

Bittern Countryside CIC

Chair's Report 2025

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 Sustainable Schools Programme

The Bittern Sustainable Schools Programme this year funded the acquisition of a potting shed for Arnside Primary School and the laying and supplementing of a hedge at Archbishop Hutton School in Warton. We have further arranged for 5 of the 6 to have another Marvellous Moths workshop with Larksfoot CIC, and the Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape have funded some additional work to evaluate the workshops. The only primary school not participating this year is Yealand, and the whole school participated in 2023, so it would be a repeat for some children if it was run again this year – we anticipate Yealand might engage less frequently than the other schools due to the size of the school.

The Marvellous Moths workshops will generate artwork which will be displayed as part of the 2025 Art Festival (replacing the Art & Craft Trail this year). Work from Arnside School might also be used as part of a Big Green Week display with Sustainable Arnside.

A further contribution has been made to the programme by the National Landscape partnership, which will allow us to deliver another series of the Marvellous Moth workshop in 2026.

Wildlife Atlases

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.

Sales figures for 2024/5 are 212 booklets, with 169 sold at Leighton Moss (leading to a £152.10 donation) and 43 sales via the National Landscape Office.

National Landscape partnership updates

The National Landscape team continue to work closely with the BCCIC, providing a temporary chairperson. Belinda Barclay has taken on additional hours in 2025/6 as an Engagement Officer, working on community projects with a nature and climate focus – this offers opportunities to work with the BCCIC.

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 continues to develop, with input from both Helen Rawlinson and Grace Holland from the National Landscape team. Thanks to Lynne Farrell and Ann Kitchen who have done impressive work on the project; the National Landscape team are building on this impressive base.

After the initial year of data recording by volunteers from various organisations, including BCCIC, led by Helen, the results are hosted on the BCCIC web site and can be found at the bottom of our links page. Individual summaries are given for each of the 56 species we are studying. Each one is chosen either because of its rarity or because it is a good indicator of health of a particular habitat. We are now focusing on 21 species, including the 14 indicator species which are considered at risk and suitable for possible reinforcement or re-introduction work by the National Landscape.

Further projects and collaborations

We have been working with Sustainable Arnside, and will be attending their Big Green Week celebration on the 14th June 2025. We are also developing further potential community sustainability projects, currently in early development.

Financial status

We remain on a sound financial footing, able to maintain our current activities. We welcome suggestions from our shareholders for further activities, especially those which might develop further engagement with new Directors.

Directorship

We have welcomed Peter Haine as our new Secretary, and he's also joined as a new Director. We're delighted to have him on the team. We would like to extend our thanks to Ken Kitchen for all his work as Secretary up to this point.

We continue to search for new Directors, looking to ensure a long-term future for the organisation so that it can continue to support efforts within the National Landscape to protect and restore nature, build a waste free world and fix our climate.

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)