



**National  
Landscapes**  
Association



**Cannock  
Chase**  
National  
Landscape

News Release

**Strictly embargoed until 0.01am Wednesday 22 November 2023**

## **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Renamed National Landscapes**

### **New name and brand underpin ambitious nature targets**

Today, [Wednesday 22 November] all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales are becoming National Landscapes, including Cannock Chase. The new name reflects their national importance; the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that they do.

This is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscapes' vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing.

National Landscape teams have been at the forefront of delivering natural solutions to the main challenges facing the nation for many years. The new brand underscores their commitment to redoubling their efforts and engaging with a wider audience. In 2019, teams set themselves the most ambitious targets for nature in the sector and continue to work to meet them.

By 2030, National Landscapes aim that, within their boundaries: at least 200,000 hectares of the most valuable natural areas (Sites of Special Scientific Interest or SSSIs), which equates to 1 ¼ times the size of London, will be in favourable condition; 100,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of SSSIs will be created or restored, which is roughly nine times the size of Manchester; and 36,000 hectares of woodland, which is a little smaller than the Isle of Wight, will have been planted or allowed to regenerate. National Landscapes Partnerships will also focus on habitat restoration to ensure the protection of some of our most endangered species and increase their work to help more people to enjoy time spent in beautiful places.

Because of their size and scope, National Landscapes are ideally positioned to address the environmental issues the UK is facing. There are 46 National Landscapes in the UK, covering 14% of England, Wales and Northern Ireland including moorland, farmland, coast, forests, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, a Geopark and International Dark Sky Reserves. They are

the UK's nearby countryside - 66% of people in England (44 million) live within 30 minutes of a National Landscape and at least 170 million people visit them every year.

**Councillor Victoria Wilson, Chair for Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee says:**  
*Cannock Chase is England's smallest mainland National Landscape but is packed full with beautiful scenery, nature and heritage interest. It was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958, and is part of a Worldwide Protected Landscape family that includes our own National Parks. National Landscapes are the landscape designation for the 21st century and beyond.*

**John Watkins, Chief Executive of the National Landscapes Association says:**  
*"For decades, AONB teams have convened powerful partnerships which have placed them at the forefront of the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, but since their initial designation, our country has changed immensely, as have the needs and pressures on the environment and communities. However, we have great ambition as well as the commitment and readiness to care for and protect these important places, whilst also extending a welcome to more people. Our ambitious aims build on AONB teams' long track record of successful delivery for nature and people and we are confident that we will achieve them. National Landscapes are the landscape designation for the 21 Century and beyond."*

**Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England says:**  
*"For decades the AONBs have helped protect the beauty of our finest landscapes. Today though we need so much more from these wonderful places, helping us adapt to climate change, catching carbon, restoring depleted wildlife and encouraging more people outside, at the same time as producing food, sustaining local communities and enhancing historic environments.  
"Modern challenges require new approaches and today marks the beginning of a new phase for our National Landscapes, as they strengthen their existing partnerships, and forge new ones that will secure in perpetuity the huge range of benefits that come from these special places. Big change has taken place during the past 75 years and bigger changes still can be expected during the decades ahead. Uniting the National Landscapes in this way is very welcome and spells immense opportunity and great hope for the future."*

**-ENDS-**

Please find National Landscapes Association [video here](#)

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**Notes to Editors:**

Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership is the body that exists to protect this special place. The partnership is made up of local authorities, interest groups, national agencies and local communities, all of whom are committed to ensuring that Cannock Chase remains a healthy, living landscape for future generations. For further information about Cannock Chase National Landscape visit [www.cannock-chase.co.uk](http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk)

For further information about the AONB Family visit [national-landscapes.org.uk](http://national-landscapes.org.uk)

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 is the Act of the Parliament that provided the framework for the creation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales, and also addressed public rights of way and access to open land. In the immediate wake of the second world war, the nation had the forethought to designate Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as sisters to the NHS – one to look after the nation’s health, the other its nature and wellbeing.

The first AONB to be designated was in 1956, Gower Peninsula, and the last the most recent, designated in 1995, is the Tamar Valley AONB, which spans Devon and Cornwall.

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is an area of countryside in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland, that has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value. Areas are designated in recognition of their national importance by the relevant public body: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency respectively. In place of AONB, Scotland uses the similar national scenic area (NSA) designation.

National Landscapes offer a uniquely integrated perspective in decisions about land use: convening conversations, bringing people together, and enabling a sustainable balance of priorities for nature, climate, people and place.

The National Landscapes Association is the membership organisation representing the UK’s National Landscapes.

National Landscape Partnerships own no land, so their work is delivered by convening strong networks with landowners, farmers and partner organisations, working together to plan projects, and secure funding to deliver them.