

## **Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company**

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## **Chairman's Report March 2018**

Welcome to all our shareholders old and new.

The solar PV initiative is continuing. The solar panels from the Leeds Childrens Holiday Centre were donated to the Lakeland Trust for Natural Sciences who run Wildlife Oasis on the A6. The Solar panels at Silverdale Primary School and the AONB offices are continuing to generate, Silverdale has had its panels for 4 years now and has generated 13,312 kWh. The AONB has had their panels for 3 winters and 2 summers and has generated 6675 kWh. Unfortunately Silverdale School have a problem with the flat roof and the panels will have to be moved temporarily. The energy leaflet on Solar PV has been updated and is on the website.

Four schools in our area did not have any help through the solar PV scheme mainly because their roofs were not suitable. We are looking therefore at seeing if we can help by lowering their lighting costs. We have done a pilot at the Arnside Football Club, where we paid for the lighting to be replaced by LEDs. This has been very successful and we will look to roll this out to the primary schools. Storth School are already going ahead.

Our Parish Signboard project is bearing fruit with the help of the AONB. Each parish is being offered help with the design and production of a series of parish information boards. Arnside's are now up and and Storth and Beetham are almost finished. Silverdale are just starting. We will be helping towards the production costs for all the parishes.

The Silverdale District Woodbank are thriving and continue to help local wood owners to manage their woodlands in exchange for the surplus wood. I feel strongly that this is an initiative that is worth supporting for many reasons. It enables waste wood to be used. Many of the members have young families and collecting wood brings them out into the countryside. We have had an enquiry from a family in fuel poverty for help in purchasing a woodburning Stove and we hope to be able to help a little towards the cost.

The atlases continue to sell well at the RSPB cafe. We donate 50p from each sale to the RSPB funds. We have sold 320 since the last AGM, roughly one a

day although the summer is by far the best time.

I am vice chair of the AONB Executive Committee of the AONB and the BCCIC can continue to support the work of the AONB team in many other ways.

We have lately been providing food for the bird feeders at the AONB office. These provide a great deal of pleasure to visitors and locals alike.

The Arnside/Silverdale AONB Red Squirrel Strategy is working well. The RSPB have agreed to join with all the other landowners in the area to support this strategy.

We always welcome suggestions from our shareholders as to further possible initiatives. We also have vacancies for directors, Val Stevens has offered to stand this year, and we would love to hear from anyone else who would be willing to serve.

I and others are working with the Morecambe Bay species introduction project.

Another important area is plastic. We are looking to see if we can work together with others to reduce the use of plastic in our locality. Val Stevens has a leaflet showing how to replace plastic with more sustainable alternatives.

Financially we remain on a sound footing and we have managed to further many of our aims.

Our web site is now run by A2A, a local business. It has allowed us a lot more flexibility than before. Do have a look at it. If you have any ideas for other things that could go on the site please let us know. Also if you would like to get involved in this side of our work we would love to hear from you.

Thanks are due to all our board and especially Mike, our secretary, David, our Treasurer and also Barbara and everyone at the AONB office.

Ann Kitchen