

# **Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company**

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Company Number 6363720

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## **Chairman's Report March 2016**

Welcome to all our shareholders Old and New.

At our last AGM, I reported that we had put new Solar PV panels on the roof of Silverdale School. However a mistake with the FIT application meant that the school had been put on the lowest tariff rate. We finally got our share of the compensation in July 2015. This amounted to £2380. It has meant that while the school, who benefit from free electricity as well as a share of the FIT, will make a profit over the life of the scheme, we will just cover our costs. We should get an annual income of around £250 from the school for the next 18 years. Our other solar panels at the Silverdale Leeds Children's Holiday Centre continue to generate well and we have had an annual income of over £500 from them. They have now said that they will be leaving the site in November so the agreement will end then (Holgates have bought the site) and the balance of £5,100 will be repaid to us. Our last Solar PV project, to give a grant to put PV panels on the Station Building for the AONB has finally come to fruition. The panels were installed in September. As we wish to support the AONB it was decided that this £3,800 should be a donation with all the FIT going to the AONB office.

Since the last AGM we have given another grant towards the cost of the installation of a wood-burning stove. We will hope to carry this on over the years as funds become available. The Silverdale District Woodbank are thriving and continue to help local woodowners to manage their woodlands in exchange for the surplus wood. They are working with the National Trust and the Woodland Trust as well as with Butterfly Conservation, The Leighton Hall estate and other small land owners.

The atlases continue to sell well at the RSPB cafe. We donate 50p from each sale to the RSPB funds. We have sold 364 since the last AGM, roughly one a day although the summer is by far the best time.

I, as Chair of the BCCIC, was invited to go on the AONB Executive Committee of the AONB. I accepted and at the last meeting became its Vice Chairman. Hopefully we can continue to support the work of the AONB team in many other ways. You may know that Ruth Ainsworth has joined the AONB team to job share with Barbara.

We are considering ways in which the BCCIC can help the Arnside/Silverdale AONB Red Squirrel Strategy and this is on the agenda for discussion.

We always welcome suggestions from our shareholders as to further possible initiatives. We also have vacancies for directors and would love to hear from anyone who would be willing to serve.

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

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

Ann Kitchen