



Cannock Chase National Landscape

Your essential guide

Welcome to Cannock Chase, a landscape protected for the nation and one of Staffordshire's most popular and cherished assets.

This guide provides an introduction to Cannock Chase, what makes it special, how it is looked after, the benefits it gives to us, and ways to get involved.

You may not realise it, but you are part of a much larger picture and contributing towards the conservation and enhancement of the nation's most important protected landscapes.

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AONBs have changed

In November 2023, all Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in England and Wales were re-named National Landscapes, including Cannock Chase which has become Cannock Chase National Landscape.

The new name reflects our national importance; the vital contribution we all make to protecting the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work we do.

Legally, we remain an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)



What is covered in this guide

What is an AONB?

- The beginnings of UK landscape protection
- Purposes
- Naturally beautiful
- National Landscape – the wider context
- National Landscape facts and figures

Introduction to Cannock Chase

- What makes Cannock Chase special (video)
- Where is it?
- Cannock Chase at a glance

Looking after Cannock Chase

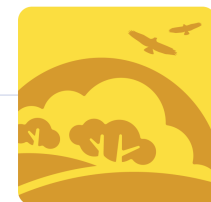
- Mike Dilger video
- The AONB model
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- AONB Management Plan
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Benefits of Cannock Chase

- Snapshot of the value of National Landscapes in England
- Ecosystem services
- Value for money

Appendices

- Ways to get involved
- Visitor centres / hubs
- Visitor information
- Resources
- Find out more

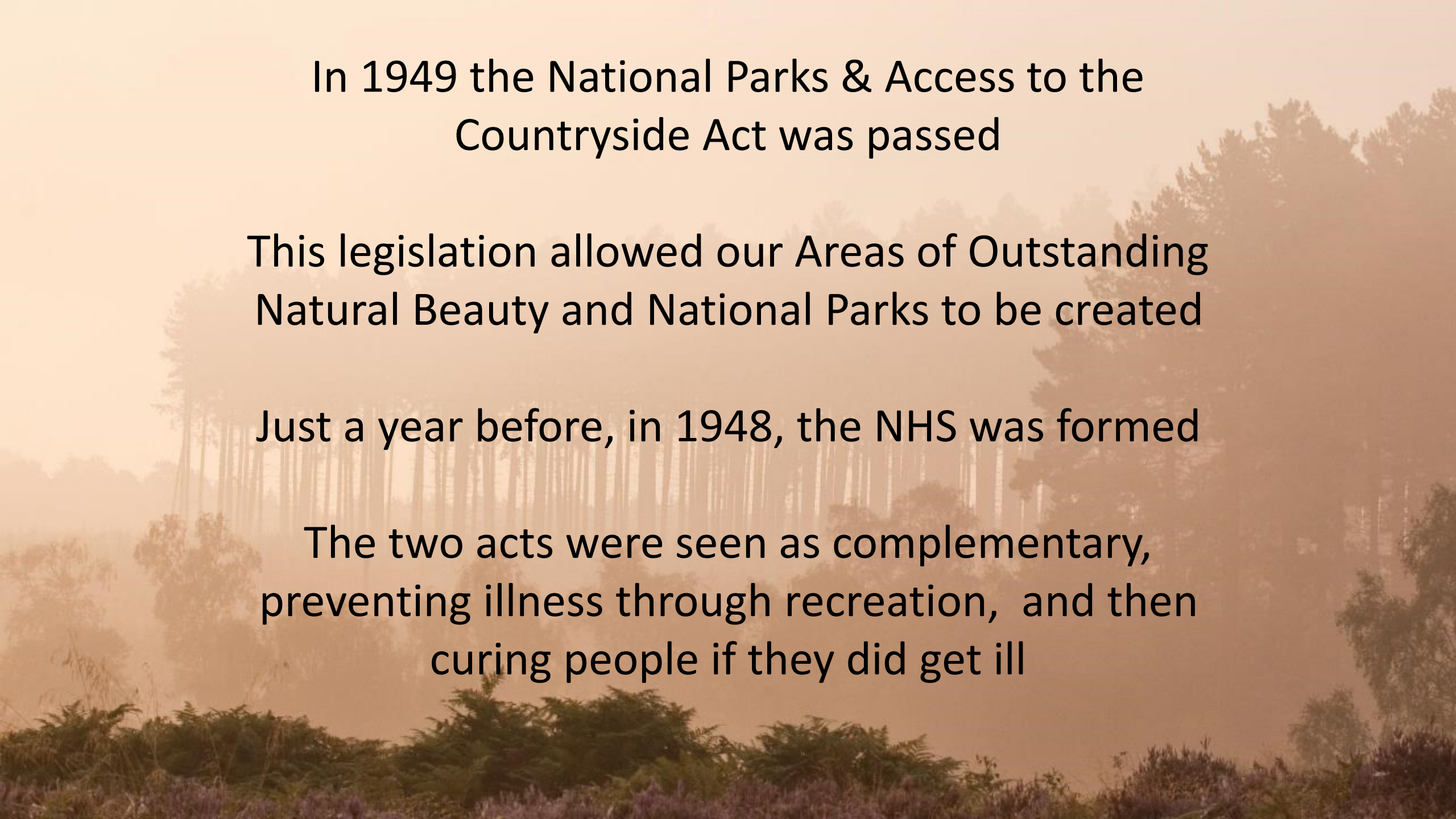


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What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) / National Landscape?



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In 1949 the National Parks & Access to the
Countryside Act was passed

This legislation allowed our Areas of Outstanding
Natural Beauty and National Parks to be created

Just a year before, in 1948, the NHS was formed

The two acts were seen as complementary,
preventing illness through recreation, and then
curing people if they did get ill

What does AONB designation do?

The primary purpose of an AONB is “to conserve and enhance natural beauty”.

Designation gives a formal statutory protection but does not mean that the area is preserved with no development or change being allowed.

In pursuing the primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and of the economic and social needs of the local community.

Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met in an AONB so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.



Naturally beautiful

Natural beauty goes well beyond scenic or aesthetic value.

The natural beauty of an AONB (National Landscape) is to do with the relationship between people and place. It encompasses everything - 'natural' and human - that makes an area distinctive.

It includes geology and landform, climate and soils, flora and fauna. It includes the rich history of human settlement, land use over the centuries, archaeology and buildings, cultural associations, and the people who live in it, past and present.

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National Landscapes – the wider context

National Landscapes and National Parks share the same level of protection in UK law, but the purpose of the two designations differs.

In international terms, National Landscapes are part of a worldwide family of protected landscapes (IUCN Category V) that includes our own National Parks and those of North America and elsewhere.

	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	National Parks
Statutory Purpose	Protect Natural Beauty	Protect Natural Beauty
	Conserve Natural Beauty	Conserve Natural Beauty
		Promote understanding of the area's special qualities
		Promote enjoyment
Governance	Lies mainly within the constituent of local authorities	Independent authorities with their own planning functions
Protected Landscape	Part of the Worldwide Protected Landscape Family	Part of the Worldwide Protected Landscape Family

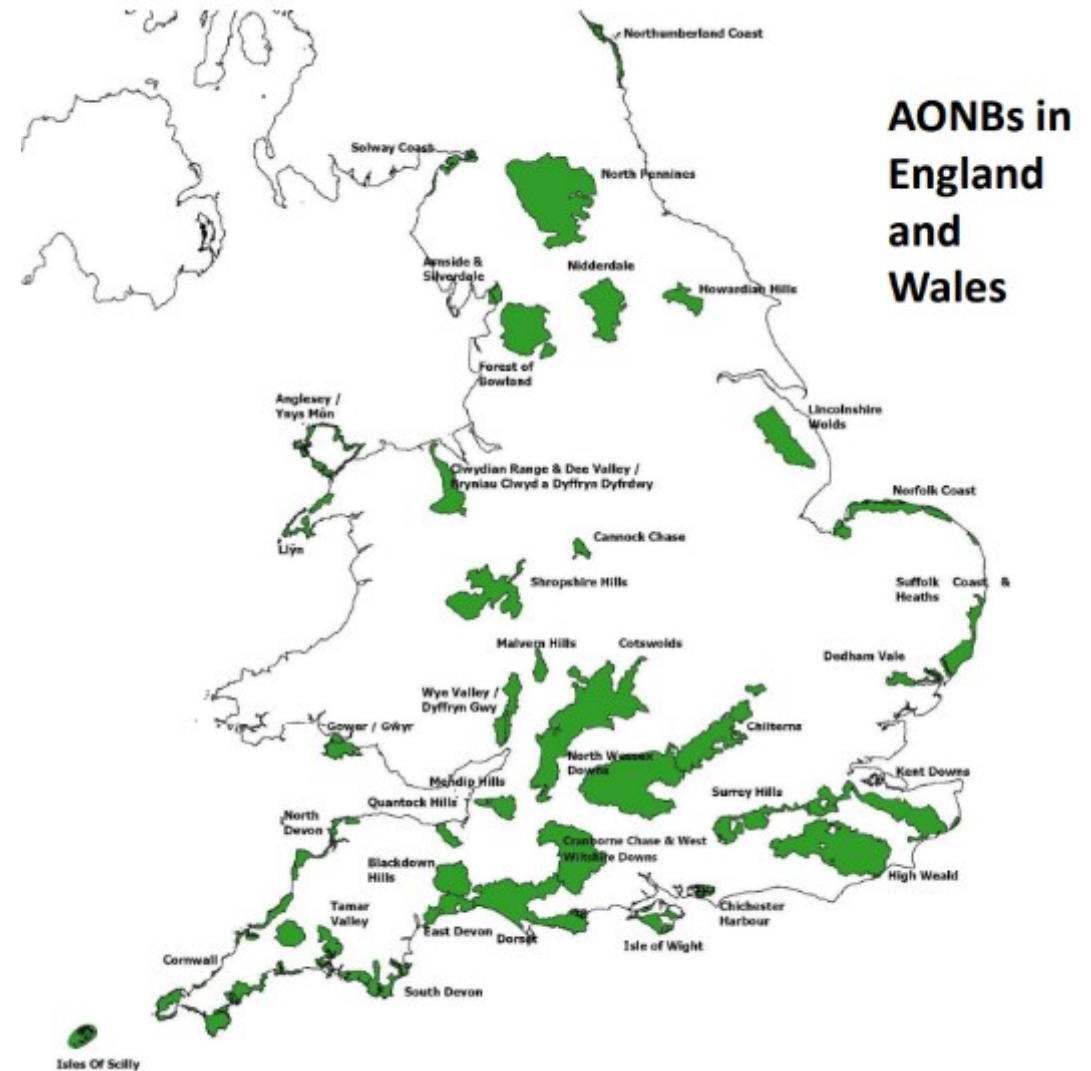
National Landscapes facts and figures

There are 34 National Landscapes in England, and a further 4 in Wales. There are also 8 in Northern Ireland, but these have a different statutory basis.

National Landscapes cover just under 20,000 km² equivalent to around 13% of the land area of England and Wales.

National Landscapes vary greatly in size, from the Isles of Scilly (16 km²) to the Cotswolds (2,038 km²).

Cannock Chase is the smallest mainland National Landscape, at just 69 km² (26 miles²).



Pause and reflect

Think of the last time you were in a protected landscape, whether it was Cannock Chase or somewhere else.

- How did this make you feel?
- What natural beauty could you see?
- Why do you think such places should be protected?



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Introduction to Cannock Chase



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What makes Cannock Chase special

[Click to see video](#)



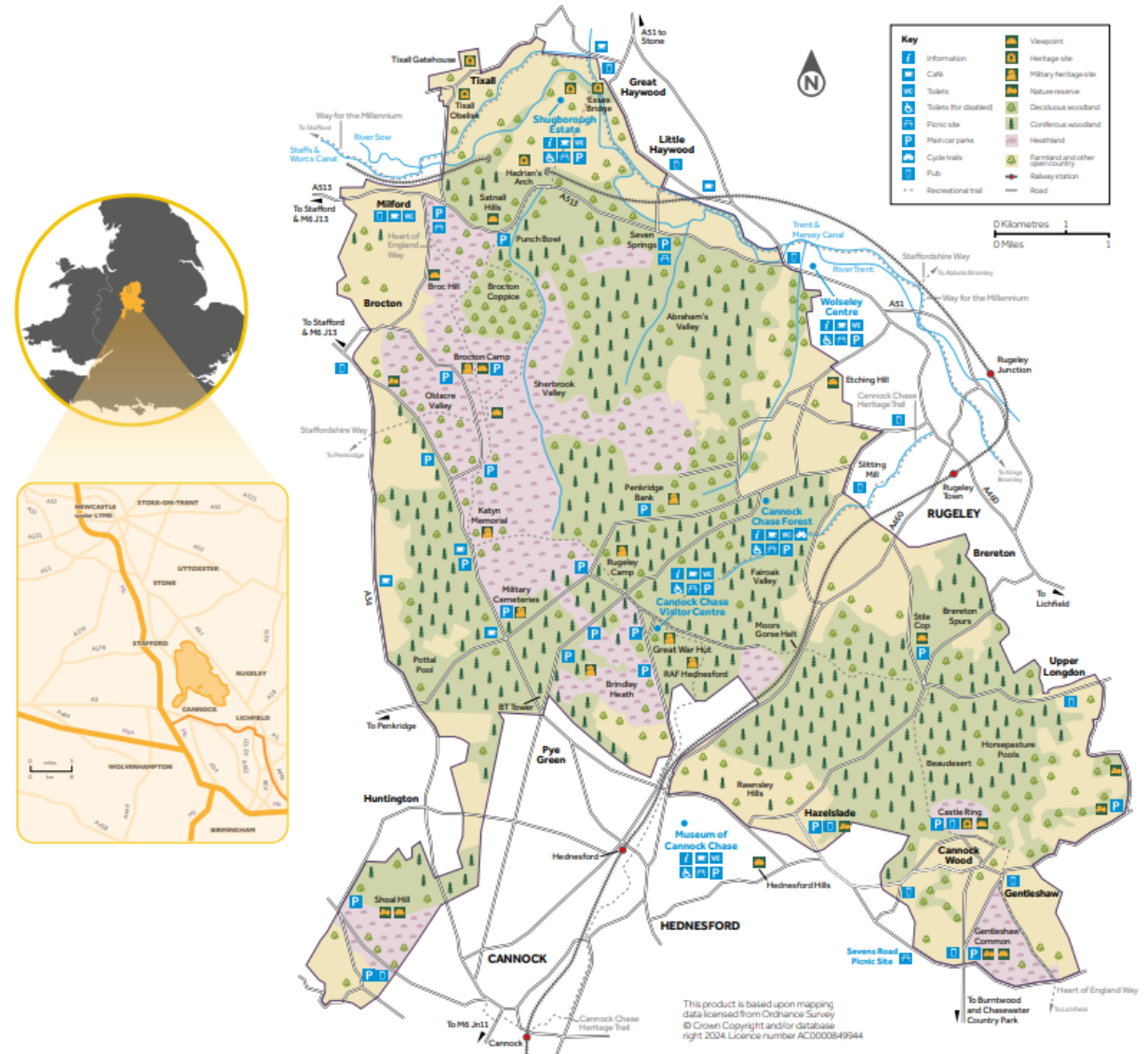
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Where is it?

[Cannock Chase](https://www.cannock-chase.co.uk) lies in southern Staffordshire between Stafford in the north, Rugeley in the east, Cannock in the south, and Penkridge to the west.

The nearest other protected landscapes are the Peak District National Park to the north, and Shropshire Hills National Landscape to the west. The National Forest lies to the east (but is not a designated protected landscape).

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Cannock Chase National Landscape at a glance

Heathland is internationally important for wildlife.

Cannock Chase has the **LARGEST** area surviving in the Midlands



8,700 people live in the National Landscape

2 million people live within 30 kms

63% is forest and heath

24% is farmland

157 kms of public rights of way including sections of Heart of England Way, Staffordshire Way and Way for the Millennium

13 Historic Parklands covering 20% of the National Landscape



2.5 million visitors each year

The highest density of visitor footfall of any UK Protected Landscape



of mining, charcoal and glass and iron making



31% is protected for biodiversity

5 Local Authorities



7 Scheduled Monuments

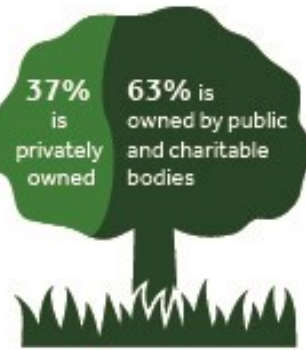


1,000-year old hunting landscape

51% is publicly accessible land

5 sites of importance for geodiversity

Over 1,000 cultural heritage assets including one of the largest Great War training camps in England



37% is privately owned

63% is owned by public and charitable bodies



15 Town and Parish Councils

820,000 tonnes of sand and gravel extracted annually
10% of the West Midlands output



Provides 2,300 million litres of water each day for public use

19,000 tonnes of timber harvested annually from Cannock Chase Forest



1.34 million tonnes of carbon is stored in Cannock Chase's habitats

Visitors spend around £47 million annually in the local economy

64 Listed Buildings

5 Conservation Areas

Mainland England's smallest National Landscape

at just 26 sq miles 69 sq kms

2 Registered Parks and Gardens

Pause and reflect

Take a moment to think about your memories of and feelings for Cannock Chase.

- When did you first visit the Chase, and what was the occasion?
- Do you have a favourite place that you visit time and again?
- Are there particular sights, sounds and smells that you associate with the Chase?
- What does Cannock Chase mean to you?
- Would you miss it if it wasn't there?



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Looking after Cannock Chase



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[Click here](#) to watch a video featuring ecologist Mike Dilger



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The AONB (National Landscape) model of landscape protection

Statutory purpose - to 'conserve and enhance Natural Beauty'

Joint working - the National Landscape Partnership

Vision and strategy - [AONB Management Plan 2019-24](#)

Capacity to act and co-ordinate – The National Landscape Team

No land, assets or powers – delivery through collaboration



Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership

Legal responsibility for Cannock Chase National Landscape lies with Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Lichfield District Council, Stafford Borough Council and South Staffordshire Borough Council.

They work together with non-voting advisors as a Joint Committee to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape in the interest of everyone - local residents, businesses and visitors.

The Committee is supported by an Officer Working Group and Task and Finish Groups for the historic environment, visitor management, landscape and planning, and land management and biodiversity.

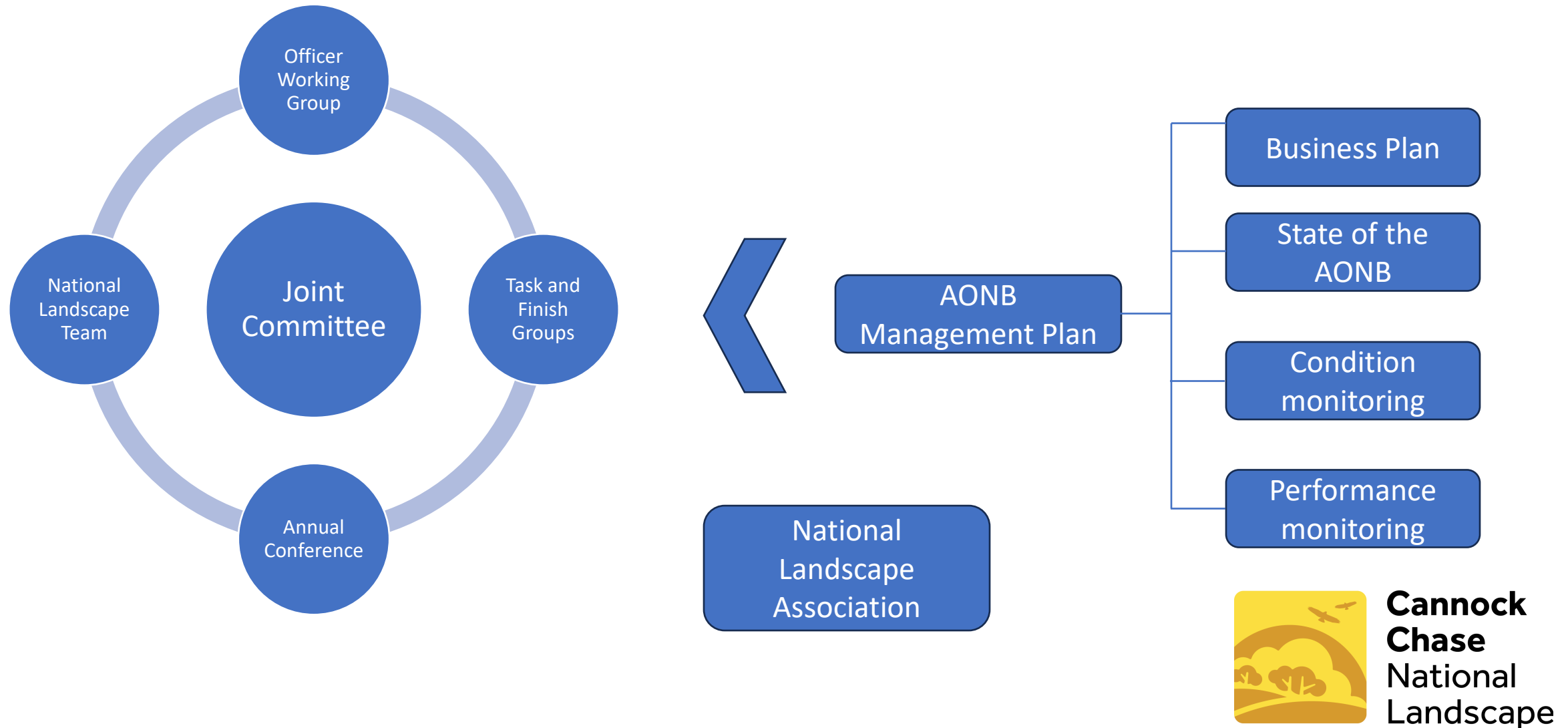
Funding is provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (75%), with the remaining 25% coming from the five local authorities.

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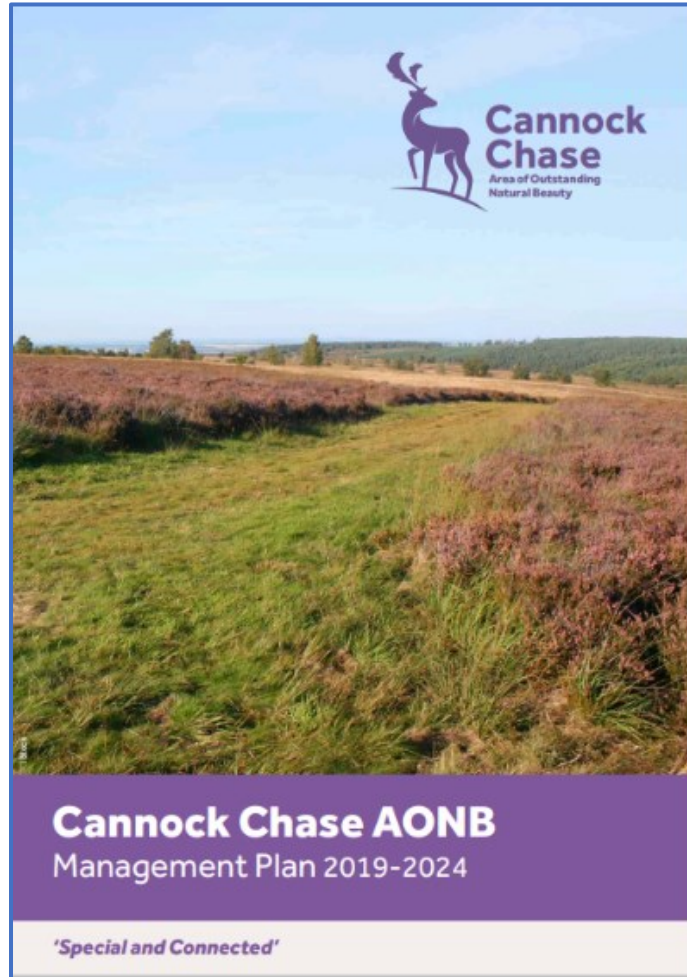


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Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership



Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan



Sets out the approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

A statutory document, that has to be reviewed every five years.

Importantly, it is a plan for Cannock Chase, not the National Landscape Partnership.

Delivery of the plan's vision and objectives relies on collaboration with many different organisations and individuals.

Collaborative working

Working across a large-scale landscape is complex and requires co-operation and coordination involving many stakeholders, across a diversity of land uses and land ownerships, and multiple different designations, legislation and policy.



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The National Landscape Team

Team

Ian Marshall

Team Leader

Richard Harris

Land Management Officer

Sam Hall

Communications Officer

Vacant

Landscape Planning Officer

Claire Geoghegan

Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer

Karen Davies

Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer

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Core functions

- Prepare AONB Management Plan
- Promote the vision
- Advise and facilitate
- Deliver activities
- Access resources
- Involve the community
- Co-ordinate actions of partners
- Provide landscape planning advice
- Monitor and report delivery
- Collaborate with other protected landscapes and the National Landscapes Association



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National Landscapes and planning

Planning powers within the National Landscape rest with the relevant local planning authorities.

The AONB Management Plan is a “material consideration” that should be taken into account when preparing development plans as well as determining planning applications.

The National Landscape Team has published [guidance documents](#) to promote good practice and encourage future building development that is landscape-led and enhances the local character of the National Landscape.

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Land management

The land within Cannock Chase is in a mixture of public and private ownership. The National Landscape is unusual in that a large proportion of the area (over 63%) is owned and managed by just 8 public and charitable bodies, including local authorities, Forestry England and the National Trust.

The National Landscape Partnership guides and supports landowners, but has no powers of control over how land is managed.

During 2021-25, the National Landscape is offering farmers and land managers financial support for projects that support nature recovery, tackle climate change, improve public access and enjoyment, and support nature-friendly and sustainable farm businesses through

[Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme](#)



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Duties for ‘relevant authorities’

[Section 245 \(Protected Landscapes\)](#) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) places a duty on ‘relevant authorities’ to ‘seek to further’ the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. This replaces the previous duty on relevant authorities to ‘have regard to’ their statutory purposes.

The duty is intended to facilitate better outcomes for England’s Protected Landscapes, which are in line with their statutory purposes. The duty does not prevent relevant authorities from undertaking their statutory functions and discharging their legal duties and other responsibilities. The duty is intended to complement these requirements by ensuring that the purposes for which Protected Landscapes are designated for are recognised in reaching decisions and undertaking activities that impact these areas.

Interim guidance on furthering the purposes of Protected Landscapes can be found [here](#).



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Cannock Chase Code

We are all responsible for keeping Cannock Chase special, and everyone can make a difference.

The National Landscape Partnership has put together the [Cannock Chase code](#), focusing on 12 simple ways in which visitors and residents can help care for this special place.

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protect - respect - enjoy



Be a Chase Champion – Follow the Cannock Chase Code

Pause and reflect

How do your actions impact on Cannock Chase National Landscape?

- What decisions or actions have you recently taken that might have caused an impact on the National Landscape?
- What was the impact, and was it positive or negative?
- What might you have done differently to reduce any harmful effects, or to help to positively protect one of this country's finest landscapes?



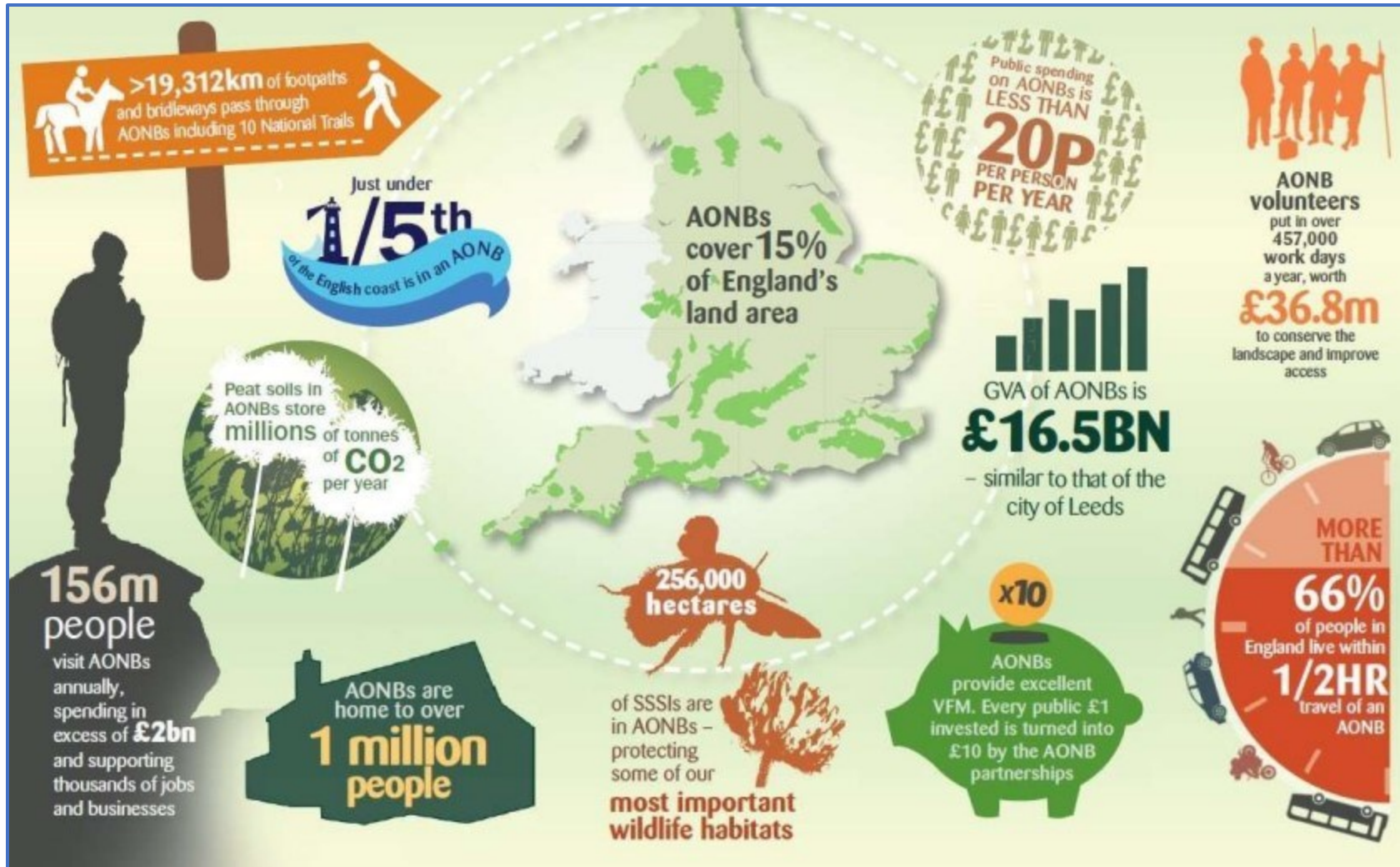
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Benefits of Cannock Chase



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Snapshot of the value of National Landscapes in England



Ecosystem services

Cannock Chase provides people with multiple environmental, social and economic benefits called 'ecosystem services'.

A stronghold for important and threatened wildlife sites and habitats

Supports jobs and the local economy

Improves health and wellbeing

Includes over 1,000 cultural heritage assets

Regulates the climate and helps to reduce surface run-off

Provides food, timber, water, minerals and other natural resources

Adds value to the services and products of local businesses

Inspiration for artists, providing cultural and creative opportunities

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Value for money

The extensive benefits that Cannock Chase National Landscape provides come at a very low cost to Staffordshire residents – just 20p per person per year.

Access to external project funding means that the National Landscape can bring in additional resources to support the delivery of local priorities.

Working collaboratively within the National Landscape enables organisations to co-ordinate their efforts, pool resources, and share expertise – improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

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Pause and reflect

How does Cannock Chase benefit you?

- Can you think of three ways in which Cannock Chase benefits you personally, your organisation or your business?
- Are these benefits financial, physical or emotional?
- Can you put a price on them?



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Appendices



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Ways to get involved

Local authorities	Through local plan policies, decisions, advice and information to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape.
Businesses	Associating products and services with one of England's finest landscapes, and signing up to use our Sense of Place toolkit.
Landowners and land managers	As stewards of nature and heritage on their land; accessing grants to support projects to tackle climate change, nature recovery, improve access and enhance place.
Government agencies	Through the implementation of Government policies, priorities and practices.
Visitors	Being aware of the importance of Cannock Chase and its fragility; following the Cannock Chase Code and helping to keep it special.
Community groups	Getting involved in our Task and Finish Groups; developing projects and activities that support the National Landscape, and accessing grants.
Residents	Taking pride in your National Landscape, and supporting the work of the National Landscape Partnership.
Volunteers	Volunteering with the National Landscape at the Great War Hut, Milford Information point or Fixed Point Photography project, or with one of our partners.



Visitor centres / hubs

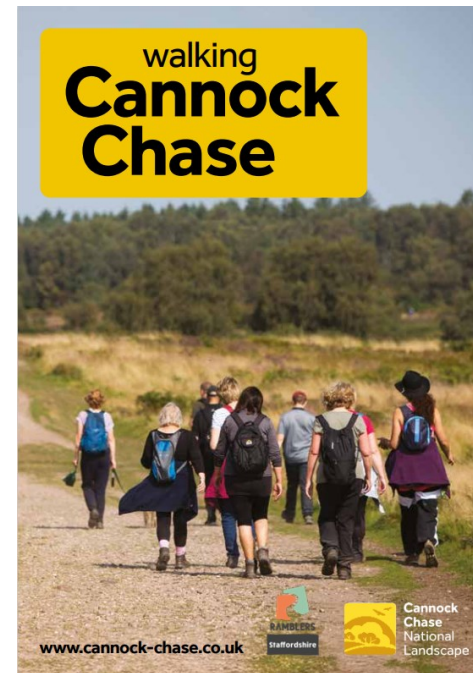
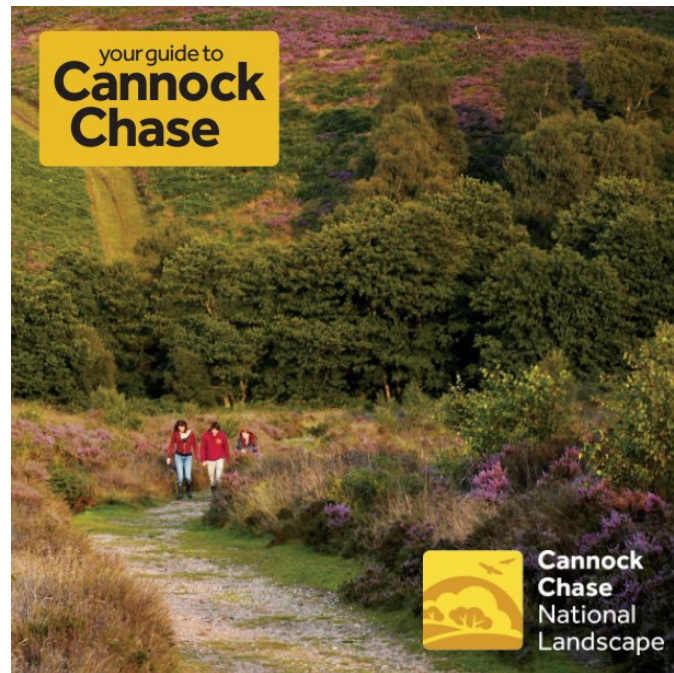
The main visitor centres and hubs on and around the Chase [are here](#).



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Visitor Information

An assortment of leaflets and guides are available in visitor centres



Resources

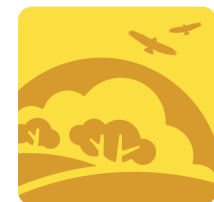
The [Cannock Chase website](#) has a huge variety of publications and resources available.

You can find technical documents, leaflets, the AONB Management Plan, sense of place toolkit and details about our grants.

Our latest [Annual Review](#) is here.

Walking, cycling, horse-riding and things to see can be [found here](#).

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Find out more

[Cannock Chase National Landscape website](#) is the main source of news, information and publications about Cannock Chase and the work of the Partnership.

If you would like to know more about Cannock Chase National Landscape and how you can get involved contact the team at cannockchase@staffordshire.gov.uk

[Sign up](#) to receive e-newsletters to update you on our work.

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