

Evaluation  
of  
Butterfly Conservation's  
Morecambe Bay Woodlands Project



s

Green Recovery Challenge Fund Round 1  
National Lottery Grants for Heritage, project code OM-20-02292

28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Sue Holden [www.sueholden.org.uk](http://www.sueholden.org.uk)

## Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
1. Background .....	4
2. Aims and methodology .....	4
Surveys.....	5
3. Evaluation findings.....	7
3.1 Employment and skills building.....	7
3.2 Community engagement.....	11
3.3 Habitat management and improvement.....	30
3.4 Feedback from stakeholders .....	46
4. Findings in relation to the Heritage Fund outcomes .....	48
4.1 Priority outcomes.....	48
4.2 Other outcomes .....	50
4.3 Sustainability.....	51
5. Discussion and suggestions.....	53
Engagement.....	53
Addressing mental health issues.....	54
Monitoring and evaluation .....	55
Challenges.....	55
Project management .....	56
6. Conclusion.....	57
Appendix 1: Terms of reference for the evaluation contract.....	58
Appendix 2: Online survey questions for volunteers .....	59
Invitation email .....	59
Online survey text.....	59
Appendix 3: Online survey questions for stakeholders.....	61
Invitation email.....	61
Online survey text.....	61
Appendix 4: The project’s end of session evaluation form .....	63

## Summary

This short project operated through three themes:

Regarding **employment and skills training** it successfully worked with a very small team of staff and contractors, and supported 32 local businesses. It invested in employment skills building with five young people and many students, gaining 35 days voluntary labour from students at three universities.

Its **community engagement** work was very successful, garnering a total 418 days of voluntary labour, against its target of 120 days. The project supported the development of three productive woodbank groups, although these did not manage, in the short timeframe, to become these self-sustaining. It also worked with eight community groups supporting their members' mental health, involving three times as many individuals as planned. In addition it ran 34 public engagement events. Feedback from volunteers and other participants was extremely positive.

For **habitat management** the project used paid contractors and volunteers to improve habitats in 18 different locations, including 14 in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). It had an impact over 22ha of land and almost 5kms of ride (open corridors of habitat for butterflies and moths.) It began a trial into using wild privet as an alternative food source for the Barred Tooth-striped moth, and conducted environmental surveys on at least 30 sites. It also planted trees and worked towards the introduction of cattle grazing on key sites, but achievements in both these areas were lower than planned.

Feedback from project stakeholders was very positive, with 57% of respondents, when asked to compare it with similar projects, rating it as 'one of the best' and the remaining 43% stating that it was above average.

With respect to the Heritage Fund the project met all five of priority outcomes it planned to address, by involving a wider range of people, giving participants greater well-being, developing the skills of volunteers, boosting the local economy, and becoming a more resilient organisation. Its work also enabled volunteers and other participants to learn about the heritage of our limestone habitats and left those habitats in better condition.

The project's focus was on improving the environment and sustaining priority landscapes for the future: at its heart it met the fund's desire for projects that *make a positive impact on the environment and particularly for nature*. In addition, one of its core features was the recycling of cut wood as fuel, and of useful parts of the woodland arisings as pea sticks, fence palings and other products. One area to consider is the environmental impact of burning wood, both as brash on site and in homes for heating.

This report concludes with some suggestions for Butterfly Conservation and the Community Interest Company that has emerged from the project.

Overall the evaluation finds high levels of achievement, with a small team of people delivering on seven of the Heritage Funds' outcomes in a short period of time, for the benefit of our limestone heritage landscapes, their fauna and flora, and the people that visit them.

## 1. Background

Butterfly Conservation (BC) is a UK charity that was founded in 1966. Since 2007 it has employed the same member of staff – Martin Wain, who managed this project – to carry out its work in the Morecambe Bay area, where the limestone landscape has long been identified as a significant site for threatened butterfly and moth species.

BC's 2021-2026 national strategy, *Saving Butterflies and Moths*, has three strategic goals:

- Halve the number of the UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths;
- Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths;
- Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies and moths.

This project was designed to contribute to meeting each of those goals, with a focus on four threatened species, and working in 18 woodlands for the benefit of those threatened species, other moths and butterflies, and people.

BC was awarded the funding in October 2020. The project was expected to run over 17 months from the beginning of November 2020 to the end of March 2022, but was granted a no-cost extension to the end of June 2022.

The project budget included funding for an external evaluator, and I was approached to bid for this work in September 2021. I am a self-employed consultant, and had recently completed a mid-term evaluation of a community project in Lancaster funded by Big Lottery Fund. I have also conducted evaluations in India, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Malawi for Oxfam, ActionAid and the British government (Department for International Development). Prior to taking on this task I knew Martin Wain slightly (we had attended the same parent and toddler group some 15 years ago), and I was a regular visitor to some of the key sites as a walker and runner.

## 2. Aims and methodology

The terms of reference for this evaluation form Appendix 1.

My approach to evaluations is participatory: to work with project staff to explore and learn with and from them, rather than to observe and judge. Being based locally I was able to attend various sessions and team meetings from November 2021 until the project's end in June 2022. One limitation is that I am not a trained ecologist, and do not have any expertise concerning butterflies and moths. I am not, therefore, able to comment on those technical aspects of the project. I was, however, able to experience the engagement events as a non-specialist, alongside members of the public.

The methods I used were:

### Participant observation

The project used a variety of ways of engaging with volunteers and the wider public; the following tables shows those that I attended:

Type of event	Who and where	Date
Woodbank session	Friends of Hutton Roof, on Hutton Roof	19 Nov 21
Public outreach	Members of the public at the Christmas market in Lancaster	17 Dec 21
Woodbank session	Dalton woodbank members in Dalton Wood	25 May 22
Public outreach	Members of Arnside Naturalists Group exploring Hutton Roof	31 May 22
Woodbank session	Grange woodbank members in Yewbarrow Wood	10 June 22
Wellbeing session	Members of Adullum at Whitbarrow	13 June 22
Surveying and training session	University students at Dalton Crag	14 June 22

By participating I was able to experience each event myself, including, for example, the anticipation and pleasure in seeing what moths emerge from the moth trap, feeling the muscle ache and satisfaction of clearing a pile of brash, and the frustration of looking for but being unable to find a particular moth. By being present I was also able to talk to other participants, and so learn about their motivations and experience of participation in situ.

I also attended four staff meetings (on 29th November, 28th April, 17th May and 14th June) which gave me greater understanding of the project's complexity and team dynamics, and I met with Martin, the project manager, on 17th November, 15th February, 22nd March.

### Semi-structured interviews

In addition to brief semi-structured interviews with 17 participants I interviewed five paid project workers.

### Quantitative and qualitative data analysis

I analysed data generated by the project, including volunteers' responses to an end-of-session feedback sheet, project monitoring data for events held and hours contributed by volunteers, and data relating to social media.

### Surveys

I generated new data through two online surveys: one for project stakeholders and another for volunteers. The text for these surveys is provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

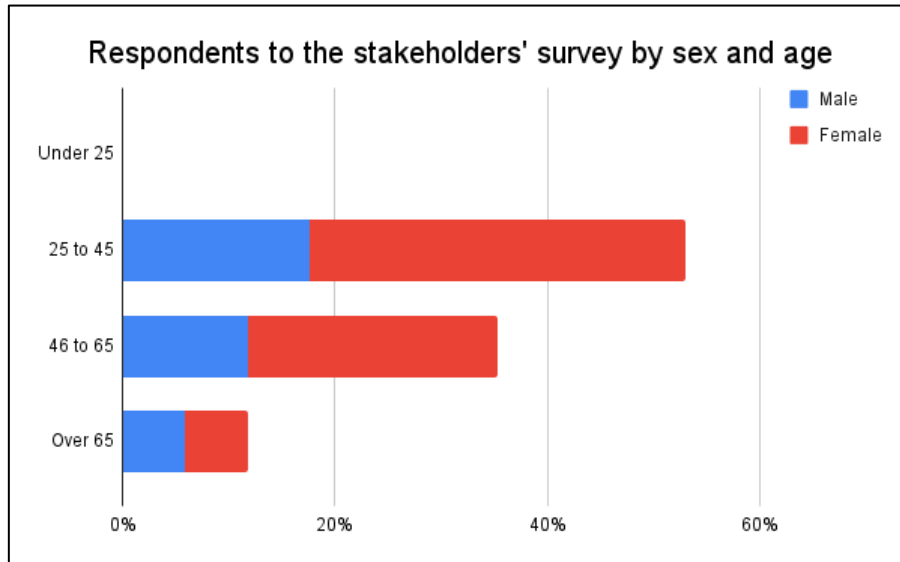
For both surveys I collated a distribution list using contacts provided by four members of project staff. I gave recipients a three week deadline, plus the incentive of being in the draw to win a copy of the book *Wild Fell* by Lee Schofield. I followed up with a reminder, and then (to those who had not responded) a two week extension to the deadline.

I note that I did not succeed in getting the invite to all the participants from wellbeing groups because the project mailing list did not hold those individuals' email addresses and I was therefore reliant on intermediaries leading their groups to forward the message (only one of whom did).

### Survey responses

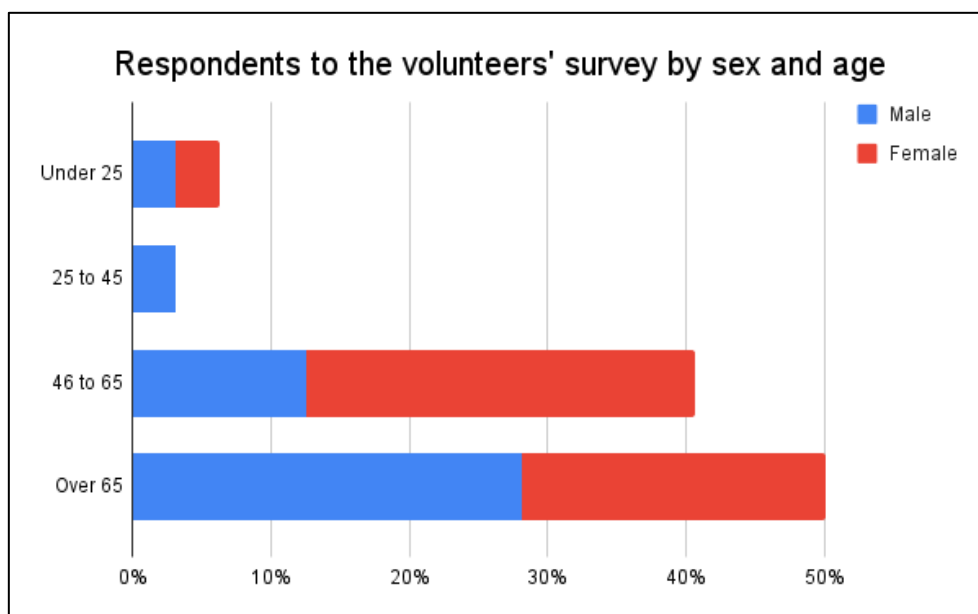
I sent the invitation to fill the *stakeholders' survey* to 59 individuals by email or mobile phone, of which four messages were not delivered. I received 17 responses, giving a respectable response rate of 31%.

All but two of the stakeholder respondents were under 65, with just over half being aged between 25 and 45. The respondents' male:female ratio of 1:2 matches the ratio among the 59 stakeholders that I contacted.



All the stakeholders described their ethnicity as white British, English or European.

I sent the *volunteers' survey* to 64 volunteers (six of whom indirectly, via the Adullum coordinator), and got 32 responses, a healthy return rate of 50%. As the chart below shows, and in contrast to the respondents to the stakeholders' survey, half of the respondents were over 65 years old.





There was an almost even split between male and female respondents, which matches the equal gender split among the volunteers that I invited to complete the survey. Regarding their ethnicity, one respondent identified as British Afro Caribbean, while all other respondents said they were white British or white English.

### 3. Evaluation findings

In this section I'll review the project's activities and outputs against those planned, using the same themes that the project's workers used – while noting that there is a fair degree of overlap between those categories. In Section 4 I'll review its achievements in the relation to the Heritage Fund's outcomes. I note that because the project proposal did not require a logical framework or similar structure I had to glean the activities and outputs from various parts of the 30 page proposal; when I started work the project staff lacked a summary of exactly what was stated in the proposal.

#### 3.1 Employment and skills building

##### a) Project staff

*Planned activities and outputs: The project will be led by Martin Wain (Conservation Officer – North) taking up 0.6FTE of his existing full time role. A newly appointed Engagement Officer (0.5 FTE) will be responsible for ensuring that practical conservation effort and public engagement activities are implemented.*

As planned, the project has been led by the existing BC Conservation Officer, Martin Wain, allowing a fast start to the work and drawing on his 14 years of experience of and networks from working for BC in Morecambe Bay.

BC also did as planned in recruiting an Engagement Officer, with Eve Grayson starting the part time role in January 2021. She received chainsaw training to enable her to use a chainsaw on Forestry Commission sites, and training in the use of QGIS software for analysis of geospatial data. However, in December 2021 she left the project to take up a full time job. As there was only three months until the expected end of the project (before the no-cost extension of three months was agreed) the team decided to shoulder her work rather than recruit a new Engagement Officer.

**Achievement:** Butterfly Conservation acted effectively to recruit the Engagement Officer at the outset of the project. Unfortunately the fact it was a part-time role contributed to her decision to leave before the end of the project.

## b) Contractors

Planned activities and outcomes: *Create five<sup>1</sup> innovative contractor roles.*

Rather than hiring salaried staff BC's strategy was to deliver much of the work through five contractors:

*A Media and Administrator role (0.2 FTE) to support the team and provide social media skills. This post was initially filled by a volunteer, Megan Oversby, then covered by the Engagement Officer, then held by Hannah Griffen from August 21 until the project's end. The postholders focussed on social media rather than administration.*

*A Woodbank and Welfare Contractor (0.2 FTE over nine months) to focus on the work with woodbank groups. This post was filled by Claire Harris, starting in January 2021. The role expanded to embrace all engagement work and some administrative tasks, at more than 0.2 FTC, following the Engagement Officer's departure.*

*A Woodlands Contractor (0.5 FTE over nine months) to ensure sub-contractors are working safely and correctly, and supporting volunteer work and training. Lee Bassett took on this role in April 2021, and continued to the end of the project, also taking on some of the Engagement Officer's work in the last months of the project.*

*A Moth Engagement Officer (0.2 FTE over five months) to provide expertise, training and run moth events. Justine took on this work in two blocks in the spring of 2021 and, with the no-cost extension, in spring and summer of 2022.*

*A Grazing Contractor (0.4 FTE over five months) to work on enhancing and restoring upland grazing systems. Initially covered by the Engagement Officer, as she had relevant experience (though probably did not have enough paid time to do justice to the role), then Ruth Dalton was contracted to this role.*

BC opted to use contractors in this way for flexibility, and reflecting the fact that some roles were very short-term and for only one day a week. This mainly worked to the project's advantage, as each self-employed contractor was, as hoped, able to respond to the project's changing needs through the seasons. The way in which Claire and Lee took on aspects of Eve's work during the last six months of the project was crucial to the project and its achievements. Furthermore, the five contractors between them provided a range of skills and services that BC would have been unlikely to find through hiring one or two members of staff. The financial cost to BC was the same as hiring staff (including the costs of paying national insurance and pension contributions) but the contractors did not benefit from paid leave, sick leave, national insurance contributions, pension contributions or travel expenses. (Ordinarily one would expect contracted staff to be more expensive, because they have to pay their own national insurance and pension contributions, and are not paid for leave or sick leave; the equivalence in this case is because the daily rate to the contractors was low and did not include travel time or travel costs.) The administrative cost to BC's headquarters was lower than if they had been paid staff, as its only engagement with the contractors was to issue a contract and then pay their invoices. One operational disadvantage was that at two woodland sites a member of BC staff had to be present during

---

<sup>1</sup> Some parts of the proposal state there will be six contractors, but Section 3c names them, and it is five, not six. The confusion arises from an earlier plan to include an Educational Officer for outreach to schools. However, as Section 3.2c) details, the project did nonetheless do quite a lot of work with schools.



any work because, as sole traders, the contractors were not able to get the £10m public liability insurance that the sites required. In addition one landowner preferred not to deal with the contractors because they were not BC staff.

**Achievement:** Butterfly Conservation successfully hired four of the five contractors in good time to work on the project as planned. The Woodbank & Welfare and the Woodlands Contractor both worked more hours than planned, particularly following the departure of the Engagement Officer. The one shortcoming was not engaging the Grazing Contractor at the project outset.

*c) Supporting local businesses*

Planned activities and outcomes: *30 contractor businesses will be supported.*

The indicator of a number of businesses supported is a little odd, as numerically a small sum of money to a single artist to run a workshop counts equally as larger sums to a contractor employing several people and working many hours over months. Nonetheless, as a proxy indicator of investment in local businesses the project's employment of 32 contractors – in addition to those listed in b) above - demonstrates how project funding was used to boost local employment.

<b>Business</b>	<b>Role</b>
Adam Kirk	Flailing
David Wain	Woodcutting
Andy Banks	Woodcutting
David Holmes	Woodcutting
Chris Killilea	Woodcutting
David Smith	Woodcutting
Peter Juizuk	Woodcutting
RSPB intern	Woodcutting
Coppice Crafts	Woodcutting
Luke Armitage	Woodcutting
Josh Foster	Woodcutting
John Hulme	Woodcutting
The Coppice Coop	Woodland management
Steve Partridge	Woodland management
David Haigh	Timber extraction
Tom Dutson	Timber extraction by horse
Stephen Henderson	Young woodland management trainee
Chris Mousdale	Young woodland management trainee
Ben Wain	Young woodland management trainee
Greg Tebbitt	Young woodland management trainee
William Wain	Young woodland management trainee
Julia Seirs	Cowslip and wild privet propagation
Arnside & Silverdale AONB	Food plants nursery
Cumbria Wildflowers	Bugle propagation
Caroline Clay	Moth surveying and moth trap sessions

Nick Godden	Bird monitoring and training sessions
Susannah Bleakley	Project protecting nesting curlews from contractors
Friends of Hutton Roof	Delivery of grazing event
Chris Rigby	Charcoal art workshop
Ellie Chaney	Paper cutting art workshop
Angie Mitchell	Printing art workshop
Sue Holden	Evaluation consultant

---

**Achievement:** The project successfully met its target of supporting 30 local businesses.

*d) Skills training for young people*

Planned activities and outcomes: *Our woodlands contractor will run at least 6 one-to-one skills taster days for young people.*

The project did offer free two-day training sessions in green woodworking skills for young people, but the take up was poor. Instead this skills training work was delivered through on-the-job training to five young woodland workers, who were paid to work alongside Lee and so develop their skills. The project also paid one contractor, who could not do the work himself due to injury, to supervise and share his experience with the young trainees. Having got work experience with the project one of the trainees did subsequently get a job in conservation work.

**Achievement:** Although the delivery method was different from that planned, the project successfully invested time in developing the capacity of five young people, giving them practical work experience over many sessions.

*e) Students*

Planned activities and outcomes: *We will offer 'stepping stone' contract work to at least 2 students and graduates at/from Lancaster and Cumbria Universities to undertake short specific research work and so invest in future conservationists.*

The project ran ten events at which it trained or involved students from Lancaster, Cumbria and Edge Hill Universities:

Date	Event	No of participants
15/05/2021	High brown fritillary walk with Edge Hill PhD and MSc students, at Holme Stinted Pasture	8
18/05/2022	Duke of Burgundy survey with BOOM project and Cumbria University students, at Broad Syke, Rusland	2
19/05/2021	Pearl-bordered fritillary transect walk and training with Lancaster University students, at Warton Crag	7
30/06/2021	Scything training and bracken bashing with Edge Hill University students, at Hampsfell Farm	4
16/07/2021	Guided walk and bracken management for high brown fritillaries with Edge Hill University students and landowners, at Holme Stinted Pasture	15
02/09/2021	Scything and habitat research with PhD student at Hampsfell Farm	3
19/05/2022	Butterfly monitoring with Lancaster University students, at Warton Crag	20
08/06/2022	Species monitoring with Lancaster University student interns, at Whitbarrow and Mungeon Farm	3
16/06/2022	Training by Tonia Armer and species monitoring with Lancaster University student interns, at Whitbarrow and Mungeon Farm	3
22/06/2022	Research training with Justine Patten and Least Minor Moth survey with Lancaster University student interns, at Holme Stinted Pasture	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>

In total these events garnered 243 hours, or nearly 35 days, of voluntary labour.

Towards the close of the project Martin set up an internship scheme with Lancaster University. It allows three second year ecology students to be paid to undertake 160 hours of work, including habitat mapping for the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and habitat quality analysis at two sites, surveying butterfly numbers, and developing a habitat assessment sheet for future use.

**Achievement:** The project successfully involved many students from three universities, giving them training and surveying experience, and is giving three students paid work through its internship agreement with Lancaster University. As such it definitely met its intention of investing in future conservationists.

### 3.2 Community engagement

*Planned activities and outputs: The Engagement Officer will seek to build on known community groups and recruit 30 individual local volunteers, delivering 120 volunteer days. We will target youth, urban community and welfare groups, colleges, and young people to facilitate their active participation in managing habitats, monitoring species and appreciating natural spaces.*

The project's community engagement had three main strands: establishing woodbanks, working with wellbeing groups, and engaging the wider public.

## a) Woodbanks

Planned activities and outputs: *We will develop 3 woodbank groups with 20 registered regular volunteers; they will be self-sufficient by the end of the project... with aspirations to supply fuel to households in fuel poverty.*

### ***Establishing woodbank groups***

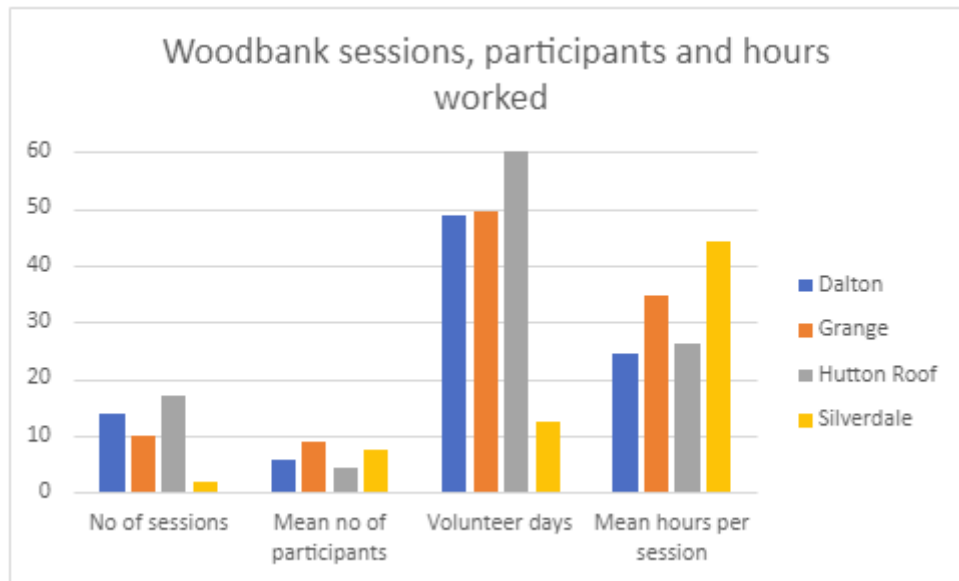
The idea of a woodbank is that its members volunteer on conservation projects and, in return for their work, can take a share of any wood that has been cut. Prior to this project (and before being appointed as the Woodbank and Welfare Contractor) Claire had sought and gained Martin's support to establish a woodbank in Silverdale. This project aimed to build on that model.

During the project Claire continued to provide some support to the Silverdale woodbank, but focussed her efforts on establishing and developing the new ones. She attracted members by putting up posters in the relevant woods, and also in local establishments such as on the vets' notice board.

By the end of the project two groups were well established: one at Dalton, with good support from the Forestry Commission, and the other at Grange-over-Sands, again with good support from the landowner, in this case South Lakeland District Council. In addition the GR team supported the Friends of Hutton Roof group, which operates in the same way as a woodbank but, due to difficulty in extracting wood from the site, without the benefit of its members regularly receiving free wood! Efforts were made to develop a further group, at Roudsea, but this work stalled due to staffing issues in the partner organisation (Peninsula Environmental Action Together) during the wood felling season; similarly work to start one at Witherslack did not come to fruition. The total number of woodbank volunteers on the mailing list was around 30.

The following table and chart present key data for each of the four groups with regard to sessions run with GR workers.

Woodbanks	No of sessions	Mean no of participants	Volunteer days	Mean hours per session
Dalton	14	5.9	48.7	24
Grange	10	9.1	49.4	35
Hutton Roof	17	4.3	63.9	26
Silverdale	2	7.5	12.6	44
Total	43	6.1	174.6	28



One obvious feature is that while Silverdale had only two sessions supported by GR workers it had the highest mean hours per session. This was achieved because one of those two sessions was long (six hours) and well attended (12 volunteers).

It's also notable that Grange had fewer sessions than Dalton but almost the same number of days work undertaken by its volunteers. Its high average number of hours per session is down to its generally good turnout, with mean attendance of nine people. This is in part due to its location: unlike Dalton or Hutton Roof, the Grange woods are next to the urban area of Grange and its housing. This means it both draws on a large population for its volunteers and is in walking distance for some of the volunteers; several spoke about living very nearby and walking in the woods regularly.

I took part in three woodbank sessions – one in cold and wet conditions and two in warmer weather. Each session had a friendly atmosphere, with volunteers chatting as they worked, and taking direction from the BC team without being bossed about by them. The conviviality was helped by a lunch break, with the team using a storm kettle to brew hot drinks while volunteers ate their own packed lunches.

From the project reports and volunteers' feedback it's clear that the project team supported woodbank members to do and learn about a range of things, in two categories:

Creating sunny glades and improved food sources for butterflies and moths by:

- building burning platforms;
- coppicing;
- clearing and burning of brash left by the woodland contractors;
- felling small trees and cutting into logs;
- bagging logs for seasoning and future distribution to those in fuel poverty;
- erecting deer-proof fences to protect new growth;
- identifying butterflies, and wild flowers growing in the newly opened up areas;
- learning about moths and birds at educational events held in Grange.

Learning green woodworking skills:

- how to identify coppice products;
- how to use the shave horse and draw knife, and hand tools;
- how to peel, cleave and point ash to make paling fencing;
- how to make tennon and mortice joints to make ash gate hurdles;
- how to cleave and weave hazel to make hurdles, and to weave Christmas wreaths;
- making saleable items including hurdle rods, hedge laying binders and stakes, bean poles and pea sticks;
- making charcoal.

Making products from coppiced wood was particularly useful for the Hutton Roof group, which raised £215 by selling bean poles and pea sticks, with the intention of using it to buy public liability insurance, in order to be able to do conservation work without the presence of BC staff.

One survey respondent, who had volunteered at Grange woodbank, stated:

*The people who lead the sessions are all friendly and informative. The other volunteers are also friendly and it is good to share their varied backgrounds. The work is physical but you can choose what to do and no pressure is put upon you. We have worked in different parts of the wood and got to know it better. There has also been some tree planting as well as wood clearance. Being able to take wood home has also been very useful.*

The benefit of being able to take wood was mentioned as a positive draw by almost all the woodbank volunteers that I interviewed, though several emphasised that it was 'the icing on the cake' and not their prime or only motivation. For most the benefit of free wood went alongside that of sociability and making friends, learning woodland skills, connecting to the place, getting exercise, and feeling they have done something useful. Some also mentioned that the usual schedule of a couple of hours once a month suited them, providing them with a voluntary role that is interesting but not too demanding in terms of their commitment.

### ***Supporting households in fuel poverty***

This aspect of the project developed gradually, having to overcome two challenges. First, the wood needs to be dried before it can be distributed, as burning wet wood is very polluting, so this necessitates some form of storage. Second, the project needed people to pass the wood to, who would in turn connect to households with suitable stoves and storage for wood.

In terms of storage, in the last month of the project Claire and Lee successfully arranged to use an old tennis court at Boarbank Hall (a Catholic community and nursing home) close to Grange as a place where they can store and season wood for future distribution. This will be in exchange for supporting the sisters there to create a wildflower meadow and manage their land ecologically.

With regard to distribution, during the project some wood was taken from Hutton Roof to a local commoner's farm, where it was sawed and bagged and passed to a volunteer at



Morecambe Foodbank for redistribution to households in fuel poverty. As one recipient said

*“They were an absolute lifeline for me this winter with working from home so much. I really can’t tell you how helpful the logs were for me this year”*

### **Overall**

The project’s support to woodbanks garnered 174 days of voluntary labour, greatly exceeding the target for all engagement work of 120 days. This voluntary labour saved money in terms of not having to pay contractors to do the brash clearance that the volunteers could do. In addition to the habitat benefits it also yielded a wide range of benefits to the woodbank volunteers themselves.

The Silverdale woodbank is operating independently as a not for profit company; its members pay an annual fee which funds the group’s insurance, and it has suitably skilled and equipped members to undertake woodland management work, including chainsaw work. This is not the case for the other three groups. For example, at Hutton Roof the group lacks the ecological knowledge to initiate work independently, and also requires permission from Natural England (which the GR workers got) for any intervention. The Dalton group has more skills and equipment among its members, including chainsaw operatives, but their qualifications need to be refreshed and they need insurance in order to use chainsaws on Forestry Commission land. Thus, during the project the insured GR workers needed to be present, and Lee did the chainsaw work.

On the positive side, having efficient paid organisers helps the woodbanks to operate smoothly, with no requirement for a committee or for members to take on key responsibilities, and no dependence on any volunteer or volunteers to make a session happen. In comparison to the Silverdale Woodbank they are ‘light’ organisations. As a result the three groups have met regularly – at least once a month – and have been free of any conflict regarding roles and responsibilities. Having targets and accountability to a donor supported GR workers to be disciplined about delivery and engagement. Having skilled paid workers also provided continuity in terms of the woodland management, and energy to direct towards diverting wood to those in fuel poverty.

GR workers’ presence at the woodbank sessions varied from a single contractor (Lee or Claire) to sessions where three people were present, such as the event at Hutton Roof where Justine, the Moths Contractor, came to open a moth trap and help the volunteers learn about moths, alongside Lee and Claire. The average attendance by GR workers was 1.7 people per session. If we take the total of 71 sessions worked by GR contractors or staff and multiply it by average cost per GR worker per session<sup>2</sup> the total cost for running woodland sessions is £8,875. Dividing this by the total output of 1,222 woodbank volunteer hours gives us a cost per volunteer hour of £7.26.

---

<sup>2</sup> The contractors were paid £150 per full day; for this calculation I have used £125 as, even accounting for the time spent on related admin and preparation, they charged for less than a full day for each session. Although there was no additional cost to the project when salaried BC staff (Martin and Eve) attended I have applied the same rate for time spent by them, as an approximation of the value of the salaried hours that they spent at woodbanks.

**Achievements:** the project was successful in developing 3 woodbank groups with 20 regular volunteers, and it supplied fuel to households in fuel poverty. The part that was not wholly achieved was the self-sufficiency of the groups. While the Silverdale woodbank is operating independently, the groups at Hutton Roof, Dalton and Grange are not. There is, however, a lot of enthusiasm among the members for continuing the work.

*b) Wellbeing*

Planned activities and outputs: *We will target 4 mental health groups in Lancaster, Grange over Sands and Ulverston engaging with at least 15 clients.*

**Working with mental health support groups**

It's clear from the feedback from woodbank members that their engagement with conservation work has the positive side effect of helping their wellbeing, mainly through socialising and feeling useful, as well as through the physical work. The wellbeing strand of the project's engagement, however, is about engaging with groups whose *primary* focus is supporting the wellbeing of its members, all of whom have experienced or are experiencing mental health struggles. While the key activities are similar, this different emphasis means that work tasks undertaken by these groups were often less physically demanding, with the exceptions of those from The Well and Haverigg Prison whose participants were physically able young men. There was also more time given to art and craft activities, and to socialising.

Over the course of the project GR workers engaged with eight different mental health groups, and ran 34 events with them. In terms of their specialisms, ACE and the Prop-up Project both focus on young people, while The Well is a residential service for young men with addition issues.

Wellbeing group	No of sessions	Total no of participants~	Mean no of participants	Volunteer days	Mean hours per session
ACE	3	27	9.0	12.5	29
Adullam	13	63	4.8	34.1	18
Cancer Care*	2.5	26	10.4	10.0	28
Eden Project	2	8	4.0	1.1	4
Haverigg prison	6	19	3.2	14.4	17
Lighthouse	2	6	3.0	2.9	10
Prop-up Project*	1.5	12	8.0	5.1	24
The Well	4	31	7.8	12.4	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>19</b>

\* The GR project ran one joint event for Cancer Care and the Prop-up Project, shown here as half an event for each group.

~ This is the sum of how many people attended each session, and therefore includes repeat participants. The project had begun by registering each individual and noting who attended, but did not persist with this as it seemed unnecessarily bureaucratic. From the records I estimate that in excess of 50 individuals attended field events, and around 30 more came to art events held with Cancer Care and the Prop-up Project.

The most consistent partnership was with Adullam, a mental health project run by Hope Church in Lancaster. It has two part-time funded support workers, who were in post throughout the GR project, at least one of whom is actively interested in conservation issues and being outside. Those workers were able to get their group members to the woodland sites by drawing on their volunteer network to provide lifts in their cars. Notably they also had a consistent group of members to draw on, many of whom attended several sessions; the Adullam model is based on supporting individuals over the long-term, and the individuals were mainly older and resident in Lancaster. Although anyone can take part in the Adullam programme there is also, for some, the continuity and connection of their church membership.

The conditions that supported the partnership with Adullam were not always present for other groups. For example, while Haverigg had the advantage of having its own vehicle for transport, and was able to grow cowslips at the prison and then plant them, there was less continuity in who attended, as some men were released from prison and so did not attend again. Meanwhile changes in staffing at ACE and the Lighthouse led to interruptions in communication and collaboration. Overall the key challenges included:

- inconsistent communication and commitment from the wellbeing groups;
- difficulties for wellbeing groups transporting their members to woodland sites;
- members' lack of interest in the sessions and/or limited physical ability to engage with them;
- members not having suitable clothing and footwear;
- personnel changes in the group leadership and turnover of membership in the groups.

This does not mean that one or two-time participants did not benefit from the engagement. For example, Lee's notes from a session with Haverigg Prison in May 2021 state "3 inmates from Haverigg prison came out onto site for the first time, and assisted in the clearing of brash and moving of logs for easier collection. 2 of them particularly enjoyed using the 2 man saw. A marked difference was seen in them from the beginning of the session compared to the end, all 3 were asking questions about the butterflies and the habitat work being carried out. One even became excited about seeing a speckled wood on the way back to the vehicles at end of day!" Another fieldnote, by Claire, records "The Lighthouse group again emptied the charcoal burner and some of the participants took some of the charcoal home with them. One of them had been before but was struggling when she first arrived and she said she was not very well. By the end of the session she was happy, talking and was much more confident. The woodland made a massive difference to her that day!" However, those that came once or twice did not have the opportunity that frequent participants had to form relationships (among themselves and with project staff), nor to build their knowledge and skills. My notes after attending the final session with Adullam included this:

*Effect of continuity very evident – a group that had met Lee and Claire lots of times and had joint narratives to draw on; they could see the place where they cut and built brash piles, see the cowslips flowering that they had planted, and share stories, laughing about Lee and Claire's red faces as they tried to make bio char raking ashes with shovels whose handles were too short, remembering the pleasure of hot potatoes from the fire, and of having the warmth of the fire to make the work fun in the winter...they then enjoyed the joint curiosity of seeing the moths in the traps, walking together looking for butterflies*

*and moths, and also learning about plants and seeing a slow worm (for the first time, for one retired woman).*

As one Adullum participant said, in the online survey, *“I have found this a wonderful program & a way of feeling helpful, learning & escaping from day to day living.”*

### **Green prescriptions**

Project staff attempted to connect to individuals who would benefit from volunteering on conservation work through NHS Social Prescribing Link Workers, whose role it is to connect patients to groups and services which will support their wellbeing. One strand of this is green prescriptions, supporting people to get outdoors. Project staff took part in NHS National Association of Social Prescribing meetings, formed links with one GP surgery in Carnforth and made and shared a leaflet with five community care coordinators. In September Claire gave a presentation to a Lancaster, Morecambe and Carnforth Integrated Care Community meetings, which included the following slide, explaining how conservation work links to the NHS’ 5 Ways to Wellbeing advice<sup>3</sup>.

**Working in the woods provides the 5 ways to Wellbeing:**

- Connect** – Connecting with nature in a hands on way
- Be active** – Its active work although we can tailor it – just the walking over 10,000 steps
- Keep learning** – Knowledgeable staff on all wildlife can keep it simple or more complex
- Give** – Participants provide valuable help to restore habitats lost through the end of traditional woodland management
- Take Notice** – There is so much to notice even when the sun is not shining - bird song, signs of animal activity



Claire invited local Link Workers to a session at Dalton Crag in September to learn about what the project was offering. Three people attended, but no referrals were ever made.

One issue is that the Link Workers themselves did not seem very comfortable or competent in the woods, so are perhaps unlikely to recommend the opportunity to their patients. Other constraints are that any individual coming would need to travel to the site, which, with the exception of patients living in Grange-over-Sands, requires having a car. To be comfortably outdoors in all weathers one also needs suitable clothing and footwear, and a willingness to manage without toilet facilities. Lastly, to join in such work as an individual is a more difficult prospect than coming along with other members of a mental health group, and is perhaps too much to ask of individuals who have other, easier options for socialising and getting out of their homes. As one Link Worker said in the online survey of stakeholders *“Great welcoming project, just wish I could find more people who are interested in participating”*. In comparison a green prescription to a static project such as [Growing Well](#) - which was

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

founded with a focus on mental health, has indoor spaces and facilities, and is accessible by public transport - is likely to be more attractive and accessible to many.

### **Overall**

It's clear that the project did deliver high quality engagements sessions to members of mental health support groups, benefiting both them and the environment. However, in comparison to the woodbank groups the work to nurture relationships with wellbeing groups was more difficult and time consuming. In terms of staff costs the average attendance of GR staff of 1.7 people per session was the same as for the woodbanks, however the lower numbers of participants makes the cost higher at £11.39 per hour of volunteer time. Moreover, the outputs in terms of habitat management per hour may have been lower; although volunteers from The Well and Haverigg Prison were physically fit and productive, other groups were less so, and more time was given to crafts and taking time to enjoy being outside. The efforts to reach out to people through the NHS and social prescriptions was not successful.

**Achievements:** the project engaged with twice as many groups and at least three times as many individuals than planned. It successfully delivered work focusing on wellbeing to people with mental health challenges while also carrying out conservation work, albeit at a higher cost per hour than with the woodbank groups.

### **c) Public engagement**

#### **Moth events**

Planned activities and outputs: *Our Moths Contractor will engage with new audiences online, running three events. Providing we can run outdoor events we will run 6 moth mornings.*

The project's Moths Contractor, Justine, ran or took part in the following 11 events:

Date	Event	No of participants
07/07/2021	Moth trap with public and volunteers to celebrate 10 years of the Myers Allotment reserve	30
19/07/2021	Moths and meadows, with the Fairfield Association in Lancaster	15
02/08/2021	Moth trap, with members of the Adullum wellbeing group	8
16/08/2021	Moth session with children aged 7 to 15, with the John Muir Trust at Heron Corn Mill	18
18/08/2021	Moth session with children aged 12 to 17, with the John Muir Trust on Warton Crag	13
19/08/2021	Moth trap at Hutton Roof Common Open Day	15
31/05/2022	Moth trap with members of the Arnside Naturalists Group, on Hutton Roof	5
13/06/2022	Moth trap, with members of the Adullum wellbeing group at Whitbarrow	6
14/06/2022	Least Minor Moth event, on Dalton Crag	2
15/06/2022	Moth trap with Hutton Roof woodbank members	6
18/06/2022	Moth trap with the general public with the Friends of Regent Park, in Morecambe	10

In addition, in July 21 Eve ran an online session about the butterflies and day-flying moths of Cumbria, which had 27 participants, and Caroline Clay ran a moth morning event at Yewbarrow on 18<sup>th</sup> June 22, attended by 6 people. In total all the moth events had 161 participants.

We can see that the number of participants per event varied significantly, the lowest number (of two) was due to poor advertising of the event. While it would not be desirable to engage larger numbers, as people need to get up close to see the moths, for cost efficiency it's useful to focus on promotion, to get the most benefit out of Justine's time setting up the trap and then engaging with the public.

**Achievement:** the project exceeded the number of planned moth events (nine) by running 13 events, though three of those were with woodbank or wellbeing groups, rather than with new audiences. In total it engaged 161 people, with more in person sessions than online than had been planned.

### *Art events*

*Planned activities and outputs: We aim to capture new audiences online with an art project delivered by two local artists. We hope to engage with 60 people online.*

On 5<sup>th</sup> September artist Angie Mitchell ran a face-to-face moth trap and printing workshop with Eve and local lepidopterist Martin Tordoff, at Witherslack, which was attended by seven people. A month later local artist Ellie Chaney ran an online workshop creating paper moths, which was attended by 42 people. The difference in reach between these events is striking; what is not clear is to what extent the participants' experience varied. It seems likely that the online event drew in people who would not have attended a face-to-face event, given the ease of logging into an online event compared to travelling to a site and interacting with strangers.

**Achievement:** two artists ran successful workshops, though the total number of participants (49) was lower than hoped (60), partly because one event was face-to-face rather than online.

### *Additional engagement events*

*Additional activities and outputs: This section of the report presents engagement work with schools and other groups for which there were no specific targets in the funding proposal.*

### **Engagement with schools**

The following chart shows the seven sessions that project workers ran with schools, which in total added up to 61 days of volunteer time (though the students' engagement wasn't necessarily productive eg with the younger children from Oversands School).



Date	School and location	No of participants
22/06/2021	Walk and games with KS1 & KS2 children with special educational needs from Oversands School, at Whitbarrow	20
23/06/2021	Walk and surveying with older children with special educational needs from Oversands School, at Whitbarrow	6
26/06/2021	Walk and survey with boarders from Dallam School, at Whitbarrow	18
06/11/2021	Woodland work with Dallam boarders and University students at Hutton Roof	39
16/11/2021	Queen Elizabeth School in Kirkby Lonsdale planting an orchard at the school	13
30/11/2021	Queen Elizabeth School in Kirkby Lonsdale, under planting orchard with cowslips and hay meadow seed	13
17/06/2022	Moth trap with Rylands Primary School in Rylands Park, Lancaster	28
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>

The work with schools reduced over the course of the project, as staff had more work to do with the growing number of woodbanks, and following the loss of the Engagement Officer. One learning was that it was easier to engage older children.

### **Other forms of public engagement**

The following chart lists a further 12 events that GR workers ran which have not been included in the above sections. All the events were used to explain the project, to encourage participation, and, where relevant, to gather email addresses for the project's mailing list.

Date	Event	No of participants
02/04/2021	Volunteer workparty at Holme Stinted Pasture	1
17/07/2021	We Love Meadows event at Richmond Hill	8
20/07/2022	Guided walk with the BOOM project at Hodbarrow	30
31/07/2021	Lancaster Health Festival, in Lancaster	52
20/10/2021	Woodland management with Cumbria BC branch at Yewbarrow	9
07/11/2021	Habitat restoration workparty, with Cumbria BC branch, at Holme Stinted Pastures	10
08/11/2021	Planting cowslips for the Duke of Burgundy butterfly with BOOM and Morecambe Bay Partnership, at Challen Hall	9
17/12/2021	Lancaster Mid-Winter Market, in Lancaster	60
21/04/2022	Hay Bridge and Cumbria Naturalist Group, at Hay Bridge	20
09/06/2022	Presentation to Royal Society of Foresters in Witherslack woods	20
17/06/2022	Event with Lancaster Eden Project, in Williamson Park	4
25/06/2022	Flutes in the woods, musical and guided walk in Silverdale woods	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>241</b>

### **Work carried out by members of the Butterfly Conservation Cumbria branch**

Although most of this work was not part of the project – it would have happened whether or not the project succeeded in getting funding – I’m including it here to note their significant contribution. These people are members of BC, and so receive motivating BC communications (a regular magazine, a branch newsletter and so on), and have access to Martin’s advice and support. Their existence underscores the importance of long-term support and continuity in order to nurture and benefit from on-going voluntary conservation work.

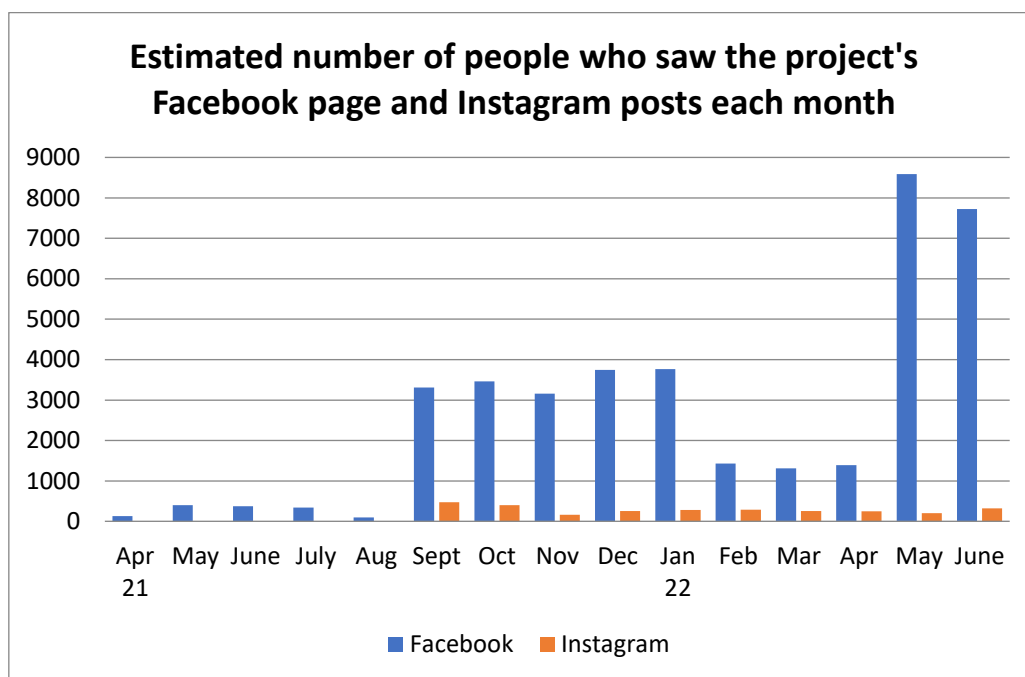
During the timeframe for this project, the group undertook 16 workparties with little GR staff involvement, at sites covered by the project, with a total labour input of 90 days. The Lancashire branch did similarly, but at sites outside of this project’s geographical remit.

**Achievement:** in addition to its planned engagement activities the project ran an additional 19 engagement events. These were relevant to the project, though the investment in them reflects a less strategic approach – focused solely on planned project outcomes - than could have been taken.

*Promotion via social media*

Planned activities and outputs: *Our Social Media contractor will link all the projects together to promote the work we are doing.*

As mentioned in Section 3.1b) the social media work was initially done by a volunteer, then by Eve the Engagement Officer, who set up the project’s Facebook page at the end of April 2021. The following chart shows the impact on the project’s social media reach<sup>4</sup> that Hannah Griffin, the Social Media contractor, made when she took up that post at the end of August 2021.

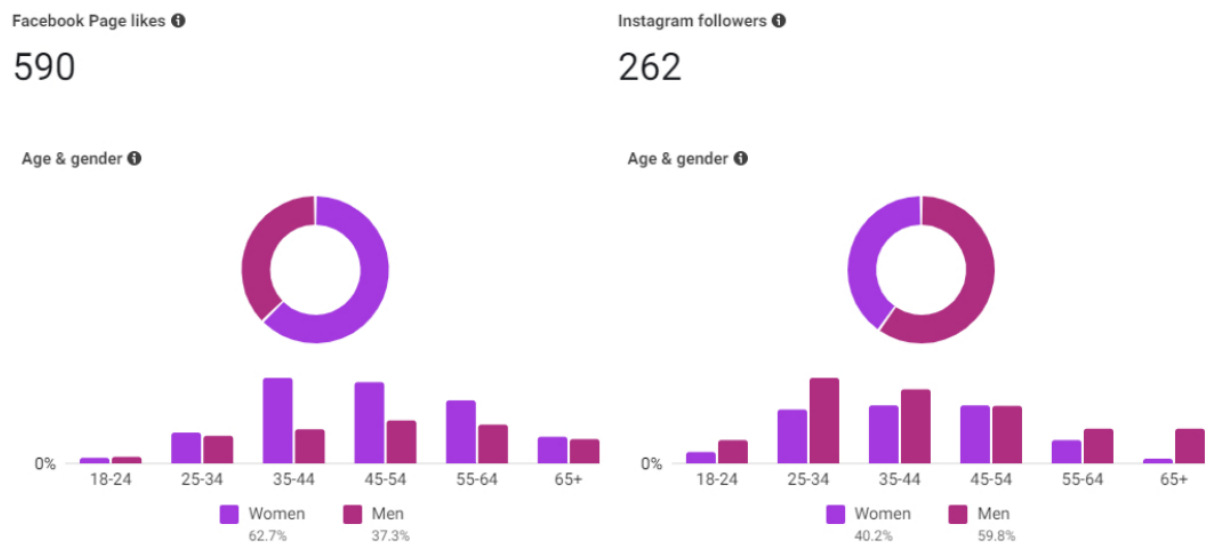


<sup>4</sup> Facebook’s ‘page reach’ metric is for ‘the number of people who saw any content from or about your Page, including posts, stories, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page and more’. For Instagram it is ‘the number of unique accounts that saw any of your posts or stories at least once.’ Note, neither measures of reach include multiple views by the same person.

We can see that Instagram reaches far fewer people than Facebook, and the numbers reached by Twitter (not shown on the chart) are lower again (the twitter account has 109 followers, while the Instagram account has 262). Hannah posts the same materials on each platform. Martin also has a personal twitter account where he sometimes shares updates from the project.

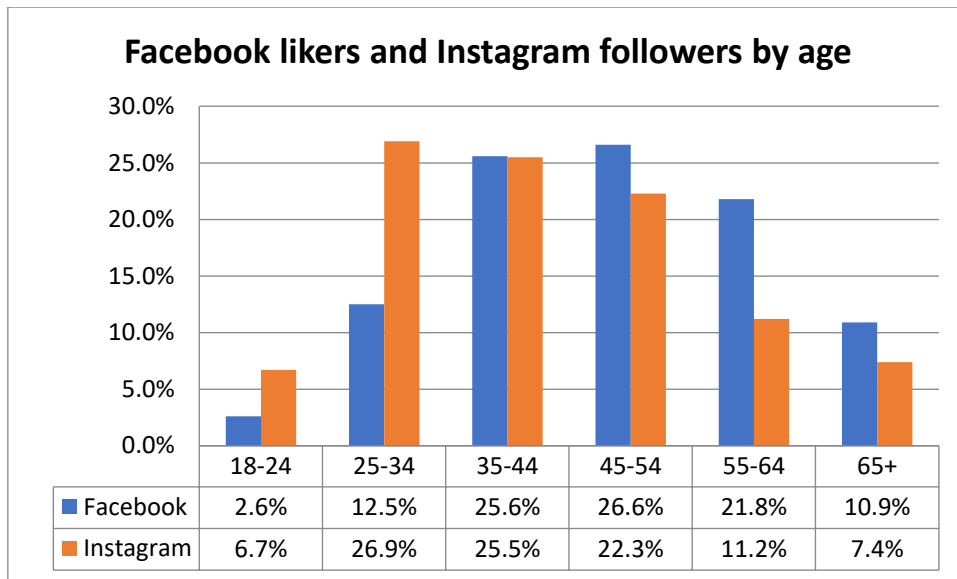
The reduction in reach during February to April is due to fewer project events due to the February storms, and fewer events in April due to GR workers being on holiday over Easter. When there was less original content generated by the project Hannah posted related content from other sources, but those posts are less interesting to the page’s audience and so get fewer clicks and shares.

Interestingly, the profile of those who have ‘liked’ the project on Facebook compared to those who ‘follow’ it on Instagram is quite different<sup>5</sup>. On Facebook women form 63% of the likers, whereas on Instagram a similar percentage are men:



The age distribution is also different, shown below with men and women combined, with the Instagram followers being more highly represented in the younger age groups:

<sup>5</sup> These two things are more or less equivalent, as when someone ‘likes’ a page on Facebook they are automatically enrolled to follow it. However, someone can follow a FB page without liking it, or can unfollow the page after liking it, so the categories aren’t exactly the same. However, FB does not provide access to the profile of those following FB pages, only those liking them.



Clearly the social media reach of the project has improved dramatically. It also compares favourably to Cumbria University’s much better funded and longer term BOOM project, having equivalent numbers of likes and follows on Facebook to BOOM. It has almost three times as many follows as the Butterfly Conservation Cumbria branch’s Facebook page, which is presumably maintained by a volunteer.

One limitation is that Hannah is not based in Lancashire, so cannot attend events herself. While this saves money (by not having to pay her to attend events) it means she is totally dependent on those present to give her text and images to share on social media. Over time she has trained them to become better at this! While she is solely responsible for the operation of the social media accounts responsibility for the project’s promotion is shared among the team members.

**Communication via email**

In addition to using social media to promote the project’s opportunities and achievements, the team also used Mailchimp to distribute a newsletter and other updates by email. Each short newsletter included updates and images about activities that had occurred and promoted future events, inviting recipients to sign up and attend. They also sometimes included additional content, such as links to useful online resources or news of training opportunities.

The following chart shows to what extent each email was opened:

Date	Content	Delivered	% opened once	Mean no of opens
05/10/2021	Newsletter	109	63%	3.4
01/11/2021	Newsletter	114	61%	3.4
11/12/2021	Newsletter	113	68%	3.8
19/01/2022	Newsletter	123	63%	6.6
10/03/2022	Newsletter	126	50%	2.7
10/05/2022	Promoting wood-working sessions	127	50%	2.6
21/05/2022	Update re events	127	57%	2.6
14/06/2022	Update re final events	136	58%	1.9
	Mean % opened		59%	3.4

We can see that the number of deliveries (ie emails sent minus those that bounced) gradually increased during the project. Furthermore, the percentage of the recipients who clicked to open the email held steady, with a mean of 57%; this is very high in comparison to Mailchimp's benchmark for all its non-profit clients of 25%<sup>6</sup>. The 'mean number of opens' column shows how many times on average each recipient who opened the email at least once opened the message in total. For example, the final update was received by 136 email addresses, opened by 79 of them (58%) and opened in total by them 151 times, so almost two views per email address.

The event organisers also used group specific email lists to contact, for example, the volunteers associated with a particular woodbank.

**Achievement:** over the course of the project funding the staff successfully improved their use of social media to promote the project's work and to encourage participation, and also used a newsletter and email distribution list to reach out to interested individuals.

#### d) *Feedback from volunteers gathered at the end of sessions*

Early in the project workers looked for a suitable evaluation method to get volunteers' feedback at the end of each session. They settled on an established method, the [Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale](#). While it was sensible to choose a pre-tested and verified method, the tool was not a good choice as it is designed for asking people to reflect on how they've been feeling over the past two weeks. This is very different from seeking a 'before' and 'after' comparison between someone arriving and leaving from a woodland session. Furthermore the questions about ongoing aspects of wellbeing (eg '*I've been feeling optimistic about the future* ') did not fit the circumstances; the only measure that a session in the woods might have a direct influence on was '*I've been feeling useful*'.

The form they created, incorporating the wellbeing scale, forms Appendix 4. Staff asked new volunteers to fill in the survey form from April to August, and kept a list of the individuals' names and the type of event they had participated in. Some returning volunteers filled the form in more than once. From September onwards GR workers began

<sup>6</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/4a6e9x8b>

to doubt the usefulness of the form and associated admin tasks, and stopped using it.

I have analysed data from 53 completed forms, 47 of which were completed by members of mental health support groups (The Well, ACE, The Lighthouse, Haverigg Prison, Adullum) and six by members of Dalton woodbank.

- 85% of respondents said they had volunteered before, and 47% had volunteered in woodland before. Both of these statistics will have been inflated by the fact that some people filled in the form more than once.
- 80% said they were 'very happy' with their experience of the event, and 20% were 'happy'. No neutral or negative responses were given.
- 76% indicated it was 'very likely' that they could come again, and 22% said it was 'likely'. One respondent indicated that they would 'probably not' come again, though that person also left the comment *"Found it interesting, informative and it was nice to be outdoors in a natural environment."*
- 30 people answered the question *'Is there anything that could have been improved?'*:
  - 24 stated 'no' or that it was good with no improvements needed
  - 3 asked for longer sessions or more sessions
  - 1 asked for flatter walks
  - 1 suggested to bring matches to heat water and make tea, another requested a glass of cider at the end!
- 100% of respondents answered 'yes' to the question *'Has coming and working in the woods been beneficial for you?'*
- 40 respondents opted to explain why being in the woods had been beneficial to them; here's a few of their comments:
  - "Being a part of a lovely group, Felt Safe."*
  - "Learning new skills in a peaceful environment is so good for my psyche."*
  - "Got me out of my flat and mixing with people."*
  - "Love being outside. Meet new people, learn about what I'm looking at. Thankyou."*
  - "Yes, it was good for my mental health. I have enjoyed all of it."*
  - "It is good to be in the forest."*
  - "I like being with positive people."*
- 11 respondents opted to *'record any special moments'*. These included:
  - "Seeing lovely birds, place where a deer slept last night, lovely people, knowledgable."*
  - "Catching a Butterfly myself."*
  - "Butterflies are linked to my grandma."*
  - "Lee using net to catch butterflies - a lot of fun."*
  - "Seeing and IDing 10 different species of butterflies, magical."*
- The wellbeing scale was not always used correctly as sometimes the forms were only given out at the end of the session, so a 'before' and 'after' comparison was not possible. For the 30 forms with two values there was a small mean improvement in their scores.

**Summary:** Although the session evaluation methodology had some shortcomings it did enable the GR workers to gather immediate feedback- which was very positive - from volunteers, and generated some useful data.



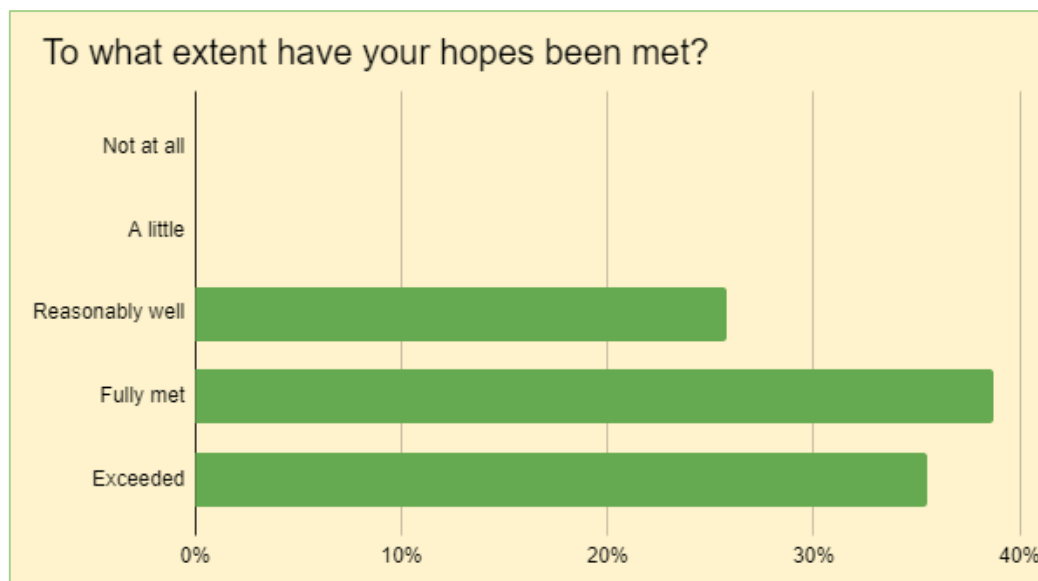
e) *Feedback from volunteers gathered near the end of the project*

As explained in Section 2, as part of this evaluation I sent the link to an online survey to 64 volunteers who had been involved in the project, and got responses from 32 of them. After first asking them how they had been involved I enquired about their motivation and expectations, asking *Why did you get involved? What did you hope for?* Their answers fell into the following categories:

- learning - about moths, butterflies, conservation, habitat management;
- helping - by contributing to environmental community work;
- getting outdoors and exercising;
- meeting people -making friends, socialising and having fun;
- gaining wood - for those volunteers in the woodbanks.

Most respondents listed several reasons for getting involved, for example, one replied *"I care about the environment. Want to learn more about the environment. Gets me out of the house into the fresh air. Get valuable exercise, and best of all we nearly always have a laugh at something."*

I then asked to what extent their hopes had been met; as the following chart shows, their feedback was very positive, with 74% saying they had been fully met or exceeded.

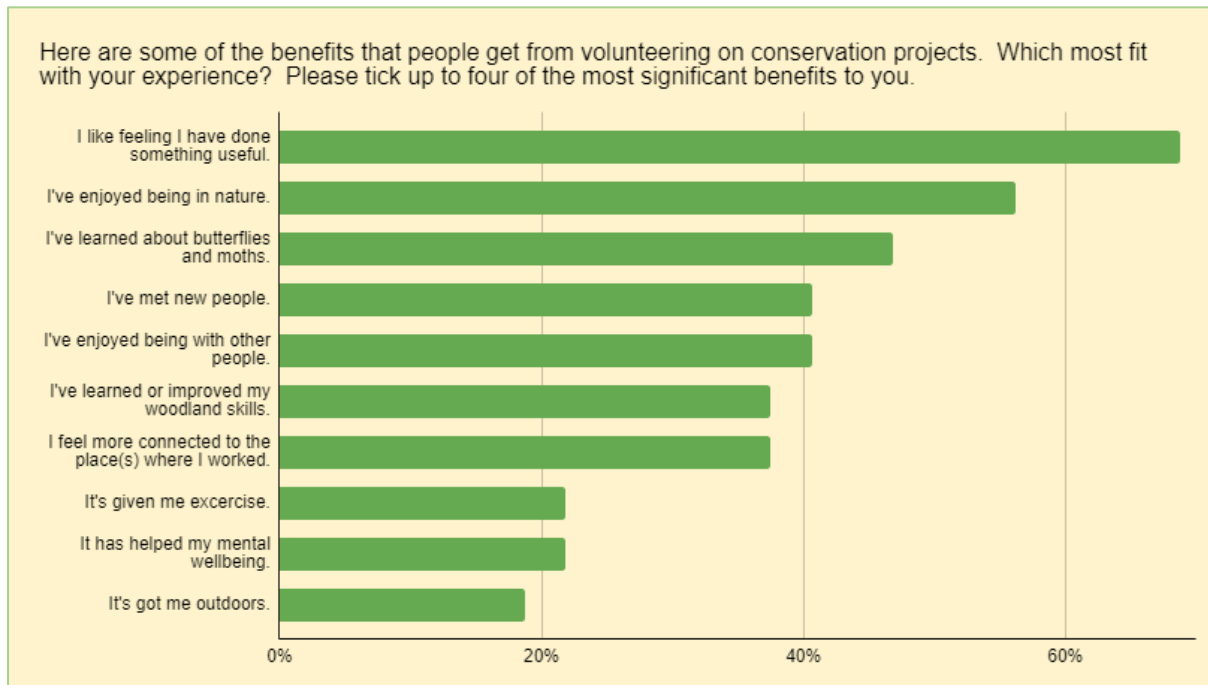


18 respondents opted to provide further information about whether their hopes had been met. These were all positive, with many praising the GR workers. For example a member of the Friends of Hutton Roof Common group said:

*"Martin, Eve, Lee and Claire (and Justine) were enthusiastic approachable and professional in their approach and always had time to explain what we hoped to achieve and guide us in new skills and woodland management techniques. I always felt they were interested in furthering our group and have participated in extra events over and above what I would have expected. They would always do more."* A volunteer from Grange woodbank said *"Been very enjoyable, learnt more about our*

*woods, made new friends, wood supply” while another volunteer noted “The work was all pleasurable, working and learning from Lee Basset was marvellous.”*

The next chart shows the volunteers’ feedback to a multiple choice question about the benefits to them of volunteering. The most popular option – *I like feeling that I have done something useful* – was chosen by seven out of ten of them.



The survey asked the open question *What do you like about the project?*, and many respondents cited several things, such as *“The people. Learning so much about our landscape and seeing progress. Making a real difference.”* and *“The things we learned. Making charcoal, planting different plants, clearing various sites, also looking at very interesting butterflies & moths, which was inspirational, also meeting some wonderful & extremely caring people who take enormous pride in what they are doing.”* Others focussed on a single aspect, such as *“Friendly, down to earth. Made to feel comfortable.”* and *“Seeing nature that I'd never seen before.”* and *“How relaxed but keen the wardens were.”*

The following word cloud is made of all their responses, with the font size reflecting how many times each word was used<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>7</sup> For the analysis I combined similar words into a single term, for example, ‘learn’, ‘learning’ and ‘learned’ all appear as ‘learning’. I also removed irrelevant words such as ‘whilst’ and ‘also’.



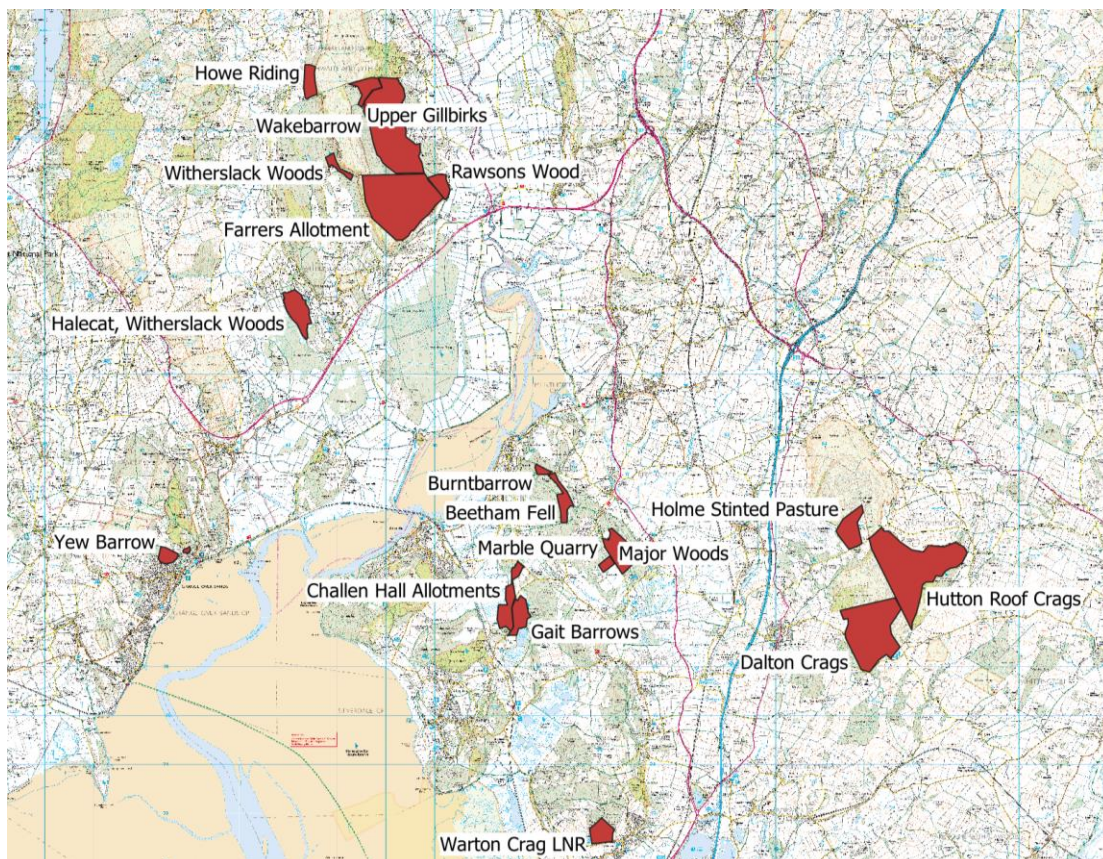


- two were positive comments without any suggestion;
- six referred to wanting the project to continue, or to have long term funding;
- one asked *"I'm not sure to what extent the project targets more marginalised groups to get them involved. Maybe approach GP practices to suggest social prescribing for this?"*;
- another suggested *"Help local groups work independently on useful projects."*;
- one (from a wellbeing group) requested *"Mentor for my daughter? I struggled to get her to join in."*;
- one suggested *"It would have been useful to have a reminder about the whole project on the emails about the next date at Dalton Wood, and a contact address to connect with other bits of the project as I could never make Wednesdays."*

**Summary:** the feedback from volunteers was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting a range of benefits gained by them and a high level of appreciation for the friendly nature of the project, the professionalism and motivation of the workers, and the opportunity to learn and to feel useful through participating.

### 3.3 Habitat management and improvement

The project worked on improving habitats at 18 important sites as shown here:



The main management techniques used were:

- clearing rides and glades to create better habitats for High Brown Fritillary, Duke of Burgundy, Peal-bordered Fritillary butterflies, and ten other rare species breeds;

- planting 1,000 cowslip plants to create stepping stone habitats for the Duke of Burgundy;
- protecting woodland regeneration from deer damage with fencing;
- developing new links with coppice groups and small wood craft businesses to grow better quality coppice, which will encourage future cutting, and which in turn will lead to ongoing creation and management of open sunny glades for butterflies such as Pearl-bordered Fritillary and High Brown Fritillary.

At Hutton Roof GR workers saw High Brown Fritillary on the edge of the woodland clearance work in 2021, and surveying in 2022 shows that the Duke of Burgundy has moved across the landscape to breed in new areas on plants grown and planted by volunteers. At Broad Syke in Rusland in May 2022 surveyors found a total of 36 adult Duke of Burgundy butterflies, including three in a new stepping stone area.

While the main focus of habitat management is on supporting biodiversity, the work to create sunny rides and glades happily also benefits humans by opening up corridors which make it easy to pass through the woodland, and by reducing muddiness on those paths because increased windflow dries out the mud. The coppiced areas and greater diversity of flora also increase the diversity of habitats for visitors to enjoy.

#### a) Working in SSSIs

Planned activities and outcomes: [C]ontribute to maintaining Favourable condition on 9 SSSIs and restoring habitat condition on at least two SSSIs that are classed as Unfavourable Recovering and so contributing to Natural England's targets.

The following table lists the 18 main sites where the project planned to work, and their SSSI status:

Grid Ref	Site	SSSI status of units
SD 557 776	Hutton Roof Common SSSI	Hutton Roof Crags SSSI Unit 11 Favourable Unit 12 <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 549 764	Dalton Crags	Hutton Roof Crags SSSI, Unit 2, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 545 787	Holme Stinted Pasture	Farleton Knot SSSI, small section of unit in Favourable condition
SD 494 724	AONB Warton Crag	Warton Crag SSSI, section 2, Favourable
SD 464 767	*Middlebarrow Plain	N/A
SD 498 785	Marble Quarry	Marble Quarry & Hale Fell SSSI, Unit 1, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 480 785	Burntbarrow	N/A
SD 488 792	Beetham Fell	Underlaid Wood SSSI, Unit 3, Unfavourable Recovering.
SD 434 880	Howe Riding	Whitbarrow SSSI, Unit 10, <u>Unfavourable No Change</u>

Grid Ref	Site	SSSI status of units
SD 436 865	Witherslack Woods	Whitbarrow SSSI Unit 16 <u>Unfavourable No Change</u> Unit 33 Favourable
SD 451 875	Whitbarrow main ride	Whitbarrow SSSI, Unit 21, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 446 879	Upper Gillbirks	Whitbarrow SSSI, Unit 29, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 460 858	Rawsons Wood	Whitbarrow SSSI, Unit 34, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 421 859	Farrers	Whitbarrow SSSI, Unit 42, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 475 773	Challen Hall	Haweswater SSSI, Unit 18, <u>Unfavourable Recovering</u>
SD 492 784	Major Woods	N/A
SD 434 842	Yewbarrow	N/A
SD 431 834	Halecat	Nichols Moss SSSI, Unit 4, Favourable

*\* work undertaken by the site gamekeeper, overseen by GR staff.*

The two rows in grey font are sites that the project did not manage to work at. This was partially compensated by work in one unplanned site at Gait Barrows, in the Haweswater SSSI, Unit 2, in unfavourable condition. In total the project worked on 14 SSSIs, of which 10 were in unfavourable condition.

**Achievement:** the project's work contributed to maintaining and restoring habitat condition on 14 sites on SSSIs - three more than planned, and with more engagement on Unfavourable Recovering units than planned.

*b) Improving wildlife corridors*

Planned activities and outcomes: *Restore and connect open sunny rides and glades, combined with coppicing adjacent areas...Creating enhanced green spaces that connect 28 Lepidoptera-rich habitats (wildlife corridors/'stepping stones')*

The work to improve wildlife corridors mainly relied on hiring contractors to do the heavy work, followed up by volunteer labour to clear the brash (though at Whitbarrow the BC Cumbria branch volunteers did quite a lot of ride clearing work, assisted by Lee). Several factors frustrated the first element, of hiring the contractors, resulting in less work done by them than had been planned. These included not booking the contractors sufficiently in advance, a key contractor being injured and unable to work, one team of contractors not having the necessary felling license for the planned task, and emergency work in the aftermath of storm Arwen taking up contractors' time, and making them unavailable to the project. Nonetheless, the combination of contractors and volunteers achieved the following, over 16 sites.



**Hutton Roof SSSI:**

0.43ha coppice cut (alongside ride 25), 200m open ride established.

Approximately 0.2ha of coppice cut deer fenced to give a diversity of regeneration.

0.58ha of limestone pavement cleared of scrub to create open mosaic habitat (open mosaic glade 26).

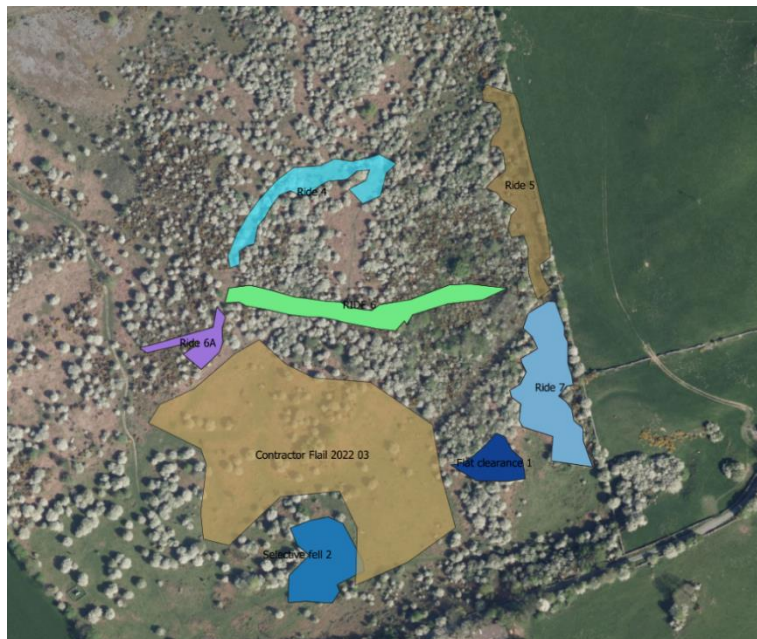


**Holme Stinted Pasture:**

Work over two winters, 2 rides of 284m (rides 4 and 6) cleared.

Scrub management in 2.25ha of glades (rides 6A, 5, 7).

Also paid contractors and worked with volunteers to undertake scrub clearance (flail and felling) creating and restoring high quality breeding habitat for High Brown Fritillary butterflies.

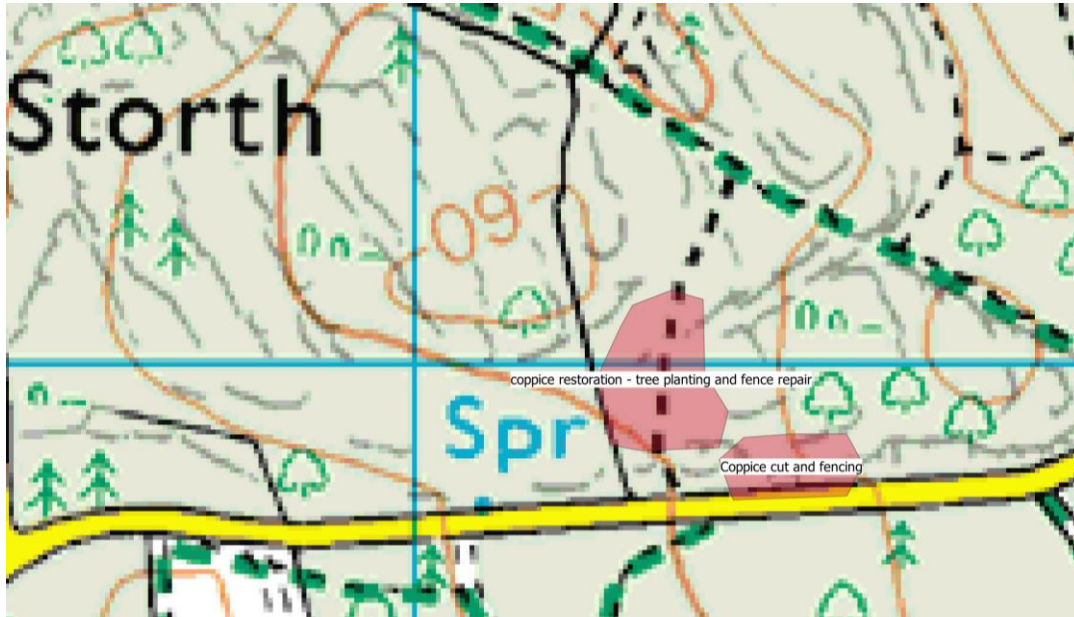




**Burntbarrow:**

Work over 2 winters, first the 0.25ha coppice coup was cut to create open early successional habitat for butterflies; the brash provided multi-events for volunteer groups, including clearing up and creating brash piles, developing wood craft such as pea sticks and bean poles, and making charcoal.

Tree planting in the 0.25ha older coppice, to restore hazel coppice with an open mosaic woodland edge.



**Warton Crag Local Nature Reserve:**

0.3ha of woodland management in two areas was completed by contractors to benefit Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies.



**Middlebarrow Plain:**

500m of good quality ride management was completed by the gamekeeper on this site in 2021 and 2022, overseen by the project staff. Although transect walkers found no additional butterfly activity in 2022, it may yet be too early to judge the management quality.

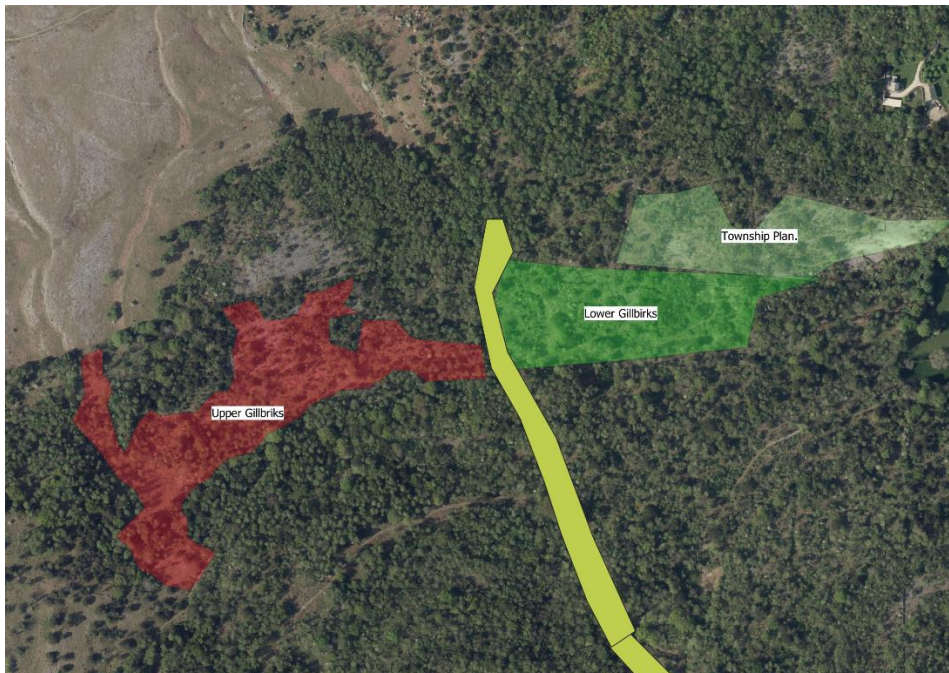
**Marble Quarry SSSI:**

Approx 0.3ha of woodland scrub cleared (blue areas in the image) to link up 2.93ha (green areas) of mosaic open limestone habitat for a range of butterflies and wildflowers



**Upper Gillbirks SSSI:**

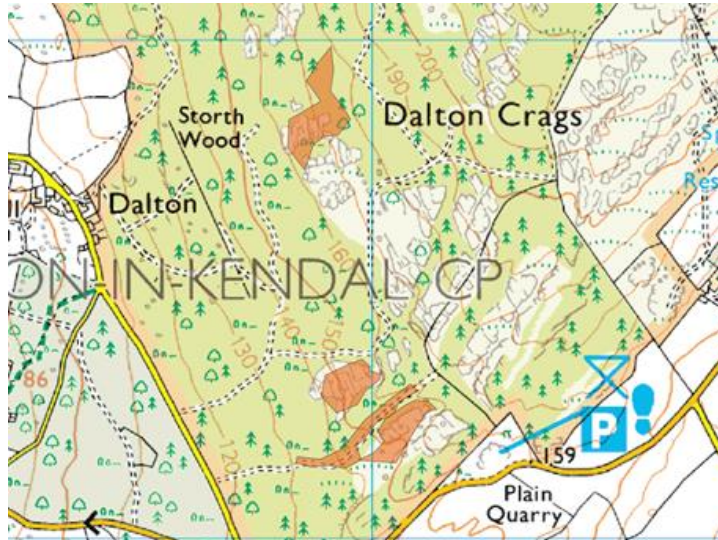
Contractors and volunteers worked to clear, connect and restore 3.6ha of open mosaic habitat for breeding butterflies including High Brown Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy. This was followed up by planting 600 cowslips. The site at Upper Gillbirks connects to other known Duke of Burgundy populations in Lower Gillbirks, Township and along the Whitbarrow ride.





### Dalton Crag SSSI:

Contractors and volunteers, mostly woodbank members, cut, cleared and restored 4.75ha of high quality open limestone grassland and pavement habitat. The project also widened and scalloped 287m of ride for benefits to wildlife and butterflies.

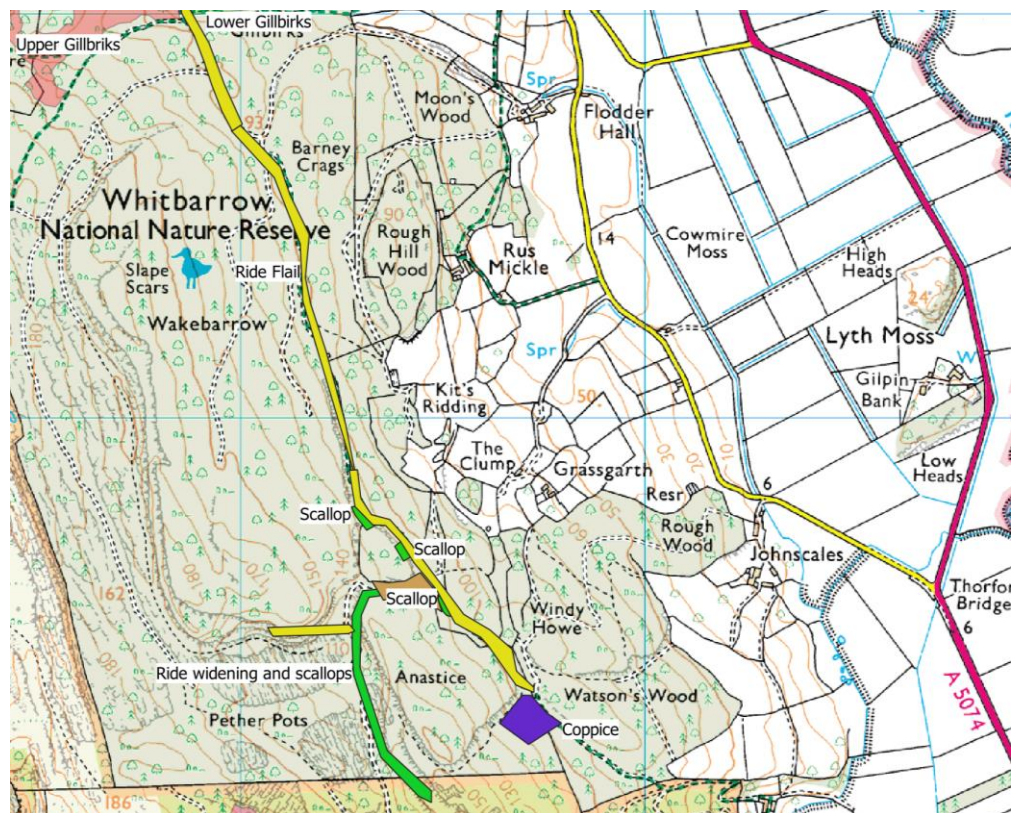


### Whitbarrow SSSI, Wakebarrow main ride:

Contractors flailed 2,483m of ride.

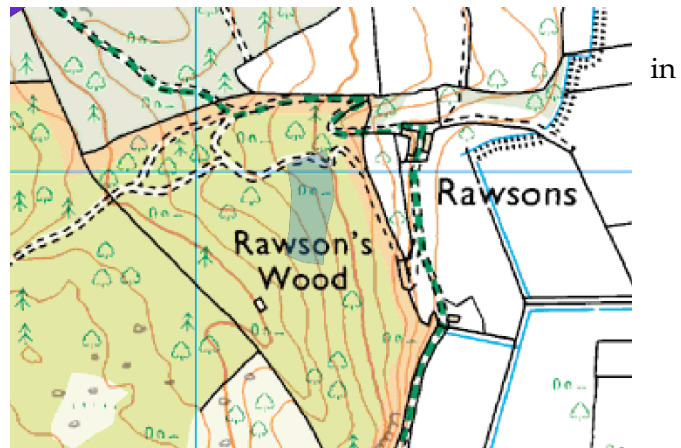
Contractors and volunteers cleared and restored 3.44ha of ride scallops, and undertook scrub management.

1 block of 1.67ha of coppice was cut and fenced.



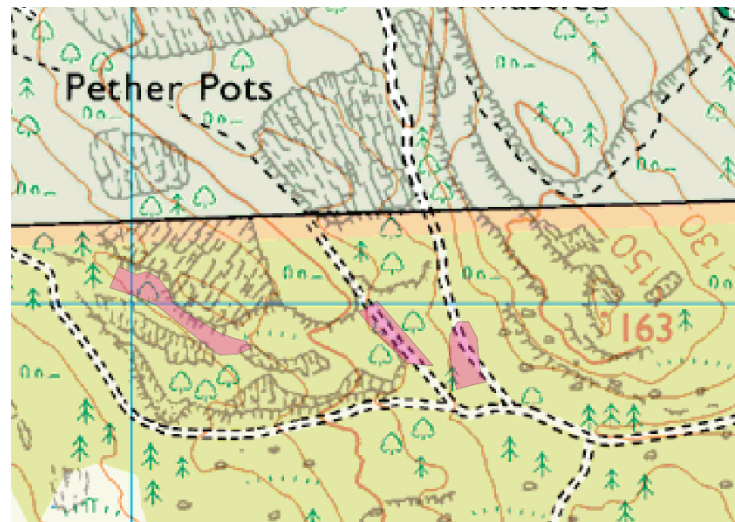
**Rawsons Wood, Whitbarrow:**

Contractors coppiced 1.36ha to create open successional woodland the hope it will be used by High Brown Fritillary butterflies. Also fenced the coppice site to create a lasting legacy that can be worked in future years.



**Farrer's Allotment:**

1.24ha of scrub cutting and ride strimming by volunteers and contractors over three sites.



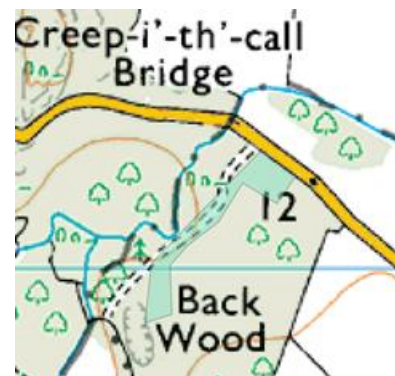
**Challen Hall Allotment:**

Working with the RSPB:

0.25ha was planted with cowslip plants by volunteers.

216m of ride was managed, through widening and scalloping.

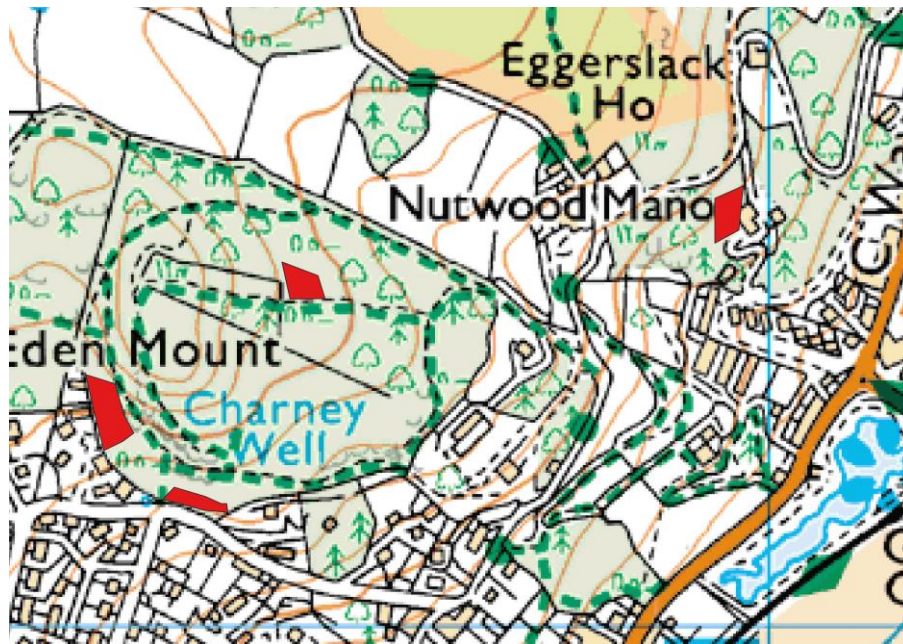
0.38Ha of scrubby woodland was cleared to create a sunny glade for butterflies and moths.





**Yew Barrow:**

Following up contractors at 4 sites with woodbank volunteers, the project cleared and restored coppice in 0.42ha of woodland.



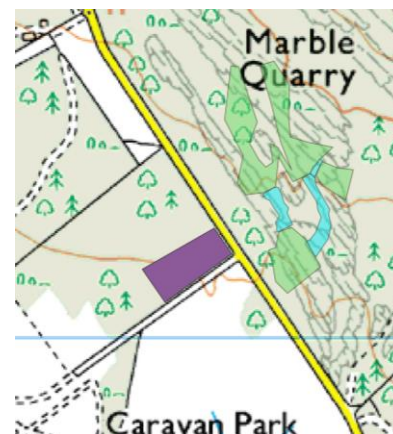
**Halecat Witherslack:**

809m of ride was flailed by the estate contractors, with additional work done by volunteers to tidy and enhance the habitat for butterflies.



**Major Woods:**

Contractors and volunteers restored 0.5ha of coppice to this site.



**Howe Riding SSSI:**

0.5ha of coppice was cut and fenced by contractors



**Summary:**

Site	Possible species	Ride managed (m)	scrubby woodland, coppice or glade cut (ha)	including coppice fenced or restored
Hutton Roof SSSI	DS, SPBF, NBA, HBF? Grayling, Wall, Small Heath, BTS, Least Minor	200	1.01	0.2
Holme Stinted Pasture	HBF, SPBF	284	2.25	
Warton Crag	DS, PBF, SPBF, NBA, HBF?		0.30	
Middlebarrow Plain*	DS, SPBF, PBF, HBF	500		
Marble Quarry	HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF, Grayling, Least Minor, BTS		0.30	
Burntbarrow	SPBF		0.50	0.25
Dalton Crags SSSI	DS, DoB, PBF, SPBF, NBA, HBF, and DoB reintroduction site	287	4.75	
Whitbarrow SSSI main ride	DS, DoB, PBF, SPBF, NBA, HBF, SWF	2,483	5.11	1.67
Upper Gillbirks SSSI	DS, DoB, PBF, SPBF, NBA, HBF, SWF		3.60	
Rawsons Wood	DS, DoB, PBF, SPBF, NBA, HBF, SWF		1.36	1.36
Farrer's Allotment	DS, DoB, PBF, SPBF, NBA, HBF, SWF		1.24	
Challen Hall	DS, DoB, SPBF, NBA, Brown Hairstreak	216	0.38	
Major Woods	SPBF, DS		0.50	
Yew Barrow	SPBF		0.42	
Halecat	DS, SPBF, PBF, NBA	809		
Howe Riding	DoB, SPBF, NBA, PBF, HBF		0.50	0.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,779</b>	<b>22.22</b>	<b>3.98</b>

\* work undertaken by the site gamekeeper, overseen by GR staff.

BTS	Barred Tooth-striped moth	PBF	Pearl-bordered Fritillary
DoB	Duke of Burgundy	NBA	Northern Brown Argus
DS	Dingy Skipper	SPBF	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
HBF	High Brown Fritillary	SWF	Silver Washed Fritillary

**Achievement:** although the contractors did less work than planned, the project successfully cleared rides and glades, and carried out adjacent coppicing in 16 sites, so linking lepidoptera-rich habitats.



### c) Conducting privet trial

Planned activities and outcomes: *An experimental trial will plant wild privet, a larval host of the Barred Tooth-striped moth, at Halecat Wood to examine whether it can compensate for declines in ash.*

The project engaged gardener Julia Sier, who specialises in cultivating wild flowers, to grow the wild privet plants. It was the first time she had tried this, and she was very successful. Five volunteers from the Cumbria Branch of Butterfly Conservation planted 50 wild privet trees at Halecat in November 2021. Martin Chadwick, a knowledgeable branch member, will be monitoring for caterpillars next year, by which time the privet plants should be big enough to attract the moths. So far the plants are generally doing well, except for one area that was damaged by badgers.

**Achievement:** the initiative to grow and transplant wild privet was successful and everything is now in place to learn from this trial over the next season. The Barred Tooth-striped moth is known to feed on wild privet in other locations, and Butterfly Conservation staff are hopeful that the trial at Halecat will prove to be a sustainable way of providing them with an alternative food in the North West.

### d) Planting native tree species

Planned activities and outcomes: *The project will plant native tree species to create open woodland across five sites.*

In November 2021 the project worked with the Nurture Group at Queen Elizabeth School to create a small orchard at the school. In February 2022 13 volunteers from The Well planted 744 trees at a site in Silverdale. And at Burntbarrow volunteers from The Well worked to improve an area of degraded but regenerating coppiced woodland, planting understory shrub hazel, and also hawthorn and blackthorn as nectar sources. Overall, however, the project did not succeed in creating open woodland through new planting at five sites. One explanatory factor was the loss of the Engagement Officer and subsequent involvement of Lee, the Woodlands Contractor, in more engagement activities than expected.

**Achievement:** although the project did carry out some tree planting it did engage with this as much as planned.

### e) Introduction of grazing

Planned activities and outcomes: *Introduction of grazing within established woodland on three sites.*

Project workers provided grazing advice and helped to develop new grazing schemes to improve sites for threatened butterfly species. With regard to introducing cattle grazing on Hutton Roof, the Friends of Hutton Roof hosted a community event in June 2022 to learn and talk about the issue. This was attended by 17 local people. However, that event was too late in the project to make any substantial progress. Staff changes at Natural England, a key stakeholder, also disrupted the work. The issue has been contentious at that site, and would

have required sustained and diplomatic work from the project's outset with all the Commoners and other stakeholders in order to achieve the planned changes.

**Achievement:** insufficient effort was invested in this difficult element of the project, partly due to the late engagement of a dedicated Grazing Contractor, with the result that much less progress was made than planned.

#### f) *Conducting surveys*

Planned activities and outcomes: *Undertaking environmental surveying across 40 sites.*

The project supported the survey of all known Least Minor moth sites in Cumbria, part funding Justine Patton to do this work along with the Liverpool Museum, and the Cumbria Branch of Butterfly Conservation. She made significant discoveries on the larval food plant, and had some success at recording adult moths. This is the first time the Least Minor moth has been studied in this detail and this will form the basis of further student projects in the future.

GR staff trained student interns to do butterfly counts and habitat assessment work on Whitbarrow SSSI. The students also developed a habitat assessment method for mires that will quantify Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary breeding habitat which can be used across South Cumbria.

Another student working with the project discovered an important population of Forester moth as part of her dissertation research.

The following chart lists 45 surveys undertaken during the project period, over 22 sites. It does not include the surveying done by BC's volunteer transect walkers, which would increase the number of sites considerably.

**Achievement:** although I do not have the data to calculate the precise number, the GR project and BC's volunteers did undertake environmental surveying across at least 30 sites, including multiple surveys at many sites.

Date	Site	Complex	GR staff	Species being surveyed	Recording format	No of people	How the data was stored
02/05/2021	Yew Barrow	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Timed count	7	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
11/05/2021	Broad Syke, Graythwaite	Rusland	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Timed Count	1	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
15/05/2021	Holme Stinted Pasture	Hutton Roof SSSI	M Wain	HBF	High brown fritillary walk with Edge Hill PhD and MSc students, at Holme Stinted Pasture	9	PhD survey work
18/05/2021	Broad Syke, Graythwaite	Rusland	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Adult search timed count	3	BOOM data report to CBDC M Wain personal records
19/05/2021	Warton Crag LNR	Warton Crag	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Pearl-bordered fritillary transect walk and training with Lancaster University students, at Warton Crag	8	iRecord
30/06/2021	Bishops Allotment	Hampsfell SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Scything training and bracken bashing with Edge Hill University students, at Hampsfell Farm	5	PhD survey work
16/07/2021	Holme Stinted Pasture	Hutton Roof SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Guided walk and bracken management for high brown fritillaries with Edge Hill University students and landowners, at Holme Stinted Pasture	16	Personal record MW
02/09/2021	Bishops Allotment	Hampsfell SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Scything and habitat research with PhD student at Hampsfell Farm	4	PhD survey work
06/01/2022	Hampsfell	Hampsfell SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Ride management - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
10/01/2022	Graythwaite estate	Rusland	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	7	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
13/01/2022	Kirkhead	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	6	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
17/01/2022	Gait Barrows NNR	Silverdale AONB	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	11	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
25/01/2022	Hutton Roof	Hutton Roof SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
26/01/2022	Warton Crag LNR	Warton Crag	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	3	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
31/01/2022	Witherslack	Witherslack SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	2	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
11/02/2022	Yew Barrow	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	9	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
22/02/2022	Yew Barrow	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
24/02/2022	Yew Barrow	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	2	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records

25/02/2022	Yew Barrow	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	3	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
02/03/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
02/03/2022	Burntbarrow	Beetham Fell	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	5	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
02/03/2022	Hampsfell	Hampsfell SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Woodland management - habitat assessment prior to landscape scale restoration for species	3	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
03/03/2022	Major Woods	Marble Quarry SSSI	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Habitat assessment prior to and following woodland management	1	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
10/03/2022	Rawson Wood	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Ride management - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	2	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
12/03/2022	Rawson Wood	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Cowslip planting - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
12/03/2022	Upper Gillbirks	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Cowslip planting - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
12/03/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Cowslip planting - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
14/03/2022	Killington Reservoir	Killington	M Wain	Marsh Fritillary	Habitat assessment and potential lead into new partnership work	1	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
17/03/2022	Rawson Wood	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Cowslip planting - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
17/03/2022	Farrers Allotment	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Cowslip planting - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
17/03/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Cowslip planting - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	1	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
19/03/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Ride management - habitat mapping and measurement prior to landscape scale restoration	2	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
01/04/2022	Yew Barrow	Grange Over Sands	M Wain	Wider countryside species	Habitat assessment prior to work	3	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
20/04/2022	Rusland Heights	Rusland	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Habitat assessment prior to landowner going into scheme as part of landscape scale restoration for species	2	QGIS mapping M Wain personal records
17/05/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	timed count	2	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
18/05/2022	Broad Syke, Graythwaite	Rusland	M Wain	DOB	Duke of Burgundy survey with BOOM project and Cumbria University students, at Broad Syke, Rusland	5	BOOM data report to CBDC M Wain personal records

19/05/2022	Warton Crag LNR	Warton Crag	M Wain	PBF, HBF, DS, NBA, SPBF	Butterfly monitoring with Lancaster University students, at Warton Crag	21	iRecord
08/06/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Species monitoring with Lancaster University student interns, at Whitbarrow and Mungeon Farm	4	Student report, data sent to CBDS
08/06/2022	Mungeon Farm	Rusland	M Wain	SPBF	Species monitoring with Lancaster University student interns	4	Student report, data sent to CBDS
16/06/2022	Mungeon Farm	Rusland	M Wain	SPBF	Training by Tonia Armer and species monitoring with Lancaster University student interns,	4	Student report, data sent to CBDS
22/06/2022	Dalton Crags SSSI	Hutton Roof SSSI	M Wain	Least Minor Moth	Research training with Justine Patten and Least Minor Moth survey with Lancaster University student interns	3	Report by Justine Patton, data sent to CBDS
22/06/2022	Holme Stinted Pasture	Hutton Roof SSSI	M Wain	HBF	Student dissertation on Mark Recapture Release study of HBF	3	Student report, data sent to CBDS
23/06/2022	Occupation Road site	Warton Crag	M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Timed Count as part of landowner engagement	6	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
24/06/2022	Rusland Heights	Rusland	M Wain	DOB, HBF, SPBF	Timed count as part of engagement with Natural England	3	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC
25/06/2022	Wakebarrow	Whitbarrow SSSI	C Harris & M Wain	HBF, SPBF	Timed Count as part of landowner engagement	9	M Wain personal records, sent to CBDC

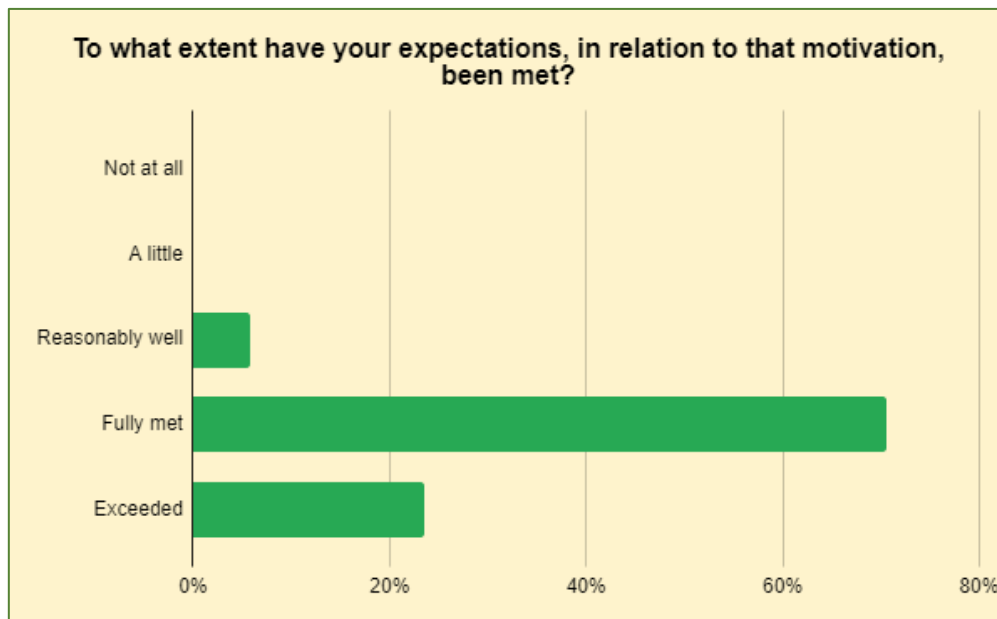
*Acronyms used in the chart:*

CBDC Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre  
 DOB Duke of Burgundy  
 DS Dingy Skipper  
 HBF High Brown Fritillary

PBF Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
 NBA Northern Brown Argus  
 SPBF Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

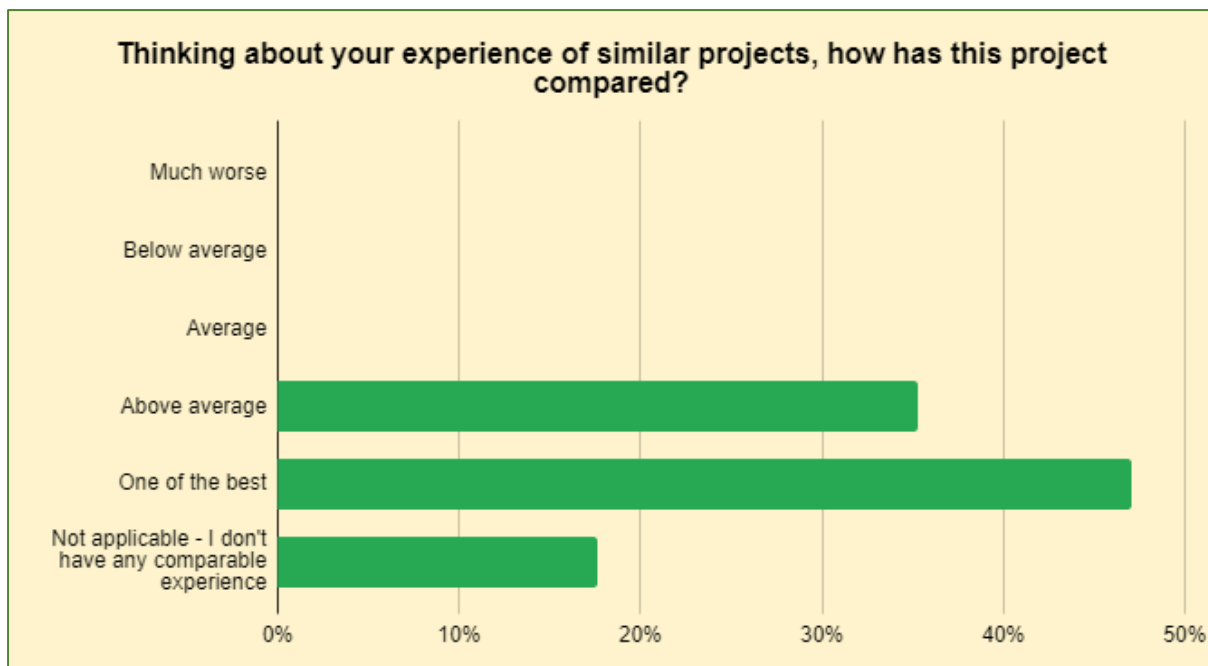
### 3.4 Feedback from stakeholders

As explained in Section 2, I received 17 responses to the stakeholders' survey. Their motivations for being involved in the project were quite varied, as the respondents represented different interests, including local government, conservation groups, the NHS, commoners, landowners, and woodland contractors. The following chart shows their positive responses concerning to what extent their expectations had been met:



11 respondents opted to provide more information about their expectations and experience of the project, and these comments were all positive. One landowner stated *“Always great to work with Butterfly Conservation - very good at explaining the work that needs to be done and guiding us through it.”* Another said *“We have signposted local citizens to connect our local environment, improve their support networks and improve health and wellbeing. The dedication and passion of people associated with the project is phenomenal.”* A woodland contractor commented *“Not easy to say [my expectations were] 'fully met' when you feel not enough is been done on protection of our environment, but the team named above are diligent and resourceful.”* Praise for the staff also came from a local government official who wrote *“The level of involvement from the local community exceeded our expectations, and this is directly as a result of the hard work and enthusiasm of all members of the project team.”*

Their responses to my benchmarking question were also very positive:



If we exclude the three respondents for whom the question was not applicable, we find that 57% of respondents rated it as 'one of the best' and the remaining 43% stated that it was above average. Of course, as with all surveys there may be a positive bias in terms of those who rate the project highly being more likely to respond, and wanting to give supportive feedback, but nonetheless, this feedback is striking.

Next I asked stakeholders what they like about the project, and eight of the 17 responses referred to the GR workers. For example:

*"I like that Martin will come and spend time with us on the ground, explaining the work and the benefits. Helps our forestry team to understand what they need to do."*

*"Enthusiastic and experienced staff and contractors with a can do attitude."*

*"Trainers who were knowledgeable and shared their enthusiasm."*

*"Martin prepared a good scheme and coordinated the work well for us."*

Others commented on the holistic approach, with a university employee liking *"The key message of butterfly conservation and landscape-scale work was always conveyed to participants, as well as the wide landscape area that it covered & the different communities involved."* A moth surveyor said *"It has been a fantastic project to not only deliver practical conservation benefits, but to also engage with people and communities who might not previously have been able to access or learn about nature"*.

I also invited stakeholders to outline the project's weaknesses, from their perspective. 14 gave some feedback, of whom four said it didn't have any. Of the remaining ten comments seven concerned funding and time: the short length of the project, the rush to deliver, and the modest level of investment against the need for long-term work at scale to achieve significant gains. The other three comments were as follows:



- One worker with a young people's group said *"We could have known more in advance about what we were going to do."*
- An NHS Link Worker stated *"Not always accessible to due to people not being able to get there either because of transport issues or the times it is happening."*
- One school worker stated *"We would love some follow up work from the charity, once the key contact left I am yet to hear from anyone else."*<sup>8</sup>.

The final question invited stakeholders to make any suggestions or further comments, and eight people used this opportunity.

- Two suggestions were about continuing and expanding the work: *"Create more of these projects and give our plant and animal communities the space and conditions they need to thrive."* and *"Just to carry it on for longer, and ideally have more staff to allow wider outreach."*
- One landowner suggested more publicity in the future, if more funding is available, while another said *"Would be great to have an overview of the long term strategy for our woodlands."*
- A BC branch committee member proposed closer working with local BC Branch Committees.
- A teacher requested *"Ensure photo permission is fit for school purposes re safeguarding."*
- The local government officer made a suggestion about continuity and management: *"Funding continuity appears to be a constant theme with these projects and a more secure project officer type role to oversee such projects may be of benefit."*
- The NHS Link Worker proposed *"I would like to see further developments around pathways between primary care and projects of this nature to encourage involvement as early as possible for people experiencing dips in mental health."*

#### 4. Findings in relation to the Heritage Fund outcomes

See section 4, page 15 of the proposal

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/outcomes> for what they mean by each of these outcomes (there are 9 and they signed up for 7 of them!)

In its application for funding BC indicated that the project would deliver outcomes for seven of the Heritage Fund's outcomes, as follows:

##### 4.1 Priority outcomes

###### *a) A wider range of people will be involved in heritage*

The project succeeded in this inclusion outcome. Although many of the woodbank volunteers fitted the profile of people most likely to be involved in conservation work – white, retired, educated, living in rural areas – some did not, and had not previously done such work. This was particularly the case at Grange woodbank, which mainly draws on the urban area of Grange for its volunteers.

---

<sup>8</sup> The school's email address had been omitted from the mailing list, and has now been added.

The diversity of those involved was also expanded by the project's work with wellbeing groups and schools, including involving:

- unemployed and urban-based young men, by working with Haverigg prison and The Well (which provides residential support for young men with addiction issues);
- students from diverse countries through working with boarders at Dallam School and university students from overseas;
- students with Special Educational Needs through working with Oversands School;
- vulnerable students (including those with gaps in early development, difficulties with social skills, low confidence, and general anxieties) through working with the Nurture Group at Queen Elizabeth School;
- young people with mental health issues, through working with ACE and the Prop-up Project;
- women who mostly did not ordinarily spend time in the countryside, through working with Adullam.

The project workers' orientation to inclusion was very evident in the effort they made to involve a man with learning disabilities in one of the woodbank groups, such as driving him from the car park to the site (because his walking speed is slow) and taking him back punctually for his lift home. I attended a session that he participated in and was struck how the GR workers and the other volunteers supported his integration and contribution. Later that day his mother texted Claire to say *"Thank you & Lee for making my son's visit today so much fun. He was on a high when we collected him – just what he needed and deserved 🙌👍 xx"*

#### *b) The funded organisation will be more resilient*

The project successfully improved resilience and its future prospects in the following ways:

- greater involvement of local volunteers and local businesses in Butterfly Conservation's work;
- better ability to use social media for promoting and sustaining involvement;
- new or stronger connections and partnerships with, for example, Hutton Roof Commoners, the AONB pop-up horticulture group, and the various wellbeing groups.

Importantly, although the end of this short-term funding means that Butterfly Conservation staffing has now retracted to the same level as before the project, Lee and Claire have established Woodland Connections Morecambe Bay Community Interest Company, in order to continue their engagement work. This new partnership will hopefully (if funding is secured) allow BC staff to focus on work for priority species while the CIC provides continuity and voluntary labour through supporting the woodbanks and wellbeing groups.

#### *c) People will have greater well-being*

The project put a good deal of effort into working with wellbeing groups, with very good effect. As set out in sections 3.2, the feedback from not only the wellbeing group members but also other volunteers was extremely positive. The data demonstrates how the project work fits extremely well with the NHS's five steps to mental wellbeing<sup>9</sup>, enabling volunteers to:

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

- **Connect** both with other people (through shared endeavour) and with nature (whether through art or hands on connection through planting, cutting and clearing);
- **Be active** by getting outside in all weathers, and doing physical work;
- **Keep learning** by developing knowledge about habitats, woodland management and the fauna and flora of the woodland, along with green woodworking skills;
- **Give** by doing meaningful voluntary work, which was picked by seven out of ten volunteers as one their top four benefits (*"I like feeling I have done something useful"*);
- **Take notice** by being encouraged by GR workers and each other to pause and appreciate, the moment, whether that be the movement of clouds, the pattern on a butterfly's wing, the crackle of brash burning, or the satisfying sensation of stretching tired muscles.

#### *d) People will have developed skills*

In the volunteers' survey I asked respondents to pick their top four benefits from a list of ten. 39% of them chose *"I have learned or improved my woodland skills"* and 48% chose *"I've learned about butterflies and moths."* (Note, as I did not all the respondents to tick all the benefits that applied to them, this does not mean that the other respondents did not develop their skills, only that they did not include the options in their top four.) Certainly the project did invest in developing volunteers' green woodworking skills (see the list in Section 3.2a) despite the fact that, in terms of productivity, it would have been more efficient only to exploit the unskilled aspects of voluntary labour.

Lee, the Woodland Contractor, also invested in capacity building with five young people, by giving them on-the-job training and work experience (see sections 3.1 c) and d). One of them subsequently got a conservation job.

As detailed in Section 3.1e), the project has also invested in skills development among university students, with at least 40 individuals taking part in ten events. It has also established an internship programme with Lancaster University to give training and work experience to three students.

Among the GR workers one person benefitted from chainsaw training, and one each from training in the of QGIS software and the iRecord app.

#### *e) The local economy will be boosted*

As listed in Section 3.1c), the project paid 32 local businesses to provide services, in addition to the employment given to the five GR contractors (Section 3.1b) and to BC staff (Section 3.1a). The project also endeavoured to use local suppliers where their prices were competitive for inputs such as tools and protective equipment.

## 4.2 Other outcomes

### *a) Heritage will be in better condition*

As detailed in Section 3.3, the project has worked to improve our landscapes and nature heritage in 17 sites. In some places this has involved undoing past interventions which had altered the habitat negatively, such as removing non-native Swedish Whitebeam trees that

had been planted by the Forestry Commission to increase soil fertility, thereby degrading the infertile limestone habitat in which local flora and fauna thrives. It has also involved attending to habitats that have deteriorated through lack of management, such as clearing overgrown areas to create sunny rides and glades. The project has also improved the habitats through the addition of new plants - cowslips and privet – and because opening up woodland allows a wider range of flora and fauna to thrive. While the drive for improving these high priority landscapes is mainly focussed on improving biodiversity the benefits also extend to humans, as the cleared rides and glades also create better access for human recreation, and a richer environment for us to enjoy.

*b) People will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions*

It was evident from my observations that project staff consistently took time to convey their knowledge and enthusiasm to participants, enabling them to learn about not only butterflies and moths but also other fauna and flora, and how they interact within each ecosystem. They were also good at explaining the ‘why’ behind aspects of woodland management, including the need to remove trees – against the common perception that conservation is all about planting trees - to improve the habitat for certain species.

As already reported, 48% of respondents to the volunteers’ survey chose *learning about butterflies and moths* as one of the top four benefits of their participation. From my observation, the experience of working in the woods also had the effect, for some volunteers, of learning to be less fearful of ‘the wild’, to be more comfortable and interested in it. More specifically, one woman who was very fearful of flying creatures (birds, insects) gradually gained curiosity and the courage to observe moths from the moth trap quite closely. There was also evidence of a spill over effect in terms of volunteers asking GR staff about the best plants to put in their own gardens to benefit wildlife. The most evident impact, in terms of action, was that volunteers kept returning to devote time to the work: a total of 2,922 hours (418 days) of voluntary labour<sup>10</sup>.

### 4.3 Sustainability

This project’s focus was on improving the environment and sustaining priority landscapes for the future: at its heart it meets the fund’s desire for projects that *make a positive impact on the environment and particularly for nature*.

In addition, one of its core features is the recycling of cut wood as fuel, and of useful parts of the woodland arisings as pea sticks, fence palings and other products. Staff also attended to reducing the project’s impact in the following ways:

- encouraging use of public transport and car sharing by participants to attend events;
- car sharing by project workers where possible;
- using appropriate technologies where possible, such as hand saws, scythes, and using a horse to extract wood;
- using an electric chainsaw, to reduce noise, pollution and fossil fuel use;
- making use of wood arising from woodland management as fencing, pea sticks and so on;

---

<sup>10</sup> This is the sum of all the volunteer hours minus the public engagement events and the on-going work undertaken by members of the Cumbria Butterfly Conservation branch.

- re-use of fencing materials within the project;
- using proper (not disposable) cups for making hot drinks for volunteers;
- using local contractors and local suppliers.

The questionable aspect of the project with regard to climate change and local air quality involves burning wood. Current evidence is that, of the solid fuels available, seasoned wood is the best option for burning. However, even if wood as a fuel is carbon neutral (because the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted on burning is matched by the CO<sub>2</sub> it absorbed when it was growing), burning it causes local pollution. Of particular concern is PM<sub>2.5</sub> (fine particulate matter of 2.5 micrometres or less in diameter), which according to WHO is “*the most air dangerous pollutant because it can penetrate the lung barrier and enter the blood system, causing cardiovascular and respiratory disease and cancers... and has health impacts even at very low concentrations*”<sup>11</sup>. According to 2018 data<sup>12</sup>, background PM<sub>2.5</sub> rates in Barrow, South Lakeland and Lancaster were, respectively, 7.35µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 5.82µg/m<sup>3</sup> and 6.99 µg/m<sup>3</sup>: at the time these were within WHO’s guideline of a maximum of 10µg/m<sup>3</sup>, but in 2021 WHO updated its guideline to state that annual average concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in cities should not exceed 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The more stringent guideline reflected new evidence about how air pollution affects many aspects of health, even at low levels.

In the project there are two elements to the burning. First, large enough pieces of wood are taken off site for burning by woodbank volunteers. Project staff check that the recipients understand why and how to let the wood season before burning it, thereby approximately halving the pollutants released compared to burning unseasoned wood. But, even assuming that the volunteers do store and dry their wood correctly, many do not have modern (more efficient and less polluting) wood burning stoves, and even the most effective stoves still emit pollution. Therefore, in cases where householders have alternative and less polluting ways of heating their homes, taking and burning wood from the project causes an increase in local air pollution<sup>13</sup>. This will be exacerbated if they burn the wood more freely than they would do if they had paid for it. However, for those without an alternative source of heating (such as a rural volunteer I met who relies on a woodfired back burner to heat her house), there is no increase in pollution. Another exception is the case where someone receiving seasoned wood – including those in fuel poverty – burns the wood instead of coal<sup>14</sup>, thereby reducing local pollution because coal is more polluting.

The second aspect is that the project burns brash on site. This is a way of ‘tidying up’ the large piles of twigs and smaller branches that are left once the larger sections of wood and useful arisings have been extracted. However, they are burned on site without being seasoned, and as an open bonfire, therefore exposing volunteers to carbon monoxide and particulates and releasing CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.

Some possible alternatives are:

---

<sup>11</sup> WHO air quality guidelines, 2021: <https://tinyurl.com/5n6ezxas>

<sup>12</sup> British Lung Foundation Task Force for Lung Health, no date: <https://www.blf.org.uk/taskforce/data-tracker/air-quality/pm25>

<sup>13</sup> Environmental Protection UK, no date: <https://tinyurl.com/y8adybsb>

<sup>14</sup> Though the gain here has been reduced now that house coal cannot be sold in England and only less polluting smokeless coal products are available.

- Provide all woodbank volunteers with up-to-date information about seasoning wood, maximising airflow and maintaining their stoves, in order to increase burning efficiency and reduce local pollution.
- Provide all woodbank volunteers with up-to-date information about pollutants arising from wood burning and options for getting an Ecodesign compliant appliance, or a different source of power including solar and wind generated electricity.
- Only supply seasoned wood to recipients in rural areas (where the pollution affects fewer people) and/or only to people with no other form of heating;
- Leave brash to decay on site. This will result in lower CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and over long period of time, in contrast to the sudden and large release of a bonfire<sup>15</sup>.
- Chip and extract brash to use for burning off site as a heating fuel in efficient woodchip boilers.
- Chip and extract brash to use as a mulch.
- If burning brash supply effective face masks to volunteers working near the bonfire.

## 5. Discussion and suggestions

### Engagement

One of the project's strengths has been its community engagement, as detailed in Section 3.2. In total staff held 127 events over 15 months which gives a mean of eight or nine events per month, or approximately two events per week; this is an impressive level of activity for project with no full time workers and plenty of non-engagement activities to undertake also.

As explained in Section 4.1a), project workers managed to involve and engage males and females of different ages, from different backgrounds, and with varying levels of conservation knowledge and experience. To do so they used a variety of ways of engaging people, from online art sessions and an online discussion with experienced naturalists, to brief encounters with members of the public, to long-term relationship building through learning about and doing woodland work as a group.

In each case they tailored what is offered to the group. They also offered variety to the long-standing groups, for example, incorporating food cooked on the fire sometimes, using a horse for log extraction, giving training in using different tools, and bringing in someone from the RSPB to explain how the habitat management would help birdlife. The learning aspect was popular among survey respondents' top four benefits, and seems to be a good investment, even though it takes time, in terms of motivating volunteers to keep coming. This may be especially if moving towards more self-sufficiency among the woodbank groups.

Using an EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion) perspective, we can see that the project has attempted to treat volunteers and potential volunteers equitably, but some barriers remain, particularly in relation to disability, because the woodland environment requires a certain level of mobility and the work requires some physical strength. The project workers' efforts to facilitate access by the volunteer with learning disabilities and a slow walking speed show their willingness to mitigate such barriers. With regard to diversity, and given the relatively

---

<sup>15</sup> Including taking into account the equivalent CO<sup>2</sup> released as methane while rotting, Sierra magazine, 2015 <https://tinyurl.com/3dh9hkna>



homogenous population profile in Morecambe Bay, the project was successful in reaching beyond the 'usual suspects'<sup>16</sup>. Workers also behaved in an inclusive way, ensuring that volunteers had work to suit their ability, and that all contributions were appreciated. It was useful that the project workers were both male and female, but the project team (including me) was not otherwise diverse, for example in terms of ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. The workers were, nonetheless, orientated towards inclusion and equity.

Future engagement will depend on funding. While the on-going engagement between the Butterfly Conservation and its branch members will be sustained by Martin as the local BC representative, he does not have the capacity to work regularly with the woodbank and wellbeing groups, nor to continue the same level of public engagement. Fortunately there are funding opportunities for Woodland Connections CIC, and its founders are motivated to continue this work if they can secure funding. If they are able to do so they can continue to deliver value for money in terms of volunteer hours spent on conservation work, as well as benefits to the participants and to other people who visit the managed woodlands. A long-term partnership between BC and Woodland Connections will be to the benefit of priority species and human engagement in improving habitats.

*Suggestion:* the BC manager and Woodland Connections CIC attend to tracking and maintaining communications with groups and individuals.

### Addressing mental health issues

The project has demonstrated that conservation work fits well with the five ways to wellbeing and supporting those with mental health issues, but at a higher cost than when engaging with the woodbanks, as explained in Sections 3.2a) and b). This is partly because the work with wellbeing groups involved an intermediary – the wellbeing group leader or other postholder – which made coordination more complex than the direct communication between the project and woodbank group members. It also led to false starts, and erratic interaction, when there was, for example, a hiatus or change in staffing in the wellbeing group. Furthermore, in comparison with the woodbank groups, the balance of effort was sometimes more towards the individuals and their needs rather than the conservation impact. While there was a dual benefit to the work with wellbeing groups – to the individuals and to the habitat – the productivity in conservation terms was generally lower than with the woodbank groups. The exception to this was the input from the younger men from Haverigg and The Well, who were physically fit and engaged with physical tasks such as sawing and moving wood very effectively.

Despite investment from project staff, their efforts to fulfil green prescriptions were not successful. The main constraint seems to be a lack of fit between what the project was offering and what people getting green prescriptions want to do: as one NHS Link Worker commented “*Great welcoming project, just wish I could find more people who are interested in participating*”. Other issues include travel to woodland sites, having suitable clothing and footwear, and needing a certain level of physical ability to participate in the work.

---

<sup>16</sup> Though this was not reflected in the profile of the survey respondents as I was not able to directly invite any of the participants from schools, most of the wellbeing group members and most of the university students.



*Suggestions:* There may be more potential for the CIC to involve a wider range of people, including those who are isolated or feeling low, if it conducts work on woodlands adjacent to residential areas. (This was mainly not possible for this project as the focus was on certain woodlands and SSSIs, mainly accessible only by private transport.)

If the CIC can get funding concerning mental health support I suggest it collects individuals' contact details, so that the project can share information directly with them, and get feedback directly from them, rather than relying on the wellbeing group post holder as the gatekeeper.

The CIC staff know now how woodland work can benefit all of us, whatever our location on the wellbeing spectrum, and can use this as a selling point of their work, even when not applying for funding that is focused on mental health.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The Engagement Officer invested time in establishing monitoring and evaluation systems at the outset of the project, including attempting to get support from a Lancaster University professor regarding measuring impacts when working with people from the mental health support groups. Unfortunately, as Section 3.2d) outlined, the measure used by the project wasn't very suitable, though the use of that scale and other questions in their session evaluation form did result in some useful feedback.

The other main system she put in place was a simple shared spreadsheet in which key project workers recorded each event they ran along with key data regarding the focus of the work, its location, how many people and which project staff attended, and for how long. They also used this spreadsheet to record a summary of field notes about their work each month. I view this spreadsheet as a great example of 'just right' monitoring: not too complex and time consuming to update, but recording useful information which would otherwise be forgotten. By gathering that data it was much easier for me, as a late comer to the project, to understand what had been happening with regard to community engagement, and to extract the analysis that features in Section 3.2 of this report.

*Suggestion:* the BC manager and Woodland Connections CIC both create and maintain a similarly simple but effective way of recording their activities. A few moments spent after each event builds into a comprehensive record of work done, and provides an easy source of information for writing reports or checking back on past activities.

### Challenges

The short funding period was a major challenge. As is very common, the project proposal planned for more than could, in all probability, be achieved in the short time frame allowed. Although the funder did allow a three month extension, a request for a further extension was refused. This meant that less was achieved, particularly in terms of monitoring the impact on butterflies and moths through summer surveys, and some funding was left unspent.

The main contextual challenge is the scale of the task. For Butterfly Conservation to be working consistently and with significant impact on all sites of importance for butterfly and moth priority species in the North West it would need to hire more staff. If it is to deliver on

its goal of transforming 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies and moths by 2026 – which would mean thousands of sites in the North West – then the staffing requirement is higher again. Even if all the work is done in partnership with other agencies it takes time to coordinate and collaborate on those efforts. The current reality is that a single person has the task of attempting to do this work! While there are many staff in BC's head office at least in the North West it seems clear there are not enough on the ground to deliver its goals.

Connected to the context of too-much-to-do is the complexity of the situation. The project involved a lot of collaboration with other stakeholders – there were 59 on the mailing list – as well as individual volunteers. Some elements of collaboration are crucial for progress, such as securing permissions for landowners. Dealing effectively with the scale and complexity requires strategic focus and perseverance: both to identify and pursue certain goals, and tactically neglect other opportunities. For example, with greater focus and determination more progress might have been made regarding introduction of grazing (see Section 3.3e), but at the expense of other aspects of the project.

*Suggestion:* BC invests in more on-the-ground staff in the region and supports a strategic and focussed approach to improve outcomes for priority species.

### Project management

The project team worked in an admirably flexible and collaborative way, with a flat hierarchy. The workers seemed well motivated, and with the motivation to juggle and exploit many interconnections and opportunities for collaboration. For example, while Gait Barrows Nature Reserve had not been identified as a planned intervention site they were able to respond to the chance to include it in the project's work. One strength of the team was Martin's long experience of working in the region, giving him a large network of contacts to draw on, and historical knowledge of key sites and past efforts.

The main constraint, from my observation, was with regard to consistency of communication. In particular – and linking to the previous point about the scale and complexity of the task – Martin was overwhelmed and did not reliably respond to communications. This caused delays and inefficiency, and likely led to lower levels of responsiveness among other stakeholders.

Linked to this, the project proposal did not require a logical framework or similar structure, and when I started work the project staff lacked a summary of exactly what was stated in the proposal. In terms of management this meant that while workers over achieved certain their engagement targets, other aspects such as introduction of grazing and planting native trees received less attention than was needed.

*Suggestions:* that BC and Woodland Connections CIC:

- establish and use a simple system for tracking planned outputs and activities;
- only use WhatsApp for quick updates: use stacked emails, with one focus or request per message, for most communications;
- organise emails, for example, label as 'waiting' (for a response), 'action' (needing my attention), or achieved;

- have a weekly review (of outputs and activities, and 'action' and 'waiting' emails) to identify the most important tasks to work on that week, and things to chase;
- set up automatic reminders (eg in an electronic calendar) for timebound tasks, for example, the need to book contractors months in advance, to carry out surveys, to begin work on a report two weeks before it is due;
- use shared files and folders as appropriate;
- establish and use a simple system for recording expenditure, to facilitate financial reporting and expense claims;
- for cost-effectiveness consider setting minimum requirements for an event to happen (eg cancel if fewer than five participants have signed up) and consider running some events with fewer paid workers.

## 6. Conclusion

The project team achieved a great deal in a short time, delivering important habitat improvements in 18 woodland sites for the benefit of threatened lepidoptera species, other lepidoptera, other threatened species, and people. As Section 4 explains, and as planned, they successfully met five of the Heritage Fund's priority outcomes, and two of its other outcomes. They achieved project targets regarding employment and skills building, overachieved on project outcomes concerning engagement, and mainly delivered on their plans regarding habitat management and improvement. Furthermore, the work very much fitted with BC's own national strategy, with its focus on four threatened species, improving habitats and improving wildspaces for people, butterflies and moths.

This was overwhelmingly a peopled project: it made its achievements with no local premises, and minimal hardware. Fortunately its people were knowledgeable, motivated and hardworking. Crucially they were able to engage and draw on the skills and labour of many more people as volunteers, and to collaborate with a range of stakeholders. While the scale of the conservation task in the region is huge this project has shown that it's possible to have an impact with a small team of paid workers, and has left BC better placed to meet that challenge in coming years.

## Appendix 1: Terms of reference for the evaluation contract

To work as directed by, and with, the Project Manager to oversee develop and deliver an evaluation report. Work may include:

- Analysis of project information, evaluations, outputs and outcomes, and social media.
- Liaise and interview the GR team to ensure relevant information is collected and available for a final report.
- Liaise with landowners, community groups, graziers, volunteer work parties and outside contractors to collect feedback and help us to evaluate our project.
- Access paperwork detailing project events and look at social media platforms.
- Make invoices available to Project Manager upon receipt.
- Work closely with other members of the GR team to find opportunities for integrating other elements of engagement, community access or habitat management.
- Discuss opportunities for stakeholder workshop to reflect and look forward.

## Appendix 2: Online survey questions for volunteers

### Invitation email

#### **A quick survey about your volunteering, and a chance to win a really interesting book**

Greetings

I'm doing an evaluation of Butterfly Conservation's *Green Recovery for Morecambe Bay's Woodlands* project. As part of this I'm keen to get feedback from the volunteers who have been involved, which I believe includes you. I'd be very grateful if you could click **here** to answer 7 questions – I've kept it very short, and quick to do! Or I'd be happy to call you if you would prefer to talk, just let me know.

One respondent will win a copy of Lee Scofield's *Wild Fell - fighting for nature on a Lake District hill farm*; just fill in the survey before **Monday 20th June!**

With thanks

Sue

[www.sueholden.org.uk](http://www.sueholden.org.uk)

### Online survey text

#### **Volunteers' survey about the Morecambe Bay Woodlands Project**

Thanks for being willing to give your feedback.

This survey is about Butterfly Conservation's *Green Recovery for Morecambe Bay's Woodlands Project*, with local staff of Martin Wain, Eve Grayson (until November 2021), and contractors including Lee Bassett & Claire Harris.

The project began in December 2020 and will finish in June 2022. It aims to promote the recovery of threatened butterfly species in Morecambe Bay through habitat management, and by enabling members of community groups, mental health groups and young people to contribute to that work and to appreciate natural spaces.

- 1) Please briefly describe how you've been involved in the project:
- 2) Why did you get involved? What did you hope for?
- 3) To what extent have your hopes been met?
  - *Not at all*
  - *A little*
  - *Reasonably well*
  - *Fully met*
  - *Exceeded*

If you want to say anything more about this please do so here:

- 4) What do you like about the project?
- 5) What weaknesses does the project have, from your perspective?

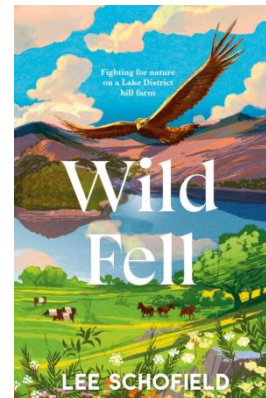


6) Here are some of the benefits that people get from volunteering on conservation projects. Which most fit with your experience? Please tick up to four of the most significant benefits to you.

- *It's got me outdoors*
- *I've met new people*
- *It's given me exercise*
- *I've learned about butterflies and moths*
- *I've learned or improved my woodland skills*
- *I feel more connected to the woods where I have worked*
- *I like feeling I have done something useful*
- *It has helped my mental wellbeing*
- *I've enjoyed being in nature*
- *other (please explain)*

7) If you have any suggestions about how to improve this type of work, or anything else that you want to add, please do so here:

If you want to be in the draw to win a copy of Wild Fell by Lee Schofield please add your email address here:



Lastly, three quick questions about you:

a) How old are you?

- *Under 25*
- *25 to 45*
- *46 to 65*
- *Over 65*
- *Prefer not to say*

b) What's your gender?

c) And finally, what's your ethnicity?

THANK YOU for taking time to respond 😊.

## Appendix 3: Online survey questions for stakeholders

### Invitation email

#### **A short survey and a chance to win a book**

Greetings

I've been hired by Butterfly Conservation to carry out an evaluation of their *Green Recovery for Morecambe Bay's Woodlands* project. As part of this I'm keen to get feedback and ideas from the project's stakeholders. I'd be very grateful if you could click **here** to answer 7 questions – I've kept it very short, and quick to do! Or I'd be happy to call you if you would prefer to talk, just let me know.

One respondent will win a copy of Lee Schofield's *Wild Fell - fighting for nature on a Lake District hill farm*; just fill in the survey before **Monday 20th June!**

With thanks

Sue

[www.sueholden.org.uk](http://www.sueholden.org.uk)

### Online survey text

#### **Stakeholders' survey about the Morecambe Bay Woodlands Project**

Thanks for being willing to give your feedback.

This evaluation is about Butterfly Conservation's *Green Recovery for Morecambe Bay's Woodlands*, with local staff of Martin Wain, Eve Grayson (until November 2021) and various contractors including Lee Bassett & Claire Harris.

The project began in December 2020 and will finish in June 2022. It aims to promote the recovery of threatened butterfly species in Morecambe Bay through habitat management, and by enabling members of community groups, mental health groups and young people to contribute to that work and to appreciate natural spaces.

- 8) Please briefly describe your involvement in or relationship to the project:
- 9) What was or is your or your organisation's motivation for being involved with the project?
- 10) To what extent have your expectations, in relation to that motivation, been met?
  - *Not at all*
  - *A little*
  - *Reasonably well*
  - *Fully met*
  - *Exceeded*

If you want to say anything more about this please do so here:

11) Thinking about your experience of similar projects, how has this project compared?

- *Much worse*
- *Below average*
- *About average*
- *Above average*
- *One of the best*
- *Not applicable – I don't have any comparable experience*

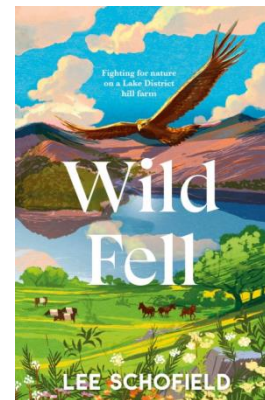
If you want to say anything more about this please do so here:

12) What do you like about the project?

13) What weaknesses does it have, from your perspective?

14) If you have any suggestions about how to improve this type of work, or anything else you want to add, please do so here:

If you want to be in the draw to win a copy of Wild Fell by Lee Schofield please add your email address here:



Lastly, three quick questions about you:

d) How old are you?

- *Under 25*
- *25 to 45*
- *46 to 65*
- *Over 65*
- *Prefer not to say*

e) What's your gender?

f) And finally, what's your ethnicity?

THANK YOU for taking time to respond ☺.

Appendix 4: The project's end of session evaluation form

## Green Recovery Morecambe Bay Woodlands Project Evaluation Sheet

**ID Number:**


**Date:**

Part of the project is to assess whether working in the woodlands helps to improve participants mental health. We would really appreciate it if you fill in the following questionnaire.

### Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (S) WEMWBS

	None of the time		Rarely		Some of the Time		Often		All of the Time	
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
I've been feeling useful	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
I've been able to make up my own mind at things	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) © Univeristy of Warwick 2006, all rights reserved.

Have you ever done volunteer work before?	Yes		No	
Have you ever volunteered in woodland before?	Yes		No	
How long were you in the woods for?	Hours			
Have you enjoyed the experience today?				
How Likely are you to come again?	Very likely	Likely	Probably	Never again
Have you come as an individual or as part of a group?				
How did you hear about the session today?				
Is there anything that could have been improved?				
Has coming and working in the woods been beneficial for ?	Yes		No	
Explain:				
Record Any Special Moments				

All participants information will be kept confidential. No personal information will be provided in any reports resulting from these forms.