



## **Forest of Bowland National Landscape**

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

<https://www.forestofbowland.com/>

Covering 800 square kilometres (300 sq miles) of rural Lancashire and North Yorkshire, Bowland's distinctive landscape of high open fells, rich green lowlands and steep wooded cloughs was recognised as being amongst the finest in the country and given its official status on 10th February 1964.

The Forest of Bowland is not an actual forest, rather a mixture of rolling farmland and high remote moorland which was once a Royal hunting forest. Our moors are largely kept by landed estates for private grouse shoots and the peatland that underlies the heather is being restored as a major carbon store. Farming is a mix of upland sheep and cattle, and our precious wildlife includes the hen harrier, curlew, brown long-eared bat, wildflower meadows, wax caps and the green streak butterfly. Our cultural heritage mirrors the landscape and geology of the area, with barns and dry stone walls, bridges, stone villages and ancient trackways. Bowland has a distinctive sense of place and a proud identity.

A large proportion of the population in and around The Forest of Bowland comes from a Muslim or a South Asian, Pakistani heritage. Our ambition through Nature Calling is to focus engagement with young people from the nearby towns of Burnley, Nelson and Clitheroe – towns within a stone's throw of the imposing and much-loved Pendle Hill, but an area that many young people do not explore.

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape has a good track record of working with artists and arts organisations, and in engaging with underserved communities in this area (<https://www.pendlehillproject.com/>) and we want to build on this with Nature Calling to develop works that have a national significance.

We are working with [Blaze Arts](#) in Burnley who will lead on our engagement work with young people so that our commissioned artists can work in a way that is informed and led by them. We are also in the process of appointing a producing organisation to work with us on the project.

We plan to work with three Youth Zones in Nelson, Burnley and Clitheroe ([https://www.facebook.com/burnleyyouthzone/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/burnleyyouthzone/?locale=en_GB)) and also with other youth led organisations in the area.

In the lead-in to the Nature Calling commissions, we will meet with young people and arrange trips into Bowland and to Pendle Hill (the nearest part of the National Landscape to the communities we are targeting) to introduce them to the landscape and join creative writing workshops.

At our first Advisory Group meeting we discussed young people's concerns and issues around isolation (both rural and social), low levels of confidence and the lack of knowledge and support to pursue creative careers. We would like to explore these issues, in the context of working with an artist in the National Landscape, with both commissions we host.

We want to work with inspirational artists who will meet, listen to and be influenced by young people; who in turn will be inspired by artists and other arts professionals to develop their own practice and career.

The Forest of Bowland Hub Advisory Group includes young people, youth workers, [Building Bridges Pendle](#), [Cultrapedia](#), [In-Situ Arts](#), and Burnley's cultural manager. We aim to build the membership of the group as work develops.

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape is not well served by public transport, other than some parts of Pendle Hill, so planning for outdoor events will have to consider this; as well as identifying suitable spaces where the artistic work can be sited/take place both in the towns and within the boundaries of the National Landscape.



© The Hodder Valley by Stephen Adair



© Climbing Pendle Hill by Mark Tattersall



© Bowland Hare by Bradley Hamer



© Bowland Knotts by Kevin Gannon



© Female hen harrier by Richard Saunders

