

Bittern Countryside CIC

Chair's Report 2026

Welcome to all shareholders.

Business Plan

Our Business Plan from 2022-2026 set the following three aims:

- 1: Protect and restore nature
- 2: Build a waste free world
- 3: Fix our climate

These aims are interconnected and provide us with a general framework to inform decision making – whilst they might be ambitious, they provide a clear direction for the organisation.

Over the last year we have undertaken or considered several projects (both new and ongoing) which might help us work towards these aims.

Bittern Sustainability Conference 2025

On the 15th November 2025 we hosted a Sustainability Conference with the National Landscape team, welcoming over 60 people to the AEI for a full day of talks and workshops about local sustainability projects. The event was a great success and we hope that it will form the basis of more collaborative working across sustainability groups in the National Landscape.

Bittern Sustainable Schools Programme

The Bittern Sustainable Schools Programme this year funded the forest school leadership training of Eve Quillian to support forest school and an eco-club at Silverdale School. We have also been working with Yealand School and Beetham School to identify projects in school with the remainder of the 2025 grant.

We delivered Marvellous Moths in 2025, with a display in Storth Village Hall with the Landscape Trust of the children's artwork and a presentation by Larksfoot CIC about the project at the Sustainability Conference. We have funded this again for 2026.

We are working up schools workshops on Fabulous Fungi, working with the British Mycological Society.

We have also met with a representative from Bleasdale School and are looking to develop links with them.

Wildlife Atlases & Publications

The wildlife atlases continue to be sold via the RSPB and National Landscape Office. They continue to provide an excellent resource for people looking to learn more about our local flora, fauna and fungi. We published our new updated Orchard Booklet in Autumn 2025, and have sold approximately 80 copies so far, with sales at Leighton Hall Apple Day, Beetham Nurseries and the Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape Office.

Sales figures for the wildlife atlases from September 2024 to August 2025 were approximately 350, with figures from September 2025 to April 2026 of approximately 150.

National Landscape partnership updates

The National Landscape team continue to work closely with the BCCIC, providing a temporary chairperson up to April 2026. Belinda Barclay took on additional hours in 2025/6 as an Engagement Officer, working on community projects with a nature and climate focus and has been assisting with the Tool Share.

The National Landscape partnership is reviewing the Management Plan, and Ann Kitchen has been attending various events representing the BCCIC.

Nature Recovery Strategy – Plant Recording Scheme

The plant recording scheme is now being delivered with the National Landscape Office, particularly Helen Rawlinson, Grace Holand and the new Nature Recovery Officer Ciaran Rowett.

Ciaran Rowett is delivering training on iNaturalist.

Further projects and collaborations

We have set up a Sustainability Network in the National Landscape, providing a regular meeting for the various local sustainability organisations to work collaboratively together.

Financial status

We remain on a sound financial footing, able to maintain our current activities. We welcome suggestions from our shareholders for further activities.

Directorship

We have welcomed Sarah Hymas, Chris Hardy and Steve Porter as new Directors, co-opted during 2025 and standing for election.

Robin Horner, Fiona Allan, Malcolm Stevens and David Askew resigned as Directors this year. We thank them all for their contributions. Fiona, Malcolm and David are staying involved in the BCCIC, acting as special advisors.

Steve Porter is now looking to step into the Chair role, whilst Peter Haine is shadowing Ann Kitchen with a view to taking on the Finance Director role. Caroline Howard will move into the Secretary role temporarily.

Thanks

Thanks to our dedicated directors for their time and effort in delivering on our business plan, our partners in supporting us and helping to create a community of conservation in the National Landscape and thanks to our shareholders for making our work possible.

Caroline Howard (Chair)