

# **East Keswick Wildlife Trust Annual General Meeting 2025**

## **EKWT TRUSTEES**

### **Highlights of 2024/25**

A Year in Review

**Bardsey fields:**

After our successful fund raising to buy Bardsey Fields, we were able to raise substantial amounts in grants to begin the nature restoration and natural flood management works on these 24 acres of land in the heart of Bardsey village.

Grants from Countryside Stewardship and Yorkshire Water over the past 12 months have allowed us to buy materials to install -

12 new access gates, 14 woodland compounds and over 2.5 kilometres of new stock proof boundary fencing.

Over 70 tons of limestone hardcore was delivered to create gateway bases and entrance tracks, improving long-term access in all weathers.

Gaps in boundary hedgerows have been replanted, and over 5,000 hedgerow saplings and trees of over 20 different species were planted, establishing over one kilometre of new hedgerows and three quarters of an acre of new woodland.

With permission from Yorkshire Water and working in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, two pipes running under the top fields taking surface water from the playgrounds and roof of Bardsey Primary Academy School to the beck below, were diverted, broken out and brought to the surface on the downslope field below the school.

Before works commenced certain criteria had to be met

Eight cross slope leaky dams were built below the break out points to arrest and slow the flow of these waters across the site. For the construction, through ongoing works in Ox Close wood, the volunteers were able to supply 400 x 2 metre logs, 130 fascines and 440 willow cuttings.

Three in stream leaky dams were built in the Mill tail

Three woodland copses were planted at strategic points

Two cross slope hedges were planted

11 parkland enclosures were constructed and planted up, with what in a few years will become small copses of mixed species of mature trees and shrubs.

None of this would have been possible without our army of Trust volunteers together with the support from other voluntary groups.

All of these works are part of a natural flood management project that will improve the resilience of the site, soak up more water protecting and reducing downstream flooding in the villages of Collingham and beyond and improve the water quality flowing into the beck and help establish new habitats across the site.

On 6 July we will be having an open day and family picnic for villagers to access the site with guided walks and we will have a display to show our vision for the future. This will be the beginning of allowing the villagers and the public, permissive safe access to parts of the site.

This is only the start of our long term plans to establish a new Nature Reserve, an educational resource for the school as well as a new green space with permissive access in the heart of Bardsey village.

Another local initiative has been to support The East Keswick Village Hall land purchase and establishment of their "Climate Change Garden".

The trust was able to help, advise and support the Village Hall team on its purchase, grant applications, wildflower and hedgerows planting and pond creation.

Taking two acres of species-poor farmed grassland and turning it into a village asset, with the right management, this will be another village site where local wildlife can thrive in its newly created wildflower meadows and ponds.

Although our focus has been at Bardsey Fields, work on other conservation tasks, especially in Ox Close, continues, with safety felling of dead elm and ash, log processing and charcoal burning providing an ongoing revenue stream to help cover some of the Trust's overheads.

A new project has been the Drone mapping of our nature reserves.

Jim and Andy, two of our volunteers, have taken footage, which in time will capture the changes resulting from the Trust's ongoing conservation management works, as featured in our recent newsletter.

This year, we have taken on a self employed expert ecologist Dan Carne on a 12 month contract to advise the Trust on its future development and writing of long term management plans for all our nature reserves. His help, advice and work at Bardsey Fields was invaluable.

Our nature reserves have a wealth of wildlife that 33 years ago before the formation of the Trust, was not found in our local parishes.

They sustain and allow our local wildlife to flourish providing safe havens and diverse habitats where they can live and breed, while beyond their boundaries in the surrounding farmland they continue to decline.

We need to thank all our volunteers, for their hard work, skills and support. especially those who turn out most Fridays for our volunteer work parties.

Douglas, George, Paul, Simon, Scott, Jim, Nick, Garrod, David, Howard, Duncan, the two Phils, Peter, Liz, Elaine, Melanie, Anne, Ginny, Julie, Mina, Margaret, Will , Andy and Richard and other voluntary groups that supports us during the year.

Michael as Treasurer

Debbie as Secretary

Elaine for writing the Parish magazine articles and the membership work with Thomasin

Jim for editing the newsletter

Peter and Debbie for their continued above and beyond endless support throughout the year.

Liz Norman from Yorkshire Water  
Abigail Mace from the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust both of whom especially helped making Bardsey Fields happen.

The Conservation Grazing Group who oversee the grazing, care and transportation between sites of the essential Dexter cows.  
Nick, Howard, Duncan, Adam and David

I hope I haven't missed anyone out, sincere apologies if I have

This brings us to today and what about the future:

We can say with certainty, there has never been more need to support organisations such as our Wildlife Trust and other similar groups that are fighting desperately to protect and care for our countryside and its wildlife,

Continual intensification of farming and food production, a growing population, a lack of political will and funding from all parties, to do what is required to stem our continued long term climate change and decline in wildlife is pushing our climate and wildlife to the brink of no return.

So a big thank you for your continued support and with your help we can continue to make a local difference.

The Trustees, EKWT