

The Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located in the south east corner of Northern Ireland, encompasses an area of 570 square kilometres and stretches across the boundaries of three District Councils namely, Newry & Mourne, Banbridge and Down.

The Mourne Mountains were first designated as an AONB in 1966. In 1986, however, the AONB designation was extended to include the Mourne Mountains, Slieve Croob, their farmed foothills and coast. This designation brings a commitment to safeguard the natural beauty, wildlife and historic heritage whilst at the same time promoting its enjoyment by the public.

At the heart of the AONB is the range of mountains which gives the area its name and image. These mountains are unique because their peaks are grouped closely together, stretching 24 kilometres from Newcastle to Rostrevor, "sweeping down to the sea" at both places. Not only one of Ireland's most beautiful mountain ranges, the Mourne Mountains are also probably the best known, thanks to Percy French and his famous song.

However, the AONB extends much beyond this upland core to embrace a wide range of hill, lowland and coastal landscapes. Although relatively small in area, the Mourne AONB combines the stunning scenery of mountains, coast, farmed drumlin and hill country, with a diverse range of habitats.

A range of activities, including farming, forestry, fishing, mineral extraction, water supply, tourism and recreation, give the countryside and its settlements their distinctive character, provide local employment and influence the quality of life for its inhabitants.

The mountains, countryside, coast and settlements of Mourne comprise a diverse resource of immense importance in respect of their landscape, wildlife, built and cultural heritage. It is vital that Mourne is conserved and managed to safeguard these values, traditional industries and natural resources.

MOURNE



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



“ To sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, built and cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well being of Mourne's communities. ”



Mission statement of the Mourne Heritage Trust

