

Welcome to our third AGM. This is my second as Chairman and I have to report another busy year for the board.

We have been holding a watching brief on land sales in the area. Nothing of interest to us or any of our other conservation partners has come up over the year. The government policy of selling off Forest Enterprise land has been dropped and as far as the AONB is concerned, the Forest Enterprise land is mainly leased. The government has had second thoughts on the NE nature reserves. They will continue to be managed by NE. We are delighted to announce that Butterfly Conservation has a 5 year lease on Myers Allotment and this will now be sympathetically managed to improve the limestone flora and habitat for butterflies.

The Conservation Cookbook is still selling and is also available on the web. There are Company web pages available through a link from the Arnside/Silverdale AONB web site.

We have held a license for Grantfinder for a year. This was paid for mainly by a grant and has proved useful. Several of the board were trained in its use and their expertise was then made available to others in the AONB. Unfortunately the past year has not been very productive as far as grants are concerned. We therefore feel that there is no further need for the use of Grantfinder in the near future and thus we will not need to look for funding to renew the license. We have however made sure that we will be able to use Grantfinder ourselves in the future by tapping into other organisations.

We have put most of our energies this year into supporting the AONB's Low Carbon Landscape initiative. This has been done partly through our energy fact sheets and partly through our own efforts in taking on the low carbon challenge. The display you see here and the talk to follow are part of that work. We are considering offering a heat audit using a thermal imaging camera to local residents in the coming year and I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on this. This is not a cheap procedure and we would need to look carefully at funding.

There are now 4 fact sheets available both on the web and in printed form. They are Electricity from Sunshine, Heat from Trees, Woodfuel Wisdom, and Avoiding Waste. They have proved very popular. There has never been a better time to look at Saving energy, Saving money and Saving the environment as our slogan goes. We are producing 3 more factsheets, Heat Pumps, Solar Hot water and Woodpellet and woodchip central heating. These will probably not be released until we have had time to learn more about the government's Renewable heat incentive scheme for households which is due to start in 2012.

In the present economic climate, using our resources wisely and buying locally is very important. We must protect local employment and also enable our younger generation to find work and housing here.

We still need further shareholders, both large and small. Those with a shareholding of just £10 are as valued as those with much larger holdings. If you have friends and or relatives who you think would be interested in becoming shareholders please see one of the board who will give you any information you need.

As you will hear from our Finance Director, most of our expenses come from things like accountants' fees. We have also taken out insurance for the coming year now we are being more proactive. This is very expensive but we see no way that we can escape our obligations as far as the insurance is concerned. We will however be looking to take on the submission of accounts to Companies House ourselves. Overall in the 3 years of the company's existence we have made a loss of £604. That is the difference between the nominal shareholding capital and the cash in the bank. At the moment we are not looking to any large moneymaking schemes. We have made the fact sheets free as we thought it was more important to have them widely used. This being the case we need to find ways of generating the money we need for our day to day running which will be around £500 per annum. This could either be by way of running fundraising events or by asking for an annual donation from our shareholders. Initially it was hoped that the income from our share capital would go some way towards this. However interest rates being what they are this has not proved to be the case. We are therefore thinking of asking our shareholders to make an annual donation of £10 to the company. I would be interested in hearing our shareholders' opinions on this.

You will see from further down the agenda that there is an election for 3 directors. Last year, our second AGM, two of the directors were re-elected. Our articles state that a third of the board (two and one thirds of a director) should resign each year. They are then eligible to stand for re-election. We have decided to round that up to 3. David Askew, David Farrant and Robin Horner are therefore retiring and are putting themselves up for re-election. We still have vacancies that we can fill on the board but we have no new candidates. It would be good to find at least one new director with an interest in renewable energy. If you, or anyone you know, support our objectives and could give some time to the company please talk to either David Askew, Mike Smith or myself. Can I take this opportunity to thank the rest of the board for their work and support over this last year.