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Chairperson’s View

View from the Chair:
County Councillor Albert Atkinson,
Chairman of the Forest of Bowland AONB
Joint Advisory Committee

A ‘shining beacon’ is how the Forest of Bowland was described by the assessment panel in reinvesting the Forest of Bowland AONB with the European Charter Award for Sustainable Tourism last year. Hardly surprising as the Bowland partnership with local tourism businesses is a continuous success story. Examples are the formation of Bowland Experience Ltd (BEx) and the rejuvenated Bowland Tourism Environment Fund; Festival Bowland and the Bowland Arts Festival; the rolling out of the Lancashire Green Tourism Project based in Bowland; Bowland ‘Wildlife Bloggers’ website www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk; downloadable web walks and rides to name just a few achievements all driven by a well worked Strategy. The outcomes are a better managed environment, innovative rural tourism and added value local produce in a highly competitive marketplace.

Carol Ritchie, the Director of the EUROPARC Federation recently visited Bowland to present the European Charter Award personally. The event was hosted by Robert Parker at the splendid Browsholme Hall Tithe Barn on a bright and sunny day in March and attended by many local businesses and partner organisations. Carol Ritchie also made presentations of Green Tourism Awards to local tourism businesses. Thirty five Bowland tourism operators have now completed the Green Tourism Award scheme and are EUROPARC Charter Partners.

The good work of AONBs like our own Forest of Bowland partnership has been recognised by central government. Richard Benyon MP and Minister with responsibility for AONBs recently announced a more streamlined and mature relationship between government and AONBs emphasising that:-

“We need AONBs to ensure that our most important and treasured landscapes continue to thrive and are enjoyed by future generations. They are crucial to our environmental objectives”.

The content of this annual report and the wealth of information accessible through the Bowland website show why government are putting their trust in AONBs and why we all need to continue to work hard for the wellbeing of this special corner of Lancashire and Yorkshire and protect its outstanding qualities from damage whilst ensuring it is at the forefront in good environmental practice.
A Year of Change and Challenges

Change is in the nature of things but we don’t always see the value of it and sometimes mistakenly resist it instead of helping to shape it. The need for change in our nation’s most beautiful landscapes was well recognised by our law makers when they put legislation on the statute books that required local authorities to conserve and enhance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in their areas. In the choice of the words ‘conserve and enhance’, they clearly recognised and accepted the need for change in our landscapes. They could have used the word ‘preserve’ but that is more suited to jars of jam than living landscapes.

Steering, directing and encouraging change that is beneficial to the essential qualities of the AONB is the day to day business of the AONB staff in delivering the statutory AONB Management Plan and also of the AONB partner authorities in any decisions they make that affect land in the designated landscape.

One significant process of change that the Partnership encouraged and grant aided from the very start of the Bowland Sustainable Development Fund in 2005 was the installation of renewable energy generation and energy conservation measures in village halls, schools, churches and in private businesses. Better incentives are now available from government and there is perhaps less need for the AONB grants for renewable energy schemes but many good schemes are now up and running with the benefit of help from the AONB. The AONB continues to promote good environmental practice through its Green Tourism work and encourage renewable energy use. Last year the AONB Partnership commissioned a study on the potential for hydro energy generation in Bowland looking at sites that the AONB partners, local people, landowners and interest groups had suggested to see if they had any potential or not for hydro power generation.

However, encouraging renewable energy doesn’t mean it is ‘open season’ for developers to go ahead and industrialise the Bowland landscape with large scale high impact schemes such as wind farms with 120 metre plus high turbines like those proposed in recent years at Claughton Moor. One of the challenges of last year and carrying on into this year is to strongly oppose such damaging proposals whilst clearly articulating what kind of renewable energy schemes the AONB partners do support and why.

Renewable energy generation at a size and scale appropriate to its surroundings and that doesn’t detract from the special beauty and qualities of Bowland is likely to be acceptable. Therefore, in consultation with the district and county development control officers and Lancashire County Council’s landscape architect, Cathy Hopley the AONB Funding and Development Officer, drafted a Position Statement on Renewable Energy to clarify the AONB Partnerships’ views and set out our position on what might be appropriate. I am happy to say that the Position Statement was approved by the FoB AONB Committee in April. Each district council has its own policies in place and has the responsibility of determining planning applications for renewable energy schemes where planning permission is required and the AONB position statement should assist in that process as well as be a useful reference point for the wider public and developers.

A challenge of a different kind last year was to plan the future delivery of the AONB Service against a pattern of reducing government grants year on year over the next three to four years. We therefore looked at options as to how the AONB service might be continued at a reduced level anticipating the cuts proposed. In the event AONBs’ budgets fared slightly better than feared and I know that the dedicated work of the small group of staff in the National Association for AONBs in communicating to successive governments the good work of AONBs in conservation, biodiversity and in helping the rural economy has helped enormously in that regard. The Forest of Bowland Partnership with Lancashire County Council can be rightly proud of having sponsored the establishment of the National Association for AONBs in 1999 and need to continue to support them through these difficult times.

Sticking to the theme of change I decided it was the right time to take retirement from full time employment with the County Council and stepped down at the end of the financial year as did my colleague Martin Charlesworth who instigated many fine environmental projects and helped organise many worthwhile volunteer schemes, in the relatively short time he was with us. However, we do have the assurance that an excellent and dedicated team will continue to serve Bowland working with the landowners, farmers, businesses and communities and many partner authorities and organisations that really do make possible the conservation and enhancement of our much loved Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Don McKay, AONB Manager: September 1992 – April 2011

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RSPB Bowland Wader Project

As ever, it's been a busy, eventful and fun packed past twelve months for the Bowland Wader Project. It would be impossible to detail all the goings on, so here are a few snippets before more detail on several especially important pieces of work.....

Some excellent results from working with Natural England over the past year on a selection of farms that are working closely with us. As well as securing new Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements, special projects have funded a new on-farm classroom, a large activity barn, and trailer for taking visiting groups, including school groups, on farm tours. A long running scheme with United Utilities at Alston Wetland near Longridge has been boosted by the creation of public viewing screens overlooking the excellent shallow lagoon and wader scrapes here. A nesting bank for Sand Martins has also been constructed by a local contractor; several hundred young Sand Martins currently being fed by their parents is a testament to this site's success!

406 hectares of Bowland's grassland were newly entered into HLS options for breeding waders this year with 7850 square metres of new wader scrapes and 610 metres of 'wader friendly' ditch created through agreements. It's not all been about waders though; 2000 new trees were planted and 9835 metres of hedgerows restored or newly planted as well as 84 nest boxes put up to provide homes for species including Barn Owl and Pied Flycatcher.

By working with local highways authorities the Wader Project, and staff from the AONB and Lancashire Countryside Service, managed to secure an agreement whereby mowing of selected verges known to be frequented by wader chicks in spring, or important botanically, would be put back until later in the summer. This followed on from an unfortunate incident when a group of Festival Bowland walk participants witnessed a newly hatched brood of Lapwing chicks succumbing to a flail mower which was mowing a road verge in early May. On the lighter side of the news, 'Larry' the RSPB's giant inflatable Lapwing, was an intriguing distraction for participants and spectators (and the police!) as the Tour of Britain cycle race swept through the Trough in September.

Public engagement and education work continued apace. High school students studying the Environmental Land Based Diploma learnt about how farming is also helping to conserve Bowland's waders at Cobble Hey Farm. Agents undertaking Higher Level Stewardship applications were fully briefed on all that is Bowland Wader in two training sessions organised by the AONB and several Festival Bowland events were again delivered in May and June with all of Bowland's in-bye waders seen well by participants on guided walks. The Bowland Schools Project was probably our main priority on this theme, with eleven local primary schools visited by the field teachers from our Leighton Moss reserve. This project, supported by the AONB and Ribble Valley Borough Council, continued to go from strength to strength with lots of highly enthused children, teachers and parents delighting in the special wildlife on their doorsteps.

Spring 2010 was the final season of surveys for the Lapwing Trial Management Project, a joint Natural England and RSPB project investigating the effectiveness of agri-environment schemes on the breeding success of Lapwings. Over the last five years it seems that Lapwing numbers have continued to fall in Bowland but some comfort is being taken in that the birds are doing better on farms where Higher Level Stewardship agreements are in place and receiving lots of care and maintenance support from the Wader Project. We all eagerly await the findings of this important piece of research.....

With this in mind it is pleasing to report that the past twelve months saw ten new HLS agreements secured for Bowland farmers to help breeding waders and other wildlife on their land. These farms are spread widely throughout, and on the fringes of, the AONB and all will benefit from a better future for their farm's wildlife as well as annual income and capital support for the next ten years.
RSPB on the United Utilities Bowland Estate

The 2010 breeding season thankfully proved to be much more successful than that of 2009 for the hen harrier on the United Utilities estate. The number of nesting attempts increased from 7 to 10 and resulted in 13 young fledging compared with just 5 in 2009. Just 12 attempts were made in the whole of England last year, highlighting just how categorically important the UU Bowland estate is for breeding harriers.

Merlins also had a good year with four nests fledging fifteen young, the second highest productivity recorded on the UU estate since records began in 1991.

The Hen Harrier Safaris proved to be as popular as ever with around 170 people attending the 11 events led by members of the RSPB and UU team. Enjoying mostly sunny weather, attendees had the opportunity to try and catch a glimpse of a hen harrier whilst learning about them, other upland birds and the land management being carried out under SCaMP.

The Hen Harrier Nest Camera project ran for a third successive year, thanks to a successful partnership between Natural England, Lancashire County Council’s Countryside Service, United Utilities and the RSPB. Not without its technical hitches, the camera recorded some fantastic images of life at a hen harrier nest which were enjoyed by visitors to Beacon Fell Country Park. This project is an invaluable tool for engaging with the public about this little known raptor and informing them about the work being done within the Forest of Bowland AONB for this species.

A big thank you to everyone involved in this work, we couldn’t achieve all of this without all your help.
AONB / RSPB Outreach Education Project

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally protected landscape and is internationally important for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare birds. Important populations of upland birds include hen harrier, merlin, short-eared owl, ring ouzel, whinchat, lapwing, redshank, curlew and snipe. Important habitats also include unimproved rough grazing, rush pasture and in-bye and upland oak woodland.

The project is a collaboration between the Forest of Bowland AONB and the RSPB and engages with local schools to celebrate and develop an understanding of the importance of the Forest of Bowland AONB for landscape, birds and other wildlife.

4 sessions are delivered at each school by RSPB field teachers with support from other staff when appropriate. The sessions involve a progression of understanding and are linked closely to the national curriculum.

Session 1 takes place in the autumn term, sessions 2 and 3 in the spring term, and session 4, which is held at a local farm, in summer term.

Key messages of the project:

- The Forest of Bowland is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a nationally protected landscape
- Landscape is not just about the view – a wide range of factors both natural and cultural give an area a special sense of place
- Moorland, farmland and woodland are key habitats in the Forest of Bowland
- Recognise the birds in your garden and what you can do to help them
- The Forest of Bowland is a special place for wildlife, especially hen harriers, lapwings and curlews
- Farmers and land managers look after the landscape, have made it what is today and play an important role in its future conservation
- The project also involves schools in the big schools birdwatch

During 2010/11 the project worked with the following schools:

- Caton Community Primary
- Caton St Paul’s CE Primary
- Sabden Primary
- St Joseph’s RC Primary
- Hurst Green
- Bleasdale CE Primary
- Thorneyholme RC Primary
- Dunsop Bridge
- St Mary’s RC Primary
- Chipping
- Newchurch-in-Pendle
- St Mary’s Primary
- St Mary’s RC Primary
- Sabden
- Hornby St Margaret’s CE Primary
- Roughlee CE Primary

The Forest of Bowland AONB / RSPB Outreach Education Project has worked with every primary school within the Forest of Bowland AONB as well as other primary schools around the area, working with over 1000 school children in 27 primary schools.
Sharing Traditional Woodland Management Skills in the Forest of Bowland

Advanced Level Countryside Management students from Burnley College practiced the traditional woodland management skill of coppicing in one of United Utilities’ woodlands at Stocks Reservoir in the Forest of Bowland AONB. During the day’s training, the students learnt the art of coppicing, an ancient and sustainable woodland management system which involves cutting down to the base multi-stemmed shrubs and trees such as hazel and ash, to produce poles and stakes. In spring, numerous new shoots regrow from the stumps (or stools) producing a further crop of poles and stakes for harvesting in future years. The stems were cut into 1.5 metre (5 ft) lengths for use as hedging stakes.

The hedging stakes were later put to good use by a group of volunteers from BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) who spent a week long holiday learning the traditional art of hedgelaying at a nearby location adjacent to Stocks Reservoir. The stakes were used to support the newly cut and laid hedge whilst it established.

The event was one of numerous projects, at various United Utilities sites across the Forest of Bowland AONB, where the students undertook their studies. The collaboration between United Utilities and Burnley College, now in its fourth year, is an extremely successful example of joint working with education organisations and voluntary groups, in which United Utilities provides appropriate sites and activities to help organisations deliver practical experience and opportunities to their group members.
Natural & Cultural Heritage

Access, Farming and Traditional Skills

Access for All

Environmental Project Officers with Lancashire County Council continued to demonstrate what the Tramper can offer and the type of terrain it can access with several partners namely in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Arnside and Silverdale AONB.

Trampers were taken to several events and locations including:

- The Yorkshire Dales National Park/Natural England “Sense the Dales” event at Bolton Abbey in September
- The annual disabled ramblers two-day visit to Lancashire (Martin Mere and the Ribble Estuary) also in September
- The Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Access Forum meeting in the Howgills, which involved taking members of the Forum onto Winder Fell above Sedbergh
- Leighton Moss RSPB reserve where the Tramper was tested both on site and on nearby paths. We were also involved in setting up a feasibility study alongside representatives from RSPB, local businesses, Arnside and Silverdale AONB and Morecambe Bay Partnership with a view to having Trampers based in the area.

Traditional Boundaries

Training and mentorship in drystone walling and hedge laying continued throughout the year involving representatives from RSPB, local businesses, Arnside and Silverdale AONB and Morecambe Bay Partnership with a view to having Trampers based in the area.

A full review of work carried out in the Forest of Bowland AONB over the past 18 years through the Traditional Boundaries programme has been undertaken. This included inputting data as a GIS shapefile with associated table. The AONB website now has a new section which includes the historical and landscape value of traditional boundaries plus case studies and maps showing work carried out www.forestofbowland.com/tradboundaries

Farming in Roeburndale oral history project

This project involved working with local artist Anita Burrows who spent time with several farming families in Roeburndale recording stories related to living and farming, past and present, in this remote valley.

Higher Level Stewardship-Farm Environmental Plan (FEP) agent training

With financial support from the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership in conjunction with Natural England, RSPB, Lancashire County Council and Ribble Catchment Trust, we were able to run further Farm Environmental Plan courses following the success of the first two run last year. Twenty six agents attended the courses in May and November 2010. The courses aimed to highlight the opportunities to include management of those landscape and biodiversity features that form a significant part of the value of the Forest of Bowland AONB. The courses also enabled agents to meet up with the relevant officers and helped to streamline the process for obtaining information and setting up joint site visits.

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Climate Change Activity in the Forest of Bowland

2009 saw the setting up of the Climate Change theme group within the governing structure of the AONB partnership and in 2010 the group oversaw three key pieces of work as outlined in the Management Plan.

The first of these was the development of a position statement, setting out the Joint Advisory Committee’s view on the siting and scale of renewable energy developments within the protected area. The position statement follows on from the publication of a Landscape Character Assessment of the Forest of Bowland, and seeks to provide guidance to local planning authorities, developers, landowners and communities. The position statement sets out a typology for developments and states that medium to large scale renewable energy development is not appropriate within the Forest of Bowland AONB (or in locations beyond the boundary where development would affect its setting and character) as it has significant potential to adversely affect the natural beauty of the AONB and to compromise the purpose of the statutory designation. However, the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee considers that micro and small scale renewable energy development may be appropriate within the designated area. For more information see the position statement at: www.forestofbowland.com/publ_plans

The statement is already proving useful in opposing the application for a new wind farm at Claughton, and we hope that individual planning authorities will also refer to it in their own planning policies.

The second piece of work was to produce a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan in conjunction with Natural England and Ribble Valley Borough Council. This is part of a regional initiative to develop such plans for each National Character Area, in our case – Bowland Fells and Bowland Fringe. Atkins were contracted to undertake this work, and they worked closely with AONB partner members of the Climate Change and Natural & Cultural Heritage theme groups.

After first identifying the AONB’s most important assets in terms of landscape character, biodiversity and ecosystem services, a model was used to identify how vulnerable these assets would be to the projected changes which climate change will bring to our region – notably warmer wetter winters, hotter drier summers and more frequent extreme weather events.

The most vulnerable assets were identified as:

- Blanket bog
- Lowland raised bogs and valley mires
- Purple moor grass and rush pasture
- Upland hay meadows
- Wet woodlands
- Upland springs and flushes
- Ponds and open water including Fisheries
- Woodland ground flora
- Footpaths and bridleways
These will therefore become the priority areas for action in the AONB in the future. If these assets can be identified, conserved, well managed and monitored, we will hopefully build resilience and enable them to adapt to climate change as it begins to influence our landscape.

The Climate Change Action Plan is available to view on our website and over the next year we hope to raise awareness of its importance with partners involved in land management, advisory services and planning authorities. For more information visit: www.forestofbowland.com/climatechange/adaptation

Thirdly, the climate change theme group also initiated a feasibility study looking into the potential for developing micro hydro schemes in the Forest of Bowland.

The study was carried out as it was felt that due to the AONB’s protected landscape perhaps hydro power could be seen as a favourable form of renewable energy development, in keeping with the landscape and heritage of the area. Similar strategic studies in National Parks have been very successful in identifying sites and encouraging development, for example in the Yorkshire Dales.

At a project launch, over 100 pins were stuck in a map of the AONB to identify sites which had previously been water mill sites, or which offered potential due to a fall in water at a weir or other such structure. Eventually these sites were whittled down to 30 and with funding support from Lancashire County Council, Pendle Borough Council, and the local strategic partnerships from Lancaster and Ribble Valley, a team of specialists from Inter-Hydro Technology were brought in.

IHT surveyed each of the sites and identified a further seven with potential. From these surveys five of the best sites are now being studied in greater detail in the hope that some of them will be able to install turbines and to generate renewable electricity in the not too distant future. The full report will be published on our website at: www.forestofbowland.com/climatechange/hydro

The five sites currently undergoing assessment are:

- Waddow weir on the River Ribble near Waddington
- Primrose Mill in Clitheroe
- Skerton weir on the River Lune near Lancaster
- Abbeystead reservoir
- Higherford Mill, Barrowford
Veteran Tree Initiative in the Forest of Bowland

In 2010 a detailed tree inspection was carried out on a 200+ year old common ash at Newton in Bowland. The tree, standing 24 m in height, falls into the category of a veteran tree, which is a tree that is biologically, aesthetically, historically or culturally important because of its age. Such trees have great presence providing an air of stability in an ever rapidly changing world.

As some concerns had been raised regarding the safety of the tree it was agreed that a comprehensive tree inspection should be carried out in order to ascertain its true condition, useful safe life expectancy and to establish the type of tree management regime appropriate for the circumstances. As the tree is included in the Newton in Bowland Conservation Area and within the Forest of Bowland AONB, David Hewitt, Ribble Valley Borough Council’s Countryside/Tree Officer and David Padley, from Lancashire County Council, were consulted. It was concluded that a visual tree inspection was required and that specialist equipment would be needed including use of a Picus Tomograph to check for signs of internal decay and a Resistograph in order to test the structural integrity of the timber.

Tree Surveys Ltd carried out the tree assessment and the results of the survey indicated that the tree could be retained albeit with some tree surgery/pruning which was subsequently carried out.
Wyre Borough Council

The Council works in partnership with many organisations, statutory, voluntary and local businesses to promote and care for the Forest of Bowland. The small team of volunteers and staff help to organise healthy outdoor activities and events to help locals and visitors enjoy and understand the protected natural environment as well as helping to improve and maintain public access across the working farmland of the area to key picnic areas and access areas. The team also work with partners to undertake habitat management and biodiversity surveys of the area. This year the team of volunteer rangers and countryside staff completed 1047 site patrols, collected 85.5 bags of litter, helped 8521 visitors and 2408 dogs. They also counted 4392 parked cars at our key recreational patrol sites.

Holme Wood and Grizedale Valley

Wyre Council volunteers worked with United Utilities on the concessionary path at the top of the Grizedale Valley to Holme/Leathercoat Wood clearing the rhododendrons from the path. In total 500m of footpath were cleared. United Utilities will continue the work by clearing the accumulated mud from the path and carrying out some small-scale drainage work. (There are plans to improve the boardwalks and bridges through Holme Wood over the next couple of years.)

During the project a fantastic drystone wall was uncovered, which is in need of repair in some sections: a future volunteer project for later in the year. The volunteers continued to work through the snow and freezing cold, holding their Christmas party on site on the last Tuesday before Christmas.

Brock Valley Picnic Site

The volunteer team continued to improve access for all at the Brock picnic site by replacing the remaining picnic benches with new, easy access picnic benches. The countryside team opted to build the benches from scratch to help reduce costs as well as using the talents of the volunteer team to make bespoke picnic furniture for this popular area on the River Brock.

Garstang Millennium Green

The Garstang Millennium Green Trustees and volunteers embarked on an ambitious plan to improve access for all along the Green. They received funding from various sources and successfully installed a harder wearing and wider path enabling walkers, and Tramper and push chair users, to enjoy the walk along the green. The Millennium Green is an important gateway to the Forest of Bowland providing wonderful views of Nicky Nook and the fells beyond as well as being on the Wyre Way route which is one of the ways that people walk into Bowland.

Wyre Council volunteers helped the Millennium Green Trustees and volunteers by preparing the way for the footpath work that started after Easter. This included the removal of benches (to be reinstalled later) to allow for the path to be widened. The volunteers also built a new set of steps and installed a new gate where the footpath meets Wyre Lane. The volunteers also resurfaced the disabled access ramp over the flood embankment at the entrance to the green.

Now the resurfacing work is complete, the Wyre volunteers have been back at the Green reinstalling benches, notice boards and tapping rails. A new stone wall is being built to screen the bins and two new interpretation panels are being erected at either end of the Green.
School Visits

Wyre Council volunteers were also busy working with two local schools. At St Mary’s and St Michael’s, Barnacre, the volunteers helped to create a new wildlife pond with dipping area and safety fence. At John Cross School, Bilsborrow, the countryside team supported woodland management sessions, working with all the children in the school in the new woodland area, creating a clearing for an outdoor classroom, using the felled wood to create shelters and making musical instruments, birdfeeders and art. They were ably assisted by a local wood craftsman to build four benches for the classroom, one with a carved owl perched on the end. Continuing the development of their outdoor classroom the children of Class 1, with help from a ranger, built a living willow arch using a kit at the entrance to the wood. The kit was very simple to follow - a great project for schools. As the structure grows and the willow needs trimming, it can be harvested to build more living willow structures.

Brock Station Pocket Nature Reserve

Wyre rangers worked in partnership with Lancashire County Council and the Brock Station Trust at Brock Station, helping with a tree planting session with children from John Cross School, planting 100 native species.

The partnership also ran a dry stone walling course on the site, led by Mike Rushton from Tamarack. During the week the volunteers built a curved section of wall incorporating a plinth for the new interpretation panel and seating. The stone used was from the old railway station.

A new interpretation panel was designed to inform people about the site’s past. This was done with help from the pupils at John Cross School. The school used the project to teach IT skill and how to use Publisher software. A competition was run within the school to see which pupil could design the best poster.

Brown Hare Surveys

Wyre Borough Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust ran a brown hare workshop at Bleasdale. The event was intended to inform people about the brown hare and its importance, and to recruit volunteers to take part in the Lancashire Brown Hare Survey by selecting a grid square and counting the hares seen there. The event was well attended with 24 people plus Wyre and LWT volunteers and a good number of brown hares. The event also featured on Steve Lowe’s Sunday show on Radio Lancashire. Steve spent an hour interviewing various members of the group at our lunchtime stop at Lower Fair Snape Farm.

To follow up on the workshop we ran an early morning brown hare walk with a 7am start at Bleasdale. This event was designed to view the hares when they are most active - at dawn and dusk. Again the event was well attended with 14 customers and just as many brown hares.

Tree Planting and Drystone Walling

The countryside team helped to extend the woodland planting at Tinkers lane planting 250 native trees, mostly hazel, whilst the volunteers once again joined forces with Lancashire Countryside Service and Mike Ruston for more dry stone walling training. One session took place at Nicky Nook with 18 volunteers followed by further sessions at Beacon Fell. Mike also ran mentoring sessions on Saturdays at Beacon Fell and one of Wyre’s volunteers, a carpenter by trade, put all this training to good use and is now working as a dry stone waller.
Milestones and Markers

The old stone milestone at Dunsop Bridge, dated 1733, is one of the oldest in the country. A former lengthswoman from Chipping, who repainted several stretches of white railings there alongside many community volunteers, pointed it out about three years ago when it was in a sorry state. It was leaning at 45 degrees, the top was rusted and it was obscured by an ugly modern-style fingerpost.

Bowland Forest Higher Division Parish Council was keen to improve the look of the signs at the corner of the Trough road and so the AONB commissioned a replacement fingerpost from Duncan Armstrong, the renowned signpost man from Padiham. The new sign and restored, straightened milestone have now been "unveiled" and make a wonderful feature in this popular part of the Forest of Bowland.

In a similar vein, a number of "West Riding" markers also benefited from a face lift in the form of a lick of black and white paint. Much of what is now the Ribble Valley in Bowland used to be in the former West Riding of Yorkshire when it was known as Bowland Rural District Council. Remnants from those pre-1974 times can still be seen beside several bridges in Slaidburn, Dunsop Bridge, Whitewell and Newton. They are triangular cast iron markers about 1 foot high with the letters 'WR' signifying that the bridge was owned by the County Council.
Natural & Cultural Heritage

Landscape Stories

2010/11 saw the second and final year of our Landscape Stories heritage project which worked with local communities, schools and visitors to understand and celebrate some of the traditional rural industries and activities which have been influenced by, and in turn left their mark on, the Forest of Bowland landscape.

A number of local rural industries were, and are, inextricably linked to the Bowland landscape in terms of the raw materials involved and the legacy they leave behind. The project’s focus on archaeology around Pendle Forest, dairying and cheese making in south west Bowland, limestone and lime production in southern Bowland and traditional chair making around Chipping allowed these elements of our local heritage to be studied and shared - introducing new audiences to the richness of the area’s past.

Much of the Landscape Stories project focused on involving people and helping them to find out more about the different themes being investigated. At the outset, the decision was taken to explore the themes in their widest sense, offering a variety of events and workshops designed to appeal to people with a range of interests. Options included presentations and guided visits, field walks and demonstrations, art workshops and traditional crafts, poetry and song and, by the end of the project, over 600 people, including 250 pupils from 10 schools, had been involved.

Project legacies include an interactive web book (www.forestofbowland.com/landscape_stories), downloadable walk, mobile display banner, local history group website and a new publication on cheese stones (Pressing the Cheese, by M Pannikar), not to mention books being planned by both Slaidburn Archive and Pendle Forest History Group – all of which will help to extend the life of the project and continue to reach new audiences.
Marvellous Meadows in the Forest of Bowland

Although the Forest of Bowland is essentially an upland area, whose landscape character is one of grandeur and isolation, with its deeply incised gritstone fells covered by large tracts of blanket bog and heather moorland, its foothills are dissected by steep-sided river valleys in which one may still find flower rich meadows of by-gone years bounded by dry stone walls.

Such meadows are of particular nature conservation importance and are the product of human intervention over many hundreds of years. They have been traditionally managed by removing stock and “shutting up” each meadow towards the start of the growing season in late May, after which a light dressing of well rotted manure is usually applied. Having been allowed to grow in the absence of livestock, they are then cut for hay during mid to late July and occasionally August especially after a wet summer. During such time, the hay is turned and allowed to dry in the sun before being baled and stored in barns to be used as fodder for livestock during the winter months of the year. The ‘aftermath’ growth following hay making is then usually grazed by sheep or cattle throughout the autumn and winter months, some into early spring before being shut up again and the process starting all over again the following year.

During late June and early July they are a riot of colour due to the many wildflowers that they support. They are to be found on areas of limestone around Slaidburn and those on the glacial and alluvial soils of Tarnbrook Dale, Hindburn Dale, Roeburndale and also along the Hodder valley.

Such meadows have become increasingly scarce throughout the countryside, since the Second World War, with over 97% of all herb rich meadows having disappeared. Those within the Forest of Bowland are no exception. There are now less than 100 hectares left within the AONB due to intense methods of agricultural production, in particular the use of chemical fertilisers and also herbicides. As such they now only occur in a few locations as isolated fields within certain parts of the Forest of Bowland.

Where they do occur, they support many species of wildflowers, sedges and fine leaved grasses forming stable grassland plant communities. These include a rare northern hay meadow type (which also occurs within the neighbouring counties of Cumbria and North Yorkshire), as well as a more common neutral type of grassland. The herb rich meadows of Bowland support a wide range of fine leaved grasses and sedges together with many wildflowers such as pignut, yellow rattle, eyebright, great burnet, betony, common bistort, lady’s mantle, knapweed, common spotted and common twayblade orchids, ox-eye daisy and meadow buttercup. In wet areas rushes, ragged robin, meadow sweet, water avens, marsh marigold and brown sedge occur whilst less common species such as melancholy thistle, globeflower, saw-wort, bird’s eye primrose and adder’s tongue fern may also be found growing in some meadows. Such grasslands attract large numbers of butterflies, insects and wading birds, notably redshank, curlew, oystercatcher, snipe and lapwing.

Look out for the “Marvellous Meadows” leaflet, which is planned for publication during 2011.
Volunteering in the Forest of Bowland

Community Woodland Days

A small piece of woodland in Newton received a lot of attention during 2010/11. It used to be a tangled mess with lots of privet and a fair amount of rubbish and litter. The dark canopy was preventing natural regeneration of native species and it was becoming an eyesore. A plan was drawn up to remove some of the less desirable things, cut back and thin some of the trees and create natural habitat piles of the thinnings – the logs and branches. After two community days the woodland, which is next to the public car park, began to take on a much more cared for look and the keen interest shown by local people was rewarded!

Excavations in Progress

The North Lancashire Bridleway passes an ancient lime kiln near Lickhurst Farm at the back of Chipping. The landowner was happy for us to find some volunteers to help excavate it carefully to try and expose more of the entrance, and maybe to find some items from olden times that would have been discarded or lost when the site was in use – 100-150 years ago.

Volunteers spent two days there and it was hard going! Tree roots from a nearby sycamore were the main problem but the site itself was delightful, with two streams merging into a cascade of water where a dipper nested.

TV Coverage for Country House

A really enjoyable, but very wet, volunteer task day was held at Wyresdale Park on the 15th Sept. TV cameras were there filming for the Channel 4 programme 'Country House Rescue' - the transformation of a garden that had been gradually reverting to nature for the last 100 years! BTCV, the practical conservation charity, were there as was Peter Foley (plants man and broadcaster), members of Lancashire Gardens Trust and our own Hetty Byrne. Having promised participants a wonderful day of healthy open air exercise in a fabulous woodland setting bathed in autumn sunshine, the reality was a little wetter!
Community Futures activity in Bowland AONB

Community Futures continued to provide on-going support to local community groups in the Bowland AONB area, focusing mainly on assisting village halls to improve their facilities and reduce energy consumption. We also represented the rural voice on several LSPs and supported Parish Councils in the area.

Renewable energy was promoted, where appropriate, on many village hall projects as these venues were considered ideal demonstration sites, helping to encourage others to consider renewable energy systems. With this in mind a Renewables Tour was jointly organised, on 22nd May, around different sites which were using renewable energy. Sites included the new Centre@Halton (Ground source heat pump/solar/PV), Bleasdale Village Hall (Wood pellet/Turbine) and Tosside (woodchip).

Energy auditing of community buildings continued to be an important activity and was carried out by Community Futures at several village halls including Wray, Caldervale and Cowen Bridge. The audit reports were used to support funding applications to improve energy efficiency and reduce running costs through the recommended measures. Community Futures continued to provide input to the AONB climate change meetings, hydro consultation and landscape impact assessment workshops.
Sustainable Development Fund 2010

In 2010/11 the Sustainable Development Fund was restricted due to uncertainties in AONB funding and was only able to support three projects:

Lancashire Green Tourism – this is the AONB project which supports sustainable tourism businesses, and the delivery of our Charter work in the area. This SDF support enables us to work in the AONB within North Yorkshire, as this was not funded by the Lancashire based project partners.

Brabins Endowed primary school in Chipping – here a delayed project from 2009 was completed as photovoltaic cells were installed on the roof of the school to generate clean, renewable electricity for use in the school.

Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust were given a small grant to build a fish pass at Talbot Bridge on Bashall Brook, to enable fish to move up and downstream, even in times of low water.
Lancashire Green Tourism Project

The Lancashire Green Tourism Project is being delivered by the Forest of Bowland AONB team, in partnership with the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB) and Lancashire County Council (LCC), to develop the sustainable tourism offer within Lancashire by supporting businesses through Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation and developing sustainable tourism activities. The project is due to complete in October 2011.

The Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) is a national sustainable tourism certification scheme. It is the largest and most established scheme of its type in the UK. The accredited businesses are promoted to visitors at www.lancashiregreentourism.com

During 2010/11 eleven businesses were accredited through GTBS, bringing the total to 54 for Lancashire, which includes 36 in the Forest of Bowland AONB. By September 2011 it is envisaged that a further 11 businesses will receive accreditation.

Other achievements for the project during 2010/11 include:

- Development of car free itineraries for Lancashire - in partnership with the Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board 14 itineraries have been produced to encourage visitors to give the car a rest. They highlight GTBS accredited businesses, walking & cycling routes, wildlife information, public transport details and great food places to stop along the way. The itineraries are featured on Visit Lancashire and are used by visitors and businesses.

- Two new visitor leaflets for the AONB – Tea Shop guide and Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike Trails - A tea shop guide and map has been produced with 31 establishments taking part, along with a leaflet highlighting the trails in Gisburn Forest. The latter was developed in partnership with the Forestry Commission and tourism businesses located close to Gisburn Forest. A substantial part of the costs of the leaflets was funded by the businesses themselves, and the remainder from the Lancashire Green Tourism project.

- Two self catering providers were short-listed for Gold Star GTBS awards; they have been highlighted amongst the 40 top GTBS accredited businesses in the country. While they didn’t make the final shortlist, this was a fantastic achievement for self catering providers Malkin Tower Farm Cottages and Bleasdale Cottages. Additionally, Clough Bottom Farm Self Catering Cottages achieved the Sustainable Tourism Award for Lancashire and also for the North West and reached the Enjoy England national final receiving a Silver award. Very well done to them!

- 5 case studies have been produced for GTBS gold accredited businesses highlighting good practice. The case studies feature many excellent sustainable practices that a range of businesses have undertaken, and which have contributed towards their GTBS accreditation.

- 21 businesses have received one-to-one support and guidance, web support and GTBS advisory or grading visits and 19 individuals have attended work-based training including marketing of green credentials and Sense of Place training.
Bowland wildlife bloggers

Momentum continues as green accredited accommodation providers continue to post wildlife sightings to the Bowland wildlife and Lancashire wildlife blog websites. The websites highlight the best places to see the rich wildlife that inhabits the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and surrounding Lancashire countryside. The businesses provide up to date wildlife sightings via their individual blogs which are then automatically fed into the Bowland Wildlife and Lancashire Wildlife websites.

These visitor websites have been developed by Barrie Tyrer web consultancy working with the Lancashire Green Tourism project to highlight the wildlife hotspots of this beautiful area, and most importantly to entice visitors to take a look for themselves. Visitor numbers to the website continue to grow (over 8,000 unique visitors to each site per month) and word is spreading. Promotional postcards, with images highlighting the wonderful wildlife and the website, have been produced allowing businesses to spread the word.

Visit the wildlife blog websites at www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk and www.lancashirewildlife.org.uk
Social Equity & Economic Opportunity

Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board

Each year Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB) offers local tourism businesses the opportunity to nominate themselves in the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourism Awards, in a selection of categories ranging from small hotel to large visitor attraction. The competition is judged by a panel of industry experts and independent judges with the winners of most of these awards then progressing to the regional England’s Northwest Tourism Awards. This showcase for industry best-practice and top quality tourism businesses in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Liverpool and Cheshire takes the winners a step closer to the coveted, national, Enjoy England Awards for Excellence.

Lancashire and Blackpool celebrated their biggest win at England’s Northwest Tourism Awards in September 2010, scooping four significant awards at a dazzling event at Lancashire County Cricket Ground, Old Trafford, organised by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). Each of the winners was mentored by a member of the team at LBTB.

The winners included Clitheroe business, Clough Bottom Farm Cottages (Sustainable Tourism award) which, along with Morecambe Visitor Information Centre (Tourist Information Service), went on to fly the flag for Lancashire at the prestigious Enjoy England Awards for Excellence.

Clough Bottom’s four star self catering accommodation is a stunning example of commitment to green tourism. Their impeccably furnished and beautifully appointed stone conversions are part of a working organic farm, situated in The Forest of Bowland.

As well as unforgettable holidays, short breaks and distinctive country weddings, Clough Bottom continues to lead the way in experiential training. Their commitment to sustainability, biodiversity, energy, water and waste management, is part of everyday life at Clough Bottom and their courses offer practical hands-on skills and experience.

The national finals were held on Friday 15 April 2011, at Birmingham University’s Great Hall where Clough Bottom walked away with a Silver Award, recognising their great achievement on this national platform. At the same event Morecambe Visitor Information Centre was named England’s finest tourist information service.

Presentation of Sustainable Tourism Award to Clough Bottom Farm Cottages © Graham Jepson

www.forestofbowland.com
Lancashire Keepsakes Campaign

The 2011 Country Escapes themed marketing campaign from Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board sought to encourage visitors to think about the treasured memories and keepsakes they take away from a short break in Lancashire.

The Forest of Bowland AONB, as the campaign’s theme champion, featured heavily through new photography commissioned in 2010 and support from businesses. Activity included a direct mail leaflet featuring a prize draw to win a short break at award winning Clough Bottom Farm (winners of both the Lancashire and Blackpool, and Northwest Sustainable Tourism Award in 2010), a brand new campaign landing page – visitlancashire.com/keepsakes, monthly e-newsletters and the creation of 15 car free itineraries.

In order to promote the sustainable tourism message Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board worked with the Forest of Bowland AONB and the Green Tourism Business Scheme to develop 15 new car free trails with district partners. These new trails encourage visitors to explore Lancashire using public transport, by foot or by bike over one or several days. The trails are available to download from visitlancashire.com and have also been promoted through the 2011 Lancashire Visitor Guide. There are several trails based in the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Campaign achievements

- Response of 11% to the Lancashire Keepsakes direct mail
- E-newsletters sent to over 32,000 people each month
- Over 91,000 page views to ‘countryside’ related pages on visitlancashire.com
- £348,129 of press coverage (EAV) was generated around the campaign which reached a circulation in excess of 2.6 million
- 15 new car free trails created and designed as PDF downloads
Bowland Experience Ltd

The private sector company now has 60 member businesses, including village halls, accommodation providers of all kinds, restaurants and tea rooms, cycle hire and visitor attractions.

Bowland Experience has started to produce visitor information maps and leaflets such as Bowland Tea Shops and Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike Trails. For more information please visit www.bowlandexperience.com

In December 2010, the company secured a grant from Awards for All to buy a Tramper which will be used by the members to provide a service for their visitors. The project also benefitted from the Visitor Pay-Back scheme run by the Three Fishes (Ribble Valley Inns) who invited their diners to contribute 20p each to the project. This funding will be used to meet running costs and to develop more routes in the AONB area. The Lancashire Green Tourism Project (funded by Lancashire County Development Ltd and Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board) also assisted with help for publicity for the scheme.
Bowland Tourism Environment Fund

The charity progressed over the year and raised a total of £11,000 from a variety of sources.

The Fund is open for applications from community groups for grants of up to £500. Projects supported include restoration of traditional cobbled paving in Dunsop Bridge, a Bowland wildlife carved ‘totem pole’ in Scorton village playing field and supporting education initiatives such as the AONB/RSPB Outreach project and a hay meadow theatre workshop in Thorneyholme School (Dunsop Bridge).

BTEF also received ‘charitable status’ recognition from Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs; this makes it possible to run a Gift Aid scheme to recoup the tax paid by donors. The Trustees plan to introduce this to generate more income in the next year. Please visit www.bowlandrefund.org for more information about the Fund and grant application criteria and process.
Exciting New Bike Trails

This year saw the official launch of the new Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike trails, with the development of two new routes through the forest. Two kilometres of trails were built by 200 volunteers working at least once a month over the last couple of years - very commendable! An information leaflet with a detailed map of the routes has been produced by Bowland Experience, partly funded by Lancashire County Council and Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board with contributions from 13 local tourism businesses. The leaflet is available from tourist information centres and other tourism outlets in the area, and is downloadable as a PDF from www.forestofbowland.com/cycling. A new website has also been launched www.gisburnbiketrails.com. The project was led by the Forestry Commission and United Utilities with funding from Sport England, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership, Lancashire County Council and the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Second Charter Mark for the AONB!

In July 2010 we were delighted to be informed that the Forest of Bowland AONB had been re-awarded the European Charter for sustainable tourism in protected areas for 2010-15. This follows on from our initial achievement in 2005 of being the first protected landscape in England to be given this good practice award. Since then over thirty other parks across the EUROPARC Federation have joined the Charter Network, the total figure now stands at 77!

The Charter recognises protected landscapes that promote the development of sustainable tourism: tourism that benefits the local landscape and wildlife, at the same time as supporting the local economy and engaging with the local community.

The assessors report about our work in the Forest of Bowland recognised several areas as being of particular merit:

- Leading the way in Europe in implementing Part 2 of the Charter, i.e. working with businesses to become Charter Partners
- Developing best practice models, particularly: our work on local food; providing accessibility for visitors who have mobility problems; and the Sense of Place project
- The establishment of Bowland Experience

The report also picked up on our strong partnership, our family identity, and a pride in our work together. In summary they concluded it was a ‘very good report, and a very good protected area.’

In March 2011 the EUROPARC Director, Carol Ritchie, attended our annual Sustainable Tourism Forum, and presented the second Charter certificate to the AONB. It was received on behalf of the Joint Advisory Committee by our chair, County Councillor Albert Atkinson. Over fifty representatives of local tourism businesses, agencies and AONB partners attended the Forum, held this year at Browsholme Hall tithe barn – a suitably grand setting for such a celebration.
Festival Bowland

Festival Bowland is a ‘year-round’ calendar of events that celebrate the birds, wildlife, landscape and culture of the Forest of Bowland AONB. Festival Bowland events allow us to showcase the area’s special qualities and share with others what makes it such a special place for people and wildlife. Events are led by local experts, landowners and businesses and provide a wealth of opportunities for people to explore the area throughout the year.

The 2011 calendar, including Bowland Arts Festival, has 163 events throughout the year and around the Forest of Bowland AONB. Festival Bowland continues to attract many visitors to the area and is one of the key ways in which the Forest of Bowland AONB partnership can showcase how they protect, conserve and enhance the area to members of the public.

Festival Bowland is coordinated by the Forest of Bowland AONB. The steering group includes: RSPB Birds of Bowland Project, United Utilities, Lancashire County Council, Wyre Borough Council and Bowland Arts Festival. Also supporting the festival are: Natural England, The Wildlife Trusts of Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, Heritage Lottery Fund as well as local businesses, landowners and farmers.

A copy of the Festival Bowland calendar of events can be viewed and downloaded at www.forestofbowland.com
Bowland Arts Festival

During 2010/11 Green Close, who specialise in rural and social development through the arts, led once more on the co-ordination and realisation of the Bowland Arts Festival. The Melling-based, not-for-profit company has been advocating the role that the arts can play in developing environmental understanding for many years and, in its fourth year, the Arts Festival contributed in a really meaningful way to the Festival Bowland programme; particularly engaging families in an awareness of the unique beauty and the importance of the habitats which make up the Forest of Bowland AONB.

The Bowland Arts Festival runs from 1st May - 30th June and this year partners delivered a whole range of creative events ranging from open studios, exhibitions, music and performances to creative workshops and walks, all to celebrate the Forest of Bowland’s unique environment and culture.

During 2010/11 the Bowland Arts Festival involved 278 artists from across the North West and attracted 739 participants and an audience of 13,145.

Local artists, arts organisations and District Council Arts Development Officers have recently signed up to a new memorandum of understanding for the Bowland Arts Festival - in effect, to look at the sustainability of the arts offer for the Forest of Bowland and also to develop the creative offer for new audiences and participants for environmental initiatives.

It is fair to say that in the current economic climate, where both the arts and environmental sectors are facing significant cuts, the Bowland Arts Festival faces challenges. However, the arts grouping are more determined than ever to programme and develop events that raise awareness of environmental issues.
Active Wyre, Festival Bowland and Garstang Walking Festival

The council coordinates and supports the Active Wyre programme which has the aim of connecting people to the natural environment through healthy outdoor exercise. Through the partnership of Festival Bowland all of the events were widely promoted throughout Lancashire and further afield. Within the Active Wyre programme are the Walkin’ Wyre health walks which are one-hour, free walks aimed at getting people back to good health. They provide a weekly opportunity to meet local walkers and explore the area on easy to use and accessible paths. Trampers are regularly used on some of these. In addition, a wide range of themed walks and activities were held in the eastern parishes of Wyre ranging from specialist walks on brown hares, whimbrels, heritage trails and Tramper treks, to regular walks from Garstang, Bleasdale and Barton Grange.

In the second week in May, Garstang held its annual Walking Festival. The festival was well attended with the two long distance walks being particularly popular (the four-day Wyre Way Challenge and the three-day Boundary Walk). The feedback from the festival was that customers particularly enjoyed the welcome received from the leaders, partner businesses and voluntary groups supporting the festival, and were impressed with the local knowledge and enthusiasm of the leaders. The festival was supported by over 20 volunteers who helped to organise, coordinate and lead the walks and events. The aim of the festival is to promote Garstang and the Forest of Bowland in springtime and is particularly noted for its beautiful bluebell woodland walks.
Success for First Apple Day

Bowland’s first apple day on 2nd October was a great success. Knowle Green Village Hall was a sublime choice of venue. The weather was brilliant and 200 people came and spilled outside to eat apple cake, apple turnovers, apple pies and Mrs Kirkham’s cheese. There were stalls for jams and preserves, bees, honey and candles, cider; trugs and homemade cakes along with more than 30 different varieties of apple to taste and buy and an apple crusher which was a hit with everyone, particularly the children. Thanks must go too, to the many local folk who brought along apples for identification.

There was garden advice from Peter Foley and a Lancashire Gardens Trust stall. Phil Rainford and Steve Edwards of LCC provided the apple expertise and artist, Annie Coxey, entertained children with a giant tree painting with bees and apples and bugs.

It was such a lovely day and we certainly hope to repeat it.
Forest of Bowland AONB Online

Developments continue on the website which in turn is attracting increasing traffic. There were 9,000 unique visits to the website in March 2011, which included 76% new visitors. A consistently high number visit the website for walking and cycling information and downloads, general information on villages and visitor attractions and increasingly to search for accommodation and events. Highlights for 2010 include:

- Photo gallery based around Sense of Place themes
- New pages packed with information and examples on Traditional Boundaries and Climate Change
- Visitor feedback functionality on the walking page
- New arts, crafts and rural skills directory
- Artist and producer spotlights on the homepage to complement the popular walk of the month
- Interactive sustainable tourism action plan linking to the interactive management plan
- New downloadable walking routes, some of which are linked to Green Tourism Business Scheme accredited businesses
Postscript

Although this Annual Report is about last financial year - 2010/11 - three valued members of the team have left the AONB recently and we can’t let them go without saying goodbye here.

Don McKay

Don McKay left the Forest of Bowland AONB Unit in the spring of 2011 after almost 34 years with Lancashire County Council and almost 20 years as AONB Officer. Don often seemed unassuming but he had a passion for Bowland which earned him respect throughout the area. Under his measured leadership many original initiatives took root: flagship activities which led to Bowland becoming a well known trailblazer in the “protected landscape” community. Don was instrumental in setting up the National Association for AONBs and kick-starting the Bowland Initiative - the national, rural advisory pilot which later became Lancashire Rural Futures. He was also actively involved in Bowland’s success in gaining the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

Don steered the AONB team from its modest beginnings as a one man band to the thriving team it is today and was quietly determined to expand and strengthen the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership. He found a way through restructures, funding cuts and changing priorities to champion the AONB with politicians, senior officers, partners and communities. Over the years he fostered a strong sense of partnership working enabling a huge amount of work to be carried out – work which has conserved and enhanced the AONB.

Susan Macdonald

Don writes:

This is the last opportunity I’ll get to formally thank Susan MacDonald, the AONB Unit’s Communications Officer for her service to Bowland and the AONB Team. Susan and her family are leaving Lancashire and planning a new life on the other side of the world and we wish her well in her adventure. She leaves her mark on almost everything the AONB does as the appearance of every publication, of the website, even communications with the media are all presented in a consistent house style and with consistent messages thanks to the revolutionary modernising changes Susan introduced after she joined the Team in 1993. Charged with adopting a more professional and business-like approach to AONB publicity and information Susan quickly employed her enthusiasm and determination, often battling the system to get the Forest of Bowland AONB the recognition it deserved.

From the current Forest of Bowland AONB logo to the Communications Strategy setting the house style with distinctive colours and templates for all communications work that Susan introduced and managed so effectively, her influence will be remembered.

One of Susan’s many achievements over the years was the time consuming and demanding task of managing what was originally a week or slightly more of participatory events known as the Bowland Festival that involved many months of painstaking planning to ensure its success. Events were so popular that many people who wanted to go on the walks or talks couldn’t get places so we took the decision to roll out a full series of events throughout the seasons which is now known as Festival Bowland, including an increasingly popular Arts Festival. Over recent years Susan has used her knowledge of working with young people to good effect in working closely with the RSPB to run the AONB and RSPB Outreach Education Project.

So thanks Susan for all your many contributions, a few of which I have mentioned, and we wish you well in your new life in Oz.
Martin Charlesworth

Martin joined the Forest of Bowland AONB Unit in March 2006, after working for BTCV at their Preston office, following 'early retirement' from BT. Martin took on the role of Community Projects officer, a role that he filled effortlessly, and with great commitment to the people and places of Bowland. Always interested in their stories, Martin struck up real friendships with many of our partners and communities. As usual, their words probably sum him up best:

‘Martin has such enthusiasm, and he’s always so cheerful! When he first visited Bleasdale parish hall it was still a building site, and he just got stuck in – literally - digging in the garden! Without people like him our project would never have been completed.’ Jean Fone, Bleasdale parish hall

‘Days in the AONB were that extra bit entertaining when Martin was involved! Risk assessments and rushes, Michelin star soup, Larry the Lapwing, bike races (and crashes!), and eagerly awaited blog posts all leap to mind.’ Gavin Thomas, RSPB

‘Martin was a great help to the parish of Dunsop Bridge, and Bowland as a whole. He started a leaflet for tourism businesses in Newton and Dunsop. He organised the refurbishment of the ancient sign post at the end of the Trough road and the new old-style sign post there as well. He personally repainted the West Riding signs around the village and supplied paint for the goalposts. He was somebody who I felt I could ring up with a problem and he would do his best to help: which was brilliant!’ Rachel Carr, parish council

‘We first got to know Martin when he visited the Slaidburn Archive in 2006 and offered support and some financial help. He has since provided advice and support on many occasions in various ways and in different areas. Martin is thoughtful, easy in conversation and has a great sense of humour. Some of his emails have been memorable, with glimpses of his particular whimsical style.’ Jenny Bradley and Helen Wallbank, Slaidburn Archive

‘In my experience, Martin has been an invaluable link between the Forest of Bowland AONB team and the local community. He has consistently defied the local government officer stereotype. His practical, 'can-do' approach has inspired confidence in others more diffident than himself. Above all, perhaps it's the fact that he has shown a rare talent for working productively with all sorts of people from very different walks of life - and he obviously enjoys this - that has made the difference. It is very unlikely that the community woodland initiative here in Newton would have seen the light of day without Martin’s support.’ Geoff Morries, Newton in Bowland

Martin promises to remain a loyal volunteer within the Forest of Bowland AONB, so we hope to continue to work with him into the future. Thanks for the last five years Martin – it’s been a ball!
### Financial Summary

#### Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee Budget

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<td>Natural England</td>
<td>272,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
<td>22,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contributions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>United Utilities</td>
<td>7,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Project Contributions</td>
<td>83,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Councils</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>32,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
<td>7,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Councils</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craven</td>
<td>5,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendle</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>7,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribble Valley</td>
<td>7,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyre</td>
<td>7,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUB TOTAL – LOCAL AUTHORITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>80,693</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME RECEIVED</strong></td>
<td><strong>465,971</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT COSTS (in kind)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire County Council</td>
<td>54,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>520,468</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Membership and Terms of Reference of the Joint Advisory Committee 2010/11

Lancashire County Council
County Councillor A Atkinson
County Councillor S Charles
County Councillor D Smith

North Yorkshire County Council
County Councillor R Welch

Craven Council
Councillor L Barrington

Lancaster City Council
Councillor J Pritchard

Wyre Borough Council
Councillor R Brooks

Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor Mrs R Elms

Preston City Council
Councillor J Browne

Pendle Borough Council
Councillor J Starkie

Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils
Mr M Helm

Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Councillor C Price

United Utilities
Mr I Grindy

Environment Agency
Mr D Bond

Natural England
S Marsden

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Andrew Gouldstone

Forest of Bowland Landowning and Farming Advisory Group
A Taylor
T Binns

Ramblers Association
Mr D Kelly
Membership

The Committee and its constituent bodies are playing the major role in ensuring that the Forest of Bowland Management Plan is implemented. The role of the Committee and its Terms of Reference is as follows:

The Joint Advisory Committee supports and encourages an active partnership between all of the agencies involved and co-ordinates management over the whole of the AONB. The aim is to:

- promote the AONB at national, regional and local level,
- ensure that the AONB is conserved and managed effectively,
- work to assist the social and economic well being of the AONB commensurate with the conservation of its special qualities,
- provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas,
- consider any issues likely to affect the area adversely and agree action,
- make recommendations for new initiatives

A range of organisations with interests in the AONB is eligible for membership. Members include local authorities and the key organisations and interests, including representatives of local people, whose involvement will assist in implementing the Management Plan. Membership is kept under review and is at the discretion of the local authorities. Ideally there should be between 10 and 20 members and, where it is not practicable to include all of the represented interests, regular consultation mechanisms should be established.

Brief for the Joint Advisory Committee

- co-ordinate the preparation and implementation of strategic plans for the AONB, including the preparation of the statutory Management Plan,
- advise local authorities preparing structure plans, local plans or other plans covering all or part of the AONB, to ensure that policies and practices (including those for development control) are co-ordinated and consistent with the statement of commitment and AONB Management Plan,
- advise local authorities and other agencies on the level of resources required for effective AONB management,
- lobby to influence organisations that are not members of the JAC in the delivery of their services and programmes in order to benefit Bowland communities, businesses and the environment,
- advise on, and co-ordinate the actions of the constituent organisations to achieve the objectives of the AONB and, in particular, ensure that the statement of commitment and Management Plan are implemented and reviewed. This includes:
  - receiving monitoring reports from the partners on progress and achievements in implementing the Management Plan, reviewing the Management Plan every five years and producing an annual report,
  - agreeing an annual work programme for the AONB to be delivered by the partners and the AONB Staff Unit,
  - carrying out special studies of key issues, as they arise, for example by setting up working parties or conducting research
  - advising the appropriate local planning authority about any developments within or adjacent to the AONB that are likely to affect significantly the landscape character of the area,
  - acting as forum for the discussion of major issues affecting the character of the AONB
  - promoting other action that is necessary to further the objectives of the AONB designation
Contact

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Email: david.padley@lancashire.gov.uk

Tarja Wilson
Area North
Tel: 01200 448000
Mobile: 07887 830853
Email: tarja.wilson@lancashire.gov.uk

Other Countryside Services
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Natural Environment Officer, Wyre Borough Council
Tel: 01253 887505
Email: aboden@wyrebc.gov.uk
www.wyrebc.gov.uk

United Utilities
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Tel: 01200 454400
www.unitedutilities.com