



# FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## An outstanding landscape of natural and cultural heritage

### Bowland Hay Time and Networks for Nectar

The N4N project is now delivering more by supporting community groups and smaller projects. In Lancaster District we are working with the Lancaster Beekeepers, creating nectar strips on community spaces along the Lune Millennium Park and in Caton and Hornby villages; in Clitheroe we are supporting the Ribblesdale Rotary in their schools project 'Wildflowers into the Meadows', helping five schools grow plug plants to plant out into one of our restoration sites at Gisburn Forest; in Hurst Green and Dolphinholme we are supporting the church wardens in improving management of the church grounds; in Chipping we are supporting Chipping in Bloom further develop their wildlife areas in the village; and at Beacon Fell Country Park we are working with the ranger to restore areas of grassland to meadow, and grow on plug plants with Krishen, our placement student from last year.

During the winter months we have been preparing for our summer season of restoration, management, advice provision and public events. On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April we are hosting a Networks for Nectar event at the Stirk House Hotel, where interested landowners, businesses and community groups will be able to hear more about the project, and the importance of bees, visit the hotel gardens and hear about the work they have undertaken to support pollinators and other wildlife.

For further information contact [sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk) or visit [www.forestofbowland.com/haytimeproject](http://www.forestofbowland.com/haytimeproject)

### Biodiversity

Since the completion of the Pennine Peat LIFE bid (still awaiting news), we have been working on developing and delivering species recovery plans for key species in the AONB area. Plans are under way for globeflower, juniper and greater butterfly orchid, and are being discussed for black grouse. We have also been working on the datasets for priority habitats within the Pendle area, with a view to surveying the woodland sites this spring and summer.

For further information on these projects, please contact [sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk) or [elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Traditional Boundaries

#### Hedge laying: Winter 2014-2015

Once again hedge laying training sessions have been well supported with more than 32 members of the local community including volunteers, contractors and farmers attending. These have been held at the Crook O' Lune - Lancaster, Keasden - Craven and Bleasdale - Wyre. All participants use the Lancashire & Westmorland Style with expert guidance provided by local trainers.

The highlight of the season was the Bowland hedge laying competition held at Lane Side Farm, West Bradford on 7th March.

The hedge laying was organised and funded by the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Lancashire County Council.

There was a total of 104 hedge laying training days for Winter 2014/2015.

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### **Hedge planting with Ribblesdale Students**

8 students from Ribblesdale High School spent 6 days during February-March planting over 300 metres of hedgerow on Saddle End Farm – quite an achievement! These skills are credited to the on-going NVQ qualifications in Countryside Management and Animal Care that they are taking.

## **Access Improvements**

### **Garstang/River Wyre access for all path**

Works have been completed on the riverside footpath between Wyre Lane and Broom Hill on the east side of the River Wyre at Garstang. This is now a surfaced path with gates suitable for use by the majority of footpath users. Garstang Millennium Green Committee engaged Proffitts CIC to project manage the scheme, and the project has been funded by Lancashire Environment Fund (LEF), Wyre Borough Council and Lancashire County Council.

### **Bilsborrow canal towpath ramp access**

Work has been completed on a new ramp access between the canal and the A6 at Green Man Bridge adjacent to Barton Grange. Myerscough & Bilsborrow Parish Council have been working over the past 2 years with the Canal & Rivers Trust with support from Wyre Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to improve the canal towpath between Bilsborrow and Barton Grange Garden Centre/Marina. The whole length has been surfaced with associated edging maintenance.

### **Nicky Nook Fell, Nr Scorton-path improvements**

The second phase of path improvements on the main footpath over Nicky Nook Fell between Snow Hill/Higher Lane junction and the SE side have been completed using a technique that creates a sub-soil path using natural materials on site. This brings the total length to 1.3km of sub soil path with associated drainage works and includes the creation of two stone pitched crossings points for quad bikes.

There are several tourism businesses in this popular area linked by the network of routes suitable for walking, cycling, horse riding and Trampers, several of which are promoted on [www.forestofbowland.com](http://www.forestofbowland.com)

### **Promoted routes monitoring & maintenance**

The volunteers' valued support continues in helping us to monitor promoted routes across the AONB and carry out minor maintenance and waymarking whilst out and about. Additional follow up maintenance has also been carried out on stiles, gates, boardwalks and signposts using local contractors.

For further information contact [tarja.wilson@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:tarja.wilson@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Resilient and sustainable rural communities

### Champion Bowland & Bowland Experience

The new agreement between Champion Bowland (CB), Bowland Experience Ltd (BEx) and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust - book-keeping and day-to-day administration of banking and correspondence for both companies - is working well. The AONB team in Dunsop Bridge remains the point of contact with both CB and BEx in their respective fields of work in the Forest of Bowland. Cathy Hopley is the link with Champion Bowland on the Small Grant scheme and SDF and Hetty Byrne continues to work with Bowland Experience members on their various tourism development projects.

For further information contact [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk) or [hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Bowland Scrapbook

The Scrapbook publication was a great success and rounded off a great little project for 2014. Just under £1000 was raised through sales of the book, and the Trustees were so pleased with this that they have funded a re-print to go on sale primarily through the Museum of Lancashire to coincide with the exhibition. Copies will also be available at points of sale throughout the AONB for a donation of just £5, so get your copy quick!

Contact the AONB office if you would like a copy 01200 448000.

### Sustainable Development Fund

The 2014 fund was all spent up with 8 projects receiving a total of just over £19,000. Schemes this year included invasive species monitoring and removal in both the Wyre and Lune river catchments; a new biomass store at Thorneyholme school and insulation improvements at Pendleton village hall. More details of these and all the schemes we have supported over the years can be found on the website <http://forestofbowland.com/SDF-Projects-201415>

The 2015 fund will soon be open for business.

For further information contact [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk)

## A strong connection between people and the landscape

### Bowland Revealed

A joint project between Lancashire Arts Development, the Forest of Bowland AONB and Ribble Valley borough council, Bowland Revealed has been awarded £62,000 grant funding from Arts Council England via their Grants for the Arts strand. The programme began in May last year and will run until the end of December 2015.

The Bowland Revealed project received some positive press coverage during its first phase and was very fortunate to be picked up by BBC TV's Countryfile programme, which featured the Landmarks artworks on the episode broadcast on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Broadcasting Audience Research Board figures estimate that this particular episode had an audience of 6.81 million – a fantastic boost for the project and a great showcase for the artists and the Forest of Bowland AONB. Originally intended to be on public view for a seven week period (from 20<sup>th</sup> September to 9<sup>th</sup> November), the interest shown by the BBC also resulted in the Landmarks having an extended run to the end of December.

The project also received wide coverage on-line and via social media. The Forest of Bowland AONB website received 2,917 page views (2,225 unique) for the Bowland Revealed project to the end of January 2015; whilst Mid Pennine Arts' web pages for the project received 1,917 page views (1,503 unique). MPA's figures show that e-bulletins, on-line invitations, blog posts, Tweets, Facebook posts and the online project leaflet resulted in over 4,400 active engagements via views, "likes", shares or comments. The six community art workshops which took place during autumn 2014 attracted 60 participants in total.

During 2015 the Bowland Revealed programme will focus on the Explore & Engage strand, which aims to encourage involvement by communities around the periphery of the AONB – particularly in those areas which are shown traditionally to have low arts engagement.

For further information contact [sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Festival Bowland

This year's programme will run from February through to December and is offering over 90 events in and around the AONB.

Once again, events have been made possible thanks to landowners, local experts, businesses and countryside staff including Wyre Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, RSPB and Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

During late spring and early summer why not look out for the Whimbrel Roost Watch on 29<sup>th</sup> April, Rathmell Heritage Ramble on 10<sup>th</sup> May, Map and Compass training on 30<sup>th</sup> May, an Evening Bat Walk on 5<sup>th</sup> June and a Ribble Valley Ramble on 26<sup>th</sup> June?

For details of all this year's events see the full programme within our new Discovery Guide or download it from the AONB website at <http://forestofbowland.com/files/uploads/pdfs/FesiGuideI5LoRes.pdf>

For more details contact [sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Dark Sky Discovery Sites

The Forest of Bowland is a stargazer's paradise - one of England's darkest areas making it a great destination both by day and night! During March we organised two workshops, attended by 20 Bowland Experience businesses – 'Star Tips for Profit', helping tourism businesses to gear up to provide an unforgettable dark sky experience for customers. The workshops, held at Wyreside Lakes Fishery and Stirk House Hotel, were delivered by local astronomer Robert Ince who has also helped the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park develop their offering and was the resident astronomer at the Scottish Dark Sky Observatory for its early phases. Working with Robert, the Forest of Bowland is currently applying for Dark Sky Discovery Site status for a number of sites across the AONB, so visitors can view the skies at their best! Visit <http://forestofbowland.com/Star-Gazing>

We'll keep you posted as things develop over the next few months!

For further information contact [hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:hetty.byrne@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Museum of Lancashire – Forest of Bowland AONB 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition

This year we are very pleased to be working with Lancashire County Museum Service to hold an exhibition at the Museum of Lancashire.

The exhibition will help to extend the AONB's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and will run from 9<sup>th</sup> May until 26<sup>th</sup> July at the Stanley Street venue in Preston. Featuring key Forest of Bowland information, details from the Bowland Scrapbook, fantastic images and a variety of interactive activities for children, the exhibition has something for the whole family and will be a great opportunity to reach a new audience.

In addition, on Bank Holiday Monday (25<sup>th</sup> May), there will also be free, drop-in art workshops delivered as part of the Bowland Revealed Explore & Engage project.

There will be a launch evening on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 4.30pm to 6.30pm – JAC members are very welcome to attend.

To find out more about the exhibition or to book a place at the launch contact [sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.silk@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Website & Leaflets

January saw the launch of a mobile friendly version of the website with some simplifications to design. Statistics showed that increasing numbers of visitors were accessing the website via smart phones, tablets and other mobile devices and the old site, created several years ago now, just wasn't customised for these various platforms. The new site is much fresher looking, with easier navigation and more images; feedback to date has been very positive and new interactivity via 'photo of week' has proved very popular. Have a look at [www.forestofbowland.com](http://www.forestofbowland.com)

Discover Bowland 2015 was launched in February and includes a wealth of information to tempt people out into this beautiful area. The full-colour A4 guide, which is available on-line and from local tourist information centres and selected venues, includes everything from walking routes and recipes to award winning green tourism businesses. And this year, for the first time, the new discovery guide features the Festival Bowland annual events calendar. Bowland Experience members supported the guide through business advertising, making the project viable.

Local businesses, tourism representatives and event providers joined AONB staff at a special celebratory launch of the guide held at Gibbon Bridge Hotel near Chipping on 11<sup>th</sup> February.

Due to demand we have also recently re-printed the Bowland by Bike Leaflet and the Gisburn Forest Bike Trails leaflet, supported again by Bowland Experience business contributions and the Forestry Commission.

## Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership

A separate update on the latest developments of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership is included in the JAC meeting papers.

If you'd like to get involved, or just keep in touch with our plans, please contact [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk)



## A dynamic and effective AONB partnership

### Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership (NUCLNP)

The Principal AONB Officer, AONB JAC Chair CC Atkinson and committee member Michael Helm attended the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership board and forum meeting on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in Greta Bridge, County Durham.

The Principal AONB Officer presented to the board on recent work of the AONB Partnership and outlined where there were likely synergies between the Partnership and NUCLNP.

Attendees at the Forum meeting were appraised of recent work of the NUCLNP, in particular:

- Establishment of a High Nature Value Farming Group and Report (<http://www.nuclnp.org.uk/themes-and-projects/>) looking at the future of this type of low-intensity, environmentally sensitive farming with the likely decline in agri-environment funding. NUCLNP has asked if the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership would like to be represented on this group. The AONB Unit will be approaching several farmers involved in this type of farming to ask if they would be willing to act as an AONB representative on this group.
- Valuing the Natural Capital of the NUCLNP area. This research aims to identify mechanisms to help attract more private and public investment in the natural environment. The Principal AONB Officer is currently working with LNP members and Eftec consultants on this research. A report on this work is likely to be complete later in autumn 2015.

For further information contact [elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk)

### Undergrounding for Visual Amenity

As part of the Undergrounding for Visual Amenity (UVA) programme, Electricity North West (ENWL) has been working with the Forest of Bowland AONB to identify visually intrusive sections of overhead lines for undergrounding.

Two undergrounding schemes have recently been working towards completion: Deep Clough to Winder in Littledale and Laund Wood to Middle Lees, near Whitwell.

In addition, ENWL have now announced future UVA funding allocations for AONBs and National Parks as part of their new business plan approved by OFGEM in the recent price review (RIIO-ED1). The Forest of Bowland AONB has been allocated approximately £1.8m to fund undergrounding scheme between April 2015 and March 2023.

### Rural Development Programme for England – LEADER Local Action Groups

Rural Development Programme for England has now been formally adopted by the European Commission. The Programme document is now available on GOV.UK - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/rdpe-programme-document-2014-to-2020](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rdpe-programme-document-2014-to-2020).

Defra has now formally announced which LEADER Local Action Groups have been successful and their total allocations for the 2014-2020 Programme. The two LAGs principally covering the Forest of Bowland AONB are as follows:

- North Lancashire and Bowland Local Action Group      £1.6m
- Yorkshire Dales Local Action Group                      £2.2m

The Forest of Bowland AONB will be represented on North Lancashire and Bowland Local Action Group executive by Elliott Lorimer, Principal AONB Officer and on Yorkshire Dales Local Action Group executive by Colin Price of Longbank Farm, Keasden representing the agricultural sector.

More details on Local Action Group funding priorities and calls for projects will follow later in 2015.