TRUSTEES' REPORT 2026

Our report covers the period between AGM meetings from July 2025 to September 2026

Yet another successful year in so many ways, far too many to record, but as ever, here are a few of the highlights

We start with our proudest moment, being judged as winners in the Community Fund for Calderdale Award ceremony 'sustainability' section. More than the award itself, it was very gratifying to receive public recognition for all the fantastic work which all of our volunteers do and to receive so many messages of congratulations and support on our Fb page from the public. The trophy and certificate take pride of place in our Visitor Centre

Continuing the sustainability theme, our recycling can collection has raised upwards of £900 so far this year, with more and more organisations collecting and delivering for us. Huge thanks to all volunteers who collect or transport the cans to the recycling plant

Since our last report, we have held 2 successful Open Days, successful on several levels. Both events were blessed with very good weather, a wider range of attractions, some new, with great support from the public in terms of attendance. The Visitor Centre was extremely popular and sold out of cakes on both occasions, despite extras being purchased or donated. Huge thanks go to the exhibitors who support these events and the volunteers and Trustees involved in the huge amount of pre planning and physical preparations needed beforehand

We were fortunate to receive a substantial grant from Northern Power which as enabled us to begin creating a Sensory Glade within the Education Area. Its purpose will be to provide a sensory experience within managed visits for supervised adults and children who may have additional needs and who's mental health would benefit from visiting. Again, volunteers have been heavily involved in groundworks following works completed by contractors. All planters have been made on site, filled with soil and a range of wildflower seeds have been sown to create a temporary blaze of colour pending more permanent plants and shrubs being planted. A range of additional multi-sensory items including water features and wind chimes may well be added in time to complement the multi-sensory experience we are aiming to create.

The communications team from Northern Power came to do some interviews for their YouTube channel which was released on 5th June to coincide with International Environment Day

We anticipate the Glade will be fully resourced over the next 18 months to 2 years

Our audio tour project with Northern Broadsides finally came to fruition with a celebratory launching of the experience which was attended by members of CBWG, Northern Broadsides members, contributors to the audio tour and representatives from Calderdale Council. The tour is now available to the public who can enjoy the tour at any time through their headsets

WORK ON THE RESERVE

Maintaining CBLNR takes a huge amount of time and effort to keep it looking at its best. Volunteers work through an annual programme divided into months which can obviously change due to weather conditions. The volunteers' work is relentless as each habitat (wetland, woodland, meadow) requires its own maintenance programme and the reserve is kept in great condition because of their efforts.

During the last 14 months, works have included: -

Landscaping, weeding, watering and maintaining a new habitat feature on North Loop, clearing brambles across the reserve, raking pre mowed areas, repairing, removing and replacing fencing including brash, spreading manure on North Loop, clearing gulleys, re staining picnic furniture, filling planters in the sensory glade, creating an extension to the minibeast hunting area, maintaining the ponds, clearing swathes in the lagoon, removing saplings in the sphagnum bog, installing and lining a new container to house tools, clearing debris from the Bailey bridges, installing new lagoon gate, cleaning and monitoring nestboxes, completing annual orchid survey, strimming vegetation, path maintenance, cleaning the solar panels, treating rust patches on the Visitor Centre roof and……balsam pulling! Many hours have been spent watering certain vegetation areas due to the lengthy heatwaves we have experienced. The 4 Exmoor ponies returned for a few weeks on North Loop as part of the grassland management and were very reluctant to leave!

We have been grateful for the valuable help from a number of students who have been a great asset over the summer period and beyond and also from volunteers from a local business

Our volunteer base includes the invaluable ‘Sunday Cabin Crew’ who serve refreshments on Sundays and Bank Holidays and whose dedication enables much needed revenue, but, as importantly, operating as a welcoming team for weekend visitors who really appreciate their hospitality. In addition, the volunteers who turn up on the 2nd Saturday of each month provide invaluable support in reserve maintenance

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

SCHOOL VISITS

Since our last AGM, we have been kept busy with visits from local primary schools

In total, 39 class visits from 13 primary schools have booked education sessions including themed walks, pond dipping, bug hunting, birdwatching, den building, barn owl life cycle sessions and bee trail. The list includes the annual ‘Santa Dash’ visit from Waters Edge Nursery. Massive thanks to the team of volunteers who are so dependable in assisting with such visits

WALKS AND TALKS

Between walk leaders, we have led 11 guided walks for groups including:- church groups, Overgate Hospice staff, Probus, Oddfellows and Inner Wheel

Similarly we have delivered talks for 10 different organisations including Calderdale College, Lightcliffe Academy, Fixby Gardening Club, Overgate Hospice Day Patients, Oddfellows and Halifax Piecemakers

COMMUNITY EVENTS

In addition to our Open Days, we have hosted 14 family events including ones for Brighouse Ladies’ Circle (kids and Critters) Healthy minds children’s summer events, Elland Children’s Centre, Family Hub events, bat nights, newt night and Calderdale Children’s Library events

We have welcomed a number of regular community groups into our Visitor Centre as part of their visit to the reserve. These include, Cygnet Lodge volunteers, Wayfinders (now called Ride Roll and Stroll), Next Steps disability group, Staying Well group, ‘Nature and Natter’ and weekly visits from 6th Formers and staff from Ravenscliffe Special School. We are very keen to keep access to the reserve as inclusive as possible and are always open to suggestions and guidance.

We have repeated our fund raising for Mabels meals and Macmillan Coffee Morning, both raising over £500

We had 2 visits from Greetland Scouts who were earning their ‘naturalist ‘ badge. They made some bat boxes and later in the year re visited to have a guided walk and be presented with their badges

PUBLICITY

Our popular twice-yearly magazine continues to be full of interesting articles as is the monthly newsletter sent to every member. Our Facebook ‘likes’ and community page members have steadily increased to 5994 and 7163 respectively

The original wooden noticeboard has been refurbished and now contains historical information relating the parts of the reserve, particularly Tag Cut. The board will form the first information point when the QR code system is put into place around the reserve. A series of 7 QR codes will enable visitors to use their phone and either read or listen to a short commentary about the place they are situated on the reserve

HEALTH & SAFETY

A number of our volunteers have been trained as Emergency First Aiders, adding to our existing qualified group

The fire extinguishers have successfully undergone their annual servicing and our electrical equipment has been PAT tested

LOOKING AHEAD

Every 5 years we put together a plan which serves as a working document, covering a variety of immediate and longer-term objectives across all aspects of the charity’s work

The next plan will run until 2031 and has been redesigned to have a clearer focus on sustainability across the main habitats on the reserve. It will also include a number of projects which will enhance the visitor experience, with a suggested time frame and estimates of budget costings.

The sterling efforts of all volunteers, together with the crucial partnership we enjoy with The Countryside Service will, I am sure, enable us to tackle the improvements we wish to see over the next year as we look forward to another busy, but rewarding 12 months

I cannot thank everyone enough for the contributions they make to CBWG. Everyone's individual effort is very much valued and appreciated

Simon Day

Chair, on behalf of

CBWG Trustees

September 2026