



FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Contents

View from the Chair

Natural & Cultural Heritage

Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme	03
Undergrounding for Visual Amenity	04
Traditional Boundaries	05
9,000 Reasons to Thank	06
Ribble Rivers Trust Volunteers	07
Street Lakes – Morphology Improvements	08
Peatland Restoration	09
Wyre Coast and Countryside Service – Looking After	10
Wildflowers for the Meadows	11

Resilient & Sustainable Communities

Bowland Experience	12
Champion Bowland	13
LEWFA Hyperfast Broadband	14

A Strong Connection Between People & The Landscape

Discovery Guide	15
Communication Projects	16
Wyre Coast and Countryside Service - Enjoying	17
Festival Bowland	18
Promoted Routes	19

Working in Partnership

AONB Networks	20
---------------	----

Financial Summary	22
--------------------------	-----------

Membership	23
-------------------	-----------

Contacts	25
-----------------	-----------



Common Darter, Lune
© Steven Kidd

Cover Image - River Hodder at Whitewell
© Chris Burscough

View from the Chair



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

One aspect of living and working in the Forest of Bowland that we can too easily take for granted is the vital input from local communities towards the work of the AONB Partnership; whether that is from individuals, community and voluntary groups, businesses or parish councils. This last year has seen some fantastic activities and initiatives being delivered - and supported - by volunteers and local businesses.

You will no doubt by now be well aware of the AONB Partnership's plans for the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme in 2018. But you may not have realised that our graduate placement, Jayne Ashe, has made a head start and has been busy supporting and co-ordinating a new 'Pendle Hill Volunteers Group' over the last year. The volunteers have been able to carry out small-scale tasks to improve the local environment of the hill, including woodland management, surveying, removal of invasives and hedgelaying amongst other things. We see this group growing and developing as the Pendle Hill LP begins its delivery phase next year.

Ribble Rivers Trust have been going from strength to strength recently, with new initiatives and projects sprouting up across the AONB, including the ambitious and exciting 'Ribble Life Together' catchment-wide initiative and the River Loud Farmer Facilitation Group. What the Trust also does fantastically is in harnessing the energies and enthusiasm of its volunteers. During the year, they have been involved in planting over 9,000 trees within the catchment – no mean feat!

Other notable voluntary efforts during the year include the Lawkland, Eldroth, Wharfe, Feizor and Austwick (LEWFA) Hyperfast Broadband connecting up local communities, and also the 'Promoted Routes' volunteers from Wyre Countryside Service and the AONB Unit, who are out there in all weathers monitoring and maintaining public rights of way in the area.

Local businesses have been doing their bit for the area too. Under the auspices of Champion Bowland (the charitable company which aims to promote the conservation and enhancement of the AONB landscape), Bowland Clothing Company Ltd. has launched a range of 'Forest of Bowland' merchandise, with 60% of any profits going to Champion Bowland.

Local tourism businesses have also been extremely generous donating prizes for the 'badge-box' prize draw and items for a Champion Bowland charity auction. These kinds of donation help to raise funds to offer small grants to support local community groups to conserve and enhance the AONB landscape.

I know there will be many other examples of local people doing their bit for the Forest of Bowland AONB whom I have not mentioned, but you know who you are and we really do appreciate your efforts. We couldn't do what we do without you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Atkinson".

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Natural & Cultural Heritage

Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme

2016 saw Cathy Hopley and Jayne Ashe from the AONB Team leading the development phase of the Heritage Lottery funded Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership in full force. A number of different development studies have been completed over the past year, all of which have assisted in the overall planning of the LP scheme. For example, Rigby Jerram carried out a full traditional boundary and phase 1 habitat survey over the 124sq km of landscape, and his results have helped us develop target areas for traditional boundary restoration and habitat management focus. A number of reports were produced looking at the visitors to the Pendle Hill landscape, as well as the tourism in the area and a communications strategy was produced which will assist in the programme's aims to engage with a wider and more diverse audience, both locally and in the surrounding urban areas.

Sixteen students from Manchester school of Architecture joined us more recently, as they worked to two briefs to design a shepherds hut and a summit shelter for walkers, both features which aim to be implemented as part of the landscape partnership. They produced some brilliant ideas in just over 10 days, and their suggestions have influenced the plans for both features.

The newly formed Pendle Hill volunteers group started activities in December, and have been hedge laying, tree planting and getting stuck in to tasks on the more creative side. This group will continue to meet throughout the development phase, and then throughout the 4 year programme.

The development work for the Landscape Partnership includes drawing up detailed costed plans for a number of different projects which will focus on the Environment, working on restoring and managing our wonderful natural heritage on the hill; Everyone, which will include outreach and community engagement work, providing members of the public with opportunities to get involved with local archaeology, reconnect with the area's social history and witness the collaboration between landscape and the arts; and the Economy, which will include work with local tourism providers, developing a local grants fund and developing local opportunities for apprenticeship and traineeships.

We aim to submit our stage 2 application to Heritage Lottery at the beginning of September, with high hopes that the scheme will begin in April 2018.



The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership board members in Sabden
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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Natural & Cultural Heritage

Undergrounding for Visual Amenity

As part of the 'Undergrounding for Visual Amenity' (UVA) programme, Electricity North West Ltd. (ENWL) has continued to work with the Forest of Bowland AONB Unit to identify visually intrusive sections of overhead lines for undergrounding. The AONB has an allocation of c. £1.8m for the current price review period (R10-ED1) from 2015 to 2023.

Work in 2016/17 has focused on planning and preparations for undergrounding schemes identified and agreed with ENWL in 2015. Three smaller schemes were completed in the Lune valley at Priory Farm, near Hornby and Farleton during the year. Schemes over Marl Hill Moor between Cow Ark and Newton and at Wolfen Hall, near Chipping are in construction and anticipated to complete next year.



Before and after undergrounding work at Priory Farm, near Hornby
© Electricity Northwest Ltd

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Natural & Cultural Heritage

Traditional Boundaries

It has been heartening to see the continued interest in the Traditional Boundaries programme – an interest which has been developed in partnership with Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service over a number of years and which is bearing real fruit.

Given the prominence of hedges and dry stone walls within the Bowland landscape, traditional boundaries have been one of the AONB's key areas of focus for some time. Not only do these types of boundary provide valuable wildlife habitat and stock shelter, they also help to tell the story of human settlement in the area over centuries. Although built to last, inevitably walls start to tumble and hedges become gappy or overgrown – at which point some skilled repair work is needed.

Through our 2016/17 Traditional Boundaries training programme we delivered 16 hedge laying sessions between 4th December and 9th March, working with trainees old and new and laying hundreds of meters of hedge. Expert guidance was provided by trainers Geoff Whitley, Joe Craig and Andy Kirkwood, whilst venues included Sykes Farm (Scorton), Higher Gills Farm (Rimington), Laneside Farm (West Bradford) and Grunsagill (Tosside). Volunteers from the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, Wyre Countryside Volunteers and members of the public took part in the training sessions.

Once again the annual Forest of Bowland Hedgelaying Competition was held in March at Laneside Farm. Part of the Lancashire and Westmorland Hedge Laying Association's Grand Prix calendar, the event is organised by Lancashire County Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council and the AONB.

People participate in the training courses for many different reasons and if even a small number are enthused enough to go on and learn more, then these traditional countryside skills have the chance to remain alive and prosper – vital if Bowland's landscape is to be cared for into the future.



Careful use of hand axe on the hedge at West Bradford
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Newly laid section of hedge above Rimington
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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Natural & Cultural Heritage



9,000 Reasons to Thank Ribble Rivers Trust Volunteers

Between November 2016 and March 2017 over 9,000 trees have been planted at four sites in the Ribble Catchment to help improve water quality, as part of the European Life Integrated Project, Natural Course.

This has been thanks to the time and effort of willing volunteers from primary schools, colleges, local businesses and the amazing Ribble Rivers Trust volunteers.

The trees planted this winter on riverbanks near Bashall, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Ramsgreave and Billington will also help reduce bank erosion and diffuse pollution from surrounding farmland, slow the flow of water entering the watercourse to reduce the risk of flooding downstream, and mitigate climate change by shading the water, keeping it cooler, and locking up carbon in the growing native woodland.

Most people associate trees with clean air and wildlife habitats but trees are also vital for improving water quality in our rivers and streams. Trees not only provide vital nutrients and shade for invertebrates and spawning fish but they have been known to almost completely prevent pesticides and phosphates from reaching watercourses.

Laura Melling, Store Manager at Fat Face Clitheroe said, "My team thoroughly enjoyed our tree planting day in November. We feel it's important to contribute and make a difference in our local community and doing something like this has a long term, positive impact on our local environment as well as supporting an important local initiative."

Edisford Primary School teacher Ben Walker added, "Our Year 4 pupils loved tree planting – they were thrilled that the trees they were planting would be around for decades and have such a positive impact on the local environment. For many of them it was a totally new experience and they learnt so much about trees and river habitats."

Natural Course is a collaborative project delivered by Environment Agency, United Utilities, Greater Manchester Combined Authorities, Natural England and The Rivers Trust. To find out how you can volunteer with the Ribble Rivers Trust, visit ribbletrust.org.uk/volunteering. To find out more about Natural Course or to sign up to volunteer, visit: www.naturalcourse.co.uk

Volunteers from Fat Face, Clitheroe
© Ribble Rivers Trust

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Natural & Cultural Heritage

Street Lakes – Morphology Improvements

Despite its aesthetically pleasing nature Street Brook has a number of environmental issues. By working in conjunction with Jon Grey at the Wild Trout Trust we identified a number of low cost projects to improve both habitat, water quality and biodiversity. The beauty of low cost interventions is that they are both simple and effective. On the watercourse concerned there were long sections of straight canalised watercourse, this leads to low biodiversity, poor retention of sediment and poor geomorphology. To address the issue, sinuosity had to be introduced into already constrained watercourses, this is achieved by installing large woody debris into the channel deflecting high flows thus causing scour and the deposition of sediment at various points within the channel and creating a more sinuous channel when the watercourse is at low levels. In this instance, we hope that the deposition of sediment within the channel will promote improved spawning conditions for salmonid species such as brown trout, sea trout and Atlantic salmon. The works which were completed on Street Brook were funded by the Environment Agency through the Fishery Improvement Fund.



In-channel work at Street Brook, Dolphinholme
© Wyre Rivers Trust

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Natural & Cultural Heritage



Peatland Restoration

This year the AONB have been working in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA) to support the Lancashire Peat Partnership and to deliver peat restoration work on the ground. The Partnership was set up in 2009 to co-ordinate peatland restoration projects within the uplands of the Lancashire sub-region and border areas. It is intended that through this co-ordination work, partners would be able to avoid duplication of effort and maximise resources. Since 2013, the EA have supported the work of the Lancashire Peat Partnership, providing expertise, information, staff time and funding. This has enabled the Partnership to have some dedicated Project Officer support and has, with match funding from partners, delivered peatland restoration on the ground since 2013.

This year (2016-7) the work on the ground was delivered on the Grosvenor estate at Abbeystead, where an area of 77 ha was identified as being in need for gully and hag reprofiling and bare peat restoration. This work was planned and received consent for delivery from Natural England in the autumn of 2016 and work began in early spring 2017. Wool filled hessian bags and tubes were used to slow the flow of water from areas of bare peat and help to trap eroding peat particles. Low dams hold the water back to help to keep the surface of the bare peat damp all year, in preparation for the areas being seeded with upland grass and heather seed. Larger dams and bunds are used further down from the water shed, there the gullies are up to 3 m deep. The work will continue into 2017-8 and beyond, as the restoration moves downslope.

Timber bunding and wool log
© Sarah Robinson

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Natural & Cultural Heritage

Wyre Coast and Countryside Service – Looking After

Access for all and Promoted route management

Rangers and volunteers helped to provide access for all by looking after popular picnic areas such as Brock Picnic Area and gateway access points to the Forest of Bowland at Garstang and Scorton. Two volunteer teams carried out a programme of surveys, maintenance and improvement on paths, routes and trails that were promoted by the Council and the AONB and visitor centres. Repairs to paths affected by the flooding of 2015 and 2016 were undertaken with funding from LCC PROW team particularly in the Brock valley. With the support of United Utilities volunteers undertook repairs to the concessionary path at the top of the Grizedale Valley to Holme Wood /Leathercoat Wood. East Bank Path - Wyre volunteers supported The Garstang Millennium Green Trustees and volunteers to improve a busy footpath into the Millennium Green. They received funding from various sources and, with contractors, improved access to the eastern side of the river on the Wyre Way long distance route which acts as a gateway into the Forest of Bowland. The work included installation of an interpretation panel, new fencing, gates and vegetation management.

Biodiversity - Invasives Non Native Species

Awareness training took place with the Wyre Waters Catchment Partnership. Staff and volunteers learnt about the impact of non-native invasive species in the river catchment and how to identify and manage them. This was followed up with an invasives-themed guided walk during the Walking Festival and in summer the public were invited to take part in Himalayan balsam management in the Brock valley and at various sites along the River Wyre

Community Engagement

Promotion and encouragement of volunteering in Wyre is a priority for the council. Exhibitions were taken to community shows and events to provide opportunities for the public to meet up with the Wyre Coast and Countryside Service to find out about volunteering and how to be involved in the care of the countryside.



Dead hedging following flood damage in the Brock valley
© Wyre Council

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Natural & Cultural Heritage

Wildflowers for the Meadows

Wildflowers for the Meadows is an 18 month project funded by Lancashire Environmental Fund which began in May 2016, following on from the Networks for Nectar project of 2014-16. The project will run till September 2017.

The project is aiming to enhance a number of wildflower meadows across the Forest of Bowland AONB by producing plug plants of late flowering species, which cannot be successfully transferred using our usual green hay transfer, as they have not set seed by the time the transfers happen. These species, such as yarrow, knapweed, great burnet and meadow vetchling, can still thrive in the edges of the restored meadows, prolonging the nectar and pollen season for the wild pollinator species.

We have been working with Offshoots in Burnley to produce the plug plants, as well as with several community groups who have been learning how to grow their own plug plants.

As part of the project, we worked with a film maker to produce a series of instructional videos looking at collecting seed, drying and storing seed, growing plug plants and planting them out. They can be seen on the AONB website <http://forestofbowland.com/Wildflowers-Meadows>



Great burnet - a later flowering meadow plant
© Sarah Robinson

Filming for one of the "How To" videos
© Sarah Robinson

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Resilient & Sustainable Communities

Bowland Experience

New Bowland Clothing Range

Bowland Experience member – The Bowland Clothing Company Limited – has developed a range of merchandise including sweatshirts, polo shirts, jackets and gilets from which 60 percent of sales profits will be donated to Champion Bowland.

Owner of the Ribchester-based company Tony Walters said, "Our range has been born out of a desire to produce high quality garments which not only look good, but perform well too. Donating a percentage of our profits to Champion Bowland helps us to give something back to the local area."

Champion Bowland is a small charity which works to enhance the very special landscape of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by providing easily accessible small grants for local projects which benefit the environment, communities and visitors.

The full range of clothing featuring a bespoke logo, was launched in the spring of 2017 and can be purchased from www.thebowlandclothingcompany.com or via the Forest of Bowland AONB website at www.forestofbowland.com/Forest-Bowland-AONB-Shop

Encouraging Visitor donations

Thanks to the generosity of Bowland Experience member, The Traddock Hotel, our collection box badges now come with an entry postcard with a draw to win a luxury night's stay for two at the hotel. This simple incentive is to encourage visitors to buy a postcard and badge, with collected funds donated to Champion Bowland – at £1 per badge, funds can soon add up! You'll see the collection boxes distributed across the AONB, mainly hosted by Bowland Experience members. New for 2017 has been for BEx members to encourage donations to the boxes for those picking up a copy of the Discovery Guide – which is currently free.

The prize-draw will take place in September 2017, and we will be looking for another BEx business to support the postcard incentive for next year.



A gilet from The Bowland Clothing Company range
© The Bowland Clothing Company Limited



Sustainable Tourism Forum

The annual Sustainable Tourism Forum & Bowland Experience AGM were held on Wednesday 23rd November at Spread Eagle, Sawley. The event was attended by 40 delegates including Bowland Experience members and AONB partners and staff. The evening was an opportunity for businesses to network and enjoy some fantastic local produce laid-on by the hosts, as well as hearing the success stories from Lancashire Tourism Award nominees – The Bowland Cottage, Newton (self-catering award) and Browsholme Hall (sustainable tourism award).

There was also a presentation of the opportunities for Champion Bowland fund-raising, including hosting badge boxes and supporting the new Bowland Clothing Company AONB range.

Charity Auction

A charity auction was run via Facebook over a fortnight in October, supported by Bowland Experience members and generating funds for Champion Bowland.

£564 was raised, and as well as raising valuable funds for Champion Bowland, the use of social media for the auction was a great way to raise the profile of the charity, the AONB and the Bowland Experience businesses involved.

Thank you so much to all of the businesses who donated prizes that the public could bid for; these were James Places (£139); Clearbeck Gardens (£44); Cobden Farm cottage (£130); Mrs Dowsons/Scare Kingdom (£35); Dale House B&B (£81); Waddow Lodge Gardens (£20); Spread Eagle, Sawley (£100) and Lowther Pavilion Theatre (£15).

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Resilient & Sustainable Communities



Champion Bowland

Champion Bowland raises funds from visitor donations and charitable activities. Our Trustees award grants which support projects which benefit the environment, local communities and visitors, to conserve and enhance the natural environment, landscape and heritage of the Forest of

Bowland AONB. As a not-for-profit recognised as a small charity by HMRC, the Trustees in the winter of 2016-17 started the process of reviewing their governance arrangements jointly with Bowland Experience Directors. This was to explore the benefits of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission. A decision was taken by Champion Bowland's Trustees at the end of March to start the activities needed for the application process, with the preferred charitable model being an Associate CIO. This type of charitable constitution enables membership, whereby the public can join as supporters or members of the charity.

A small but dedicated group of Trustees continue to administer the grant process including:-

- Paul Reynolds our Chair (of the Traddock Hotel)
- Martin Charlesworth (of Friends of Bowland)
- Brenda Mccloughin (of the Spread Eagle)
- And Janet Sharp (of Height Top Farm holiday cottages)

We also thank Phil Dykes (ex-Lancashire Wildlife Trust) for his kind service who resigned as a Trustee January 2017.

Our Trustees are pleased to have awarded grants for a diverse mix of six projects for applications received during April 2016 - March 17 (see list below), although a number of these projects will see completion in the summer and autumn of 2017-18.

- The Human Hive, Muck and Nettles
- Chain saw training for volunteers of Moor Piece Woodland, Wildlife Trust
- Repair of public footpath bird hide, Bleasdale Cottages
- Bolton by Bowland Heritage Trail
- Pollinator Pathway, Lune Valley Bee Keepers
- Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition

Secretariat support continues to be provided to the Trustees by the Forest of Bowland AONB and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, especially during what will be a significant process of change for the charity over the next year ahead.

Please see our website for further information
www.championbowland.org.uk

Lune Valley Bee Keepers pollinator pathway before and after
© Erica Sarney

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Resilient & Sustainable Communities

LEWFA Hyperfast Broadband

In January 2015, Lawkland Parish was approached by neighbouring Clapham to see if people would like to join the Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN) network. Since at the time, the parish languished at the end of two telephone exchange lines with a maximum of 1mb of data, the answer was a very quick 'Yes'. Soon the parish had gathered around 100 residents signed up for the service, recognised as the fastest fibre broadband in the UK. Properties in the parish in the Forest of Bowland AONB in Lawkland and Eldroth, were eligible, along with those across the A65 in Wharfe, Feizor and Austwick – LEWFA Hyperfast Broadband was born.

Now over two years later, about 240 houses have registered for the connection. The Forest of Bowland AONB provided a grant to help with planning: every metre of more than 55kms has had to be plotted and approved. In the summer of 2016, work began to dig the ducting across the communities. Although first concentrated in Austwick and Feizor because of proximity to the connection from Clapham, 2017 has seen a major push to bring the line into Lawkland Parish. 56 houses in Lawkland and Eldroth are now in the process of having ducting brought to their garden boundaries and by the end of the year, with a following wind, some decent weather and fingers crossed, the bulk of them will go live.

The funds – over £200,000 – have been raised from local people through loans and shares. Landowners have given permission for free for the network to cross their land. All the planning and work is done by local people, sometimes using contractors to help out. Through rain and shine, volunteers have helped get the orange ducting into the ground, to the houses, and connected.

It is a remarkable project which has shown true community spirit and commitment.



Cable being laid out
© LEWFA

Cable trench under construction
© LEWFA

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A Strong Connection Between People & The Landscape

Discovery Guide

Dark Sky discovery; family-friendly walks; seasonal wildlife and over 70 Festival Bowland events – including a world premiere! - are just a few of the things featured in 2017's Discover Bowland brochure.

Local businesses, tourism staff, event organisers and community members celebrated the release of the brand new guide, which was launched 1st February at Holmes Mill in Clitheroe – one of several venues owned by Bowland Experience member, James' Places.

The publication showcases the landscape, wildlife, people and places of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which covers 312 square miles of breath-taking Lancashire and North Yorkshire countryside.

The guide, put together by AONB staff and journalist Mark Sutcliffe from Salar Media, was written with both residents and visitors in mind, offering ideas for afternoon tea stops, tips for star gazing, wildlife highlights and a whole range of Festival Bowland events.

The free guide is available from Visitor Information Centres in and around the AONB and also from a range of local venues, businesses and accommodation providers. The guide is supported through advertising from Bowland Experience members, and is distributed nationally through Take One Media. Although the guide is free, a new feature on the front of the guide encourages visitors to donate to Champion Bowland if they have picked up the quality publication.

An on-line version is available on the Forest of Bowland AONB website at www.forestofbowland.com along with a full calendar of Festival Bowland events.



Discovery Guide
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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A Strong Connection Between People & The Landscape

Communication Projects

Charity Calendar

The Forest of Bowland 2017 calendar captures the unique sense of place of this beautiful area. Featuring some wonderful, seasonal landscape, wildlife and farming photographs, the calendar raised over £700 for Champion Bowland to support a range of fantastic local projects.

The photographs in this year's calendar were all kindly shared by residents and visitors to the area via the AONB website - <http://forestofbowland.com/visitor-photogallery> - and all the images submitted (over 200) can be viewed there. Keen photographers are still able to upload their photographs to the website where they have the chance of being chosen as "photo of the week", or even appearing in print in the AONB's 2018 calendar!

Look out for the 2018 calendar in local outlets or buy online at: www.forestofbowland.com/Forest-Bowland-AONB-Shop

Family Fun

Featuring bright colours and a fun design, our family-friendly resources got a brand new look in time for the school summer holidays. From seasonal quizzes and anagrams to village I Spy sheets and Bowland Bingo the website now has a whole range of options to choose from. Along with beautiful colouring sheets produced by local artist, Louise Mills, these downloadable activity sheets are designed to help families enjoy Bowland and find out more about this fantastic area and what they can find here.

Bowland Bingo

People walking with rucksacks	A lapwing	A beautiful leaf	A kissing gate	Pendle Hill
A leather	A dry stone wall	A trig point	Rain drops	A fluttery butterfly
An old field barn	The cry of a curlew	A yellow flower	The Trough Road	A church with a tower
A village cafe	Some sheep	The sound of the wind in the trees	Clouds	A brown hare
A river or a stream	Some heather (flowering or not)	Cyckits	A hawthorn tree	A fantastic view!

With quizzes and activities for everyone to enjoy, why not take a quick look at: forestofbowland.com/family-fun



A Second Bite at the Anniversary Apple

The AONB's 50th anniversary exhibition, which ran at the Museum of Lancashire during 2015, was lucky enough to get two further outings, this time at Clitheroe Castle Museum and Lancaster Maritime Museum. Featuring the Bowland Scrapbook and images submitted for our anniversary photography celebration, plus wildlife spotter and "dry stone wall" activities for families, the exhibition ran from late spring to mid-summer 2016 in Clitheroe and from summer to February 2017 in Lancaster. We were fortunate to be able to retain the large-scale AONB location map and the panoramic landscape image which had featured in the exhibition and these are now on display in our Dunsop Bridge office. The AONB Partnership is very grateful for the support given by Lancashire Museums Service throughout our anniversary celebrations.

Family Fun sheet
© Forest of Bowland AONB
2017 AONB Calendar
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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A Strong Connection Between People & The Landscape

Wyre Coast and Countryside Service - Enjoying

Festival Bowland, Wyre Walks and Activities

The council coordinated a programme of activities with the aim of connecting people to the natural environment through healthy outdoor exercise. These included: Walking Wyre, Health Walks - 1 hour free walks which started from venues including Garstang and Scorton, and 2 hour Legstretchers from Bilsborrow, Garstang and Scorton; Trampler Treks, which provided customers with disabilities who use "off- road ability mobility vehicles" opportunities to explore the area with the support of Trampers and guides for the day and Festival Bowland - themed guided walks where leaders highlighted the heritage of the Forest of Bowland on walks covering subjects such as brown hares, whimbrels and Bleasdale WWI heritage.

Garstang Walking Festival –Ridges, Rivers and Rural Pastures

In 2016 the Friends of Garstang Walking Festival coordinated the Festival supported by Wyre Council. Taking place the second week in May, the nine day festival celebrated springtime in Garstang, rural Wyre and the Forest of Bowland and aimed to encourage new visitors as well as local residents to explore the area on foot. Walks taking people to places not normally open to the public were particularly popular. The festival was well attended - customers particularly enjoyed the local knowledge provided and the expertise and enthusiasm of the walk leaders.

Visit Garstang

The visitor centre at Garstang provides an easy access location for visitors to find out about Wyre and the Forest of Bowland and helps to promote local visitor attractions, accommodation and places to enjoy through walking and cycling.



Participants during the Garstang Walking Festival
© Mike Coleran

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A Strong Connection Between People & The Landscape



Festival Bowland

From dawn chorus to dark skies, the Festival Bowland annual events programme once again offered a host of opportunities for people to make the most of this beautiful area.

This year's calendar included walks-a-plenty of course. Bluebell strolls, moorland bird safaris, bat walks, heritage discovery, a brown hare walk and a trek to the summit of Pendle Hill were all included. Garstang Walking Festival in May lined up an impressive array of outings as usual, whilst Pendle's Walking Festival planned over 60 walks throughout the borough – including routes in the Forest of Bowland. The Bank Holiday Ribbles Valley Rambles once again drew large audiences.

Family-friendly events ranged from crafts and kite flying to pond dipping and shelter craft, plus the well-loved Gruffalo walks at Beacon Fell. Dark sky discovery nights proved popular – despite the less than reliable weather! – whilst creative activities were also on the menu with felt making, greenwood working and willow bird feeders, plus an open studios and art fair.

Our annual catch up with Uclan's archaeological excavation above Whitewell moved indoors this year. Lecturers and students were taking a break from the summer dig to catch up on data gathered over the past six years, the findings from which made an absorbing presentation.

We crammed extra events into September to celebrate Outstanding Week, which this year ran from the 17th to the 25th. Organised by the AONB Family, the week aims to help people enjoy and be inspired by the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with events taking place across the country.

The birth of medieval Bowland was the focus of the sixth annual lecture hosted by the Lord of Bowland. Held once again at Browsholme's Tithe Barn, the event attracted record numbers.

Our thanks go to all the event leaders, businesses, organisations and landowners whose time, expertise and support go into making Festival Bowland such a varied programme.

Enjoying Wyre Council's autumn Trampler trek in Grizedale
© Forest of Bowland AONB

Kite Flying at Gisburn Forest Hub
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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A Strong Connection Between People & The Landscape

Promoted Routes

From village walks and valley rambles to strenuous high level hikes the Forest of Bowland promotes an array of on-line, downloadable routes. A very popular feature on our website, the routes offer visitors and residents the chance to discover some of the AONB's fantastic walking country, whether they are looking for a day-long excursion or an hour's easy stroll.

Weather, terrain, stock – and plenty of use! – all take their toll on path surfaces and access furniture and we rely on feedback from path users to let us know how the routes are coping.

To this end, a band of generous volunteers lace up their boots, pack a rucksack and pick up their notepads before heading out to monitor their chosen walks. Twice a year, generally during the autumn and spring, the keen hikers set off to make a note of any jammed gates, rickety stiles or missing fingerposts and report these back to the AONB Unit who can then arrange for repairs to get underway. Broken waymarkers and small-scale vegetation clearance are often dealt with by the volunteers themselves whilst out checking the paths.

Following the initial establishment of the path monitor group in 2013 in partnership with Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service, a refresher training session and recruitment drive was organised during the summer of 2016, which saw a number of new volunteers joining our existing members.

Without the help of our volunteer path monitors it would be very difficult to offer such a wide variety of promoted routes and we are extremely grateful to them for their time and expertise. We still have a number of "un-adopted" walks and are always happy to welcome new people.

Working once again with the Bentham Community Rail Partnership, late spring 2016 saw the launch of four walking routes – one from each of the stations at Wennington, Bentham, Clapham and Giggleswick. The routes (three circular and one linear) offer rail users the chance to combine their trip with a walk direct from one of these four Bentham Line stations.

Walking information and downloadable routes are available at <http://www.forestofbowland.com/Walking-Information>



Littledale stile before and after repair
© Forest of Bowland AONB

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Working in Partnership

AONB Networks

National Association for AONBs

Members of the AONB Unit and the AONB JAC Chairman, County Councillor Albert Atkinson, attended the NAAONB 'Landscapes for Life' Annual Conference held in Newport, Shropshire in July 2016. The theme for the conference was landscapes for health and wellbeing and had a range of speakers from NHS England, universities and health-related projects. The conference included field trips to Shropshire Hills, Malverns, Wye Valley and Clwydian Hills & Dee Valley

Other NAAONB meetings and events attended during the year included:

- the NAAONB Chairmen's Conference and AGM in London, November 2016
- Communication Officers meeting in Birmingham, December 2016
- Lead Officers meeting in Birmingham, February 2017

Northern AONB Group

The AONB Unit hosted the Northern AONB Group meeting in May 2016. The meeting was based at the Stirk House Hotel, near Gisburn (with meeting facilities kindly provided free of charge by the hotel) and included presentations on a variety of projects and activities and also two project site visits to Gisburn Forest and Bolton by Bowland.

In addition, the Solway Coast AONB hosted a meeting at Silloth in October 2016, visiting the Solway Mosses Landscape Partnership scheme at Holme Cultram Abbey and the RSPB Campfield Marsh reserve.



Pendle Hill
© Andy Cowell

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Working in Partnership



Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership

The Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership has continued to work closely with partners in Northern Upland Chain LNP. During 2016/17, the work of the LNP has focused on two principal issues: support for high nature value farming and establishing the Northern Hill Farmers' Panel.

High Nature Value Farming

The LNP has been piloting a 'Payment by Results' agri-environment scheme in Wensleydale. The scheme is supporting farmers (not in existing stewardship schemes) to conserve species-rich grassland and wader-friendly habitats, offering increased payments based on observed and assessed habitat improvements. The AONB has been working with farmers in Bowland to test the scoring process for this scheme, to establish any local differences for a potential future rollout of this approach in other areas of the LNP.

Northern Hill Farmers' Panel

The Panel was established in 2016 to represent farming in the Northern Upland Chain and help raise the profile of hill and upland farming within Government and other national organisations. Farmers from Bowland have been involved during the year and were involved in the visit of farming minister; George Eustice MP to the Yorkshire Dales National Park in March 2017. The minister visited the Wensleydale PBR pilot and LNP farmers also had time with the minister and the opportunity to discuss the potential impacts for upland farming due to the UK leaving the European Union.

Northern Hill Farmers' site visit
© Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

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Financial Summary

	Actual 2016/2017 (Out-turn prices) £'s
EXPENDITURE	
Core Costs	
Salary, N.I. and Superannuation	179,121.10
Out-based premises	18,268.26
Travel and subsistence	3,951.67
Central, Departmental & Tech. Support	39,636.40
Core Activities	18,646.61
SUB TOTAL OF CORE COSTS	259,624.04
Non Core Costs	
Employees	
Travel and subsistence	
Projects (inc. SDF)	96,805.26
SUB TOTAL OF NON CORE COSTS	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	356,429.30
INCOME	
Government Grants	
Defra Grant	207,843.03
Contributions	
United Utilities	6,800.00
Other project contributions	20,000.00
County Councils	
Lancashire	35,919.87
North Yorkshire	5,430.00
District Councils	
Craven	6,800.00
Lancaster	6,800.00
Pendle	6,800.00
Preston	6,800.00
Ribble Valley	6,800.00
Wyre	6,800.00
TOTAL INCOME RECEIVED	316,792.90
CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT COSTS (IN KIND)	
Lancashire County Council	39,636.40
	356,429.30

Membership



Membership and Terms of Reference of the Joint Advisory Committee 2016/17

Lancashire County Council

County Councillor A Atkinson
County Councillor S Charles
County Councillor K Ellard

North Yorkshire County Council

County Councillor R Welch

Craven District Council

Councillor I Thompson

Lancaster City Council

Councillor J Parkinson

Wyre Borough Council

Councillor V Wilson

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Councillor Mrs R Elms

Preston City Council

Councillor J Browne

Pendle Borough Council

Councillor J Starkie

Lancashire Association of Local Councils

Mr M Helm

Yorkshire Local Councils Association

Councillor C Price

United Utilities

Mr M Upton

Environment Agency

Ms H Dix

Natural England

Mr M Burke

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Mr G Jones

Bowland Land Managers' Forum

Mr A Taylor

Mr T Binns

Ramblers Association

Mr D Kelly

Champion Bowland

Mr P Reynolds

Bowland Experience Limited

Mr J Beavan

Friends of Bowland

Ms J Baddeley

Moorland Association

Mr J Duckworth

Membership

The Committee and its constituent bodies are responsible for the implementation of the AONB Management Plan. 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 landscape of the AONB is conserved and enhanced appropriately through the implementation of the AONB Management Plan,
- 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 appropriate 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



Contacts



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United Utilities

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