

Forest of Bowland AONB

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The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally protected landscape and internationally important for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare birds. The AONB is managed by a partnership of landowners, farmers, voluntary organisations, wildlife groups, recreation groups, local councils and government agencies, who work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of this special area.

Lancashire County Council acts as the lead authority for the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee a partnership comprising: Lancashire county Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Craven District Council, Lancaster City Council, Pendle Borough Council, Preston City Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Wyre Borough Council, Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils, Yorkshire Local Councils Association, NWDA, DEFRA, Countryside Agency, United Utilities plc, Environment Agency, English Nature, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Forest of Bowland Landowning and Farmers Advisory Group and the Ramblers Association.



FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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I was very happy to be elected as the Chairman of the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee back in October 2005, having served on the committee many years ago when I was Chair of Planning for Lancaster City Council. It was a pleasure to return to an area in which I have a long-standing interest.

Having been brought up on a hill farm in Shap and attending the local village school, I have always been aware of the dilemmas that can face rural areas. The M6 motorway was a challenge to a village located on the A6 and especially to my family, which had diversified into a transport café and bed and breakfast. There have always been big issues to face and the big issues matter to AONBs.

We are part of a global family of protected landscapes and we need to play our part in sustaining the environment for the future. As well as giving priority to local needs we should not neglect to look outward too and engage with other areas in this country and elsewhere in the world that share similar challenges. If we are willing to work together we can learn lessons from each areas experiences, grow solutions together and exert more effective influence. I was therefore pleased to take part in the celebrations at Chipping Village Hall in October in our achievement of becoming the first protected area in England to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, and shared this special event along with a wide range of tourism stakeholders committed to the principles of sustainability. Anita Prosser, member of the Europarc Council, presented the formal Charter award in recognition of the Bowland partnership's commitment to sustainable tourism and the

importance of the occasion was recognised by the Leader of Lancashire County Council, Hazel Harding joining us for the proceedings. There was a delicious buffet lunch showing the best of local Bowland produce which rivals anything else in Europe and merits an award on its own.

We want to see a future for Bowland that is well balanced, based on a sufficiently broad rural economy so as not to be vulnerable to a downturn in a particular narrow sector such as we saw in the Lake District in recent years. That is why, in the last twelve months, we have continued to invest time and energy as well as funds in planning for a more sustainable future and in economic regeneration, ensuring through top up funding and other support that Lancashire Rural Future's skilled advice and practical help is available to rural businesses throughout the AONB. Not all schemes that come from local businesses in the AONB attract enough support to see them through to fruition, and perhaps rightly so in a few instances, but I would urge all the decision makers and those lucky enough to live in this attractive area to bear in mind that unless there is sufficient income to support land based businesses, sons and daughters will seek work elsewhere and the maintenance of Bowland's landscape features would be the likely victim.

During the last year, the Joint Advisory Committee has continued to channel funding and efforts towards helping to care for the landscape features and wildlife habitat that is special in Bowland and to direct and manage the pressures from public access and enjoyment so that people both appreciate and understand the area they visit. Through engaging with people from different backgrounds; a wide range of age groups; able bodied and those less able, we aim, through schemes and projects described in this report, to work with our partners to respond to the needs of communities and visitors and a prime example of this is through the projects we have been able to grant aid through the Sustainable Development Fund described in this report.

Because we are able to work as a partnership, we are able to put the well-being of the AONB first and I believe that this annual report shows we are making good progress and shall continue to attract investment into the AONB and help it through the challenges ahead.

County Councillor Jean Yates

Chairman of the Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee

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Wow - what a fantastic year has just flown by! So much packed into twelve months it seems like light years away from last June when we were welcoming Paulo Castro from Portugal on a verification visit to Bowland for the Europarc Federation - a whistle stop tour of the AONB to meet members of our sustainable tourism partnership - including local tourism businesses, food producers and restaurant managers, AONB staff, tourism officers and countryside officers, and to see what local tourism businesses were achieving in developing sustainable tourism. Senor Castro tested us with some searching questions as those who met him can testify. He was more used to seeing much larger organisations managing protected areas on the continent with budgets that dwarf Bowlands. Luckily he was impressed by what was already happening in Bowland through partnership working. He saw genuine commitment and enthusiasm for developing environmentally friendly activities and supporting local services and producers as well as projects aimed at protecting our special landscape heritage and unique medley of wildlife. He needed evidence and detailed information of funding bids and commitments for the future, which we duly supplied and thankfully he was able to recommend that Bowland be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. That award being in recognition of our progress towards meeting the stringent conditions set by the Europarc Federation as to how protected areas such as the AONB should work with all stakeholders to manage tourism for a more sustainable future.

We were also privileged in November to be invited to meet the government minister responsible for AONBs, Jim Knight, on a visit to Lancashire for a buffet lunch at the award winning Three Fishes restaurant near Whalley. Surrounded by photos of local food producers on the walls and with traditional regional dishes made from locally sourced produce on the plate, it was a good setting to chat informally to the Minister about our activities such as the success of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in Bowland. The Minister was able to give assurances over budgetary provision for SDF for the following two years. The AONB has to bid for that funding in January each year however and is assessed on performance, which we are happy to demonstrate in these pages.

Speaking of SDF when we were invited to bid for the funding last summer we asked for the maximum possible, having faith in the communities of Bowland to respond with project proposals that could make good use of the funds and we were not disappointed. A lot of hard work was necessary to set up and run the fund effectively and we are delighted that the officer on a short term contract with LCC who put in most of that hard work joined the AONB Unit on a three year contract at the close the year. Cathy Hopley is one of four new contract staff that joined the Unit in the early spring - Cathy and Martin Charlesworth are full time and

Hetty Pavey and Mike Pugh are part time. We are lucky indeed to have such a wealth of ability and experience and hope to put it to good use in delivering a wide ranging package of projects and activities working with local communities and businesses over the next two years.

It is a great privilege to have the responsibility for managing the AONB Unit and working with such a dedicated and able team who have the well being of the Forest of Bowland central to their thinking. The following pages set out the wide range of achievement by partners, the countryside services including the parish lengthsmen and the AONB Unit and set a benchmark for an even more ambitious performance for Bowland in future years.

Don McKay

Forest of Bowland AONB Officer



Don McKay AONB Officer
© Susan MacDonald, Forest of Bowland AONB

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A Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Following wide ranging consultation the following vision and aims were agreed by the sustainable tourism forum.

Vision

In 2010, the Forest of Bowland will be distinguished by the way in which visitors' enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are making a positive contribution to the economic and social well-being of those who live and work there. The Forest of Bowland AONB will be regarded as a beacon for its leadership of the successful management and promotion of sustainable tourism in partnership with others.

Aims and associated actions

1. For all those involved with tourism in and around the Forest of Bowland AONB to be engaged with its development and management by:
 - Developing the right management structures
 - Ensuring tourism enterprises can play an active role
2. For the Forest of Bowland AONB to be recognised as a sustainable tourism destination, promoted in partnership by all those involved with tourism service delivery in the wider area by:
 - Developing a distinctive brand
 - Promoting the Forest of Bowland
 - Developing a 'sense of place toolkit'

3. For experiences of the highest quality to exceed visitor expectations by:
 - Encouraging excellence in all tourism enterprises
 - Maintaining investment in walking, riding and cycling experiences
 - Ensuring that wherever possible Bowland is accessible to all
4. For visitor products to enable discovery and exploration of the special qualities of the AONB by:
 - Developing and promoting a range of visitor products that promote quiet enjoyment of the AONB
 - Encouraging enterprises to use local produce
 - Encouraging packaging of accommodation with activities
 - Supporting local festivals
5. For people to develop a greater understanding of, and respect for, the natural, cultural and built environment of the AONB by:
 - Developing an interpretation strategy
 - Building partnerships with tourist information centres in gateway towns
 - Increasing opportunities for people to find out about the special qualities of the area
6. For the natural, cultural and historic environment of the Forest of Bowland to be protected and enhanced, strengthening support for this wherever possible through tourism by:
 - Supporting land management practices that maintain or improve the quality of the landscape and benefit wildlife
 - Encouraging tourism enterprises to manage their business in an environmentally friendly way
 - Strengthening the Bowland Tourism & Environment Fund



7. For the performance of the local tourism economy to improve, identifying new opportunities for tourism to deliver economic benefit by:
 - Encouraging increased length of stay, mid-week and repeat visits
 - Taking opportunities to address seasonality
 - Making it easy to book accommodation in connection with things to do
 - Encouraging development of appropriate new and existing tourism enterprises that reflect the special qualities of the area
 - Maintaining business support and advisory services
8. For good quality visitor information to be readily available in and around the area by:
 - Agreeing a clear strategy for distribution of information
 - Producing better information about sustainable tourism opportunities in the area
 - Developing the AONB website as a visitor information service
 - Developing the role of existing visitor information centres and points
 - Providing those engaged in tourism with selected information about the special qualities of the area, visitor facilities and activities, to share with their visitors
9. For tourism to support the quality of life of local communities, with opportunities for them to play a special part in the creation and delivery of tourism experiences and visitor services by:
 - Encouraging visitor spending in local shops and services
 - Involving local communities in the development of projects that reflect what they feel is special about the area
 - Promoting the special qualities of the area through local events and the involvement of local people

10. For the movement of visitors to have the least possible adverse impact on communities and the environment by:
 - Working to relieve visitor pressure at popular sites
 - Working with local communities to identify and manage visitor issues that are having a detrimental impact on village life
 - Improving quality and effectiveness of signage in the area
 - Providing sustainable transport opportunities
 - Promoting messages to visitors to reduce the impact of their visit
11. For decisions to be well informed by accurate and current data by:
 - Developing a coordinated approach to data collection and monitoring
 - Improving data collection from tourism businesses
 - Monitoring visitor impact at key sites and locations



Photograph
© Countryside Agency / Charlie Hedley

Photograph
© Countryside Agency / Charlie Hedley

For more information or to obtain a copy of the Forest of Bowland AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy, contact **Lucy Barron** on 01772 534134, alternatively e-mail her at lucy.barron@env.lancscc.gov.uk



Forest of Bowland Sustainable Tourism Conference

To officially launch the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, a very successful sustainable tourism conference was held in May at Chipping Village Hall for the year's annual AONB conference.

Delegates were invited to celebrate the launch of the strategy and to find out more about the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

The programme was interesting and varied and offered a unique opportunity to partners and local business representatives to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the Forest of Bowland.

Guest speaker Barry Ferguson, Sustainable Tourism Officer from Mourne AONB in Northern Ireland, inspired the delegates with a presentation about the benefits the Charter has brought there.

Local businesses already involved in sustainable tourism initiatives shared their knowledge and experience. Businesses had the chance to seek professional advice about accessing grant funding and helping their own tourism business.

Delegates took part in a consultation to help with the development of a 'Bowland sense of place toolkit', a resource to enable businesses to use the special qualities of the area to effectively promote themselves.

A delicious local lunch was served and delegates were able to taste the latest range of Bowland beers from the local Bowland Brewery. A cheese making demonstration by Bob Kitching from Leagram Organic Dairy proved very popular, as did the two local walks around Chipping Village and along the North Lancashire Bridleway.

Speakers on the front lawn at the Sustainable Tourism Conference, Chipping, May 2005

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty became the first protected area in England to be awarded the prestigious European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in September 2005.

The Charter is awarded to protected areas that are following a best practice approach in delivering tourism that takes account of the needs of the environment, local communities and the local economy. The Forest of Bowland AONB joins a group of just 30 other protected areas across Europe.

This achievement was possible because of the enthusiasm and commitment of many people, organisations and businesses. A celebration was held in recognition of this in October 2005 at Chipping Memorial Hall. Anita Prosser from the Europarc Federation presented the official certificate and a delicious local lunch was served.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is a valuable and practical tool for ensuring that tourism development in Europe's protected areas is sustainable. To achieve the Charter, the Forest of Bowland had to demonstrate that we are cooperating to a high level with local stakeholders and tourism partners to address strategic tourism issues. In joining the Charter, we have

made a 5-year commitment to further that cooperation, to implement agreed joint actions with partners, and to continue striving for excellence in the management of tourism in the AONB.

The purpose of the Charter is to encourage good practice by identifying those protected areas, which are meeting agreed requirements for the sustainable development and management of tourism.

The Charter is for individual protected areas of all kinds. They are invited to apply for recognition by the Europarc Federation as meeting the requirements of the Charter. These requirements include:

- A permanent structure for working in partnership with others
- A strategy for sustainable tourism
- A set of actions, which address identified sustainability issues

The Charter is awarded by the Europarc Federation, the umbrella organisation of Europe's protected areas. It unites protected areas in 38 countries with the common aim of protecting Europe's unique wildlife, habitats and landscapes.

The Charter was officially presented at the Europarc Conference 2005 in Appeldoorn, Holland in September; and again at a local celebration held at Chipping Village Hall in October.



County Councillor Mary Wilson, Lucy Barron and County Councillor Tim Ormrod at the Europarc Sustainable Tourism Conference, Appeldoorn, Holland, September 2005.
© LCC

County Councillor Mary Wilson, Lucy Barron, County Councillor Hazel Harding, Don McKay, County Councillor Tim Ormrod and Anita Prosser with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism at Chipping Village Hall, October 2005.
© LCC

www.forestofbowland.com

For more information about the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected areas contact **Lucy Barron** on 01772 534134, alternatively e-mail her at lucy.barron@env.lancsc.gov.uk or visit www.europarc.org



Cyclists at The Priory in Scorton

Implementing the Sustainable Tourism Strategy

After achieving the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas the Forest of Bowland AONB secured over £500,000 of funding to implement the high priority actions from the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

Working closely with our tourism partners an action plan was put together to drive this sustainable tourism work forward, focusing on the following areas of work

Creation of new route ways

Identifying key bridleways, footpaths and cycle routes which can be extended or upgraded to provide opportunities for visitors to explore Bowland and actively enjoy the area. These may include extending the North Lancashire Bridleway and improving mountain biking facilities at Gisburn Forest

Support for tourism businesses demonstrating sustainability

Offering financial support and business advice to businesses who wish to cater for sustainable tourism. Helping businesses develop their plans, marketing and set up costs, as well as offering training and advice.

Improved information for visitors

Several new forms of visitor information are planned, from downloadable maps for walking, riding and cycling, to new 'area' maps highlighting places to go and things to do in the four corners of Bowland. An improved website that will provide up to date listings and diary dates, and support to information officers and businesses who deal with visitors in Bowland. Working with communities and businesses we also aim to publish a family of village attractions leaflets.

Support for the local products industry

Developing a local products database to help people find out where to buy local food, crafts and other goods. Encouraging existing catering businesses to better utilise local produce. In addition, we hope to be able to support the development of at least two new businesses in Bowland which produce local food, drink, or other products from the land.

Support for local communities celebrating Bowland's special qualities

Sustainable tourism is as much about people as about the landscape and environment. We want visitors to have a greater understanding of these communities when they come to visit Bowland and hope to do this by working with a number of communities to identify and celebrate the special qualities of Bowland – from farming life and wildflowers to family history and parish boundaries. These community projects will then become an interesting and informative way for visitors to engage more with local people.

Improving sustainable transport for visitors

By carrying out research into the potential for a network of sustainable transport in Bowland: to help visitors and locals alike to get around the AONB without increasing traffic. We are also keen to support some active experiments whereby visitors can explore Bowland without a car.

Thanks to major funding from the North West Development Agency, Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board, and others, over the next two years we plan to significantly invest in sustainable tourism in the Forest of Bowland AONB and create a higher profile for the area as an environment-friendly visitor destination.

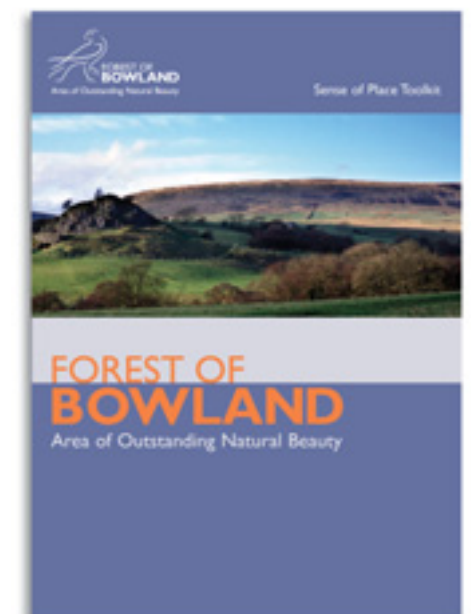
This programme will be delivered by the Forest of Bowland AONB Sustainable Tourism Team, based at Lancashire Rural Future's office in Clitheroe. The team comprises:

Cathy Hopley – Communities & Funding Officer

Martin Charlesworth – Community Projects Officer

Mike Pugh – Business Development Officer

Hetty Pavey – Information Officer



Contact the **Forest of Bowland AONB Sustainable Tourism Team** on 01200 426433, alternatively e-mail them at cathy.hopley@env.lancscc.gov.uk
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RSPB Bowland Wader Project

Since the end of April 2005, Tom Bridge took over for a year as the Wader Project Officer in the Forest of Bowland to allow Gary Woodburn to work on the Bowland SCaMP Project. Tom successfully carried on with work begun by Gary, as well as initiating new projects in the area. By working closely with Lancashire Rural Futures, clients were able to benefit from a combination of Defra and other funding and the unique expertise provided by the RSPB.

Chipping Moss continued to flourish as a habitat for wading birds, with a further £11,000 of funding secured towards the positive management of this site which is now grazed by Highland cattle over winter, to control the rushes. As a result of the RSPB's ongoing advice and supervision, the site is a Regional Finalist in the Silver Lapwing Award, which recognises outstanding examples of habitat management.



Partnership working with United Utilities has resulted in the disused reservoirs at Alston, near Longridge, being well on its way to becoming an exciting new reserve managed specifically for the species living there, including great crested newt and little ring plovers.

Close working with the local farming community has resulted in Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Schemes at Harrop Hall, Dean Slack and several farms in the Sabden Valley. In addition to receiving annual payments for managing wet grassland for wading birds, funding has been secured for the restoration of traditional field boundaries and traditional hay meadow management. Local farmers have also benefited from practical demonstration days focussing on rush management with the help of funding from the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Raising awareness of wading birds among the wider local community has always been a priority for the RSPB and the annual lapwing survey is now under way, with twenty local volunteers of varying ages and backgrounds dispatched to Bowland farms to record lapwing numbers.

When asked about his year in Bowland Tom said 'forging links between the farmers, statutory agencies and the general public for the benefit of the unique bird life in Bowland has made this an exciting and rewarding year for me.'



Rewetting work at Chipping Moss,
Highland Cattle, Chipping Moss
© Tom Bridge, RSPB

For more information on the Bowland Wader Project, or advice on how to improve your holding for breeding waders you can contact either **Gavin Thomas** or **Gary Woodburn** on 01200 426433, alternatively e-mail them at gavin.thomas@rspb.org.uk, gary.woodburn@rspb.org.uk

RSPB Birds of Bowland Project - Hen Harriers on Bowland's United Utilities Estate

After the success that the hen harriers had in 2004, they had a lot to live up too in 2005. And did they disappoint? No they did not...

From the off in early spring, there were obviously good numbers of hen harriers, with six nests located by the end of April; and they just kept coming. By the middle of June, the final tally had reached an incredible 11 nests.

On top of this the English Nature Hen Harrier team had located a further four nesting attempts on neighbouring estates. In all, these nests represented nearly 80% of the English breeding population!

Through many hours on the fells, in all weathers, we were able to monitor the season's events to the culmination of the successful fledging of 19 chicks from the UU estate. Many people put a lot of time, effort and money into this work, not least the team of volunteers and United Utilities.

As always, it was an incredible privilege to be involved, as an observer, in a great natural history event



Female hen harrier in flight
© James Leonard, RSPB

For more information on the RSPB's Birds of Bowland Project contact **Peter Wilson** on 01200 446425, alternatively e-mail him at pete.wilson@rspb.org.uk or visit www.rspb.org.uk

People and Hen harriers are here to stay

Vast areas of privately owned heather moorland in Bowland, which are some of the most spectacular in the country, were opened up to the public in September 2004 under the auspices of the new open access legislation under CRoW 2000.

The Bowland Fells are most famous for their breeding hen harriers, one of England's rarest breeding birds of prey, at its one and only stronghold in the country.

It was clear some time before the commencement of the new right of access that careful planning would be required if visitors were going to be able to enjoy their new rights without fear of disturbing the harriers.

English Nature, the Countryside Agency, RSPB and Lancashire County Council therefore jointly embarked on a detailed study and produced an access management plan that was designed to reconcile any possible impacts to nature conservation interests without the need for statutory closures.

The plan included management measures including signage to encourage responsible behaviour; access infrastructure to steer people away from sensitive areas; and a detailed monitoring project to assess whether the new patterns of access were compatible with the ability of birds to breed successfully.

English Nature and Lancashire County Council with help from the RSPB carried out a monitoring project during the spring and summer months of 2005. The work consisted of a combination of remote monitoring, using electronic counters at a series of access points to Bowland Fells, and also employed a dedicated field officer to directly observe the movement of visitors and their usage of the Fells in key areas.

The remote monitoring recorded over 35,000 people movements on the Fells, with the majority of activity in the traditionally well used areas of Langden Intake and Parlick Foot Fell. Direct observations by the Field Officer, Karl Dentigh, supported this data and it appeared that there was little evidence to suggest that there were large numbers of visitors using the newly accessible areas.

The risk of disturbance to ground nesting birds, including the hen harrier, is greatly increased when dogs are present especially when they are let off the lead. About 10% of the 530 visitors observed had dogs with them, most of these on or close to the footpath in the Langden Valley. A large proportion of these let their dogs off the lead and 10 of those dogs observed were also deemed to be 'out of control'. Although this was considered to be at fairly low level, and is probably reflective of the situation before the new access rights came into being, ongoing care will need to be exercised by visitors with dogs on the Fells, where allowed, in order to keep their dogs under 'close control' and ensure that ground nesting birds are not disturbed.



Direct interactions between visitors and hen harriers were also observed during the same period. A large proportion of the 21 incidents recorded were of bird watchers who were actively seeking out hen harriers to observe at close quarters. When visitors remained in such areas for long periods, the birds were noted to give alarm calls for extended periods of time, from 40 to 70 minutes in some cases. Considering the remoteness and size of the study area we can assume the actual number of 'disturbance events' to be higher and is particularly worrying given the spread of birds across the Fells and the possibility that continued disturbance might result in certain birds not breeding successfully.

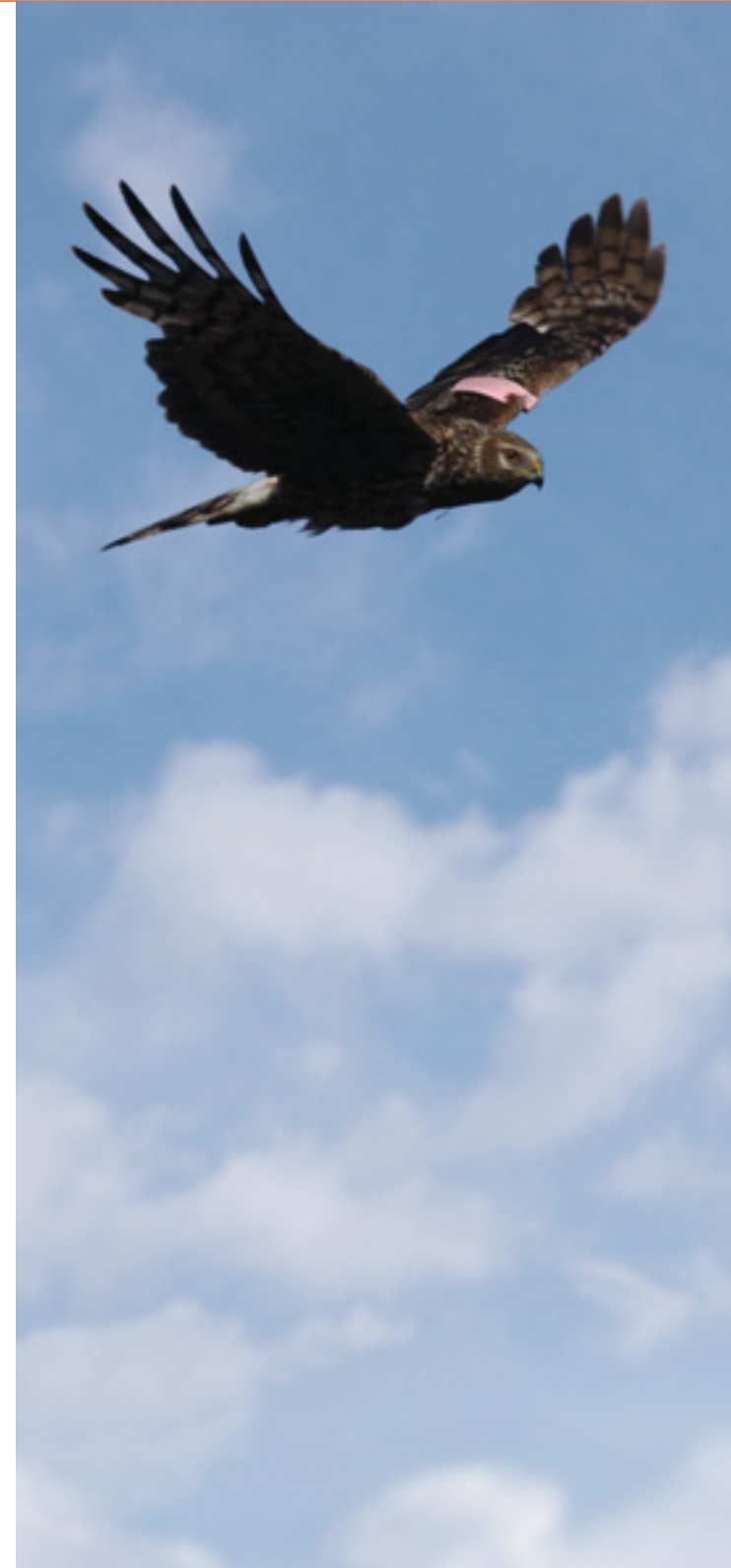
Young birds that nest on the ground rely on the parent birds to keep them warm and protect them from predators. In addition when hatchlings get older they require a steady supply of food to survive. Successful fledging can be seriously hampered if adult birds spend periods away from the nest reacting to what they perceive as a threat.

There was no evidence to suggest that the Bowland population overall was affected by the incidents during 2005, being notoriously difficult to prove. However special care must continue to be

exercised by all visiting the Fells during the Spring and Summer months ahead to ensure that this rare and most spectacular bird of prey may continue to breed successfully throughout the Fells.

Disturbing hen harriers is illegal and punishable by large fines, however prosecution is always the last resort. It is accepted that visitors may not be aware of the damage they are doing. Monitoring will continue into the breeding season of 2006, with a particular focus on the activity around the nests themselves. In addition, steps will be taken to educate bird watchers who may unknowingly be jeopardising the very birds that they set out to enjoy. A leaflet has been produced by the Forest of Bowland AONB, with funding from English Nature, explaining how you can enjoy watching these birds without causing them harm or disturbance. This leaflet, entitled Treading Carefully can be obtained from Lancashire Countryside Service by calling 01772 534709.

In summary, while general patterns of Fell use appear not to have changed to the degree where any restrictions are needed, the partner bodies involved are concerned about the individual incidents around the harrier nesting sites.



Birdwatchers looking at hen harriers
© Lucy Barron, Forest of Bowland AONB

Female hen harrier in flight, brown berry clough
© James Leonard, RSPB

Article by Jon Hickling and David Slater

For more information on the Hen Harrier Recovery Project contact
Jon Hickling at English Nature on 01942 614015, alternatively e-mail him at jon.hickling@english-nature.org.uk



Biological Heritage Sites

The launch of Defra's new Environmental Stewardship Scheme this year brought good news for the owners and managers of the many Biological Heritage Sites and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Bowland.

The scheme targets these local wildlife sites as well as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species, and payment rates are significantly higher than under the old Countryside Stewardship scheme. As a result landowners and managers have shown considerable interest in both the Higher Level and Entry Level scheme, although difficulties in obtaining the necessary base maps has caused unfortunate delays and frustration.

Lancashire Rural Futures has registered 28 new clients in Bowland this year. These holdings include around 26 Biological Heritage Sites. Farm visits have enabled Biological Heritage Sites to be surveyed, documentation to be updated and management issues discussed. Close working with partners such as the RSPB's wader project, United Utilities SCAMP project and FWAG has enabled the appropriate management of additional sites to be taken forward.

A species-rich pasture in Chipping and an area of moorland near Caton have been added to the Biological Heritage Sites register this year. In addition, 3 existing sites have been extended. However, a former species-rich pasture in Tatham has had to be deleted from the register as a result of agricultural improvement. Survey work on several farms in Keasden has revealed several previously unknown areas of valuable grassland and work is underway to manage these with the help of Higher Level Stewardship agreements soon.

For further information about Biological Heritage Sites please contact **Margaret Evans**, Ecologist, Lancashire Rural Futures on 01200 414875/01772 534193, alternatively email her at margaret@lancashireruralfutures.co.uk



Sustainable Catchment Management Programme (SCaMP)

United Utilities is unique amongst water companies, as it has secured permission to fund a programme of improvement work on two of our four catchment areas in the period 2005 to 2010. Our Sustainable Catchment Management Programme (SCaMP) is the only catchment scale programme we are aware of in the UK. The two areas are our Bowland Estate and our Southern Estate area (Goyt, Longdendale and Peak District). We are now twelve months into the five-year programme, which aims to improve the landscape and habitat value of the land and to help stabilise or reverse the deterioration in raw water colour. The programmes objectives are:

To develop an integrated approach to catchment management incorporating sustainable upland farming which delivers:

- Government targets for SSSIs
- Biodiversity plans for priority habitats and species
- Improved raw water quality

We are looking to enter into long term agreements with our tenant farmers to define farming plans compatible with the objectives above. Whole farm plans have been produced that identify specific land management techniques to be applied on all catchment and Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) land within the funded areas.

The programme is progressing well, we set ourselves an ambitious target to complete farm plans for all of the United Utilities landholdings within the Bowland area within the first 12 months which we have done, producing some 20 or so plans for just under 10,000 hectares of land. Developing the plans has been a learning experience

for both United Utilities and our partners the RSPB. Working closely with English Nature and the Rural Development Service we have sought to ensure that the plans will help achieve the objectives of improving the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest whilst allowing access to appropriate agri-environment support so that the plans are both environmentally and economically sustainable.

As part of the programme we are looking to assess the impact of any changes of land management on the vegetation, hydrology and water quality within the area. We have engaged consultants to carry out extensive monitoring to identify the impact of SCaMP. Whilst the RSPB will carry out surveys to assess how the implementation of SCaMP has impacted upon bird populations within the target areas.

We have also been able to carry out some work on the ground at our trial farm at Whitendale in Bowland. We are progressing with environmental improvements and early indications are encouraging. The work includes moorland re-wetting with some 8km of grips being blocked and we have started establishing about 64 hectares of broadleaf upland woodland using native species. We have also invested in improving the farm buildings to help in the operation of the new farming system.

We have started on the next phase of the programme and are discussing plans with our tenants with a view to getting agreement to proceed to apply for grants and to implement the agreed plan. We hope to be able to maintain the momentum by continuing to work closely with our partners, our regulators and our tenants in implementing the farm plans.

Sheep & crags south east of Eldroth
© Countryside Agency / Charlie Hedley

For more information about SCaMP contact **Martin McGrath** on 01925 537246, alternatively e-mail him at martin.mcgrath@uuplc.co.uk

Wildflower
© Peter Guy

Waders
© Peter Wakely, English Nature



Juniper berries
© Peter Wakely, English Nature

Once lost but now found – Gin and Berry it!

Common Juniper (*Juniper communis*), whose blue green 'berries' (which are in fact cones) give gin its unique flavour, and is a dioecious evergreen conifer found on both basic and acidic soils over a wide range of habitats throughout Great Britain.

The latter include chalk downland in Southern Britain, heather moorland in Northern England, oceanic heaths in Wales, rocky slopes and scree within the Lake District and Scots pine/birch woodlands in Scotland.

It is of considerable nature conservation importance because of its limited distribution and extent throughout Great Britain and as such is one of very few native evergreen conifers present in this country, which can form dense areas of prickly scrub.

Once common throughout England on the chalk downs of southern England and also on upland fringes in Northern England, it has declined extensively over recent decades due to cultivation and heavy grazing pressure, as well as burning management, especially on upland fringes and moorlands. Few areas now show signs of stands regenerating naturally and remaining populations when found tend to be even aged and dominated by mature old bushes.

Within North West England its main stronghold lies within the Lake District, with rocky scree slopes above Ullswater and along Langdale being covered with it, as well as the fact that it also occurs quite frequently on the limestone pavements around Morecambe Bay, especially within the Arnsdale/Silverdale AONB.

It was probably once common on the northern most slopes of the Bowland Fells during the 19th Century as scrub to woodland edges before the open fell, but became increasingly rare and was all but thought to be have been lost by the late 1960's with only the odd bush known to occur then.

However, it's recent re-discovery as a couple of old clumps in a woodland opening on the edge of Cragg Wood, with both male and female plants present, has given new hope for the possible regeneration of the plant within the area, especially with the most recent discovery of a healthy stand of a dozen or more bushes on the upper most parts of Rotten Clough on the northern side of Blanch Fell, of both young and old plants.

Nationally Juniper is endangered, so it is most important that these remaining plants in Bowland are looked after and the remaining bushes are encouraged to regenerate if at all possible of this once more common shrub in Lancashire's acidic woodlands and upland fringe by excluding grazing wherever possible.

For more information contact **Jon Hickling** at English Nature on 01942 614015, alternatively e-mail him at jon.hickling@english-nature.org.uk

Linking Town and Country around Clitheroe

The skyline from much of the thriving market town of Clitheroe is dominated by vistas of wide open countryside, with the reassuring bulk of Pendle Hill to the south and the Bowland fells to the north. The town boasts an enviable number of paths allowing residents and visitors alike direct access into the wonderful Bowland countryside and over the last few years Lancashire Countryside Service have been making steady improvements to the accessibility of these links.

The last year has seen progress on further improving a number of attractive paths by making them much more accessible to people with disabilities and those with young children.

An ambitious project to open up 2 miles of riverside path along the Ribble Way downstream of Clitheroe to people with mobility difficulties has reached completion of the first phase over this last winter. The path below the Edisford recreation ground had become difficult even for relatively agile walkers and there was becoming a real risk of a section being lost to the river. Due to the generosity of the landowners, the Spedding family, the path has now been routed away from the eroding river bank and re-graded and surfaced to a standard to allow easy passage by all sections of the community. The next phase involves a slight diversion to the line of the path at Siddows farm and the successful outcome of this application will allow the construction of a further section of "Access for All" path through to Henthorn road.

A similar project has been completed at the upstream side of Clitheroe where some 600 metres of path have been given a high quality surface to link Brungerley Park with the nature reserve at Crosshills quarry. This project has been carried out in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and funding for both projects has come from a variety of sources, including the Forest of Bowland AONB, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and the Countryside Agency.



Even kissing gates can be a problem to some people wanting to access the countryside

A barrier free easy access riverside walk
© Dave Oyston, LCC



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Wyre Coast & Countryside Service

Wyre Borough Council Coast & Countryside Service works with partners and agencies as well as Volunteer Countryside Rangers, students and other members of the community to undertake the careful management of the natural and cultural resources in the Forest of Bowland.

The 2005 Pathways Garstang Walking Festival took place over the weekend of the 13th to 15th May, and was a huge success. It was officially launched at The Discovery Centre in Garstang by Professor David Bellamy, who also led the first walk of the weekend along the River Wyre at Garstang, followed by a visit to Bleasdale School to explore the environmental area in the school grounds. The Festival acts as a gateway to the countryside around Garstang, in particular the Forest of Bowland, with over 50% of the activities this year taking place in the Forest of Bowland AONB. Planning is well under way for 2006 with the Tourism, Countryside and Arts team working together with local businesses and voluntary organisations to create a new and varied programme of events.

The Wyre Coast & Countryside Team also supported the Bowland Festival, organising a range of walks including an upland ramble, wildflower and nature walks, an upland farm walk and the annual Dry Stone Walling Competition at Cobble Hey Farm & Gardens. Wyre Coast and Countryside Team were also involved in organising the

Wood Carving and Stone carving workshops at Cobble Hey. In addition to the two main festivals in the area, the countryside team organised and led 21 walks within the AONB as part of Wyre's annual programme of events. The team also promoted the AONB through attendance at local events and shows.

Wyre Countryside Rangers and Volunteer Rangers manage the following Bowland sites within Wyre: Brock Picnic Site and Brock Valley, Grizedale Valley and Nicky Nook, Delph Quarry, Harris End Fell Road and Scorton Millennium Way. Rangers and Volunteer Rangers completed 1,297 site visits meeting 14,364 visitors and collected 101 bags of litter.

Wyre Coast & Countryside Service supported a Brown Hare Workshop at Lower Fairsnape Farm, Bleasdale, organised by Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Lancashire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group; funded by DEFRA. The aim of the day was to help deliver the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan for Brown Hares. Volunteers were given information on Brown Hare biology, the purpose of the survey work and the basic skills needed to undertake the surveys. The day resulted in 20 new volunteers agreeing to undertake Brown Hare survey work which will contribute to the annual survey work being undertaken in rural Lancashire. This will provide baseline information on the state of Brown Hare populations and will help provide a better understanding of the factors that affect their survival in Lancashire's farmland.

Wyre Countryside Volunteers have carried out a wide variety of work on Traditional Boundaries, Access and interpretation. Over 85 metres of Dry stone wall have been restored on Nicky Nook, in Grizedale Valley and at Lower Fairsnape Farm, Bleasdale. Over 150 metres of hedgerow have been planted at Sykes Farm, and 2.28 hectares of new woodland has been planted at Arkwrights Farm. The stone interpretation/seating structure at Grizedale Bridge, Harris End Fell Road was repaired and upgraded. Mr & Mrs Gardner of Lower Fairsnape Farm at Bleasdale constructed a new public Bird hide for which Wyre Countryside Volunteers constructed 5 metres of 'Access for All' standard stoned path. In addition, a 'Scorton Three Churches Walk' Interpretative panel was installed, as was a panorama plinth on Peacock Hill, Cobble Hey, on part of the Lapwing Trail.

Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board organised a 'Lancashire Rural Familiarisation Visit' for a variety of delegates from around the country, that included walking group leaders, cycling group leaders and travel writers. Wyre Coast & Countryside Service gave an evening presentation and a guided walk over Nicky Nook and along Grizedale Valley, promoting the Forest of Bowland and Wyre, as well as forthcoming events in both areas.

Roadside Railings Get Restored Around Bolton by Bowland

A number of sets of the cast iron roadside railings around the Parish of Bolton by Bowland, Sawley and Gisburn Forest have undergone a programme of refurbishment and restoration.

The Parish council working with the Countryside Officer have been successful in securing funding from the Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to carry out the programme of work.

The Parish Lengthsman has been working with a local contractor to carry out the repairs and to replace some sections of railings with new, they will then be repainting the railings in the traditional white and black finish.

Professor David Bellamy at the Launch of the Pathways Garstang Walking Festival 2005
© Wyre Coast & Countryside Services

For more information contact
Wyre Coast and Countryside Service on 01995 606654,
alternatively e-mail them at countryside@wyrebc.gov.uk

Dry stone wall repair
© Countryside Agency / Tessa Bunny

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Bowland Hedge Laying Competition 2006

This year the 12th Annual Forest of Bowland Hedge laying competition was took place on March 11th at Greenhead farm Sawley. This was the fourth of five competitions in the 2006 Grand Prix run in partnership with the Lancashire and Westmoreland Hedging Association.

The competition was well attended with competitors travelling from as far away as North Cumbria and West Yorkshire as well as a number of local Lancashire hedgers. A total of 24 competitors and 4 trainees took part in the day with a total length of over 200m of hedge layered in the traditional Lancashire and Westmoreland style. County Councillor Mary Wilson on behalf of the Forest of Bowland Joint Advisory Committee presented the prizes.

This year's event received assistance from the Forest of Bowland Sustainable Development Fund and involved more practical demonstrations of hedge planting, fencing, trimming and seminars on aspects of the new grant schemes and hedgerow regulations. The event was widely publicised in the farming press and locally at the auction marts, and farmers were directly mailed with details of the day.



Interpreting the Local Landscape and Wildlife through Carving

Carving workshops based at Cobble Hey Farm and Gardens and Bridge House Tearooms in Wray generated a huge amount of interest in the local community. The finished waymarkers will help visitors to the area find their way around local walks and stimulate interest and understanding of the local landscape and wildlife. These were the first in a series being run throughout the Forest of Bowland, with the next two planned for Summer 2006 based in Barley and Slaidburn.

Wood and stone carving workshops were held at Cobble Hey involved students from Garstang High School and adults from the local community who worked with local woodcarver Geoff Whitely and stone artist Philip Kennedy. The resulting waymarkers are due to be installed along the 'Lapwing Trail' at Cobble Hey and one of the Calder Vale circular walks.

At Wray local schoolchildren worked with local artist Sue Flowers to develop drawings and designs interpreting what parts of their local environment were important to them. They then carved these designs into clay tiles, some of which have been incorporated into a leaflet holder for local walks based from Bridge House Farm

tearooms. Several of these designs were then carved into stone by a group of adults working with Boris Howarth to create waymarkers for a short family walk around Wray taking in the river and the village.

Well-known professional stone carver, Boris Howarth, has shared his skills and secrets with the group of eight adults to enable them to produce their own work, two of whom are now keen to use these newly developed skills to bring in work of a different kind to their small rural skills businesses.

Funding from the Forest of Bowland AONB, Leader +, Lancashire County Council Arts Unit, Wyre Borough Council and Lancaster City Council has made this project possible.

Cobble Hey Farm and Gardens is open to the public every weekend from April 1st until end September. For more information, visit the website at www.cobblehey.co.uk or telephone 01995 602643.

Bridge House Farm Tearooms is open to the public every day for regional food, local crafts and garden gifts. For more information, visit the website at www.bridgehousefarm.co.uk or telephone 015242 22496.



Bowland Hedge laying competition
© Dave Padley, LCC

For more information on the Bowland Hedge Laying Competition or new grants schemes and hedgerow regulations, contact **Dave Padley** on 07860 578558, alternatively e-mail him at david.padley@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Carving Workshops
© LCC

For more information about the Carving Workshops contact **Tarja Wilson** on 01200 426433, alternatively e-mail her at tarja.wilson@env.lancscc.gov.uk



Traditional Boundaries

Following surveys carried out in 2004/5 to prioritise restoration projects, significant hedgerow and dry stone wall restoration work was carried out in the area with support from landowners, Countryside Service, Countryside Agency and the Forest of Bowland AONB.

For example, farmers, local contractors and the local Countryside Services have teamed up to deliver over 900m of hedgerow and dry stone wall restoration in the parishes of Wray-w-Botton, Nether Wyresdale and Bleasdale:

Birks Farm, Wray: 320m of hedgerow restored
Lower Greenbank Farm, Wray: 60m dry stone wall restored
Sykes Farm, Nether Wyresdale: 170m hedgerow restored
Harrisend Fell, Nether Wyresdale: 80m dry stone wall restored
Bleasdale Estate, Bleasdale: 340m of beech hedgerow restored

Comprehensive surveys on traditional boundaries were carried out by Robin Forestry Surveys in the parishes of Bowland Forest High, Goosnargh North and Roughlee Booth. These surveys will help prioritise future restoration work and assist in preparing environmental stewardship schemes.

Ranger Service Projects and Duties in Pendle the Hill area.

The main role of Lancashire Countryside Service Rangers is to advise and assist visitors to the countryside, as well as providing events, educational activities and maintaining parks, picnic sites and other facilities within the county.

On Pendle Hill Rangers mainly undertake visitor management work, which involves everything from giving directions and information about paths to promoting compliance with national and local legislation and restrictions.

In the last twelve months there has been a number of small projects on Pendle that both full time and volunteer rangers have been involved with.

Early in 2005 work was done to improve the structure of the well-known Scout Cairn that is visible from Clitheroe and the busy A59. This large cairn that now stands almost 10 feet high has always been a popular landmark and is now very sturdy and secure thanks to the work carried out.

One major project that has recently been completed on the Pendleton Moor area of hill is the clearing of ordnance debris left over from the Second World War. An army unit from Kent has been clearing the area periodically for the last few years. Pendle, like some other parts of Bowland was used as a military practise area during the war and it has taken a very long time to completely clear all the fragments of shells and other ordnance that was embedded deep in the soft peaty soil.

Beech hedgerows in Bleasdale being laid

Local contractor walling at Lower Greenbank, Wray-w-Botton

Harrisend Fell wall after restoration.

For more information on Traditional Boundaries Restoration Projects contact **Lucy Barron** on 01772 534134. alternatively e-mail her at lucy.barron@env.lancsc.gov.uk

Photograph
© Countryside Agency/Charlie Hedley

Paul Shoreman Countryside Ranger
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Forest of Bowland AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) had previously been trailed in National Parks and the Welsh AONB, and had proved very successful. For this reason the rural affairs minister extended funding to all English AONBs for the first time in 2005. This is Defra money and the key criteria for the fund are set by the ministry. Eligible projects need to:

- demonstrate sustainable development
- involve the local community
- link to local strategies
- help deliver the Forest of Bowland AONB management plan

In addition the Forest of Bowland AONB set local criteria to ensure projects enhance the natural, cultural and built heritage of the AONB, link nearby urban populations to the area, support our sustainable tourism work, and conserve important wildlife and habitats within the Forest of Bowland. The fund is administered by the AONB Unit, and an independent grants panel meets regularly to assess applications.

Sustainable Development is an approach in managing development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meeting their own needs. However, sustainable development is still a very broad term, and we therefore defined the purpose of the fund as being: "to test new ways of achieving a more sustainable way of life in the Forest of Bowland".

This aim is perhaps best exemplified in the three community hall projects we supported, where the committee members had decided that the most SUSTAINABLE way to heat and power their buildings for the future was to invest in renewable energy. This meets the three tenets of sustainability – renewable energy is kinder to the environment as it will provide carbon free or carbon neutral energy and thus not contribute to global warming. It is also rooted in the community; the idea came from them and will be used by many groups to encourage other businesses and householders to install renewable energy. And perhaps most importantly, renewable energy will lead to a cut in energy costs for the halls, and will aid their long term and economic viability as providers of community facilities and services

We opened the scheme in July 2005, and were able to offer small grants totaling £100,000 to projects around the AONB. In the first year we supported the following thirteen projects:



1. Creation of a bird hide at Lower Fairsnape Farm
2. Riverside improvement project in Roughlee village
3. Conversion of Dalehead Church to an informal visitor centre
4. Installation of a ground source heat system at Over Wyresdale Parish Hall
5. Research and development project for Bowland Forest Foods
6. Art workshops, held at Wray School
7. Habitat improvement work by the RSPB's Wader Project
8. Installation of photovoltaic cells to provide electricity at Barley Village Hall
9. Seminar on renewable energy for communities in the Forest of Bowland
10. Nature conservation work at Chipping Moss
11. Bowland hedge laying competition and hedgerow awareness seminar
12. Installation of a wood pellet boiler for heating of Bleasdale Parish Hall
13. Ecological and habitat surveys of a stretch of the River Wenning



Sustainable Development Fund Case Study - Bleasdale Parish Hall

The small community of Bleasdale serves an isolated corner of Wyre district, and the parish hall was in need of extension and renovation in order to provide 21st century services.

A committed group of residents worked hard to fundraise and plan for this exciting project, which includes new meeting and IT rooms, disabled access and a new heating system. This latter project met the criteria of the sustainable development fund, and the grants panel offered them a total of £17500 to cover 50% of the costs of purchasing and installing a wood pellet boiler; and also insulating the main hall roof to reduce heat loss and further improve energy efficiency.

The committee decided to install a wood pellet boiler after realising that the existing oil fired boiler was both uneconomic and unsustainable. This carbon neutral system (power which does not emit any more carbon than it consumes) was chosen after a number of meetings with CLAREN, the north west's community renewable energy advisory project. The committee also held public meetings to assess the views of local people and to encourage their support. The committee are very keen to promote the ideals of sustainable development and renewable energy, and hope to educate and involve the wider community with future projects.

Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan

The Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan is helping to fund a range of projects across the county to aid the regeneration and development of a dynamic rural economy for Lancashire which is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.

The LRRAP awarded funding of £30,000 in 2004 to The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) Europarc Sustainable Tourism Strategy project to support and expand the tourism economy in rural areas. This funding contributed to the success of the Forest of Bowland in achieving the Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas in 2005.

The Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board continued to deliver the Lancashire's Rural Tourism Strategy through the Lancashire Rural Tourism Initiative (LRTI) which is working towards renewing and strengthening the recreation and tourism offer across the region. The successful Country Escapes short breaks marketing campaign for rural Lancashire continued in Autumn 2005 and Spring 2006 to promote Lancashire's rural areas. The Forest of Bowland again featured prominently as a key destination.

In September 2005, the LRRAP awarded £250,000 to LCDL to manage the Rural Small Buildings Scheme working with Lancashire Rural Futures, which delivers the LRRAP funded Rural Business Facilitation Service. The scheme has enabled a £581,524 investment including £137,134 from the LRRAP in the Forest of Bowland area. This was achieved through four key projects: a conversion of farm buildings into light industrial units in Clayton le Dale; renovation of the redundant Royal Mail Sorting Office in Clitheroe into a Wine Bar and café; a building conversion providing new small office/retail lets in Clitheroe; and the conversion of a redundant barn in Downham to create new work space for a crafts business.

Lancashire Rural Futures has continued to deliver significant advice and assistance to businesses in the Forest of Bowland AONB through the Rural Business Facilitation Service. Meanwhile the LRRAP funded Rural Community Inclusion Programme delivered through Community Futures continues to work with rural communities to develop co-operative activity and community enterprises to improve access to services. Myerscough College receives LRRAP grant to support food processors and producers and promote the food produced within the county through The Development and Promotion of Lancashire Food project.



Wind turbine at Dalehead Church, Tosside
© Martin Charlesworth, Forest of Bowland AONB.

The Forest of Bowland AONB Sustainable Development Fund 2006 is now open for applications, and we hope to also run the scheme in 2007. For more details contact **Cathy Hopley** on 01200 426233, alternatively e-mail her at cathy.hopley@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Wood pellet boiler installed at Bleasdale Parish Hall
© Robert Gardner

For further information contact the **LRRAP Support Unit** on 01254 300 362, alternatively email **Katherine Ashton** at katherine.ashton@lrp.org.uk or visit www.lancshireruralpartnership.gov.uk/lrrap.asp

Bowland Charter Mark Promotes Outstanding Rural Businesses

The Bowland Charter Mark is offered to outstanding rural businesses that are working in harmony with the environment. Launched in 2004 the mark has gone from strength to strength during the year, with 75 charter mark members currently registered.

The Charter is a quality mark, not a "made in" mark and a particular strength of the scheme has been that it cuts across sector boundaries, finding the mutually supportive links between farming, food, tourism, creative businesses, the environment and other manufacturing.

Bowland Charter Mark members were proud to exhibit their products at the Europarc Charter Presentation held in Chipping in October, when the Forest of Bowland celebrated being the first area in England to be designated with a European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. At this event it was shown how having a Europarc Charter for the area and a quality accreditation mark, the Bowland Charter, for local businesses is a symbiotic way to promote the special nature of this area and a unique way of the public and private sector working in partnership.

Additionally each Charter Member makes a contribution to the Bowland Tourism & Environment Fund, and this contribution from the Charter Members has been the major source of income for this fund in the last two years

The Bowland Charter Mark is an initiative under the Rural Sustainable Marketing Programme funded through the Lancashire LEADER+ programme. Examples of the 130 projects supported can be found on the Lancashire Rural Futures website. Taking examples just from the food sector projects include:

- The support of local foods from farm to plate including local organic lamb, farm shops, local yoghurt, and the reformation of the Lancashire Cheesemakers Association to promote Lancashire Cheese. Many of these products can be found at the annual Food Lovers Festival now established at Stonyhurst College, itself an initiative supported through the programme.



For further information on the Bowland Charter and how to become a member contact **Andy Pickard** on 01200 426433, alternatively e-mail him at andy@lancshireruralfutures.co.uk or visit the LEADER+ pages at www.lancshireruralfutures.co.uk

Bowland Tourism Environment Fund

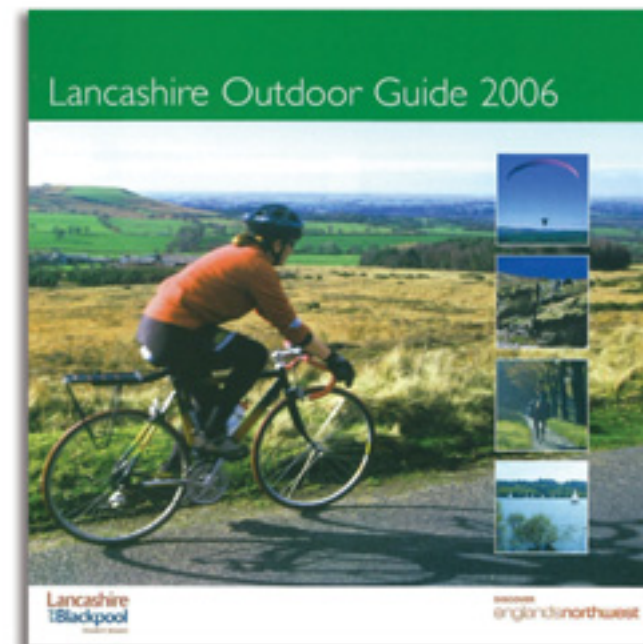
The Gibbon Bridge Hotel has kindly donated a short break prize to re-launch the Bowland Tourism Environment Fund. The Gibbon Bridge is a luxurious privately owned hotel in the heart of the Forest of Bowland and the prize includes a two-night short break for two people.

Members of the public can enter the prize draw by making a donation to the fund. Prize draw postcards with Forest of Bowland AONB pin badges are available at participating visitor attractions and businesses within the AONB.



Gibbon Bridge Hotel

All donations will directly fund environmental projects within the AONB. Grants of up to £500 are available. Please visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk for more details.



Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board

During 2005/06 Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board has continued to promote 'Country Escapes', one of our five Winning Themes. Country Escapes is the short breaks marketing campaign for rural Lancashire and was implemented during autumn 2005 and spring 2006. Country Escapes aims to attract high spending visitors to the countryside for short breaks. The Forest of Bowland is a key destination within Lancashire's countryside and has remained a vital component to the marketing campaigns.

Marketing work has included direct mail, online and e-marketing, exhibition at The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show at Birmingham NEC, public relations plus the production of Lancashire's Countryside Collection, a new leaflet to promote Lancashire's rural attractions and the Lancashire Outdoor Guide, another new publication to promote outdoor activities in Lancashire's countryside.

Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board has continued to implement the Lancashire Rural Tourism Initiative (LRTi), a three-year funding programme supported by the Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan.

LRTi provides grant funding to rural tourism operators working in partnership to identify new products and packages, increase visitor numbers and promote short breaks and longer stays.

For further information or to apply for funding please contact the Rural Tourism Team at LBTB who can provide advice and assist in the completion of application forms.

The Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan is a funding programme to aid the regeneration and sustainable development of the rural economy across Lancashire. Funding has been secured from the Northwest Regional Development Agency until 2008 for a range of regeneration projects across the county.



Lancashire Rural
Recovery Action Plan



For further information or to apply for funding please contact the **Rural Tourism Team** at Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board, who can provide advice and assist in the completion of application forms on 01257 226615, alternatively e-mail them at enquiries@lbtbltd.com or visit www.lancshireruralfutures.co.uk



Lancashire Rural Futures

Over the past year Lancashire Rural Futures has continued to deliver significant advice and assistance in the Forest of Bowland AONB. Through aiding business developments by securing planning and funding LRF have in turn created and safeguarded a number of jobs and have significantly increased rural workspace.

Lancashire Rural Futures is cited as a model of best practice, with Lancashire County Council being their lead partner. Lancashire County Council has recently been awarded Pathfinder status with Lancashire Rural Futures presently leading the Pathfinder Enterprise group.

LRF has recently assisted Backridge Farm, Waddington, in obtaining a grant to convert a redundant building into rural workspace. The project will create 500 sq. metres of improved workspace. This will be occupied by the furniture makers 'Ribble Valley Design', candle makers 'Melt', and a hairdressing business. In addition to the significant number of new jobs which this project will create, the wide range of businesses operating from this site is actively creating a diverse economic base of small companies in the Ribble Valley.

The Environmental delivery also undertaken at LRF over the past year includes the SCaMP project. This is a joint project with United Utilities, RSPB and LRF and has resulted in 12 whole farm plans being completed over 8 months as well as over 80 hectares of new woodland being planted in Whitendale.

The new Environmental Stewardship Scheme was launched in spring 2005 by Defra and interest within the Forest of Bowland AONB has been high. The scheme allows farmers to select from two levels; the Entry Level Scheme allows farmers to receive an annual payment in return for maintaining features such as dry stone walls and hedges and for managing land with reduced inputs of fertiliser while the Higher Level Scheme offers higher payments for more targeted management of key habitats in Bowland.

Higher Level Schemes submitted by Lancashire Rural Futures have included management of traditional hay meadows on the lower slopes of Pendle Hill, to encourage twite; management of Biological Heritage Site species-rich grassland near Chipping and re-creation of wet grassland for breeding wading birds as well as new public access.

Finally, the Sustainable Bowland team are now in place at the LRF Clitheroe office which is providing effective joint delivery with the LRF and Leader+ team.

The Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan is a funding programme to aid the regeneration and sustainable development of the rural economy across Lancashire. Funding has been secured from the Northwest Regional Development Agency until 2008 for a range of regeneration projects across the county.

The Bowland Festival 2005

In it's 3rd year, this year's Bowland Festival ran 58 events over seven days from 6th – 12th June 2005 bringing over 1200 people from all over the UK and some from abroad to the Forest of Bowland area of outstanding natural beauty.

This year's festival had the core wildlife events discovering the birds, plant and insect life of the area as well as some new events looking at conservation and management. Also new for 2005 were a number of food and drink events along with some heritage walks looking at the archaeology and history of Bleasdale, Abbeystead, Chipping and Slaidburn. The events were delivered by individuals from a wide range of organisations, all experts in their field.

All events were very well attended with a number being fully booked for some time. Most places not filled prior to the festival were taken up by people visiting the area and booking places through local Tourist Information Centres – also a new service brought on-line for the first time this year.

Our feedback revealed that the majority of people came to Bowland to take part in the Bowland Festival, quoting it as their 'main reason' for coming to the area on evaluation forms. A large majority of people were also staying in the locality with various accommodation providers throughout the area, with even more enjoying local produce from proprietors that put on special menus in celebration

of the festival. It is hoped that this increase in length of staying visitors and the added value of encouraging people coming to the festival to enjoy the other attractions that Bowland has to offer will see a significant increase in benefit to the local economy.

Without doubt this year's Bowland Festival was a resounding success and enjoyed an increased level of awareness both locally and further afield. Organisers are already reviewing this year's festival and are excited about preparations for next year and beyond.

The Festival is organised by, Forest of Bowland AONB, RSPB Birds of Bowland project, United Utilities, Lancashire Rural Futures, Lancashire County Council Countryside Service and Wyre Borough Council – working in partnership for the well being of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Also supporting the Bowland Festival are Ribble Valley Borough Council, English Nature, The Environment Agency, Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team, The Duchy of Lancaster Estate, The Wildlife Trusts of Lancashire, Manchester and N. Merseyside, Lancashire County Council as well as local councils, individuals, businesses, landowners and farmers.

For more information contact **Lancashire Rural Futures** on 01200 426433, alternatively e-mail them at admin@lancashireruralfutures.co.uk or visit www.lancashireruralfutures.co.uk

Farmland Wildlife Safari
© Susan MacDonald, Forest of Bowland AONB

Wildflower
© Peter Guy

Tossie Church
© Peter Guy

For more information about the Bowland Festival contact **Susan MacDonald** on 01772 531473, alternatively e-mail her at susan.macdonald@env.lancscc.gov.uk or visit www.forestofbowland.com



Beacon Fell Country Park

Beacon Fell Country Park remains the most popular destination for visitors to the Forest of Bowland. Lancashire County Council Countryside Service's management here recognises this "honey-pot" status and always seeks to balance the needs of the visitor and the natural environment. It is vital that people have a positive experience at an excellent site on what is often their first contact with the AONB.

Last year saw enormous strides in ensuring that ALL people have the chance to experience the beauty of Beacon Fell. Not all sectors of society have been able to do so fully in the past and it is important that this is not the case in the future. Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service has made additional resources available to facilitate visits from ethnic minority communities, visually impaired and deaf people and others. It is always exciting to welcome new visitors to the Fell.

Of particular note, June 2005 saw the official launch of the "Tramper" buggy scheme for visitors with low mobility. These "all-terrain" vehicles allow access across the Fell for people who may have otherwise never have been able to experience anything like this. The scheme's success has been phenomenal and customer feedback has been exceedingly positive and often very moving. The scheme has attracted a lot of attention nationally, with many local authorities and public bodies visiting the Fell to seek inspiration for their own similar schemes. Bowland is quite definitely providing an exceptionally useful template for social inclusion in rural areas everywhere.

New activities for young people of all ages have been provided. The Green Gang targets the younger end of the market, whilst the Conservation Crew is for teenagers. Both provide an enjoyable outlet for those keen on environmental matters. Schools regularly visit Beacon Fell from all over Lancashire. Beacon Fell provides a taster of the wider countryside for young people and we aim to provide the spark that will encourage them to come back and explore the rest of Bowland in their own time.

The management of the Fell seeks to enhance its nature conservation and landscape interest. As non-native coniferous trees – mainly spruce and pine – reach maturity they are selectively felled. A combination of natural regeneration and judicious planting will allow their replacement with native deciduous and mixed woodland. This management work is always carried out sensitively and last year parts of the work was done using heavy horses, which is always popular with the visitors.

The sheep grazing of moorland areas as part of a Countryside Stewardship Scheme worked well in 2005/6, the regime having been tweaked since the previous season.

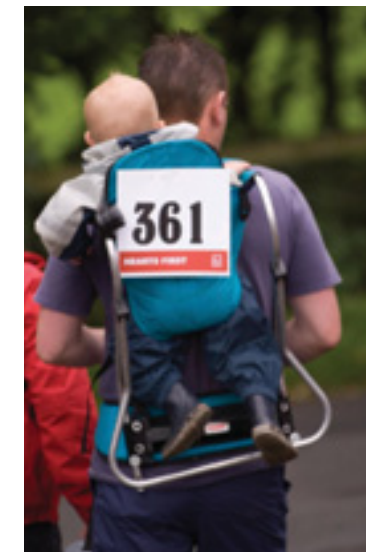
Maintenance work must be constant with over 300,000 visits a year. Last year saw dry stone wall restoration and improvements to the natural sculptures. Over 1,000 trees were planted in Spade Meadow as compensatory planting for trees felled elsewhere.

British Heart Foundation – Heart of the Kingdom Challenge

For its 2nd year the Heart of the Kingdom Challenge took place on Sunday 18th September 2005. This 12 mile British Heart Foundation hike started at Dunsop Bridge taking in the Salter Fell Road before turning right through Croasdale and the Upper Hodder Valley, before returning back to the Heart of the Kingdom - Dunsop Bridge.

The event was supported by the Forest of Bowland AONB, Lancashire Countryside & Ranger Service, United Utilities plc and the Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team.

The day was a huge success and featured on Granada TV as part of their 'Britain on the Move' feature. The event attracted 296 participants who raised £2846.82. With an additional £9504.60 from sponsorship the total raised from this event to date (excluding gift aid) is £12384.42



Members of Beacon Fell's Green Gang Club

Any queries should be directed to the **Bowland Visitor Centre** on 01995 640557 or the Beacon Fell Rangers on 01995 61693.

Photographs
© British Heart Foundation

For more information on this event and other **British Heart Foundation** events visit www.bhf.org.uk/events

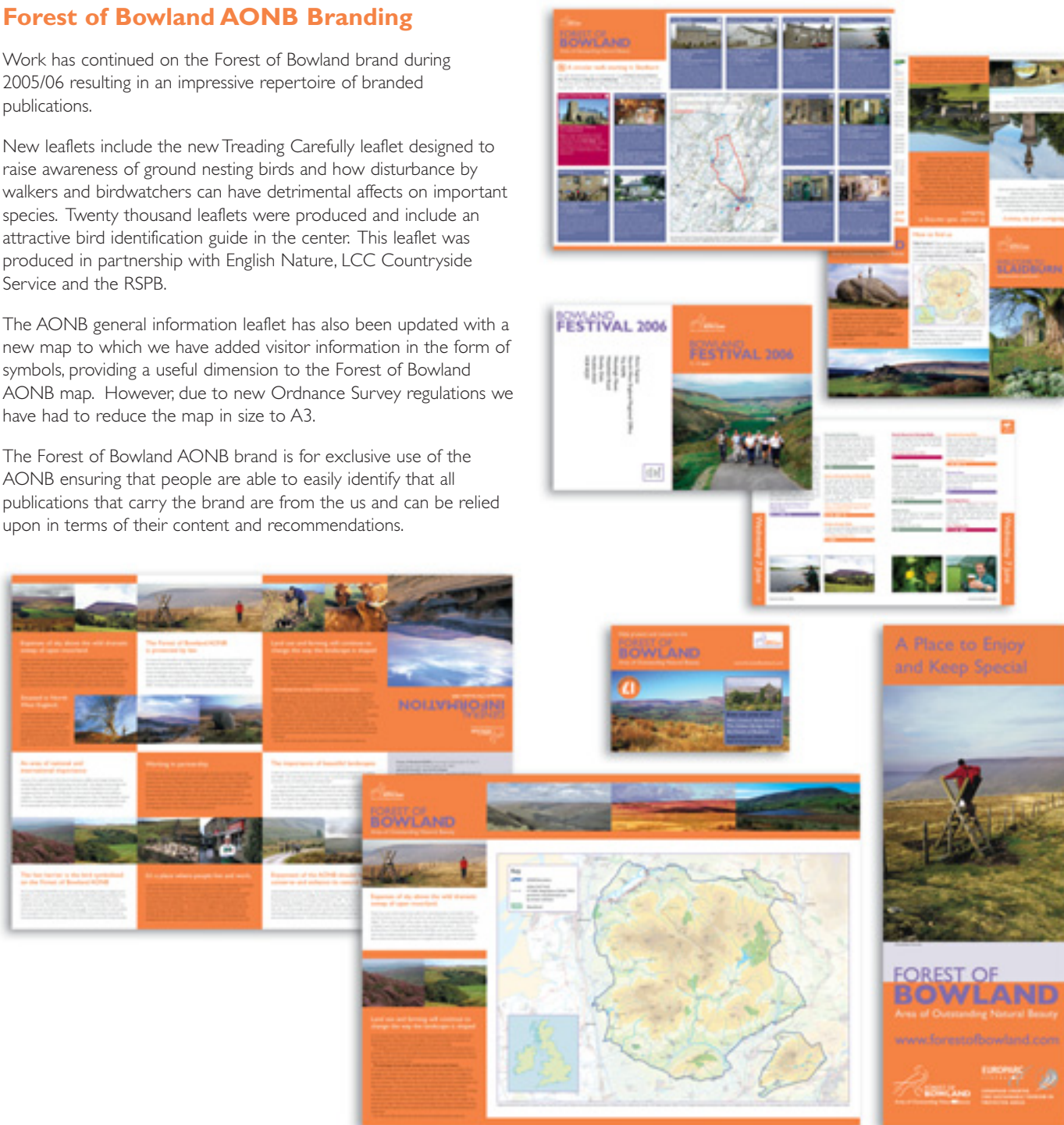
Forest of Bowland AONB Branding

Work has continued on the Forest of Bowland brand during 2005/06 resulting in an impressive repertoire of branded publications.

New leaflets include the new Treading Carefully leaflet designed to raise awareness of ground nesting birds and how disturbance by walkers and birdwatchers can have detrimental affects on important species. Twenty thousand leaflets were produced and include an attractive bird identification guide in the center. This leaflet was produced in partnership with English Nature, LCC Countryside Service and the RSPB.

The AONB general information leaflet has also been updated with a new map to which we have added visitor information in the form of symbols, providing a useful dimension to the Forest of Bowland AONB map. However, due to new Ordnance Survey regulations we have had to reduce the map in size to A3.

The Forest of Bowland AONB brand is for exclusive use of the AONB ensuring that people are able to easily identify that all publications that carry the brand are from the us and can be relied upon in terms of their content and recommendations.



A Clear Commitment

A clear commitment was made by the Countryside Agency and all the local authority funding partners to use their best endeavours to retain funding support for the AONB at current levels by signing a joint Memorandum of Agreement that will run till March 2012. The agreement will be subject to regular review every 3 years. The Countryside Agency and its successors will fund the core costs of the partnership up to 75% subject to satisfactory annual funding applications made by the AONB Unit.

The partners' decision to flag up their commitment to future support for the AONB puts a marker up for 'Natural England' – the new agency that takes over responsibilities for AONBs from the Countryside Agency in October 2006. It is also one important aspect of delivering their statutory obligations to AONBs under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

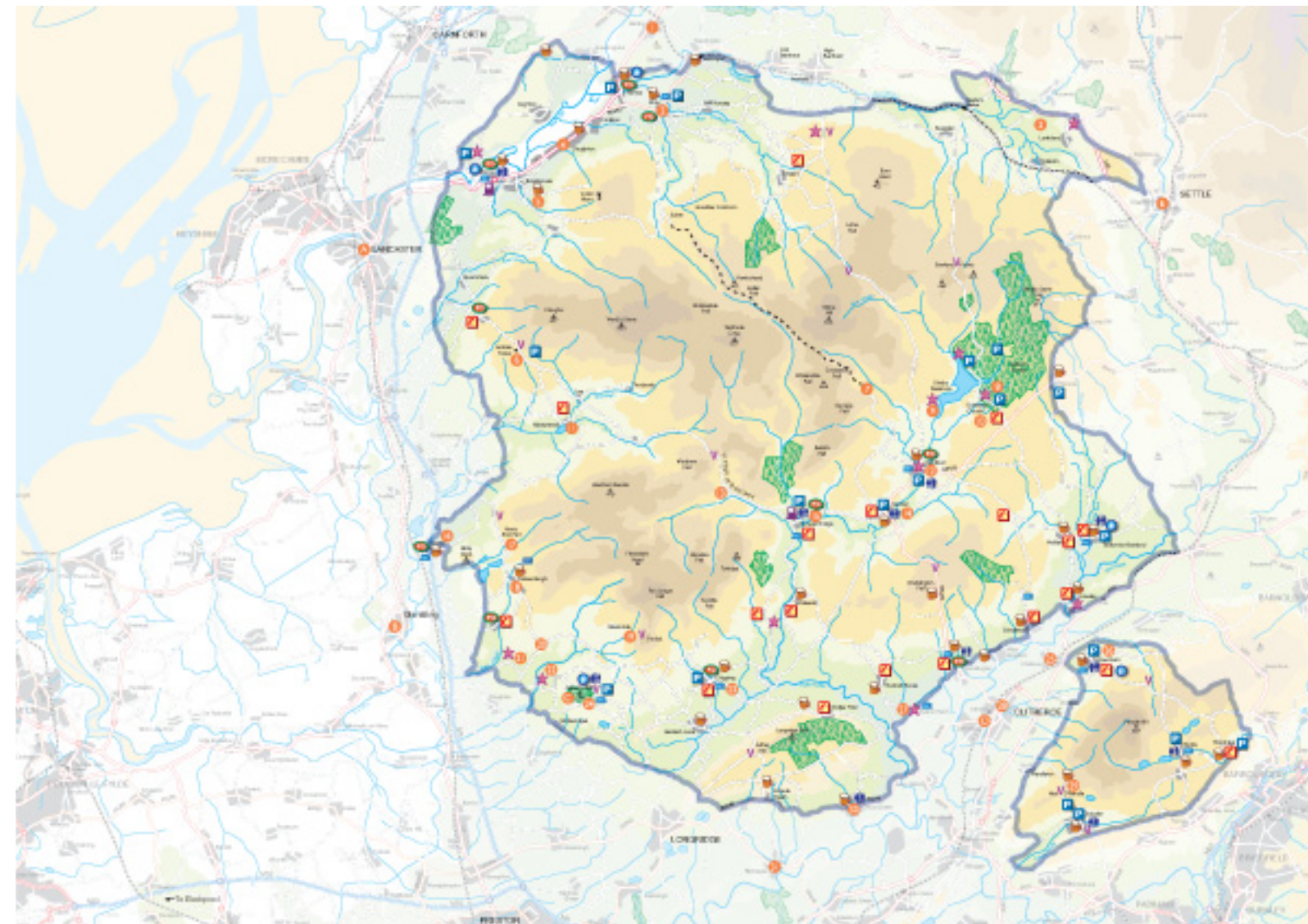


Anyone with any queries regarding the Forest of Bowland AONB branding or using the AONB logo should contact **Susan MacDonald** on 01772 531473, alternatively e-mail her at susan.macdonald@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Photograph
© Countryside Agency / Charlie Hedley

Forest of Bowland AONB Joint Advisory Committee Budget

	Original Estimate 2005/2006 (Out-turn prices) £'s	Actual 2005/2006 (Out-turn prices) £'s
EXPENDITURE		
Salary, N.I and Superannuation	99,000	95,567
Outbased premises costs	12,400	6,862
Car allowance and subsistence	4,400	6,345
Central, departmental and technical support	45,400	56,098
Core activities (including Information)	31,200	26,698
Projects	87,600	295,764
TOTAL COST TO BE RECOVERED	280,000	487,334
INCOME		
Government Grants		
Countryside Agency Grant	144,300	299,460
Contributions		
United Utilities	6,450	6,450
Other	0	34,425
County Councils		
Lancashire	38,700	48,976
North Yorkshire	6,450	6,450
District Councils		
Craven	6,450	3,225
Lancaster	6,450	6,450
Pendle	6,450	6,450
Preston	6,450	6,450
Ribble Valley	6,450	6,450
Wyre	6,450	6,450
SUB TOTAL – LOCAL AUTHORITIES	83,850	90,901
CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT COSTS (in kind)		
Lancashire County Council	45,400	56,098
	424,300	487,334





Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Mrs J E Yates
County Councillor Mrs M Wilson
County Councillor P R Elliott

North Yorkshire County Council
County Councillor D L Ireton

Craven District Council
Councillor G Hurtley

Lancaster City Council
Councillor P Quinton

Wyre Borough Council
Councillor R Brooks

Ribble Valley Borough Council
Councillor Mrs R Elms

Preston City Council
Councillor J Browne

Pendle Borough Council
Councillor I Robinson

Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils
Mr M Helm

Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Councillor C Price

Countryside Agency
Miss R Budd

United Utilities
Mr I Grindy

Environment Agency (North West Region)
Mr K Ashcroft

English Nature
Mr J Hickling

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Mr P Wilson

Forest of Bowland Landowning and Farming Advisory Group
Mr R C Banks

The North West Federation for Sport, Recreation and Conservation
No representative

Ramblers Association
Mr D Kelly

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Email: david.oyston@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Dave Padley
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Tarja Wilson
Bowland North and West
Tel: 01200 426433
Mobile: 07887 830853
Email: tarja.wilson@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Other Countryside Services

Alison Boden
Senior Manager, Wyre Coast & Countryside Service
Tel: 01253 887220
Email: aboden@wyrebc.gov.uk
www.wyrebc.gov.uk

United Utilities
Bowland Estate Office
Tel: 01200 454400
www.unitedutilities.com

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 and 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

Bowland Countryside
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