

Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company

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BCCIC

Chairman's Report October 2021

Welcome to all our shareholders. The Corona virus, Covid-19, has affected us all greatly in the past months. Our 2020 AGM was cancelled and could not be rescheduled. We continued to work together (if apart) if you know what I mean.

I don't know if you watched the earth shot prizes hosted by Prince William. I was very impressed by their aims and would like to think that as we approach defining our Business Plan for 2022-2026 we can look at our activities in the light of three of their categories, 1: Protect and Restore Nature, 2: Build a waste free world and 3: Fix our Climate.

We have made a start by updating our energy saving booklets The first to be redone is Factsheet 4. We hope you will take a few copies each and hand them out to friends to pass around. We need to reduce our carbon footprint as much as possible. Another 3 will be finished by the end of this month and the last will be finished we hope by March when the research we are doing will be finished.

Other things which have happened since our last AGM are:

The solar PV initiative still continues to reduce the carbon footprint of the area. Storth School, our first solar school in 2012 are still very pleased with their panels. The solar panels from the Leeds Childrens' Holiday Centre which were donated to the Lakeland Trust for Natural Sciences who run Wildlife Oasis on the A6 are generating. The Solar panels at the AONB offices are working well and have generated around 3,000kwh per year since they were installed in 2015 and the small panels on the shed still charge up the batteries. Silverdale Primary School panels went back in the summer for the second time after the roof was repaired properly and we are again receiving our share of the FIT money.

The Parish Signboard project we started with Arnside Parish Council is bearing fruit under the aegis of the AONB. Each parish is being offered help with the design and production of a series of parish information boards. Arnside, Storth and Beetham and Yealand boards are now up and Silverdale have decided to wait until the Coast Path Route along the shore is finalised.

The Silverdale District Woodbank is thriving and continues 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. They all understand the importance of burning seasoned dry wood and their communal wood stores enable them to achieve this.

The Wildlife Atlases were withdrawn from sale at the RSPB due to Covid restrictions for over a year. They are now back on sale in the shop, not the cafe. The AONB Landscape Trust also sell the Atlases through their new web shop.

The BCCIC continues to support the work of the AONB team in many other ways.

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. This is now on our website.

Financially we remain on a sound footing and we have managed to further many of our aims. We always welcome suggestions from our shareholders as to further possible initiatives. We are working with the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Partnership and the Landscape Trust to put together a bid to the Heritage Lottery fund for a grant to look at ways we can improve our working together to further our aims of conservation and protection of our AONB. We are also looking at how we can all work together to provide a good selection of events.

After a good many years David Askew has retired from his post as finance director for health reasons. He will however continue his role as a director. We are immensely grateful for all the work he has put in over the years. His place is being taken by Ray Anslow who we co-opted last year. Thank you Ray for volunteering. Bob Hamnett is retiring from the board as he is spending such a large amount of time on the Red Squirrell project. Roger Walton retired from the board last year. Again we want to record our thanks to Bob and Roger for their help and encouragement over the years.

We have vacancies for directors. We would like to hear from anyone who is interested. They could be co-opted any time in the coming year and stand for election at the next AGM.

Thanks are due to all our board and especially Mike, our secretary, David and Ray, our Finance Directors and also Lucy and everyone at the AONB office. Thank you too to all our shareholders for making our work possible over the years. Without your share capital none of this would have been possible. Finally can I wish you all continued health and all the best in the coming months.