Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

ARNSIDE AND SILVERDALE

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Arnside (in southern Cumbria) and Silverdale (in the Lancaster district of northern Lancashire) is a quiet corner of the north-west, often overlooked by visitors focusing on the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales. Designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1972, it is now a Natural Landscape. The area is mix of low hills, mosslands, woods, fields and small villages.

To the west is Morecambe Bay with its saltmarshes, mudflats and river channels, especially that of the River Kent. There is a big tidal range here and a bore on the Kent's channel. The eastern boundary of the AONB is the A6 road.



From its offices and information centre (open weekdays) in the Old Station Building at Arnside station the AONB's staff of just four ensures the protection of the area from inappropriate development and encourages the public's enjoyment of the natural and built environments.

The map later in this guide shows the dense network of well-signposted footpaths that allow walkers to explore the area. The limestone rocks provide a distinctive habitat for plants not often found elsewhere and the insects, butterflies and moths they host. In other places there are more acidic soils that extend further the botanical diversity of this area. Walkers may also see some of the deer that roam the low hills.



There is a rich bird life here. The RSPB's reserve at Leighton Moss is very well known for its lakes and reedbeds surrounded by deciduous woodlands and fields. However, all the area's woodland walks will display a good range of birdlife. Guide 25 on Birdwatching is a useful read here.

The western shore onto Morecambe Bay, at for example Jenny Brown's Point, allows the bird watcher to get close to the shore birds of Morecambe Bay, particularly towards high tide and during the winter.

The maintenance of the built environment is also important, not only in the villages of Arnside, Silverdale, Beetham, Warton, Yealand Redmayne and Yealand Conyers but also in the farmhouses and cottages across the area. The stone walls need repairing and there is an active programme of volunteers who help out.

Evidence of the old tradition of coppicing trees can be seen widely. The Natural Landscape staff are actively running projects to keep rural skills alive, to encourage visitors and to improve both the natural environment and the historic landscapes.

By car the area is best accessed via the A6. By train the stations at Arnside, Silverdale and Carnforth are good points to start your walk or cycling.

Their website is at: https://www.arnside-silverdale.org.uk







Text – Gordon Clark. Photographs and map courtesy of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB.
Published by Lancaster Civic Society (©2015; revised 2026)
Lancaster Civic Vision is the trading name of Lancaster Civic Society, registered charity no. 258434