



# FOREST OF **BOWLAND**

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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This past year has been my last as the Chairman of the AONB Joint Advisory Committee, as I plan to step down from my position as a County Councillor in 2021.

So, not only have I been thinking back to the work of the last year, but also over the last decade. Over this period, it has been satisfying to note how the AONB Partnership has progressed from a position of maintaining stability in the face of budgetary and resourcing constraints to one of growth and development. Long may this continue!



**County Councillor  
Albert Atkinson**

*Chairman of the Forest of Bowland  
AONB Joint Advisory Committee*

**W**hilst the significant challenges posed by the pandemic last year have persisted into this one, that has not stopped the AONB Partnership from making good strides in programme and project delivery and also in exploring new opportunities.

The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership has been leading the way in adapting to some of the constraints on our lives over the last 12 months, developing online talks and webinars and even helping people to better engage with their local landscape and natural environment through the '72 Seasons' project and online delivery of the John Muir Award with local families.

Elsewhere, we've been able to respond to the call from Government and others to support a green recovery from the effects of the pandemic. Two bids to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund in which the AONB Partnership is involved were successful in attracting support. The first is a peatland restoration project

on the Bleasdale Fells, to be delivered alongside Yorkshire Peat Partnership; and the second is as a partner to a national project, 'Meadow Makers', led by the environmental charity Plantlife, and will be working with Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust to deliver meadow and species-rich grassland restoration. These projects will not only help with nature's recovery but will also help local charitable partners to recover from a very challenging period financially.

A further exciting development has been the announcement by Government in late 2020 to support a 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme. This programme, due to open in 2021, offers an opportunity for farmers and land managers in the Forest of Bowland to help them transition from existing agricultural support systems to the new Environmental Land Management schemes to be rolled out by Government from early 2024. The AONB will be working with farmers and land managers over the next three years

to help them develop projects delivering against the programme and AONB management plan objectives, namely: nature recovery, climate change, people and place. This programme feels like a significant step forward for the AONB Partnership, helping us to deepen our already strong working relationships with those in the local land management sector.

And finally, to conclude my tenure as Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to say what a pleasure it has been, and it has always been a great source of pride to hold this position. I will look back on these years with a great deal of fondness. I wish everyone in the AONB Unit and our AONB partner organisations well and look forward to hearing how the Partnership moves from strength to strength in the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Atkinson'.

*County Councillor Albert Atkinson*

# Infographic



**144**  
hectares  
of peatland habitat  
restored



**20ha**  
species-rich grassland  
conserved or  
enhanced

**361**  
farmers/  
land managers  
engaged

**400**  
young people engaged  
through schools



**97** planning  
applications  
appraised



**22**  
partnerships  
influenced

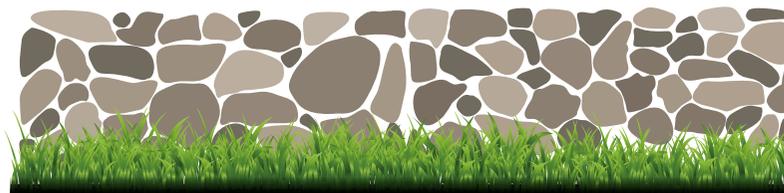
**7,600m**  
of overhead  
power lines  
**REMOVED**

**318**  
volunteers  
giving their time

**1,600m**  
of hedgerow  
managed or planted



**3,378**  
attendances at events



**351m**  
of dry stone wall restored

# An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage



There were eight hen harrier nests in Bowland in 2020 (a third of England's total) - seven on the United Utilities estate. 10 chicks fledged from the UU estate and one chick fledged from a private estate. Merlin had a poor year. There were five nests on the UU estate, compared to the usual six to nine, with chicks only fledging from three nests. Peregrines had a better year, with five successful nests - including one on a private estate for the first time in a decade.

Contact: [jeremy.sutton@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jeremy.sutton@rspb.org.uk)



Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership completed 1600 metres of hedge restoration works on five farms around the hill. These lengths were all completed by contractors as we were unable to carry out any training or volunteer work in 2020. In all cases the work was a partnership between ourselves and the farmer, with them providing stockproof fencing to protect the young hedge as it re-grows and regains its important place in the landscape. The hedges that we restored in 2018 and 2019 are now looking great!

Contact: [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk)



In partnership with United Utilities, Environment Agency and Catchment Sensitive Farming, the Wyre Rivers Trust has been monitoring pesticides in the upper River Wyre. Chemicals used to control sheep parasites and weeds frequently end up in watercourses. They are expensive to remove from water which is abstracted from the river for drinking and can be harmful to river life. Extensive sampling has revealed key problem areas and WRT are now working with landowners to improve practices and reduce pesticide runoff.

Contact: [lucy@wyreverstrust.org](mailto:lucy@wyreverstrust.org)



2020 Hay Time continued valuable meadow enhancement and restoration on over 20ha across nine sites in partnership with Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. Plug plants from locally collected seed were used to increase the diversity in previously restored meadows, including globe flowers grown at Kew Millennium Seed Bank. One meadow received later flowering, species-rich green hay. This adds seed missing in July when the hay is normally cut, increasing the diversity of flowers and, in turn, their pollinators, supporting an abundance of wildlife.

Contact: [carol.edmondson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:carol.edmondson@lancashire.gov.uk)



## Highlights for 2020–21

## An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage



A £550,000, three-year programme of Defra-funded peatland restoration on Abbeystead Estate drew to a close this year with the focus on Lee and Dunkershaw Fells. Work included revegetation and re-engineering eroded peat hags, together with the installation of peat, timber, and stone dams and coir rolls to help slow the flow of water of the fell. An Environment Agency grant of £60,000 saw supplementary work on Mallowdale and Brown Syke, overseen by Lancashire Wildlife Trust through the Lancashire Peat Project.

Contact: [sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk)



Work continues on the Lune Rivers Trust WEG Saving Roeburndale Woods project. Lead by Dr. Rod Everett, it combines multiple Natural Flood Management measures with bank stabilisation to protect the woods. Measures include leaky dams, river training (to reduce bank erosion), swales, ponds and planting trees and hedges. LRT have purchased a grassland aerator to be used by Roeburndale farmers to increase soil absorption, whilst Rod developed a tank and dripper to add "compost tea" to create carbon-rich open soil to hold more water.

Contact: [sarah@luneriverstrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah@luneriverstrust.org.uk)

## An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage



Ribble Rivers Trust has been carrying out the removal of non-native invasive plant species and woodland management at Badger Plantation Woodland, Simonstone. By removing *Rhododendron Ponticum* and eradicating *Himalayan Balsam* the woodland can recover biodiversity and restore native ecosystems and natural regeneration. The woodland has relied on active management, creating habitat piles for insects, beetles, and fungi and thinning of the dense compact underscrub. By continuing this work, we are restoring an important habitat for wildlife. All the activities have been undertaken by volunteers.

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Since 2010 the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership has been involved in the restoration of 775 ha of peatland on 18 fell sites across the AONB, with an investment of around £2.5 million. This is thanks to project funders, landowners and partners including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Yorkshire Peat Partnership, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Ribble Rivers Trust, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Environment Fund, the National Lottery, United Utilities and Abbeystead Estate, alongside contractors and volunteers.

Contact: [sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk)



The Environment Agency's Field Operations Team maintain water courses where there could be a flood risk or an impact on flood risk infrastructure. In Gisburn Forest, the team cleared large fallen trees which were creating a dam at Bottoms Beck monitoring flume, diverting the flow of water and affecting the reading from the monitoring station. In Barrowford, clearance of vegetation and overburden allowed the floodgate to be opened and the seals, hinges and surrounding flood wall to be fully inspected.

Contact: [helen.dix@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:helen.dix@environment-agency.gov.uk)



# An Outstanding Landscape of Natural and Cultural Heritage



“ Hay Time would have had only a fraction of its astounding success without the dedication of Peter and Linda at Bell Sykes Farm ”

## Hodder Valley meadows are hub for habitat regeneration

Hay meadows are one of our rarest habitats and a priority for conservation and enhancement. Traditional farming practices play an important role in the success of those that remain.

Bell Sykes Farm in Slaidburn includes the largest area of species rich meadows in Lancashire. Internationally important, and with national and local designations, these Hodder valley meadows were chosen as Lancashire's Coronation Meadows in 2013 because of their species diversity and public access.

Sympathetically managed over decades by farmer, Peter Blackwell, and his family, late cutting of the crop and lack of artificial fertilizer have resulted in a suite of floristically diverse meadows which burst with life and colour during the summer months.

Bell Sykes Meadows includes six unimproved flower-rich fields. Three of these are alongside the neighbouring River Hodder and include grasses such as meadow foxtail and sweet vernal grass along with moisture loving flowers like great burnet and meadowsweet. The upper three fields are home to the characteristic flowers of dry hay meadows in northern England. Meadow crane's-bill and melancholy thistle grow together with a colourful mix of yellow rattle, eyebrights, pignut, buttercups and lady's mantle.

A partnership project between the Forest of Bowland AONB and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, the Hay Time project will celebrate its tenth season during 2021. Over this decade, Bell

Sykes has been a site of meadow restoration, but has also been the single largest donor of species rich green hay and seed within the programme. This has allowed restoration work to be undertaken on an impressive 61 meadows, totalling over 80 hectares – from Ellel to Higham and from Tatham to Ribchester.

The farm has also become a hub of training activities around meadows; hosting scythe training courses, meadow restoration sessions and seed collection days, as well as being Bowland's focus for the annual National Meadow Day event since its inception in 2014.

Bell Sykes is also the source of the hand-picked botanicals which are used each year by Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network member, Goosnargh Gin, to produce their small batch 'Hay Time Gin'; a portion of the profits from which have gone into furthering meadow restoration work in the AONB.

Bell Sykes' influence has now been captured on a brand-new map, featured on the left.

**Sarah Robinson**  
*Farming in Protected Landscapes Lead Officer*  
 Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership  
 sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk



The Pendle Hill Fund is a community grant scheme run by the Pendle Hill LP, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Communities in Sabden and Rimington were awarded funds to enable them to explore and share their local history and to create a walking trail. The Pendle Heritage Centre received a grant to help support nature conservation works in their grounds. In addition, we funded the Pendle Lengthsman to repair footpaths under pressure from the exceptionally high number of visitors to the area.

Contact: [jayne.ashe@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:jayne.ashe@lancashire.gov.uk)



The Discover Bowland guide was produced ready for the start of 2021. The 112-page guide shines a spotlight on some of the fantastic project work of the AONB Partnership, as well offering visitor information to inspire people around where and what to explore. Five area-based itineraries highlight the hidden corners of Bowland and link visitors with some fantastic hospitality businesses. The guide is available from local Visitor Information Centres and tourism businesses, or can be viewed online here: [www.forestofbowland.com/discover-bowland-guide-2021](http://www.forestofbowland.com/discover-bowland-guide-2021)

Contact: [hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk)



The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership delivered our annual sustainable tourism forum via an online event attended by 38 businesses on 15th February. The forum included lockdown reflections from three of our business network members and we were pleased to welcome two external speakers: Susan Briggs from the Tourism Network presenting about 'Marketing to Bounce Back' and Sarah Lynas, a mind and business self-belief coach. It was a great opportunity to re-connect with the network and to share ideas and experiences from lockdown.

Contact: [hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk)



Marketing Lancashire continued to support its visitor economy partners, through VisitLancashire campaigns and activities. However, the pandemic meant that our role often switched to communicating critical messages regarding travel restrictions, visitor safety and the protection of rural areas. Despite this the Forest of Bowland product and events were viewed over 300,000 times on VisitLancashire channels. By the end of 2020/21 Marketing Lancashire was embarking on a tourism recovery campaign #RediscoverLancashire, aligned with VisitEngland's domestic 'Escape the Everyday' campaign.

Contact: [anna@marketinglancashire.com](mailto:anna@marketinglancashire.com)

## Highlights for 2020–21



## Resilient and Sustainable Communities



# CHAMPION BOWLAND

Originally founded in 2005, Champion Bowland has been re-constituted as a “Charitable Incorporated Organisation” regulated by the Charity Commission. The Trustees, with help of a National Lottery Grant, have been developing a Strategy to identify opportunities to support the AONB in its Objectives and to raise funds to deliver them. The focus is to work through the tourism network to mobilise visitors to join in Keeping Bowland Beautiful.

Contact: [chair@championbowland.org.uk](mailto:chair@championbowland.org.uk)



Champion Bowland and the AONB have supported the development of a new visitor destination website for businesses who are members of the Sustainable Tourism Business Network. The website includes accommodation, outdoor activities, courses and experiences, and the food and drink offer; alongside business listings. Website [www.discoverbowland.uk](http://www.discoverbowland.uk) was launched in September offering free business listings to support COVID recovery. In the future businesses will contribute towards the ongoing maintenance of the website and any profits will be donated to Champion Bowland.

Contact: [hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Countryside Management Making an Impact During The Pandemic

During the first Covid-19 lockdown, the Wyre Coast and Countryside team responded to the pandemic by assisting with local community and council deliveries of food and pharmacy parcels to vulnerable residents.

Staff and volunteers used the larger ranger vans to support deliveries to rural locations, sometimes four to five days a week. They also supported the Lancashire Resilience Forum signage campaigns to share strong safety messages out on site, with banners and posters to help encourage respectful and safe behaviour.

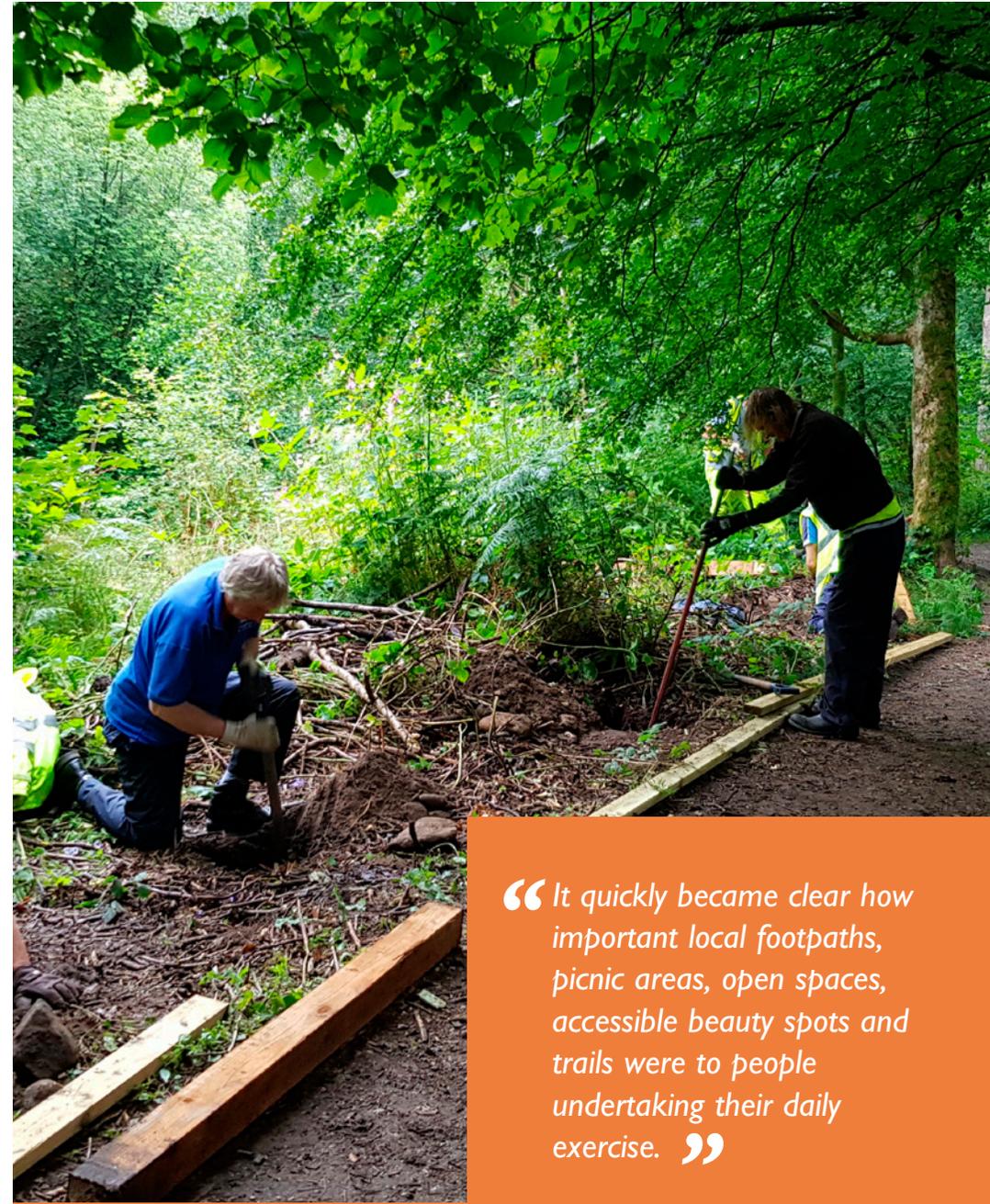
As a result of higher visitor numbers, the team increased patrolling of busy sites to every day: these included Holme wood and Grizedale bridge, Nicky Nook and Brock Bottoms. Whilst it was great to see people enjoying the countryside, the subsequent pressure saw an increase in infrastructure wear and tear and anti-social behaviour. We experienced everything from illegal camping, with camp fires and bar-b-q's causing wildfire risk, to congestion within car parks and country lanes, fences being broken, car parks and roadside verges being damaged and a big increase in bags of litter being collected from all sites patrolled.

For a very short window of time, when restrictions eased, our volunteers helped with a few running repairs and litter patrols. Brock Bottoms saw a post and rail fence being installed to replace a dead hedge that had disappeared (this was to help protect an eroding path). We also carried out tree felling and woodland management around the car park. At Grizedale, volunteers undertook repairs to the very busy Holme Wood boardwalk. We also worked in partnership with the Wyre Rivers Trust to install leaky dams in the upper Wyre Catchment with materials sustainably sourced from Wyre Council's managed woodland plantations.

However during these difficult times we were heartened to see countryside access and picnic areas provide a quality environment for families to get outdoors, breath fresh air and leave their worries behind. They were able to discover places on their doorstep, children paddled in the Brock, Calder and Wyre and people enjoyed wildlife with first time views of Nuthatches, Tree creepers and Dippers.

The team and its volunteers continue to patrol and litter pick popular areas with the aim that our local residents and surrounding communities have areas to visit safely; that are clean and tidy and where they can benefit from experiencing the landscape and wildlife of the Bowland countryside.

**Alison Boden and Graeme Nuttall**  
Wyre Council - Coast and Countryside  
countrysideservice@wyre.gov.uk



“It quickly became clear how important local footpaths, picnic areas, open spaces, accessible beauty spots and trails were to people undertaking their daily exercise.”

# A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape

## Highlights for 2020–21



Downham is a main gateway to Pendle Hill and, thanks to the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, working closely with the Downham Estate and Ribble Valley Borough Council, we have improved the visitor information barn in the village. New cycle racks were installed, a new window and lighting provided and, together with benches and new interpretation panels, the centre now looks bright and welcoming! The centre describes the history of the village, its key buildings and wildlife, as well as a several walking routes to explore.

Contact: [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk)



Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership's plans to launch a family version of the John Muir Award had to be modified, so we delivered it to more than 20 local families online! We issued weekly ideas bulletins and resources, created short films about places to go and things to do, and ran a very animated Facebook group. Each family completed their 25 hours of activity and received a Discovery Award. They also had a great time in the process: connecting to nature, the landscape and their local heritage.

Contact: [pendlehill@ernestcooktrust.org.uk](mailto:pendlehill@ernestcooktrust.org.uk)



As with many public engagement activities, Festival Bowland moved online this year and, alongside welcome familiar faces, reached a whole new audience in the process. Between June 2020 and March 2021, the virtual programme delivered 33 events attracting over 1,170 attendances. From wildlife, heritage and habitats to star gazing, cooking demos and conversations with artists, the digital approach opened a new chapter for the Festival. The programme will continue to offer online sessions alongside the more traditional face to face events going forward

Contact: [sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk)



The Friends of Bowland are an independent volunteer group undertaking practical conservation work and organising walks and talks in and around the Forest of Bowland. Our activity was drastically reduced in the last 18 months, but volunteers helped cut and rake wildflower verges at Newton and Easington in the Hodder valley, and in October we held a virtual Apple Day, with recorded contributions from Muriel Lord and Phil Rainford. Several apple related videos can be seen on the Friends of Bowland YouTube channel.

Contact: [friendsofbowland@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofbowland@gmail.com)

## A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape



The Wyre Coast and Countryside team entered into a partnership with Nether-Wyresdale Parish Council to renew the Scorton Millennium Way – an accessible path alongside a very busy road into the village. Works included removing the old timber edging and guide rails section by section, replenishing these with new timber and then resurfacing with stone. This route provides a valuable means of connection for visitors and local people with each other, with the landscape and with local businesses. On-site interpretation will also be refreshed.

Contact: [countrysideservice@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:countrysideservice@wyre.gov.uk)



2020 saw the launch of “Days to Remember” – a series of online resources available via the Forest of Bowland AONB website. The project aims to encourage older people and those living with dementia, alongside family members and carers, to enjoy a “virtual” exploration of this beautiful area. From tips and resources for making a Great Outdoors memory box; to links to puzzles, quizzes and colouring sheets, the page also features a meadow-inspired guided meditation, written and narrated by holistic therapist, Helen Leece.

Contact: [sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk)



Two of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership projects aim to engage more people via creative activities and working with artists. This year In-Situ ran our Gathering conversations online and supported lockdown artists through their innovative Testing Ground programme. Mid Pennine Arts continued to bring radical Pendle people to life via walking trails, reunion gigs, podcasts and more. Stone plaques commemorating George Fox were erected in Downham and at the summit shelter; and the lid to Fox’s Well is now a much more exciting thing to open!

Contact: [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk)



## A Strong Connection between People and the Landscape

PENDLE HILL  
LANDSCAPE  
PARTNERSHIP



# CONNECTING TO NATURE

“Joint working between the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership and Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust has been a key benefit”

## Helping Nature Connectedness to Flourish

People Enjoying Nature is an outreach project offering supported activity sessions in the Pendle Hill landscape to individuals and groups who are dealing with mental health and social isolation issues.

The past year has been very different for everybody, with major restrictions on how far people could travel, how people could socialise and the activities people could do. For nature, however, many would say it was rather a special year.

With no planes in the sky and considerably less traffic on the road, many families and communities across East Lancashire found themselves listening to bird song they had never heard before, watching mammals take full advantage of empty roads and re-learn names of familiar species of plants and trees. There was a re-connection to nature. Local footpaths were re-discovered and many people relied on neighbouring green infrastructure for their daily exercise. However, not everyone experienced this same connection with their local outdoor space.

In the absence of delivering nature sessions face to face, the People Enjoying Nature project set out to encourage as many people as possible to get outdoors and enjoy time in private gardens, public parks or across the wider countryside. The team created resources that included different nature-based activities, species to look out for and information about local walking routes. With instructions and guidance, it was hoped that more people would be inspired to take that extra step outside and

learn more about their natural surroundings. Activities included making bird feeders and bug hotels, along with fun ways to spend time helping nature outside the front door (garden or no garden). For those with gardens, Keeping Nature in Mind offered nature friendly gardening tips, plus species to spot in different seasons.

Much of this work was done in collaboration with Nick Alderson, Community Officer from Community Prevention and Engagement Team (Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust) as well as local social prescribers and other health and wellbeing groups, who were still working with individuals who needed some support. The easing of restrictions will allow these connections to develop further and encourage more people to find out about People Enjoying Nature guided walks and activity sessions. The project is now part of a Pendle Green Social Prescribing group, whose aim is to spread the word about different opportunities for people across the borough looking to get out and about.

**Jayne Ashe**  
Community Engagement Officer  
Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership  
07770 273643  
jayne.ashe@lancashire.gov.uk

# Membership of the Joint Advisory Committee & Financial Summary 2020/21

## Lancashire County Council

County Councillor A Atkinson  
County Councillor S Charles  
County Councillor S Turner

## North Yorkshire County Council

County Councillor R Welch

## Craven District Council

Councillor S Handley

## Lancaster City Council

Councillor J Pritchard

## Wyre Borough Council

Councillor J Ibison

## Ribble Valley Borough Council

Councillor Mrs R Elms

## Preston City Council

Councillor J Browne

## Pendle Borough Council

Councillor B Newman

## Lancashire Association of Local Councils

Ms C Kynch

## Yorkshire Local Councils Association

Mr C Price

## United Utilities

Mr M Upton

## Environment Agency

Ms H Dix

## Natural England

Ms S Critcheley

## Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Ms B Denman/Mr R Horner

## 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

Vacant

Actual 2020/2021  
(Out-turn prices) £'s

## EXPENDITURE

### Core Costs

Salary, N.I. and Superannuation	226,263.23
Out-based premises	16,415.90
Travel and subsistence	1,836.24
Central, Departmental & Tech. Support (LCC)	63,011.98
Partnership costs	17,696.27
<b>SUB TOTAL OF CORE COSTS</b>	<b>325,223.62</b>

### Non Core Costs

Projects	49,830.75
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**TOTAL EXPENDITURE 375,054.37**

## INCOME

### Government Grants

Defra Grant	225,957.00
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### Contributions

United Utilities	6,800.00
Other project contributions	

### County Councils

Lancashire	33,145.39
North Yorkshire	5,340.00

### 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 312,042.39**

## CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT COSTS (IN KIND)

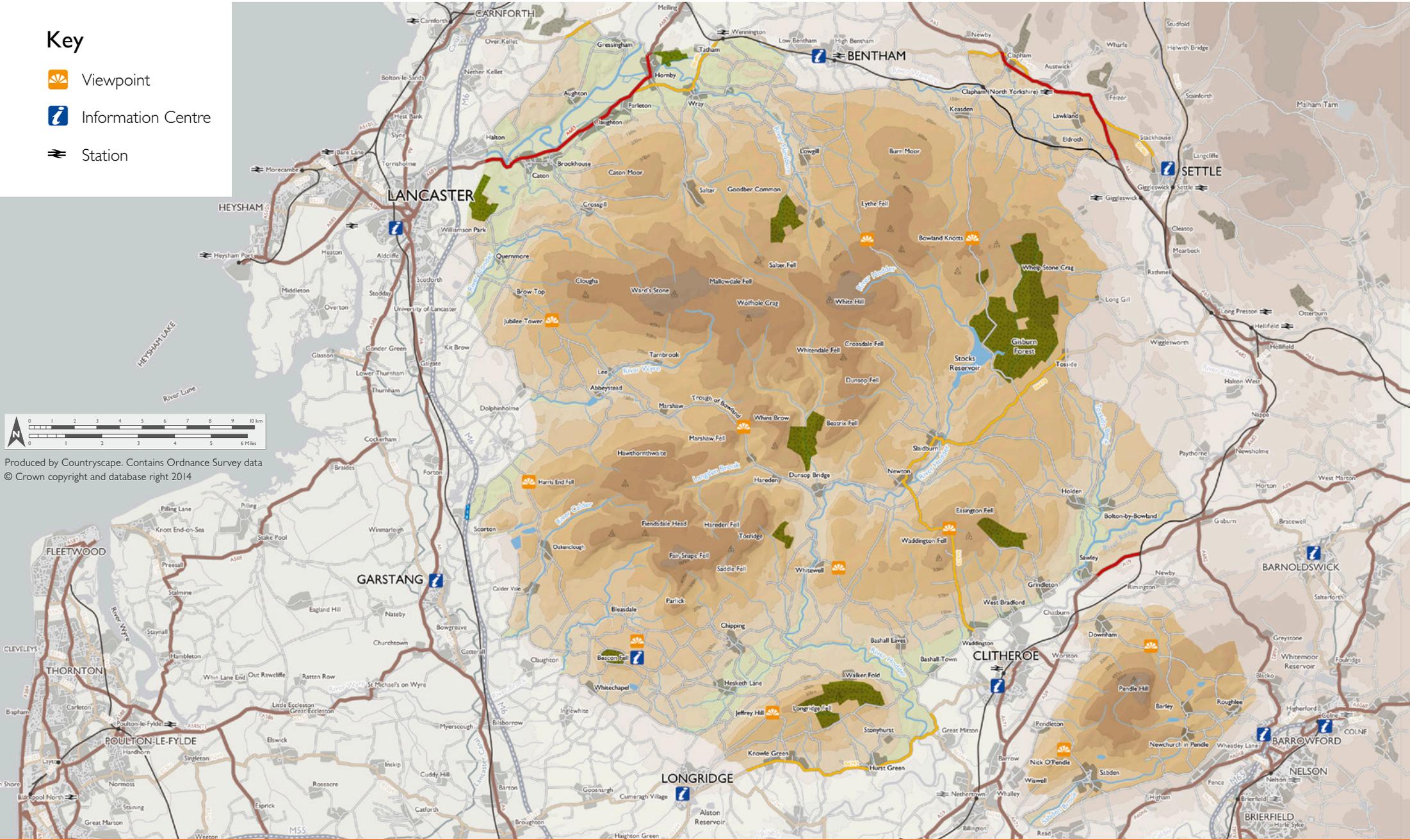
Lancashire County Council	63,011.98
	<b>375,054.37</b>

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Advisory Committee are available at  
[www.forestofbowland.com/Joint-Advisory-Committee](http://www.forestofbowland.com/Joint-Advisory-Committee)

# Map of the Forest of Bowland AONB

## Key

-  Viewpoint
-  Information Centre
-  Station



Produced by Countryside. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014



## Forest of Bowland AONB

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Dunsop Bridge  
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## AONB Unit

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### Jayne Ashe

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### Emily Brazington

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### Hetty Byrne

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### Alison Cross

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### Sarah Dornan

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### Carol Edmondson

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### Nichola Gill

Business Support Officer  
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