

Annual Report



FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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Cover Image

Beacon Fell from Parlick © Forest of Bowland AONB

View from the Chair

Since being made Chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee in November 2021, I've very much enjoyed getting to know more about the wider Forest of Bowland area and the various AONB programmes, projects and activities being delivered by the AONB Unit and partner organisations.



County Councillor Shaun Turner

Chairman of the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee

ow that the effects of the pandemic are becoming fewer, happily, we've seen the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership back up to full speed with its myriad activities and projects, from a 'New to Walking Festival' to a community archaeology excavation and from support for trainee apprenticeships to the award-winning 'People Enjoying Nature' project. This outstanding programme has another six months to run, with a busy summer planned to deliver even more!

We mustn't forget the impact the pandemic also had on local communities and businesses in the area, with tourism businesses being particularly badly affected I was therefore delighted to learn of the joint work between Lancashire County Council's Economic Development team and the AONB Unit to promote and support sustainable tourism businesses in Bowland through the new 'Eco-Escapes' campaign. This has the makings of a very exciting initiative and I look forward to seeing how it develops through 2022.

The Defra-supported 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme is also now in full swing, with the team and the Local Assessment Panel working extremely hard to develop projects to application stage and allocate programme funds. We've seen the fruits of these labours with farmers and land managers supported and now delivering projects, which encourage nature recovery; address climate change; improve countryside access and support nature-friendly farm businesses. Additionally, with funds from National Grid, the Quernmore and Conder Valley Landscape Enhancement Initiative has also been able to support farmers to restore and manage traditional boundaries close to the NG powerline in the north-west corner of the AONB.

Critical programmes to address the twin emergencies of climate change and biodiversity declines have continued apace with further habitat restoration of peatland and upland hay meadows. These are two of our most precious and vulnerable habitats in the Forest of

Bowland and the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund (created in response to the pandemic) as well as the EU LIFE+ programme have been able to support this vital work.

Finally, I can't fail to mention all the great work by our AONB partner organisations including Wyre Coast and Countryside Service, Champion Bowland, Ribble Rivers Trust, RSPB, In Situ and Friends of Bowland. So, I urge you to take a moment (perhaps with brew in hand) to browse through this Annual Report and reflect on another successful year for our AONB Partnership.

J. e -

County Councillor Shaun Turner

An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage

Highlights for 2021 – 22





The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL) opened in July 2021 and is part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan. Through the Programme, farmers and land managers can be supported to carry out projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape or support nature-friendly sustainable farm businesses. The programme is now in it's second year and projects can be viewed at:

www.forestofbowland.com/farming-protected-landscapes

Contact: bowlandfipl@lancashire.gov.uk



Bowland is again a stronghold of the hen harrier population, with 12 nests across three estates in 2021 (over a third of England's total). With funding from Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, RSPB improved habitat for curlew on 20 farms in Bowland, and 40 volunteers surveyed waders on 47 farms, recording 157 pairs of curlew. 2021 was a year of staff changes too, with Sonja Ludwig joining in place of James Bray and Philip Miller as GRCF Curlew Project Officer. 70 farm advisory visits were undertaken.

Contact: jeremy.sutton@rspb.org.uk



Dry stone walling saw a resurgence post pandemic as many people re-evaluated their work-life balance or career aspirations. The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership project had an inundation of volunteers wanting to learn how to wall, training up 23 at Beginners level and 10 at Level 1. In total 121m of wall was restored, at Martholme Greenway and at Pendleside. The PHLP even ran a supervised 'week of walling' to enable 14 people to practice their new-found skills.

Contact: cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk



As part of the Health and Environment Action Lancashire (HEAL) project, the Wyre Rivers Trust has planted 1550 trees, installed two livestock troughs and 749m of stock proof fencing at Huds Brook Farm near Calder Vale. The planting was completed by 12 brilliant volunteers and follows an unnamed brook that runs into the Calder. The benefits will include carbon storage, river shading, increased biodiversity for both aquatic and terrestrial life, bank stabilization and the creation of a riparian buffer, improving local water quality.

Contact: sam.marshall@wyreriverstrust.org

An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage



DEFRA's Green Recovery Challenge Fund Meadow Makers project in partnership with Plantlife carried out 40ha of meadows restoration work across 14 sites in 2021-2022, with a grant of over £54,000. Over 11,000 plug plants were grown and planted by volunteers. A variety of public events, including National Meadows Day celebrations, enabled us to engage with over 4,500 people in person, and over 30,000 through social media and our website. Post restoration surveys showed an increased diversity of meadow flora at all sites.

Contact: carol.edmondson@lancashire.gov.uk



A £280.000 Nature for Climate Peatland Discovery Grant was secured for surveys of up to 5000ha of land across the AONB by 2023. Work will include Citizen Science monitoring. People's Postcode Lottery funding enabled the AONB to commission survey and restoration plans for four upland peatland sites between July and September 2021. 17.3ha of eroding peat on Holme House Fell was subject to restoration work thanks to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund. Pennine Peat Life restoration continues a further 132ha.

Contact: dominic.hartley@lancashire.gov.uk



Working with fantastic Ribble catchment farmers, the Ribble Rivers Trust have delivered projects that help to improve water quality, habitats and habitat connectivity, climate change, flood management and farm business sustainability. Interventions have included slurry store roofing, planting hedgerows across diffuse water pollution pathways to slow the flow of run off and establishing woodland buffer zones alongside watercourses, providing shade for invertebrates and fish, and increasing habitat connectivity.

Contact: admin@ribbletrust.com



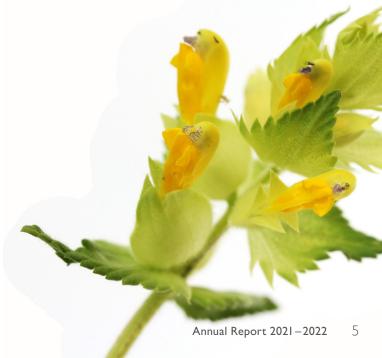
In April 2021 the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership was awarded a grant of almost £200,000 as part of National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative. Bowland's three -year programme focuses on traditional boundary restoration and aims to mitigate the visual impact of National Grid's electricity transmission lines, which skirt the boundary of the AONB around Quernmore and the Conder valley. Over one and a half kilometres of hedgerow and 34m of dry stone wall were restored during the first year of the scheme.

Contact: sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk



Last year, Environment Agency received additional funding from Defra to increase our regulation of farms, focusing on protected areas. In the Forest of Bowland, we targeted the River Loud Catchment because it suffers from diffuse agricultural pollution. We inspected 15 farms and supported farmers to address a range of issues, including leaking slurry stores and silage clamps. We also work in partnership with other organisations, like Ribble Rivers Trust, who provide advice to farmers and help them secure funding to improve their environmental performance.

Contact: helen.dix@environment-agency.gov.uk



An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage



Catchment-spanning programme benefits people and the environment

Ribble Life Together may have recently drawn to a close, but the impact and legacy of this award-winning, eight- year programme will be felt for a long time to come.

ed by Ribble Rivers Trust, Ribble Life
Together brought together over 20
diverse partner organisations, delivering
significant improvements worth around £5
million to the Ribble Catchment, benefiting
both people and the environment.

£3.2million of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Environment Agency, Natural Course, Woodland Trust, Lancashire Environment Fund and others was supplemented by volunteering and support 'in kind'.

Projects included planting over 24 hectares of woodland across 30 sites, delivering 15 wetland projects, building 14 fish passes, unlocking 184km of river habitat and improving access and interpretation; along with installing sensory art across the catchment and investing in the use of data and evidence.

The scale is difficult to summarise but, as an example, the programme stabilised over two and half square miles of peat at Cam End Common, improving water quality and habitat and reducing flood risk downstream.

Projects within the Forest of Bowland AONB included downloadable circular walks in Barrowford, Chipping and Slaidburn; a fish pass and carved bench in Sabden and a 360-degree panorama video of new woodland near Tosside.

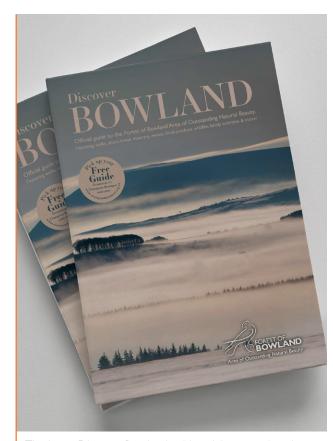
Equally important have been the thousands of people engaged through the project - from school children to farmers and land managers; people with the power to change behaviours and become stewards of the environment in the future. Ribble Rivers Trust employed apprentices for the first time, providing opportunities for people to take their first steps in a career of river conservation. The programme also benefited from a staggering 13,622 hours of volunteer time, with new volunteers carrying out citizen science, as well as conservation volunteering such as tree planting and river clean ups.

In addition to the physical improvements to the catchment, the funding and support received by the programme allowed Ribble Rivers Trust to try new engagement methods – including arts projects, river walks, 360-degree photos and a podcast – as well as trying new methodologies for capital projects, to learn and develop as an organisation.

Several new projects have been generated as a result of this work, which demonstrates the real legacy for Ribble Life Together.

Ribble Rivers Trust admin@ribbletrust.com

Resilient and Sustainable Communities



The latest Discover Bowland guide celebrates a decade of peat restoration on the Bowland fells and 10 years of wildflower regeneration in the hay meadows.

Incorporating six walking routes on Pendle Hill and highlighting the ultimate Bowland itinerary, packed with ideas to make the most of a holiday in the area.

Highlighting the legacy of Pendle's remarkable radical women, as well as celebrating Bowland's food heroes including our very own Pendle Peat Pie!

The guide is available in print or digital format: www.forestofbowland.com/discover-bowland-guide-2022

Contact: hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk



As Covid restrictions eased, the Wyre Coast & Countryside staff and volunteer team were able to continue their public access and habitat management work, including footpath repairs, tree planting, leaky dam installation and more. The regular nature of the activities enables volunteers to make good use of their life skills and to enhance practical skills and knowledge. Working with volunteers to contribute to the management of Lancashire's countryside also helps to support the health and wellbeing of the individuals taking part.

Contact: countrysideservice@wyre.gov.uk



As tourism started to recover from the pandemic, Marketing Lancashire asked visitors, through a new *Rediscover Lancashire* campaign aligned with the Visit England *Escape the Everyday* campaign, to rediscover the delights of the county. The campaign, driving visitors to bespoke pages on visitlancashire. com, ran during June and July 2021 and achieved 5.9million page impressions. Bowland Wild Boar Park was part of the campaign, which included film and photography at the attraction. Forest of Bowland products and events on visitlancashire.com received over £724k page views.

Contact: hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk

Highlights for 2021 – 22



Resilient and Sustainable Communities





On 8th November the AONB Partnership hosted its first face to face Sustainable Tourism Forum for almost two years. Held at Gisburn Forest Hub Café, it was attended by over 50 businesses who enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas and experience electric bike rides, kindly offered by Ribble Valley E-Bikes. The guide was launched at a further event at Wood End Farm B&B, Dunsop Bridge in March and was attended by over 40 members of the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Business network

Contact: hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk

CHAMPION

Champion Bowland has been supporting Forest of Bowland AONB communities and groups since 2009, becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2018, enabling wider fundraising and investment to Keep Bowland Beautiful. During 2021/22, Champion Bowland worked with Sustainable Tourism Network businesses to maintain and expand commitment to the destination website, Discover Bowland (www.discoverbowland.uk) that attracts visitors to the area. Visitors generate prosperity and donate via visitor-giving options. Donations are distributed by Champion Bowland's Small Grants Fund, offering grants of, at present, up to £750.

Contact: chair@championbowland.org.uk

Resilient and Sustainable Communities

Keeping bowland in the dark

Step outside on a clear night in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and you're likely to be rewarded with a star-filled sky. Something we're very lucky to have.

he night skies over the Forest of Bowland have been recognised as some of the darkest in England – with several areas being designated as Dark Sky Discovery Sites. This is thanks to the relative lack of light pollution in the AONB, allowing the majesty of our celestial panoramas to be enjoyed as much as our daytime vistas.

For a number of years now, the AONB Partnership has been trying to build awareness of the value of dark skies by persuading residents and visitors alike to "look up" once the sun has gone down.

Tourism businesses have been encouraged to become Dark Sky Friendly; attending training by a local astronomer, proactively reducing light pollution at their business and offering flexibility to guests looking to stargaze.

With this comes the added benefit of extending tourism opportunities into the "shoulder" seasons – helping to support the local economy and entice visitors to experience an aspect of Bowland they may not have discovered before. Over twenty

Hetty Byrne
Sustainable Tourism Officer
Forest of Bowland AONB

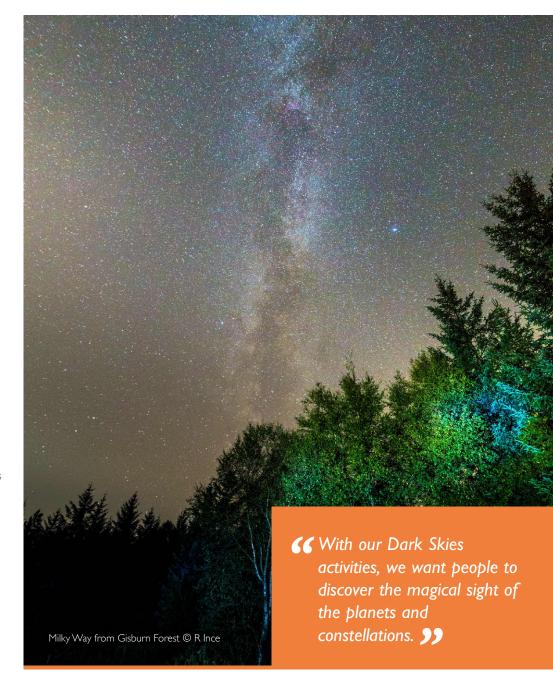
Dark Sky Friendly businesses are currently listed on the Forest of Bowland AONB website: https://www.forestofbowland.com/star-gazing

Alongside this sustainable tourism work has been the establishment of an annual Dark Skies Festival during February half-term. 2022 marked the fourth year of this nineday calendar of events, complimenting the existing Festival Bowland programme and getting the year off to a magical start.

Given the school holiday timing, families were well catered for, with events this year ranging from night-time creatures and natural crafts to robot space explorations. For older audience members, online smartphone night sky photography and a colourful aurora talk proved popular one again.

Alongside the Festival the AONB team partnered with Lancashire County Council's museums service, issuing a call for entries to a brand new dark skies photography exhibition to be held at the Stewards Gallery in Clitheroe Castle during the coming spring.

Plans were also made to invite local parish council representatives to an online presentation about "the right light at night" – aiming to equip them with information about dark skies and light pollution which they could then share with local residents.



A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape

Highlights for 2021 – 22





In-Situ deliver creative work for the Pendle Hill LP project. Face-to-face work is at the core of In-Situ's approach, so COVID lockdowns required a big shift in thinking. Determined to support artists and offer creative outlets to local people, many of whom did not have digital access, In-Situ created *Reconnect*. *Reconnect* is a free publication inspired by Pendle Hill, featuring eight artists' work and accompanying creative activities, suitable for all ages to do at home. Almost 2000 copies have been delivered directly to local residents.

Contact: info@in-situ.org.uk



Whilst Covid restrictions applied for a large part of 2021, Wyre Coast and Countryside service were able to deliver a number of events in the Wyre Great Outdoors Programme. Activities included health walks and guided heritage walks, plus a variety of conservation days. The Friends of Garstang Walking Festival organised a five-day festival in August, when customers were pleased to able to join slightly larger groups. Following the Thirlmere Aqueduct, Sullom Evening Walk and Summer Wildlife around Nicky Nook were just some of the events on offer.

Contact: countrysideservice@wyre.gov.uk



The annual Festival Bowland programme hosted 68 events, attracting over 1500 attendances. Face to face events made a welcome return once circumstances allowed, whilst virtual events continued to offer an option for those unable to attend in person. Poetry workshops, practical conservation, family fun, wildlife rambles and health walks all featured alongside the fourth Bowland Dark Skies Festival, which took place during February half-term. Thanks go to all those who organised, led and supported these events.

Contact: sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk



A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape



The Pendle Hill community archaeology project ran 6 training days for 58 people and delivered 24 volunteer days this year. Training for volunteers, provided by Northern Archaeology Consultants included field surveying, historic buildings, and finds identification. In partnership with NAA we also carried out a small excavation of the Roman Road at Chatburn, uncovering a few metres of this important route connecting Ribchester to Ilkley. The project also supported a new local group to set up and deliver its own activity.

Contact: cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk



The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership scheme has been working in partnership with The Ernest Cook Trust to deliver an Outdoor Learning project. Currently, 42 schools have received support on how to embed outdoor learning within their school. The Outdoor Learning Officer has delivered teaching training, hands on conservation sessions, modelling environmental education in local greens spaces and school grounds. This has provided teachers with knowledge, skills, and resources to support Outdoor Learning within their education establishment and the local landscape.

Contact: PendleHill@ernestcooktrust.org.uk



A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape



New projects and new volunteers for the friends of bowland

The Friends of Bowland was formed over nine years ago by people who wanted to be an independent, self-supporting group undertaking practical work, walks and talks in and around the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

he intention was to support the aims of the AONB Partnership, working with them sometimes, but without being tied to them - free to differ if you like. Perhaps it is unusual, but the Friends group is not a charity and has never aimed to be a fund raising arm of the AONB. Unusual and even more surprising is that we don't generally wish to set the agenda for the AONB, so have remained good friends!

In the past year we have returned to regular practical tasks and walks after the uncertainties of COVID restrictions. Thanks to help from the AONB Unit and Joint Advisory Committee, we found some new sites and new customers for our practical work, as well as new volunteers. Here are some highlights:

Carol Edmondson, Bowland Hay Time Officer, introduced the group to Lucy Metcalfe of the Studio Bakery in Bolton by Bowland. Several sessions took place in their impressively large orchard - securing trees, pruning, weeding and mulching. These were popular tasks despite bad weather - maybe it was the cake?

Jane Ashe, then project officer with the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership team, suggested we contact Christine Greenwood, Woodlands Officer with United Utilities. This led to work at two new sites near Longridge and there are also plans to return to UU woodland at a new site for us in Gisburn Forest.

And finally, a chance conversation resulted in a new venture. Many locals in Ribchester were upset about the felling of three trees on the edge of the village. A local farmer offered field margins for planting, and we applied to the TCV/OVO "I Dig Trees" scheme for free trees, which were then planted in spring..... And that is just the start!

Martin Charlesworth Secretary The Friends of Bowland friendsofbowland@gmail.com

Membership of the Joint Advisory Committee & Financial Summary 2021/22

Lancashire County Council

County Councillor M Maxwell-Scott County Councillor G Mirfin County Councillor S Turner

North Yorkshire County Council

County Councillor S Myers

Craven District Council

Councillor S Handley

Lancaster City Council

Councillor J Pritchard

Pendle Borough Council

Vacancy

Preston City Council

Councillor A Hindle

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Councillor Mrs R Elms

Wyre Borough Council

Councillor J Ibison

Lancashire Association of Local Councils

Ms C Kynch

Yorkshire Local Councils
Association

Mr C Price

United Utilities

Mr M Upton

Environment Agency

Ms Helen Dix

Natural England

Ms G Hinton

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Mr | Sutton

Bowland Land Managers' Forum

Mr A Taylor

Ramblers Association

Mr D Kelly

Champion Bowland

Mr M Pugh

Friends of Bowland

Ms M Pilkington

Moorland Association

Neil Kilgour

Sadly, two members of the Joint Advisory Committee passed away during the last year. Councillor J Browne and Councillor L Crossley were representatives for Preston Borough Council and Pendle Borough Council respectively.

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Advisory Committee are available at www.forestofbowland.com/Joint-Advisory-Committee

Actual 2021/2022 (Out-turn prices) £'s

EXPENDITURE	
Core Costs	
Salary, N.I. and Superannuation	205,543.06
Out-based premises	20,129.41
Travel and subsitence	3,579.47
Central, Deparmental & Tech. Support (LCC)	54,906
Partnership costs	20,284.89
SUB TOTAL OF CORE COSTS	304,442.87
Non Core Costs	
Projects	113,807.62
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	418,250.49

IN		

Defra Grant	261,949.00

Contributions

Government Grants

United Utilities	6,800.00
Other project contributions	

County Councils

Lancashire	48,365.45
North Yorkshire	5,430.00

District Councils

Craven	6,800.00
Lancaster	6,800.00
Pendle	6,800.00
Preston	6,800.00
Ribble Valley	6,800.00
Wyre	6,800.00

TOTAL INCOME RECEIVED

363,344.45

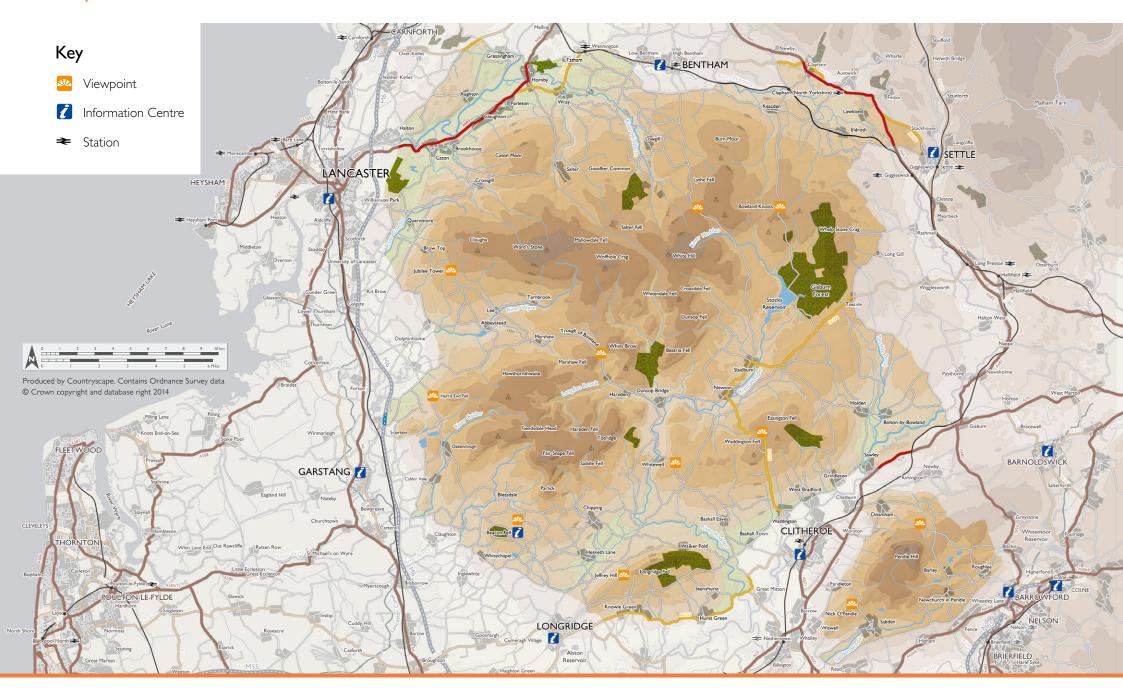
CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT COSTS (IN KIND)

Lancashire County Council

54906

418,250.49

Map of the Forest of Bowland AONB



Contacts



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Other Local Countryside Services

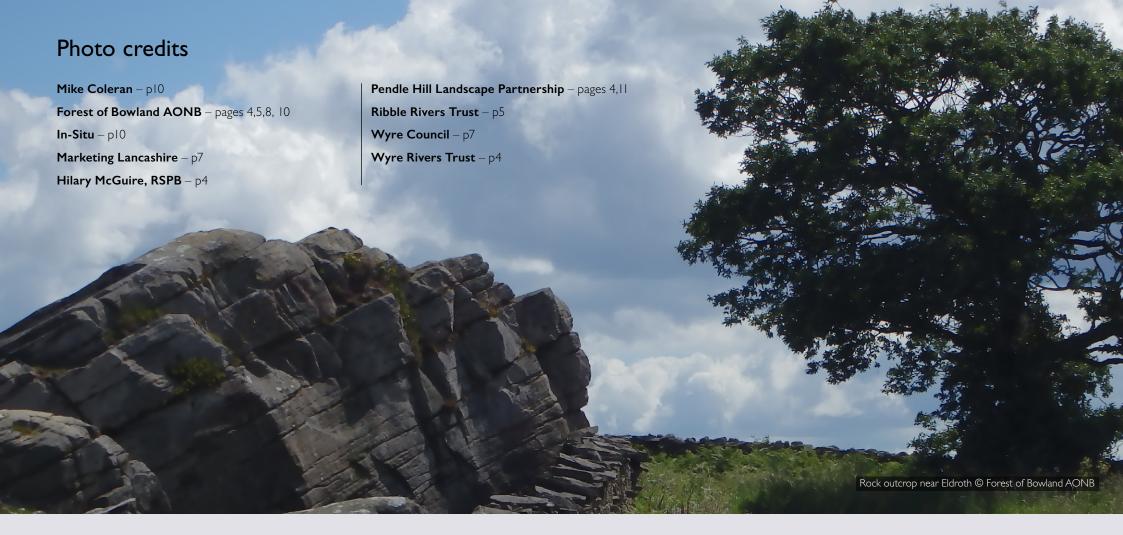
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Coast and Countryside Manager

Wyre Council

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FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

