



Lady Shuttleworth and the Lostock Hall Guides, from left Daisy, Kiera, Alicia and Katelyn at the opening of the Woodland Oasis

# A year of promise before the lockdown – Annual Review

Your Wildlife Trust has studied and lobbied on strategic plans, including the Lancaster City Local Plan Examination in Public, and presented our views on major development proposals, such as High Speed 2, the Mersey Barrage and fracking.

Our work to re-establish Lancashire's Local Nature Partnership, led by Lancaster University, saw a relaunch conference planned for the end of March 2020 but was cancelled due to Coronavirus lockdown. The re-emergence of an effective strategic voice for nature in Lancashire will be a welcome development and sit alongside the partnerships that operate in Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region.

As an example of effective LNP work increasing awareness of an area's wildlife, the 2019 "Year of the Environment" banner was embraced by Liverpool City Region's LNP, now called Nature Connected. Your Wildlife Trust and Merseyside Biobank led on the Greenspace Challenge – a recording competition using the web-based 'iNaturalist' app. It yielded 57,000 wildlife records by 700 participants.

## Living Sea Campaign

We had great news at the beginning of the year in the successful designation of six new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) in the North West Irish Sea. This followed considerable NW Wildlife Trusts campaigning work around a Government consultation that saw 1,800 responses from across the North West. There are now a total of 10 Marine Conservation Zones in the Irish Sea and work continued throughout the year to increase awareness of these areas and work to ensure they are meaningful through work with the NW Inshore Fishing and Conservation Authority.

Public events, particularly in Marine Week, proved so popular that more than 100 people attended. The Connecting to Nature Project at Heysham Nature Reserve had over 1,200 people participating during the year in a wide range of family and specialist events in partnership with EDF Energy.

## Safety, Health and Environment

A new SHE Advisor post was established at the Trust to help advise staff and volunteers and to develop our systems. A new risk assessment and method statement system has been developed and key policy and guidance updated to ensure staff are supported to deliver consistently high standards of legal compliance.

A new committee has been formed to concentrate on 'safeguarding' development work within the Trust and reflects our increasing work in this area and need for support to staff and volunteers on existing programmes. Training of staff and volunteers in mental health awareness, safeguarding and specialist practical skills has increased.



## "The January Christmas tree planting saw more than 200 volunteers partially burying 2,000 trees on the foreshore, trapping windblown sand."



Planting Christmas trees on at St Annes



## Living Landscape Campaign

In partnership with councils and the Environment Agency, the Trust had another successful year progressing the protection of the delicate dune system on the Fylde coast.

The Lancashire Dunes Project undertakes practical measures to rebuild the dunes system such as sand capture barriers, in combination with activities to increase awareness of the delicate ecosystem and its role in coastal defense and the benefits to the tourist industry.

The January Christmas tree planting saw more than 200 volunteers partially burying 2,000 trees on the foreshore, trapping windblown sand. The event was closely followed by storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge that lashed the Fylde coast but the trees held very well and helped prevent considerable further damage to the coast.

A new Tale Trail was launched in the North Blackpool area and a considerable number of public events attracted over 3,500 participants over the year.

After five years, the South Pennines Grasslands Project came to an end in September with activity focused on the management and restoration of herb-rich grasslands in the West Pennine Moors. The project has been a significant success and exceeded its target of restoring 250 hectares of rare grassland in the area, increasing and updating our knowledge of biodiversity in the area.

Surveying of other sites across our area this year included a number of surveys and management planning under contract and through Biodiversity Benchmark assessments. A new scheme to quality assure suppliers to Jordan's Cereals was started and training given to staff. A considerable amount of surveying of invertebrates, particularly bees and wasps, was undertaken through the 'Plan Bee' Project in South Lancashire.

The Red Squirrel project's spring 2019 monitoring showed good results overall despite recent and ongoing squirrel pox outbreaks. The population in the reserve woodlands is at 90 per cent of the baseline figure in 2002. The Trust hosted the UK Red Squirrel fair in Southport.

**Reserve Management**

Our nature reserve portfolio has 37 sites (more than 1,300 hectares) and manages and advises on the wildlife management of other substantial sites in the sub-region. Resourcing the management of this land is a constant challenge and we bid for agri-environment and other grants to enhance what we can achieve through membership fees alone.

Purchasing and replacing vehicles, tractors, mowers etc, are particularly difficult to fund through third party grants. Some investment is needed on reserves such as fencing, access paths, gates, animal husbandry equipment and tree management. Volunteers contribute a huge amount of time to the conservation work of the Trust on sites and through campaigning. The year proved to be a difficult year to achieve goals with extreme weather in autumn and winter.

Additional staff resources were put in place to develop strategic reserves work such as better management planning, communications and grant / legal compliance. The suite of Conservation Key Performance Indicators (KPI) performance for the year indicates the successful completion of most nature reserve tasks. A task and finish group produced a new management plan template. Signage and interpretation on sites is deteriorating and in need of investment and particularly, to take advantage of new digital media.

The Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve redevelopment gained pace during the year. The refurbishment of the staff and volunteer accommodation and shop was completed and fit out of the new café and community space building extension was underway when Coronavirus measures stopped progress. The redevelopment is costing over £500,000 and the Trust is grateful for the generosity of The Casey Group, donors, grant aiders and the Friends of MSW Wildlife continues to develop with habitat development work on the woodlands.

This may be paying dividends as indicated by a survey that found maternity roosts for brown long-eared and noctule bats, which confirms them breeding on site for the first time. Sadly, there was a setback to the development of the reserve when the excellent Cyril Gibbons bird hide was burned to the ground by arsonists.

Another site with rapidly developing people engagement facilities is Lunt Meadows Nature Reserve on the edge of Liverpool. The site continues to amaze with the number of breeding and over-wintering birds that are using the site. News was received in March 2020 that our bid for £1.1m match funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was successful, following considerable work during the year to develop the bid and to trial activities.

The bid was jointly developed with the Museum of Liverpool and the funding will include a new visitor facility providing schools and community awareness raising programmes focusing on the wildlife and hunter-gatherer archaeological findings on the site.

New reserve acquisitions were completed on an 25ha extension to Winmarleigh Moss Nature Reserve. Future acquisitions are being developed at Hope Carr, Leigh and an extension to Freshfield Dune Heath Nature Reserve where a successful planning application for 200 houses next to Freshfield Dune Heath included mitigation measures for a buffer zone piece of habitat to be gifted to us.



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Seven Longhorn cattle have been gifted to The Trust and these are now grazing Bickershaw grasslands in Wigan. The Trust's Grazing Project now has a small herd of Longhorn and Highland cattle, a flock of over 100 Hebridean sheep and a small trip of goats, providing invaluable grazing on our grassland sites. Access to vehicles powerful enough to haul a trailer full of cattle out of fields is proving a challenge as funding vehicles through external grants is very difficult.

Heysham Nature Reserve had a boost this year with the reserve lake undergoing a successful desilting project, revealing more deep water and variety of edge habitat. Heysham Moss Wet Grassland Project added to the diversity of wetland habitats on site. Warton Crag reserve benefitted from a further season to tree thinning to encourage the endangered high brown and other fritillary butterflies.

Moor Piece reserve has had the rhododendron removed as part of actions to reduce further problems with the Larch Dieback vector, Phytophthora ramorum on the site. Breeding common tern on site at Seaforth Nature Reserve had a good breeding year with 170 chicks fledging.

# Annual General Meeting - via video conferencing

## Saturday October 3rd, 2020 from 1.30pm-2pm

**The Annual General Meeting of the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside will once again take place within the Volunteer Conference. The AGM will begin at 1.30pm with ALL MEMBERS WELCOME, details on how to join the meeting will be published on our website in October.**

Lancashire Wildlife Trust Ltd. Charity Number 229325 - Company Number 731548

**Elections**

The Trust Council is the governing body of the Trust. It consists of up to 30 members ('trustees') elected at the AGM on a three-year cycle, together with the President and Vice-President (elected at the AGM every five years) who are ex-officio members of the Council.

Nominations, addressed to the Company Secretary, should be sent by email to the Governance Officer, mathertonpatel@lancswt.org.uk. Nominations should include the name and address of the nominee and confirmation of his/her willingness to stand, together with the names of both proposer and seconder, all of whom should be Trust members. Any member is eligible to stand as a Member of Council. Members are entitled to a proxy vote at the AGM. See below re proxy voting.

Note: Copies of the 2019 AGM Minutes will be available on the Trust website.

**Annual Review**

The Trust has been working to reduce our printed materials to reduce our environmental impact and increase the money we spend on conservation. This year's annual report will be digital and available at [www.lancswt.org.uk](http://www.lancswt.org.uk).

**Proxy Voting**

Pursuant to the Companies Act, Members are entitled to attend general meetings either personally or by proxy or (in the case of a member organisation) by an authorised representative. Proxy votes must be completed with the information on the form below and returned to the Governance Officer at [mathertonpatel@lancswt.org.uk](mailto:mathertonpatel@lancswt.org.uk)

**AGM AGENDA**

- 13.00: Arrival
- 13.30: Annual General Meeting of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust Ltd
- 1. Apologies for Absence
- 2. Approval of Minutes of AGM held on October 5th, 2019
- 3. Matters arising from the Minutes
- 4. General Business:
  - (a) Presentation of Accounts for 2019/2020
  - (b) Auditor's Report and Appointment
  - (c) Financial Outlook
  - (d) Report by Chair of Council
  - (e) Appointment to honorary positions
  - (f) Elections and Resignations to Council
- Vote of Thanks
- 14.00: Finish
- Any additional items, relevant to the Annual General Meeting, should be notified to the Governance Officer, by email, by 4pm on Friday September 4th, 2020.

**Lancashire Wildlife Trust Ltd** Charity Number 229325 - Company Number 731548  
Registered Address: The Barn, Berkeley Drive, Bamber Bridge, Preston PR5 6BY

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ being a member of the above-named company hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ or failing him/her \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ as my/[our] proxy at the general meeting of the company to be held on Saturday 3rd October 2020 and at any adjournment thereof.

Signature(s) of Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name(s) of Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership number(s) \_\_\_\_\_