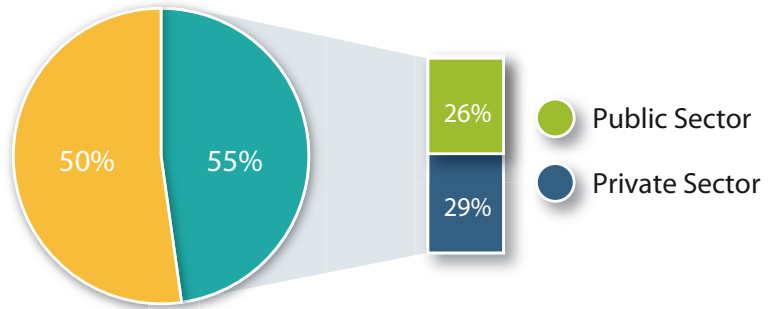
2022-2023 Grant Schemes



As ever, the ongoing contributions that the AONB grant schemes bring to the Wolds are invaluable in maintaining a thriving, high quality landscape and supporting local communities and businesses.

Total cost of work undertaken **£60,361**
 Total grant offered **£27,080**

Grant offered – 45%
 Match funding – 55%



Inside the newly renovated Claxby Village Hall



New planting to create a hedgerow habitat corridor.



Securing and expanding the honey bee population in the Lincolnshire Wolds

Discovering the Lincolnshire Wolds

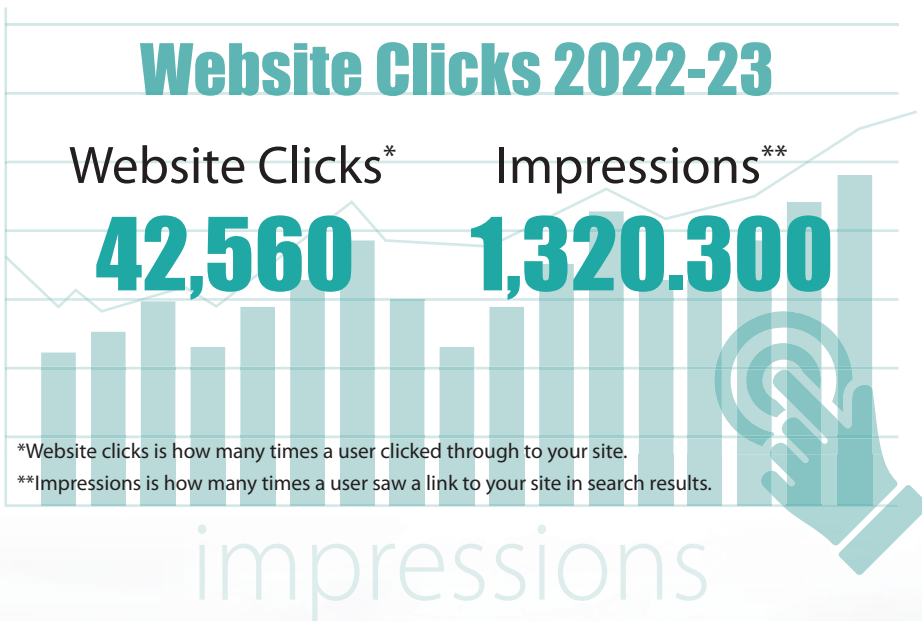
Guided Walks, Events and Shows

Lincolnshire Wolds Outdoor Festival - LWOFF 2022

The LWCS continue to work closely with key partners including East Lindsey (lead partner) and West Lindsey District Councils to help develop and deliver this popular Festival. During 2022 - 2023, the five week LWOFF delivered over 200 events with 5,000 people attending and enjoying a range of outdoor activities across the Lincolnshire Wolds. Stourton Estates hosted an Activity Day to launch to the Festival, with plenty of people enjoying walks, dancing and trailer rides in the beautiful warm spring sunshine. Whilst not all events or leaders stayed dry, there were plenty of activities on offer.



Digital interface



3,415

Followers

1,500

Followers

31% men 69% women

409 people added photos or reviewed the Lincs Wolds AONB on Google

- 85% gave AONB 5 ★★★★★
- 10% gave AONB 4 ★★★★★
- 3% gave AONB 3 ★★★
- 1% gave AONB 2 ★★
- 1% gave AONB 1 ★

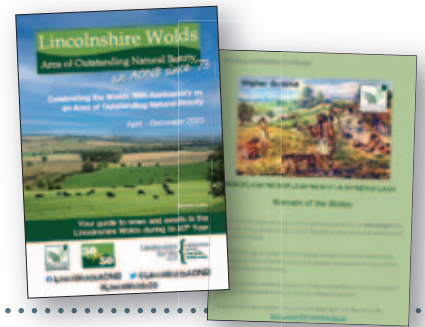


Developing the Lincolnshire Wolds

Publications

The Annual Review 2021-22 was published in a digital format, with further revisions and a reprint of the set of four Horncastle Cycling Routes and the 2023 edition of the Making of the Most of the Lincolnshire Wolds. A special edition of Wolds News, our printed newsletter last seen in 2016, was produced and published in March 2023 helping to showcase past achievements and look ahead to the events planned for 2023 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the designation. The launch took place with the branding of 'an AONB since '73' and '50 for 50' with over fifty events planned to help highlight the special qualities of the Lincolnshire Wolds and its' 50

years of national landscape protection. The LWCS also undertook their spring leaflet drop, with over 26,000 leaflets distributed to libraries, tourism outlets and businesses. Further promotion and networking took place during Lincolnshire's destination management group's leaflet swap.



Strategic Policy and Planning

The LWCS has continued to respond on a wide range of strategic plans and development proposals to help ensure the sustainable development of the Wolds and the protection and enhancement of the AONB's nationally important natural beauty. This has included over 25 responses on a wide range of planning applications and reviews of a number of public rights of way orders. The statutory Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management (2018-23), National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plans provides the framework for our independent observations and subsequent assessment of more substantial planning applications.

Comments have included some concerns on the location and scale of a forthcoming mountain bike park facility near South Willingham; and further formal

objections at the planning hearing on the proposed conventional oil drilling facility at Biscathorpe, with the Inspector's final determination pending.

The LWCS successfully facilitated the AONB Partnership's ongoing review of the current Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan (2018-23). The responses highlighted successes and other key areas of future project delivery in the context of the AONB staffing unit, the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Partnership and the wider peer group comprising the Lincolnshire Wolds Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). The current Management Plan has now been "saved", with the preparation on the next review now proceeding, but delayed as we await the roll-out of new government guidance for nationally protected landscapes.

Undergrounding

Planning continued during 2022-23 for the next round of funding via Northern Powergrid & Western Power Distribution on undergrounding for visual improvement in the AONB.



Partnership in the Lincolnshire Wolds

Local Partnerships

The LWCS works alongside a wide range of organisations, local landowners, community groups and volunteers advising on policy and undertaking activity that furthers the interests of the AONB and wider Wolds character area.



Over the past 12 months positive links with over 30 local partnerships and initiatives have been maintained and developed; these have included ongoing positive engagement with the Love Lincolnshire Wolds tourism group, the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and the new South and East Lincolnshire Climate Action Network (SELCAN).

National Partnerships

The Lincolnshire Wolds is one of 46 AONBs in the UK and we have continued to remain actively engaged in wider collaboration across the family of protected landscapes, especially through very positive links via the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).

The strategic objectives for the NAAONB include:

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

The NAAONB has continued to help to coordinate and further opportunities for the family of AONBs, with activity focused on securing:

- Increased recognition by policymakers of the capabilities of AONB teams as convenors
- Increased recognition by policymakers of the knowledge and expertise in the network
- Increased funding with a 15% uplift in Defra income secured for 2022-23
- Wider advocacy on behalf of AONB Partnerships
- Knowledge sharing and collaboration - including meeting the new challenges the of biodiversity decline and climate change

- Increased capacity for the whole network
- Coordinating new ways of seeing AONBs to reach new audiences and deepen affinity with landscape
- Training and development for the network including coordination of the NAAONB three-day conference at Lancaster with the theme The Nation's Landscapes? - Peoples and Places.

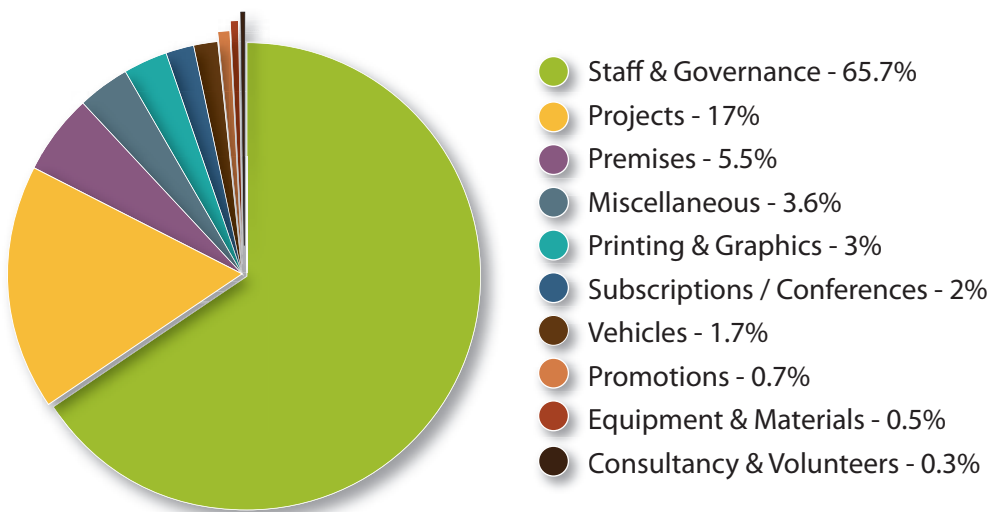
Landscapes
for life
.org.uk

THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
Areas of Outstanding
Natural Beauty



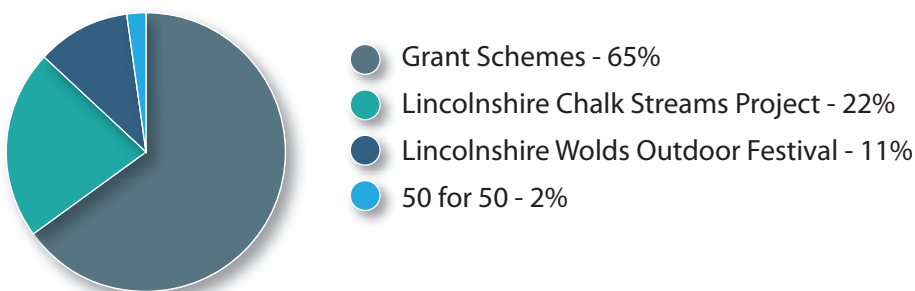
Partnership in the Lincolnshire Wolds

Core expenditure 2022 - 23: £264,255

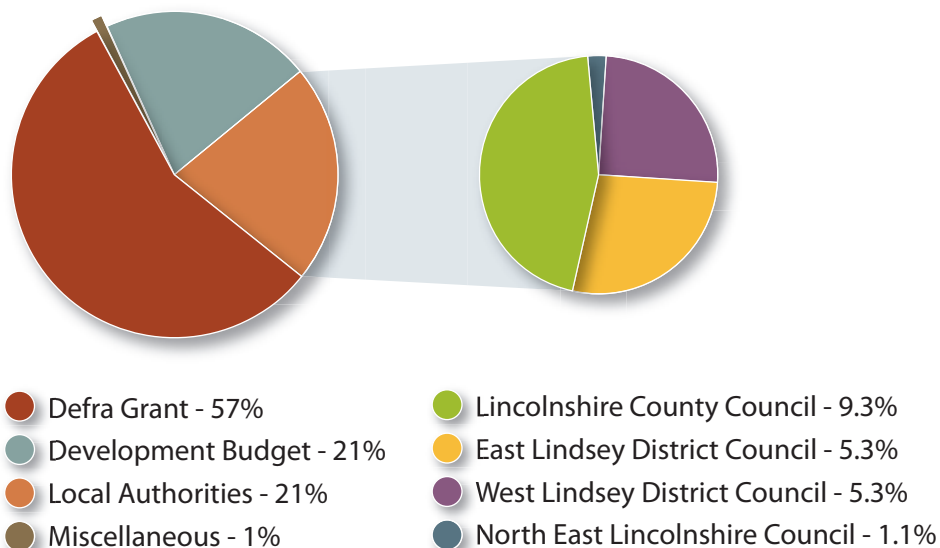


Thank you to our key funders **Defra, Lincolnshire County Council, East Lindsey District Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and West Lindsey District Council**. Support from our local authorities is very much welcomed by the AONB Partnership and ensures we can continue to secure 75% match-funding from Central Government.

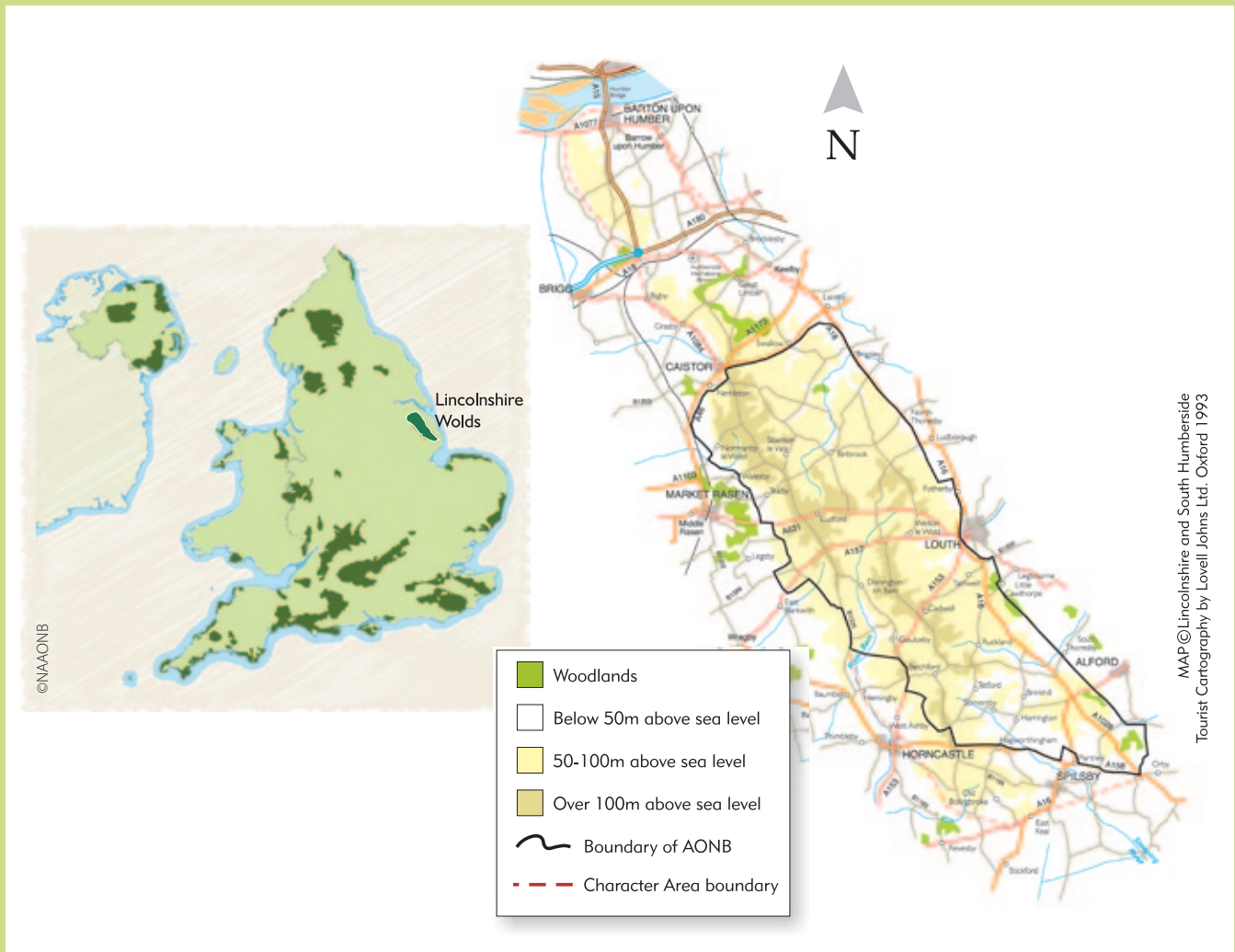
Project expenditure: £45,580



Total Income (Core and Project funding) 2022 - 23: £333,336



Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service

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It is also available on our website www.lincswolds.org.uk