



Lancashire,
Manchester &
N Merseyside

The Lancashire Wildlife Trust

— ANNUAL REVIEW —
2016



www.lancswt.org

We are part of the Wildlife Trusts movement, the UK's leading conservation charity dedicated to all wildlife.

We are your local charity, working hard to improve your local area for wildlife and for you. Since 1912, The Wildlife Trusts have been speaking out for nature in the UK. Our organisation is unique - while most of our work for wildlife takes place at local grassroots level, we have a national voice.

Our Vision

To create and protect a region rich in wildlife for everyone to enjoy.

Our Objectives

These are the nationally agreed priorities with the Partnership of Wildlife Trusts.

- To protect, create and enhance wildlife in our region, creating living landscapes and living seas
- To stand up for wildlife and the environment
- To inspire people about the natural world and encourage everyone to take action for wildlife
- To foster sustainable One Planet Living, where the functioning of the natural environment is appreciated as essential for supporting life
- To ensure our work is based on knowledge and sound evidence
- To be recognised and respected for our work
- To grow our resources and increase support for our mission
- To ensure the organisation is effective and fit for purpose



Chairman's Statement

The year has been another active one for the Trust. Public sector funding continues to reduce and charities have faced difficult times in the media. We have always carried out our fundraising in a respectful way but as we look for new models for income generation, we have published a donor care and legacy charter to ensure we continue with our commitment to responsible fundraising.

We continue to move forward in these challenging times. The Trustee team has been significantly strengthened, including a new president. Our new trustees bring a wide range of additional skills and experience.

Our reserves continue to flourish and new sites, such as Lunt Meadows in Sefton, are already becoming fantastic areas to see wildlife. We are active in many areas of conservation with projects including the marine environment, peatlands, grassland restoration and conservation of pollinating insects.

We continue to deliver key outcomes for people and wildlife in our region. The Biodiverse Society project delivered its first year of programming and trained its first tranche of four students. This is crucial in continuing wildlife surveying - right at the heart of protecting our natural world. An exciting new area is developing projects with new partners to address health issues. Other plans for establishment of a solar farm on Trust land in Wigan were unfortunately put on indefinite hold due to sudden changes in Government subsidies to the solar sector. We hope this may become financially viable in the future.

Our membership growth has slowed and we continue to see grant funding reduced. With a renewed focus on our membership, we are working hard to secure a sustainable future. All those who care about wildlife need to unite and take action.

We continue to watch for developments and political changes. Topical issues in the North West include the impacts of huge local government spending cuts, ongoing fracking discussions and upland management to name but a few.

Of course the recent result in the EU Referendum will change the landscape of our work and we will act on both a local and national level to secure the best outcome for wildlife

I would like to thank our many members for their continued support. With more threats to wildlife and the countryside than ever and given the challenging funding and political environment in which we work, your support is absolutely fundamental.

Your membership really is making a difference to wildlife. Thank you.

Steve Garland

Chairman



We lobbied and prevented changes to landfill tax funding, protecting significant areas of our work by saving thousands in funding which would otherwise have been at risk



Our Mere Sands Wood nature reserve was announced as one of the top places in the UK to experience the dawn chorus by national media



We managed and protected over 1,300 hectares of local wild spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife



Our work won several awards, including Veolia's Environment Category for 2015 at River Darwen Parkway LNR, Blackburn

We helped protect farming subsidies for wildlife



Our work with red squirrels saw populations rise to similar levels as 2008 pre-squirrel pox levels

Our GM Wetlands project has seen over 12 partners, from all sectors, join forces to create a better network of habitats across our region



We rallied our supporters to Vote for Wildlife in the EU Referendum and we will continue to lobby the Brexit Government to place the environment at the top of the political agenda



We planted over 1,500 recycled Xmas trees on the dunes, creating an effective sand trap and encouraging the dunes to grow



We lobbied and helped secure two new marine conservation zones in the North West



— Our passion —

Standing up for wildlife and the environment

Standing up for wildlife is our passion. Our members and supporters give us a powerful voice and - with The Wildlife Trusts movement - we can all make a real difference at local and national levels.



Red Squirrel Officer Rachel Miller feeds an orphan kitten



We campaigned for better protection....

Many of you responded to the Defra Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) Tranche 2 consultation. Success came in the shape of two new North West sites being designated by Government. We have lobbied to bring forward the designation of the West Pennine Moors as a Site of Special Scientific Interest creating a protected area of around 100 square miles for the wildlife that lives on our doorstep.

We kept a close eye on developments....

Staff and volunteers have been vigilant in commenting on major development proposals and local plan consultations. Exploration for shale gas reserves one mile under Lancashire in the Bowland Shales has presented major concerns for us all over potential wildlife impacts from possible fracking. The Trust has continued a dialogue with exploration companies to gain reassurances. We have also met with companies proposing tidal energy schemes.

We worked in partnership, for a bigger, better and more joined-up approach....

At a strategic campaigning level, The Trust has continued to play a major role in the development of Local Nature Partnerships. Anne Selby is chair for the Greater Manchester Low Carbon Hub which is setting the strategic direction for environmental/low carbon policy across Greater Manchester. The Trust is also active in the work of Nature Connected, the LNP for Liverpool City.

We continue to be actively engaged in the The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) partnership work, challenging Government over proposed changes to the Landfill Communities Fund which has been vital to fund wildlife projects. The Trust continues to play an active role in a number of other partnerships. We have maintained our work within the Sefton Coast's Landscape Partnership and helped with Lottery bids in the Forest of Bowland.





Brown hare



Sun dew at Winmarleigh Moss



Reserve Highlights

Our nature reserve portfolio has **35 sites** covering more than **1,000 hectares**. The Trust also manages and advises on the wildlife management of a number of other sites - protecting, enhancing and influencing others to benefit wildlife.

Moston Fairway

An extension to Moston Fairway Nature Reserve was acquired during the year and although small in size (3.29ha), captures the remaining habitat available next to the reserve. Moston Fairway is one of the best wildlife sites in the City of Manchester and it now has a path to transport you into the middle of the wildlife.

Lunt Meadows

Lunt Meadows in Sefton is one of our most exciting reserves. New Lottery support has allowed a part-time post to develop volunteering there. Birds that flock here prove its potential for breeding and over-wintering. Where birds congregate, people follow and the site will be challenging in capturing that interest without impacting on the wildlife. The site includes an 8,000-years-old settlement and much of the landscape around hasn't changed that much.

Mere Sands Wood

Mere Sands Wood volunteers and staff have completed much rhododendron removal, replanting with understory trees and shrubs. Progress was made on work needed to replace the ageing part of the visitor centre - replacing it with a new cafe and improved facilities for visitors, including schools. Work with architects produced a suitable design although the costs for even a basic design are challenging in the current grant funding climate. A major setback was the failure of a Lottery bid creating the need to reevaluate our aspirations and funding targets.

The Lancashire Dunes Project

We have focused on invasive plant removal such as Japanese rose, white poplar and sea buckthorn as they were beginning to dominate large areas of the dunes at the expense of native dune plants.

Heysham Moss

A major success in 2015/16 was the emergence of the first large heath butterflies at Heysham Moss for almost 100 years. The reintroduction project boosted the local population through another release of Chester Zoo reared adult insects in summer 2016.

Brockholes

Our Brockholes reserve continues to progress and we never lose sight of our most important visitors, the wild creatures that bring it to life. We continue to monitor biodiversity within conservation guidelines. This involves swapping 10 hectares of haymaking area for equivalent summer grazing in otherwise unmanaged areas. Last year saw over 100 species of moth, record numbers of dragonflies and butterflies and regular monthly sightings of over 100 species of bird, including two bitterns spending several months in residence.

Stormy weather

The Christmas storms of December 2015 caused damage and issues on a number of our reserves and disruption for visitors and to budgets. Landslips at Aughton Woods resulted in a length of the Lune Valley Ramble public path being washed away by the river. Rerouting the path may result in loss of habitat. Lunt Meadows passed its first test as a flood alleviation scheme and was flooded for almost two weeks. Brockholes saw difficulties as the reserve was blocked by flood waters, but the visitor village kept floating - that's why we built it that way!

— Our wild places —

Protecting wild places on your doorstep

As a member of The Lancashire Wildlife Trust, you are part of the 47 Wildlife Trusts who work nationally but are focused on local issues and the local environment. This means that when it comes to protecting wildlife on your doorstep, we have an army of dedicated staff and volunteers with invaluable local knowledge and expertise.



Robin at Longworth Clough



— Our inspiration —

This year has seen our People and Wildlife team starting major projects that will inspire people to get into the natural world. Our excellent work within education, community activities and volunteering are continuing to thrive.



Pond-dipping at Heysham Nature Reserve



My Place

This is a five-year project in partnership with Lancashire Care Foundation targeting young people considered to have mental health issues. Funding for My Place came from RSWT's Our Bright Future, a funding programme supported by Big Lottery.

Our Biodiverse Society

The Biodiverse Society project had a successful first year demonstrating that interest in wildlife recording is still strong - from a wide variety of audiences and working with 20 local groups.

Keeping families wild

For our work with children, young people and families we have engaged with 23,065 people, through a combination of education, Nature Tots, Wild Families and youth activities. Most activities have been through charged services. Nature Tots is continuing to do well now operating out of two centres at Brockholes and The Hive in Bolton. Wild Families is doing well and at Brockholes, The Hive and Chat Moss.

Forest Schools

Forest Schools training, activities and development of facilities, continues to grow as interest in the initiative gains momentum. We successfully secured continuation funding from People's Postcode Lottery through a partnership that has been developed at RSWT. The fund is paying for us to work with four new schools in Manchester which will develop their capacity to run their own Forest Schools.

Men In Sheds

The Men In Sheds project at Bolton has had outstanding success, engaging a wide range of men all keen to put practical skills to use and make things for our Environmental Resource Centre and its grounds. They are now being commissioned for work in other greenspaces. The group won a Community Award in recognition of the fantastic work achieved.

More about mosslands

Community and education activity at Chat Moss, also funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, continues to inspire and engage, and we are now seeking new funding for continuation. We have regular volunteers, placements and lots of people within the community keen to discover ways to explore their environment. The establishment of a local group is well under way. In total, 6,716 people attended our events and community engagement activities.

Volunteers

Our volunteering project continues to see a high level of support. We supported 4,000 volunteers (1,000 active for LWT) to complete 50,000 hours of volunteer time. Many were skilled volunteers taking part in surveys, livestock looking, event support, leading walks, giving talks, helping to provide an excellent visitor experience at our visitor centres and helping in the office. All this is in addition to practical conservation work parties. You can volunteer by visiting www.lancswt.org.uk.

Our biggest thanks go out to our volunteers!

Lancashire Wildlife Trust finance 2015/16

The Trust continued to operate in a challenging economic environment with many of our historical sources of external funding, particularly in the public sector, facing real cuts. Over the past few years the Trust has adapted and will continue to adapt to this environment.

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We believe that the Trust has the skills to grow in areas such as education, commercial contracts, environmental employment schemes and interfacing the health agenda with the environment.

We will continue to invest in reducing the reliance on external funding by growing voluntary income. Indeed, our valued membership continues to grow with nearly 27,000 members at the end of the financial year.

Principal themes from our consolidated statutory accounts are summarised here. These incorporate the results of the Trust and its subsidiary Brockholes Enterprises Limited ("Brockholes"). A full set of accounts is available on request or can be accessed through the Charity Commission web site.

- Overall income for the year was up to £4.0m. Key trends are, voluntary income continued to grow along with more income generated by our visitor centre at Brockholes. Whilst grant income declined. We are extremely grateful to our members, funders and visitors for supporting the work we do in our region.

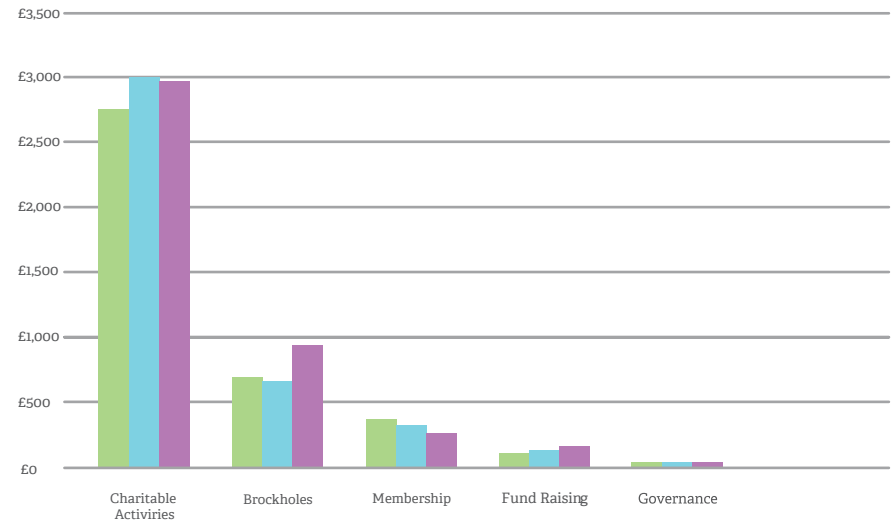
- Brockholes saw another year on year of significant improvement in its operating performance. During the year, Brockholes, although not profit making, contributed significantly to lifting the profile of the Trust with nearly 150,000 visitors and its wildlife continues to thrive on the nature reserve.
- Resources expended for the Trust remained stable year-on-year with a slight increase.
- Overall the Trust had a net outflow of resources of just under £0.7m.
- At the end of the year the Trust had net assets of £12.4m with the majority of this being tied up in fixed assets and in particular land and buildings, which have been acquired for nature conservation and public enjoyment. Our nature reserve portfolio contains 38 sites covering more than 1,300 hectares. Although these are not usable in money terms to fund our activities, these are fantastic assets to have and show our commitment to local wildlife and conservation.
- The graphs on the next page show where our income came from and how our income make up is changing over time, i.e. a move from restricted grant funding to unrestricted voluntary income. We continue to spend the majority on protecting wildlife and engaging people in conservation activities.

2013-14 2014-15 2015-16

Annual Income Trends



Annual Expenditure Trends



Leave a gift for nature

Leaving a gift in your will is one of the most meaningful ways you can help local wildlife

— We're here to talk when you're ready —

01772 324 129
info@lancswt.org.uk
www.lancswt.org.uk



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The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside

The Barn, Berkeley Drive, Bamber Bridge, Preston PR5 6BY
T 01772 324129 F 01772 628849 E info@lancswt.org.uk

Websites - www.lancswt.org.uk and www.brockholes.org
Facebook - www.facebook.com/lancashirewildlifetrust and www.facebook.com/brockholes
Twitter - @lancswildlife and @visitbrockholes

Help protect wildlife where you live

We work on your doorstep to give wildlife a chance to thrive and wild spaces for people to enjoy.



Please become a member and support your local wildlife.

Already a member?

Why not choose a gift membership for someone special.

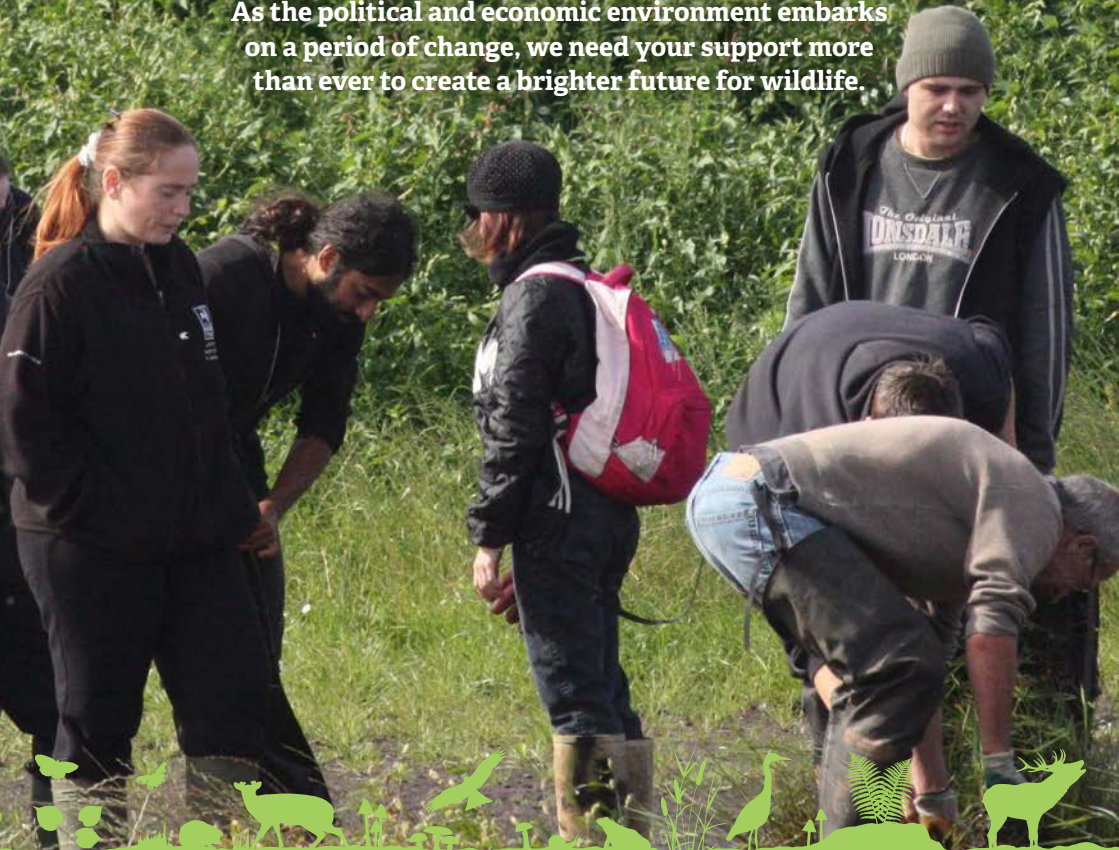
www.lancswt.org.uk

You can become a member, find out more about legacy giving or find out how your business can get involved at www.lancswt.org.uk

— Our wild future —

Raising funds and growing support

As the political and economic environment embarks on a period of change, we need your support more than ever to create a brighter future for wildlife.



It has been another challenging year for fundraising within the Trust. We continue to see a reduction in available funding pots and consequently more competition for those that remain. The media storm around charity fundraising knocked confidence in many existing and potential supporters of our cause.

Respectful Fundraising

We have always worked hard to fundraise in a respectful way; we have published a supporter care charter and a legacy charter to reaffirm our commitment. With restricted resources, we remain dedicated to our work in campaigning for wildlife, with a critical year ahead for the political landscape and its significance for the future of our wildlife and our natural world.

Raising Our Profile

We have made progress in raising the profile of wildlife within the region and nationally the Wildlife Trusts movement is still a driving force behind nature conservation. Raising the profile of wildlife and the benefits to people is key, the more people caring for our natural world, the brighter the future for a region rich in wildlife.

We have regular columns in the leading regional magazines and newspapers, alongside weekly coverage on key radio stations and regular television coverage. Our media relations continue to grow and we are the “go to” organisation for enquiries around wildlife and the environment in our region. We continue to work with colleagues at The Wildlife Trusts to maximise national publicity opportunities, which have included countrywide TV coverage.

Membership

This financial year saw membership grow by 1.5%. This is a great achievement but there is still much more to do. Venues to host membership recruiters are increasingly difficult to secure and we are working to diversify our methods. We have seen retention levels decrease over the past two years, with many new members leaving within their first year. This is common within the sector. We have introduced procedures and engagement tools to minimise this and communicate our cause more effectively. The next financial year will see a strategy rolled out to ensure members support us in the long term.

Legacy Giving

Our legacy giving remains modest but is still a vital source of unrestricted funds to the Trust. This year has seen legacies enabling us to keep vital conservation projects running and provide support for areas where funding is scarce.

The Business of Wildlife

Another challenging area for the Trust is the decline in corporate members. We are adapting the scheme to make it more suitable to today's businesses, and engaging more through corporate volunteering and our new scheme to encourage all businesses to “Do One Thing for Wildlife”.

For every £1 you give us, we fundraise to turn it into just under £4



- 71p is spent on conservation work, from managing reserves to environmental education
- 12p is spent on running our organisation, so we have the ability to carry out our work
- 16p is invested in fundraising to help our organisation grow, raising the profile of wildlife and looking after our existing supporters
- 1p is spent on governance, to make sure we are complying with charity laws

— Our united front —

Standing together for nature

The Trust is preparing a new business plan as the current plan runs out at the end of the year. We have been looking at the future using SWOT, PESTLE analysis.



The Trust is preparing a new business plan as the current one runs out at the end of the year. This involves looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to our business as the economy changes. One key issue is income loss from cuts to public spending. We have also found that there is less environmental expertise within the public sector which throws greater pressure on environmental bodies, to fill the gap. The plan should be completed before December.

There is also strength in being able to share intelligence on such things with the 46 other Wildlife Trusts and refine our understanding of future influences. This is done at conferences with chief executives, chairmen and senior staff.

Diverting time and effort into improving core income are clear outcomes from this work and that has already started in the 2016-17 budget. Brockholes is getting closer to a break-even position and the possibility of a Clip and Climb centre with a commercial investor would move the operation to viability.

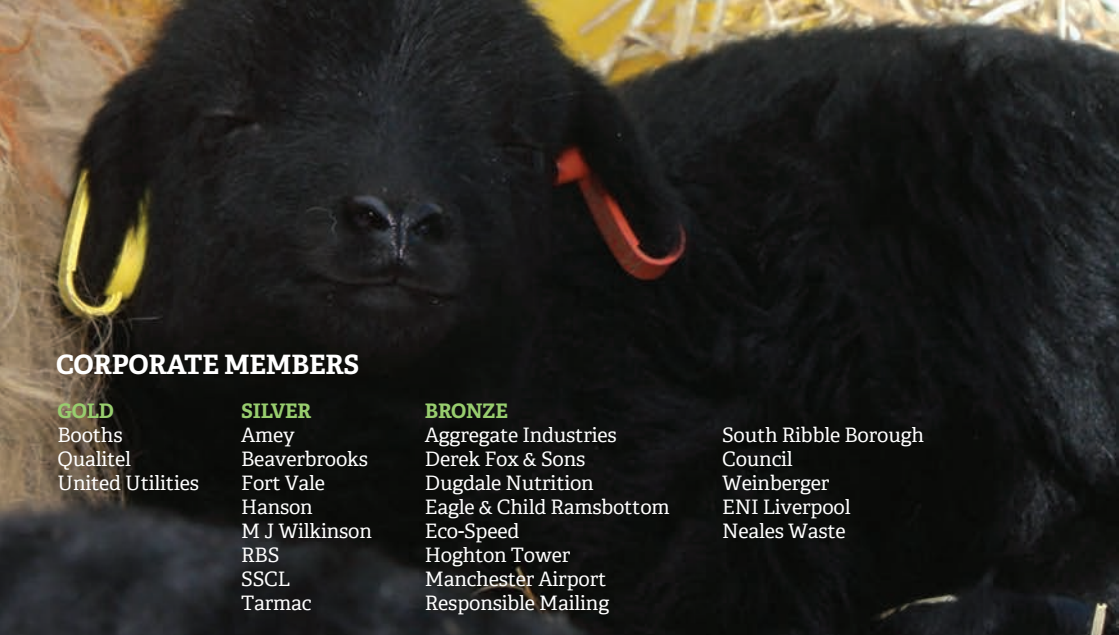
The success with the Big Lottery, Our Environment Our Future programme, which aims to reconnect young people to the environment and support mental health well-being, is a major programme over the coming years. Health benefits gained from the natural environment is being recognised worldwide. We aim to lead the way in Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

Opportunities with the European Programme are being considered. We are also involved in discussions with local authorities about countryside and land portfolios which they wish to transfer to sympathetic owners for future public benefit and the protection of wildlife.

A huge thank you to all of those who have stood with us through these challenging times. The support of our members has kept us strong where other organisations have fallen.

Anne Selby





CORPORATE MEMBERS

GOLD

Booths
Qualitel
United Utilities

SILVER

Amey
Beaverbrooks
Fort Vale
Hanson
M J Wilkinson
RBS
SSCL
Tarmac

BRONZE

Aggregate Industries
Derek Fox & Sons
Dugdale Nutrition
Eagle & Child Ramsbottom
Eco-Speed
Hoghton Tower
Manchester Airport
Responsible Mailing

South Ribble Borough
Council
Weinberger
ENI Liverpool
Neales Waste

Special thank you to organisations contributing in different ways to our work:

Beehive Estate Agency, Lucozade Ribena Suntry, Brewin Dolphin, RBS Service Optimisation Team, Siemens, Costain, Price Waterhouse Cooper, Tetley (Tata Global Beverages), Eric Wright Construction, Leyland Trucks, Nurture Lakeland, Opticon, Ribby Hall Village, Vine House Farm.

Thank you to all our funders:

Awards For All, BAE Systems, Baxenden Community Forum, Big Lottery Fund, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackpool Council, Bolton Council, Bolton CVS, Chester Zoo, Chorley Borough Council, Cory Environmental Trust in Britain, DEFRA, Department of Health, EDF Energy, Environment Agency, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, EU LIFE, First Transpennine Express, Forestry Commission Green Grants, Fylde Borough Council, Green Vale Homes, Heritage Lottery Fund, HSBC, Hyndburn Borough Council, Irlam Rotary Club, Lancashire County Council - Local Initiatives Fund, Lancashire Environmental Fund, Natural England, Pendle Borough Council, People's Postcode Lottery, Ribble Valley Borough Council, Scout Moor Habitat Enhancement Fund, St Helens Borough Council, Tesco small grants - tools for education, United Utilities, Veolia Environmental Trust, Viridor Credits, White Moss Community Fund, Whitworth Town Council, Wigan Council, Windfall Fund, WREN.



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N Merseyside

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside

The Barn, Berkeley Drive, Bamber Bridge, Preston PR5 6BY

T 01772 324129 F 01772 628849 E info@lancswt.org.uk www.lancswt.org.uk

The Lancashire Wildlife Trust is a Registered Charity (No. 229325) and a Registered Company (No. 731548) dedicated to the protection and promotion of wildlife in Lancashire, seven boroughs of Greater Manchester and four of Merseyside, all lying North of the River Mersey.

Conservation grazing lambs at Freshfield Dune Heath by Alan Wright

