



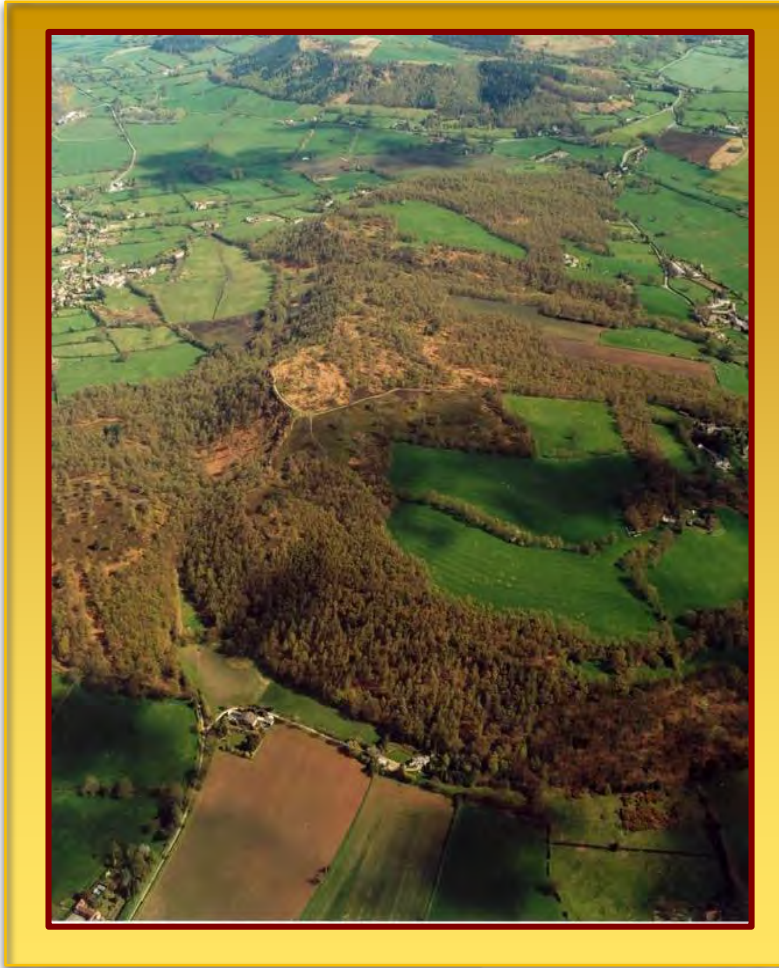
# Sandstone Ridge

Towards a Sustainable Future

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The Sandstone Ridge Trust



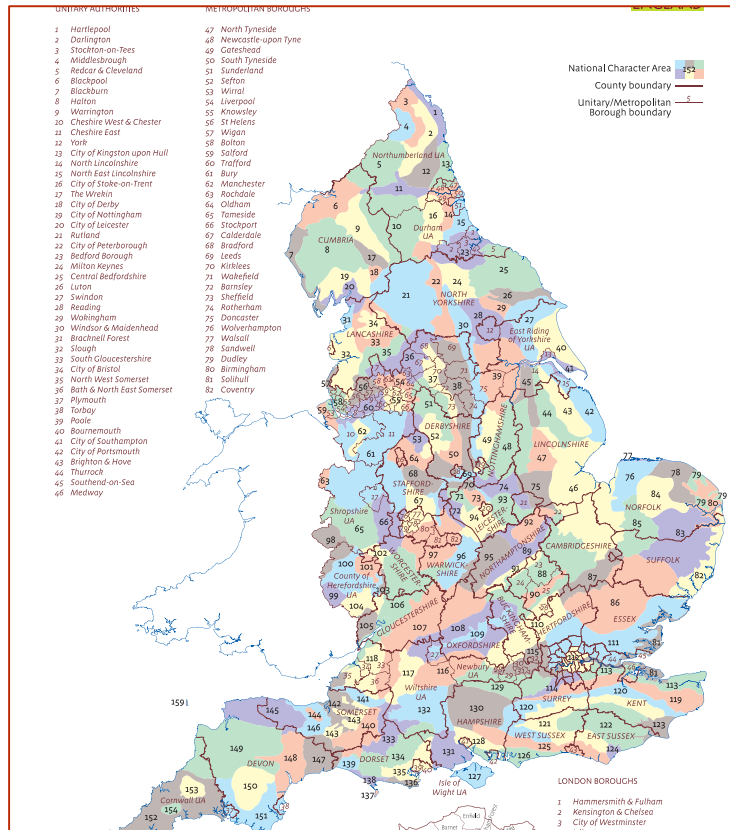
# + Sandstone Ridge



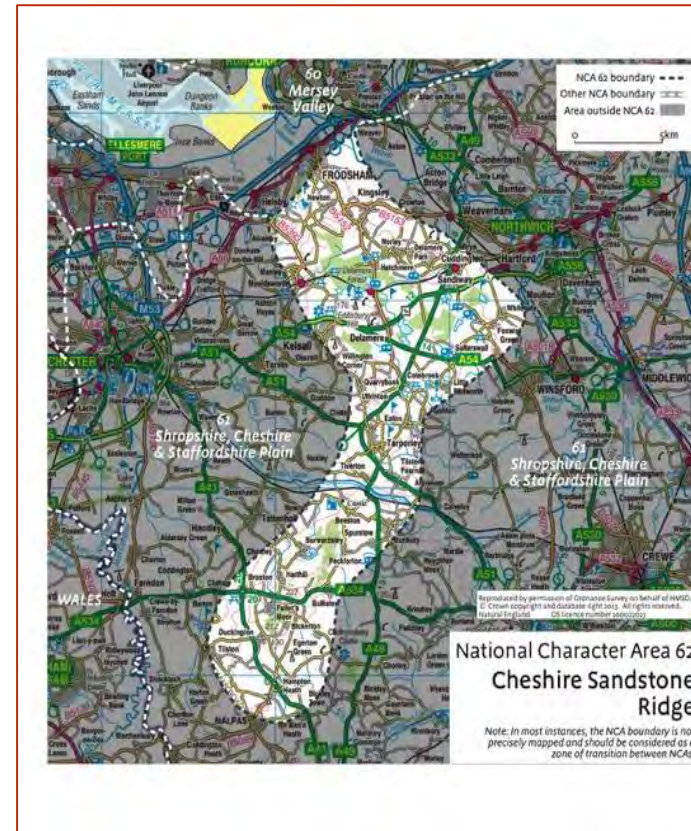
- ◆ Breathtaking, long distance views
- ◆ 200 million year old Triassic sandstone outcrops and cliffs
- ◆ Internationally important wetlands
- ◆ Largest tracts of lowland heath and ancient sessile oak woodland in Cheshire
- ◆ Six prehistoric hillforts
- ◆ A medieval royal forest
- ◆ Sandstone houses, walls and sunken lanes
- ◆ Industrial heritage of copper mining and sandstone quarrying
- ◆ Ancient springs, wells and water sources
- ◆ Vibrant market towns and quiet scattered farms and settlements of medieval origin
- ◆ The most popular middle distance walk in northwest England



# A distinctive landscape – nationally recognised



National Character Areas

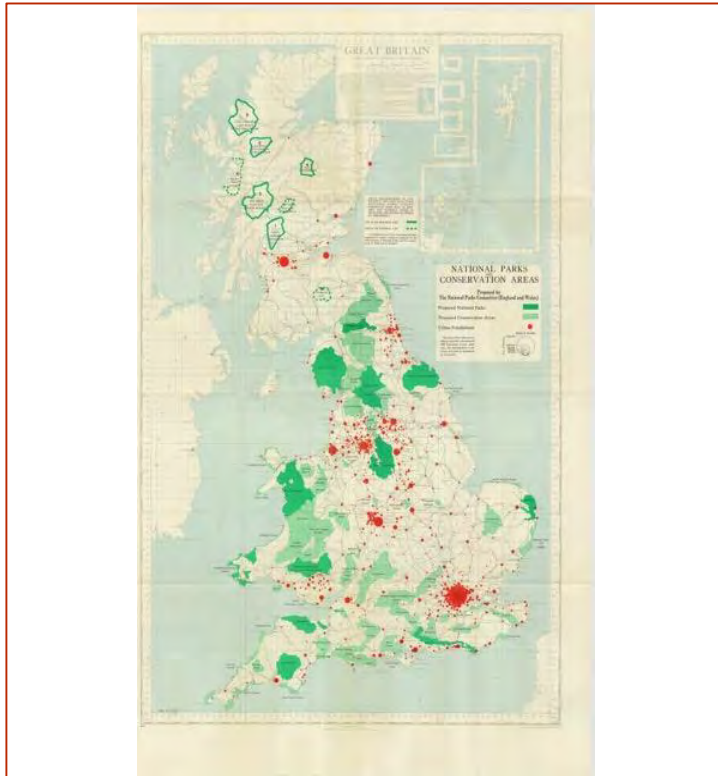


NCA 62 Cheshire Sandstone Ridge

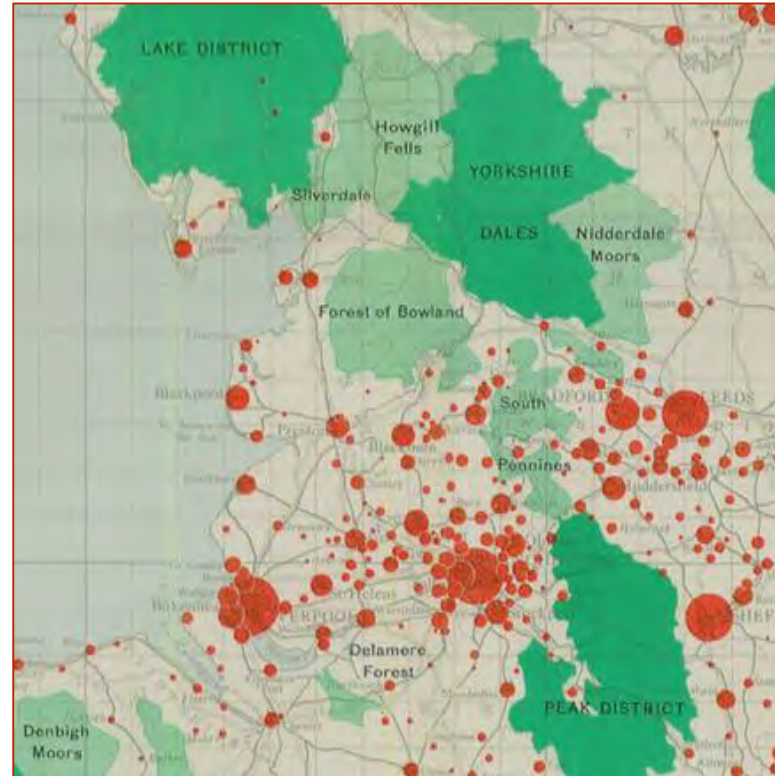




# ...recognised for 70 years




Hobhouse Report, 1947



North West England

# + History of investment

1999-2004	Life EONet Project	<i>Prioritised the Sandstone Ridge</i>	
2005-09	Sandstone Ridge EONet Partnership	<i>Delivering the ecological network on the ground</i>	
2008-12	Habitats & Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme	<i>Hillforts and surrounding habitat management zones</i>	
2011- present	Sandstone Ridge Trust	<i>Safeguarding the legacy and seeking future investments</i>	
2014-16	Ridge, Rocks and Springs	<i>Physical and cultural heritage of quarries and water supplies</i>	



# Habitats and Hillforts LPS



**The Scheme had four inter-related programmes of work:**



- ◆ Habitats of the Ridge (Habitat restoration and conservation – as both an ecological and landscape enhancement measure)
- ◆ Hillforts of the Ridge (Investigation and consolidation work on the hillfort sites, including any adjacent historical features of significance)
- ◆ Access and Interpretation (Access improvements and associated interpretation and education in the hillfort areas and linking the hillforts to the Sandstone Trail)
- ◆ Training and Volunteers (A related training, education and volunteer programme)



**Total Project Costs - £2.2m**



# Habitats and Hillforts LPS



Habitats and Hillforts

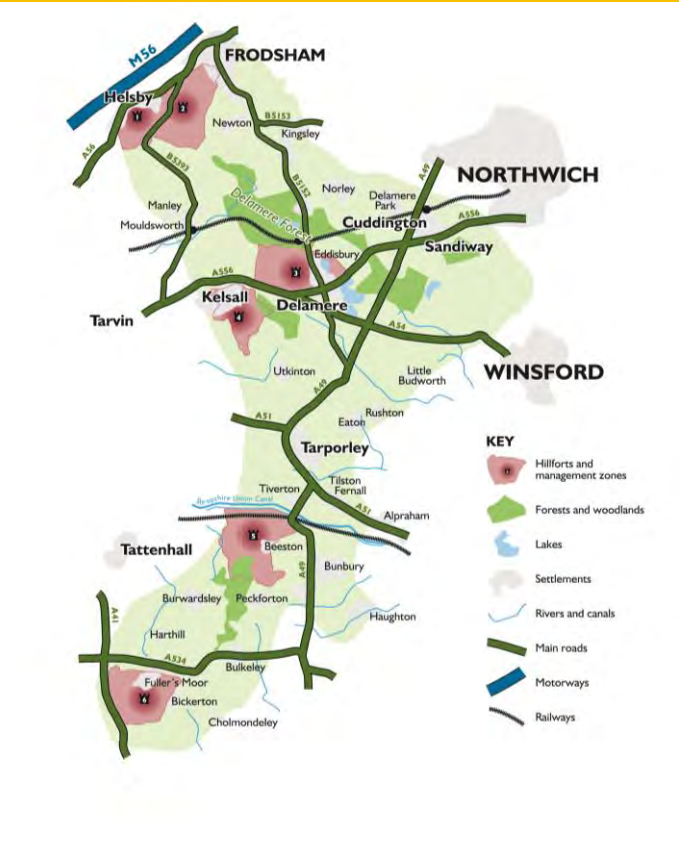
## Outputs:

- ◆ Archaeological investigation and management of 6 Iron Age hill forts
- ◆ 40 hectares of new/restored habitats
- ◆ 1300 metres of restored hedgerows;
- ◆ 700 metres of sandstone walls restored
- ◆ 700 metres of footpath improvements
- ◆ 4.1 kms of permissive access
- ◆ A range of promotional material, including booklets and on-site interpretation panels
- ◆ A range of events & activities including a guided walk programme, reminiscence workshop and community workshop
- ◆ Over 350 training and education days





- ◆ The Sandstone Ridge Trust established, 2011
- ◆ Promoting the conservation and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Ridge.
- ◆ Supporting legacy projects from past investments (Habitats and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme 2008-12)
- ◆ Seeking new funding opportunities





# + Forces for Change



- ◆ Declining public purse
- ◆ Pressures for landscape change
- ◆ Declining investment in natural and cultural heritage
- ◆ Declining rural skills, knowledge and understanding
- ◆ Poor co-ordination and sharing of effort and resources between stakeholders
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Post Brexit

# + Risks to the legacy



- ◆ Unmanaged and unregulated landscape change
- ◆ Decline of special qualities of the Ridge
- ◆ Loss of goodwill from the community
- ◆ Hearts and minds of people diminish
- ◆ Missing out on opportunities for new investment
- ◆ Sphere of influence of the Trust diminishes





# How to respond to change



- ◆ Understand local assets and forces for change
- ◆ Anchor into local and national policy
- ◆ Community support and engagement
- ◆ Strong local partnership, willing to collaborate and work for common goals and pool resources
- ◆ Capacity to engage in economic and social, as well as environmental action
- ◆ An overarching body that directs, coordinates and chivvies



# Strategies for managing change



- ◆ Do nothing (rely on existing mechanisms, eg, planning controls and agri-environment schemes)
- ◆ Task and finish partnerships for specific projects
- ◆ Seek a designation for the area (eg. AONB)
- ◆ Other options – Nature Improvement Areas, Local Economic Partnership, Environmental Co-operative
- ◆ Seek new funding (again !)





# Preferred option – AONB designation



**There are 46 AONBs throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**



- ◆ Tried and tested driver for safeguarding our finest landscapes
- ◆ Provide focus, direction, co-ordinated actions
- ◆ Core unit to get things done
- ◆ 75% DEFRA core funded; 25% local “match”
- ◆ Not an obstacle to development: boost rural economies
- ◆ Not a quick process (3-10 years)
- ◆ In the meantime?

# Investing in partners



# + Investing in people





# + Investing in places





# + Investing in business





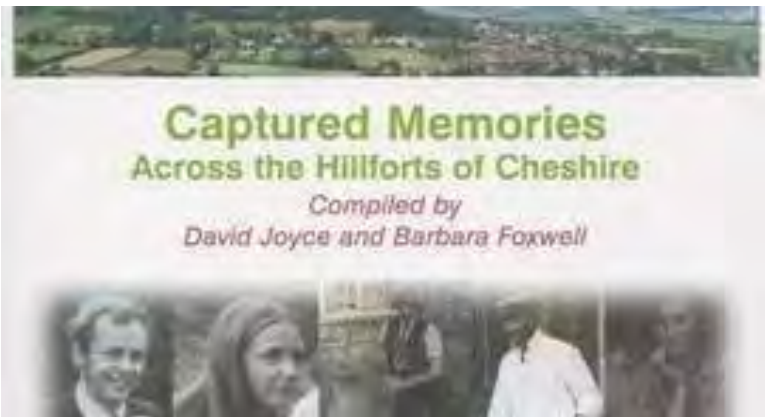
# Investing in arts and culture







# Investing in knowledge and understanding



# + Transition Funding

- ◆ Successful application made to Heritage Lottery Transition Funding
- ◆ £97k for two year project – starting October 2016
- ◆ Additional financial and in-kind support from CWaC
- ◆ Project officer in post December 2016
- ◆ Premises secured in Tattenhall from November 2016
- ◆ Reporting to HLF and the CWaC Rural Growth Board





# + Transition Funding

- ◆ developing current and creating new partnerships
- ◆ engaging local people and communities and facilitating ongoing stakeholder involvement
- ◆ developing a marketing plan and brand for the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge
- ◆ receiving mentoring from an existing AONB and from the National Association of AONBs
- ◆ evaluating the AONB and other delivery models and seeking engagement from stakeholders into the various options to come to a consensus of the favoured way forward for the Sandstone Ridge
- ◆ identifying the skills, knowledge and leadership within the Trust and its partners to achieve the favoured way forward
- ◆ preparing a business plan to deliver the favoured way forward.



# Towards a sustainable future

- ◆ Progress towards a more long-term sustainable structure, organisation and funding basis
- ◆ Develop a new partnership to better protect, manage and conserve the special qualities and natural beauty of the Sandstone Ridge
- ◆ Consider the most appropriate delivery model to address the issues and challenges facing the Ridge
- ◆ Working together as a Sandstone Ridge 'family', including defining and developing a Sandstone Ridge brand





**Thank You**