

1. **£84,654 invested in AONB projects**

AONB grant panels, made up of representatives of business, community and environmental interests in the two AONBs made awards totalling £84,654 across 40 projects. The funds, that come from DEFRA, planning agreements and donations. Grants will support activity worth well over £250,000 on projects that meet the aspirations for the nationally protected landscapes. Details at:

<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/grants-and-funding/>
<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/grants-and-funding/>

2. **Outstanding Newspapers**

If you have not managed to pick up one (or both) of our fantastic newspapers, packed with information about the AONBs and their project areas, why not look at them online. See:

<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/publications/dedham-vale-and-stour-valley-newspaper/>
<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/publications/aonb-newspaper/>

3. **Constable Country Guide: Thanks to Sponsorship**

Thanks to our terrific sponsors see <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/publications/guide-to-the-aonb/> we have been able to update the terrific Constable Country guide. See it at link above.

4. **Welcomes and a Thank you**

A huge thank you to **Danny Thorrington** who has been with us over the last 6 months as a Volunteer Officer and given exemplary service. He and his work will be much missed by the team but I am delighted to say Danny has secured a paid job in the environment sector he was. Much deserved.

We extend a warm welcome to **Ben Rigby**, from the University of Essex, who will be working mainly on a Marine Conservation Society Cool Seas Project. This is part of his assignment and he will be with us for a total of 60 hours.

Alona Ochert will be joining us after Easter as our new Volunteer Placement over a period of 6 months. She will be supporting with the practical conservation work parties and developing up a project activity.

5. **Walk with us or why not sponsor us?**

The chairman of the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Advisory Committee and the Mayor of Colchester, Cllr Julie Young, will be walking for charity through the Dedham Vale AONB on 22 April. Walk with us or sponsor us-details at:

<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/home/news-and-blogs/mayor-of-colchester-and-aonb-chairman-sponsored-walk/>

6. **National Association for AONBs**

The National Association has been co-ordinating AONB tweeters over recent weeks which has seen #OutstandingHour trending nationally-terrific profile for the AONBs. National Association staff have also been meeting with the DEFRA minister responsible for AONBs, Lord Gardiner, to promote the great work going on in AONBs across the country and the value they are to society in terms of the tourism and rural economies and the contribution they make to our health and well-being.

7. **AONB Boundary Reviews**

Natural England are planning a consultation on proposals to review the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB boundary after the County elections in May. Latest information from Natural England on this process at:

<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/about-us/aonb-boundary-review/>

A survey to understand if there is public support for the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership's aspiration for a boundary review has now closed. 95% of the 352 respondents share the aspiration.

8. **Support for River Stour Enhancement Project**

The Environment Agency have indicated that they will continue their support of the River Stour Enhancement Project. The project is doing great work to improve the environmental conditions of the river and projects to control Non Native Invasive Plant Species. We are currently looking for further sites for river side tree planting following the outstanding success of the 500 trees project. Get in touch if you can help.

9. **Volunteers Continue to excel**

Where would the AONBs be without the dedicated band of people that give up their time and energy to look after the AONBs and the project areas? Look at what the Estuary Wardens have been up to: see

<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/assets/Get-Involved/Volunteering/2016-Coast-Estuary-Wardens-Report.pdf>

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www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org