

Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership:

Gathering two sides of the hill together

Introduction

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) Partnership is developing a Landscape Partnership Scheme for the Pendle Hill area. This exciting programme of activity looks to re-connect people with their landscape and their past, to safeguard the area's wildlife and heritage and to improve people's access to this popular countryside area. We will do this by providing opportunities for training and volunteering; by supporting research and devising digital interpretation to inspire a new generation about our heritage; by restoring important landscape features, and by working with communities to re-tell the stories of radical Pendle people. This programme will increase pride in this special place and raise aspirations amongst communities, and it will bring in new investment to support the environment and the economy.

Our Vision

A landmark of Pennine Lancashire, this iconic massif will become a focus for bringing town and country people together to understand, restore and celebrate the distinctive landscape and heritage of this much loved and inspiring place.

The Landscape and Heritage of Pendle Hill

At 557m Pendle Hill is very nearly a mountain, and its relative isolation on the edge of the Pennines and the Bowland Fells makes it appear very dominant in the landscape. Pendle Hill acts as a weather vane to many of us, and is a constant backdrop to our lives, yet it has two very different and divided sides. These differences are rooted in its geology – the lighter limestones and shales on the Ribble Valley slopes, and the darker millstone grit and siltstones facing the towns of Colne, Nelson and Burnley. The bedrock has influenced the vegetation and the farming; and this in turn has led to different land ownership patterns and levels of industrial exploitation and development throughout history. This division is compounded by administrative boundaries and long held perceptions about 'the other side' – leading to limited communication or co-ordination across the summit of this imposing hill.

Pendle Hill's landscape may be similar to many other northern hills. It has heather and bog moorland on the summit, criss-crossed with dry stone walls. Lower, lush slopes are grazed by sheep and divided by hedgerows. Small stone villages nestle around streams, farms and mills. However, Pendle Hill's rich and distinctive past of medieval forest, vaccaries and early industry; and its relative physical isolation, which led to it becoming a focus for both religious persecution and inspired radicals, make this hill a very special place for heritage.

Programme Activity

In order to create a cohesive programme of projects across an area of 120sq km, we are proposing the following thematic approach to improve the **environment**, build the **economy**, and provide opportunity for **everyone**. Each theme will include a 'Gathering' project which will be a creative arts activity, weaving together the two sides of the hill, helping to build cohesion, introducing dialogue and creating shared points of view.

Environment projects will include:

1. Repairing the network of dry stone walls and hedgerows that give the landscape its characteristic appearance
2. Surveying and bringing into management our special wildlife sites, and seeking to link these with farmland managed for biodiversity
3. Interpreting the area's important geology and the contribution this has made to the area and its economy
4. Managing the Pendle Hill Fund to support community-led projects focusing on heritage, landscape and the environment, and generating income to the fund via Visitor Giving and sponsorship
5. Gathering projects

Economy projects will include:

6. Developing visitor hubs at established 'honeypots' using digital technology and traditional methods to inform people, to reduce pressure on over used sites and to reduce conflicts. We will also improve access for all by promoting key routes in order to disperse visitor pressure and by providing routes for all abilities
7. Offering apprenticeships for young people in traditional rural and heritage skills
8. Researching the value of Pendle Hill's 'ecosystem services' and its contribution to people's health and wellbeing
9. Gathering projects

Projects providing opportunity for **Everyone** will include:

10. Supporting a series of local history group surveys into village-wide house histories to create a digital archive
11. Delivering community archaeology projects and heritage placements: investigating the Iron Age hill fort at Portfield and the secrets of the Sabden Valley, and using digital techniques to widen understanding and interest
12. Creating a series of projects researching and interpreting the Pendle Radicals: free thinkers and non conformists
13. Developing training, education and outreach work (particularly focussing on urban, disadvantaged communities) to introduce new audiences to the area, building understanding and confidence to enable people to access and enjoy the countryside
14. Managing the programme's interpretation materials based on the area's 'sense of place' and a strong brand
15. Gathering projects

Making it Happen

The programme will be managed by the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Board made up of local organisations, community and business representatives. The Board will employ a small project team who will be based in the project area and work with the various programme partners to deliver the activity. The programme is currently estimated to cost £2.4m and will require a grant of £1.8m from Heritage Lottery Fund which we bid for in June 2015. If that is successful the programme enters a development stage, and then delivery will begin in 2018 and run for four years. The remaining £600,000 will be raised from partners including the AONB Partnership, statutory bodies like Natural England and Environment Agency, European Rural Development Programme funding, Landfill tax funds, local businesses and other grants.

Programme Outputs

Throughout the four year delivery programme the Pendle Hill Partnership will:

- Create at least five full time equivalent jobs
- Create more than 20 apprenticeship placements for local young people
- Provide annual heritage placements for university students
- Deliver an annual programme of creative engagement including artists in residence, community and public art
- Restore over 3km of hedgerows and dry stone walls, particularly where these are important landscape features
- Bring at least 10 biological heritage sites into positive management
- Provide outreach experiences in the countryside for more than 1000 people
- Work with at least 20 local schools by providing curriculum-linked and engaging activity in the outdoors
- Improve 4 visitor facilities and provide on-line or app-based digital interactive information about the area
- Improve or upgrade over 5km of public rights of way
- Provide at least one new Tramper for use in the area
- Carry out important archaeological surveys and digs
- Work with at least 5 local history groups and provide them with training and support
- Allocate over £80,000 to community-led heritage and environmental improvement schemes
- Attract over £2m worth of investment

**For further information please contact Cathy Hopley or Elliott Lorimer
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