

LANCASHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL FUND



Annual Report 2024

The Fund was established in 1998 as a not-for-profit organisation to support community and environmental projects within Lancashire with grants generated by the Landfill Communities Fund.

Funds are provided by SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd. The Fund is an equal partnership between SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Community Futures. Representatives from each organisation serve on the Fund's Board and Application Assessment Group to ensure that the best projects throughout the county, which provide environmental, community and social benefits, are supported.



Landfill Communities Fund (LCF)

Tax on landfilling waste was introduced to allow for a small percentage of the tax to be donated to not-for-profit organisations who achieve environmental and/or social objectives. The LCF is managed by HM Revenue and Customs and is regulated by ENTRUST. To find out more about the

Landfill Communities Fund visit www.entrust.org.uk



Community and environmental groups can apply to Lancashire Environmental Fund for awards up to £30,000 from two funding streams:

Green Grants (up to £3,000) or Main Grants (up to £30,000)

Projects to date have included improvements to community facilities, general environmental improvements, creation and management of habitats, improvements to parks, gardens, open spaces, play areas, recreational facilities, ponds, canals, rivers and natural biodiversity.

Lancashire Environmental Fund Board

CC Shaun Turner - Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, Lancashire County Council

Andrew Hughes - Regional Director Energy North, SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd

John Drury - Lancashire Wildlife Trust

Frank McGinty - Community Futures

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Photography: Project contributors.

Front cover: Improving Access to Grimsargh Wetlands



CC Shaun Turner, Chair of the Fund Board, Lancashire County Council



I always look forward to introducing the Fund's Annual Report and showcasing the diverse and worthwhile projects that have been supported.

Lancashire County Council has a long standing and proud association with the Fund and its key partners, Community Futures, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Suez Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd, the donating landfill operator.

Through this partnership the Fund has distributed around £33 Million to local communities since 1998 with every project making a difference to the county's communities, greenspaces, play facilities and natural environments.

The projects highlighted in the 2024 Annual Report are just a small representation of the great projects to make life and nature more accessible to all and hopefully you will find them as pleasing as I do. I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow Board members, the Assessment Panel and the Fund Staff for another positive 12 months of grant making.

Elizabeth Morgan, Fund Manager

It has been a pleasure to meet and visit so many dedicated and passionate organisations looking to enhance their community facilities and the natural environment this year. As the Fund is firmly rooted in Lancashire, we know that our commitment to projects secures around a further £3 to every £1 granted, through other funding and income coming into the county.

Seeing local groups reap the fruit of their funding efforts, which will be enjoyed for future generations, is the most rewarding part for everyone here at LEF. Our success in delivering a local fund for local communities comes from a dedicated and knowledgeable Board, Assessment Panel and Fund Team who are all committed to making the Fund as impactful as possible.



Tree Planting with The Woodlands Trust at Swindells Wood

Mere Tun Longhouse £15,000 Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Martin Mere Wetland Centre

It is not every day that LEF receives an application to help with the construction of a Viking residence, but we have learnt over the years to expect the unexpected. Martin Mere Wetland Centre rose to the challenge and asked for funding towards the cost of a thatched Viking longhouse to be situated in the Mere Tun village at the Wetlands centre.



The purpose of the village and the longhouse is to enhance the living history visits by schools as well as being open and accessible to visitors of all ages and abilities, demonstrating the uses of wetlands throughout the ages particularly with regard to how communities relied on them for food, materials and their livelihood. Also, the intention is to raise awareness about how wetlands

provide a vital function as carbon sinks thus helping to positively affect issues resulting from climate change. During peak visitation periods the Mere Tun village will be 'live' using staff and volunteers who will engage visitors in a Living History experience. Outside of peak periods, the village is accessible to all for self-guided visits via a boardwalk with information provided by interpretation panels.

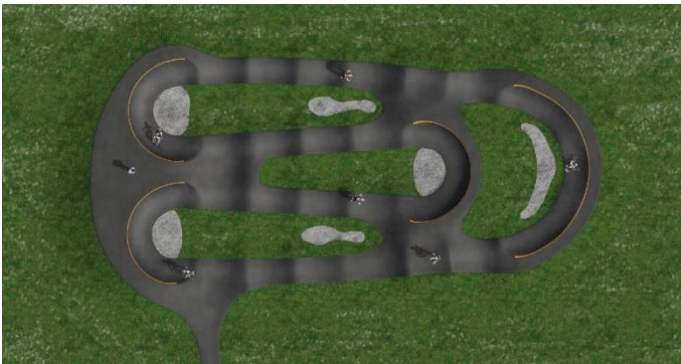


The project itself was undertaken largely in house, with staff and volunteers building the structure and using specialist contractors just for the thatching. Doing the work in house has meant that materials from other jobs has been reused and recycled where possible.

So next time you visit Martin Mere do not be too surprised if it feels like you have stepped back a thousand years!

Hapton Pump Track £40,000 Hapton Parish Council

Hapton Parish Council wanted to improve the attractions and facilities for youngsters in the area and decided that a state of the art pump track fitted the bill perfectly. For those who are not in the know, a pump track is an outdoor circuit for bikes, skateboards, scooters, roller blades and some wheelchairs to use. The intention was to provide a safe and accessible space for children and teenagers to engage in healthy outdoor activities improving physical fitness and social interaction whilst developing skills.



However, the benefits have extended far beyond physical fitness. A sense of community has been fostered and a positive outlet has been provided for young people, promoting teamwork, camaraderie and a healthy competitive spirit. The track has

been used not just by local residents, but also by visitors from neighbouring areas, stimulating economic activity and the expectation is that in future the venue will be used for events and competitions.

The money LEF provided helped to create a state of the art facility suitable for both beginners and advanced users. Located on the Hapton Recreation Ground, the pump track has added a new element to the area giving young people something to do all year-round. The number of young people who make use of the track is testament to how much this facility was needed.



Achieving Net Zero - £20,000 Knowle Green Village Hall

For over a hundred years Knowle green Village Hall has been enhancing the lives of the locals and has become a major community venue in the Ribchester parish. But like all such venues and indeed many families the increased costs of gas and electricity have had a significant impact on their finances.



To address this, and to ensure that the Hall can continue to operate in the future, the intention is to become net zero by 2026. As a first step towards this, the Hall decided to install an array of thirty solar panels together with three batteries to store the energy generated for evening events.



They also wanted to provide charging points for electronic vehicles for use by all visitors to the area, many of whom use the free car park at the Hall as a base for their walks. LEF was able to assist with a grant towards the cost of the works, which now completed should go some way to reducing energy bills and thus help to secure the long term future of the Hall which is the

only such facility in the village and is used by diverse groups which include Line dancers, high energy exercise classes, Pilates, as well as chat and film clubs and the Ribble Valley Music Festival.

We will just have to hope that the mist over Pendle Hill doesn't blow their way!

Kidtopia - Mercer Park £40,000 Clayton-le-Moors with Altham Prospects

The play area at Mercer Park was over 20 years old and in desperate need of refurbishment. A modern play area should be both challenging and provide a range of opportunities for children of all abilities. The aim was to develop a space that would become a destination for young people living in the 4,362

households located within 15 minutes walk of the Park in the Clayton area, improving their physical health through exercise and mental health through social interaction.



With the help of a grant from LEF, the play area has been completely refurbished featuring twelve new pieces of play equipment which were

chosen with the help of feedback received from consultation with local schools and families residing in the area nearby. The play area is accessible, suitable for a wide range of age groups and abilities and includes children's favourites such as a trampoline, a variety of rotating equipment, a cableway, slides and swings for a number of age groups and abilities. Three extra pieces were able to be added which were not envisaged at the outset and the surfacing which had become worn and in need of repair was also replaced.

The improvements have certainly been well received judging by the number of children who can regularly be seen finding their Utopia in Kidtopia!



Gamble Road Landscaping Scheme £40,000 Thornton Cleveleys FC

For years an area of land covering approximately 7,000 square metres adjacent to the car park at Thornton Cleveleys Football Club had become a bit of an overgrown eyesore and was attracting adverse comments from local residents. The Football Club, which owns the land, decided that better use should be made of the area so wanted to develop it so that the community would view the area as their space and feel a closer connection to the Club even if they are not particularly sports orientated.



Much work was needed on such a large site and the clearance of brambles, thistles, rubbish and existing scrub was, in itself, a massive task. The replanting of the area was done with the aim of attracting as much wildlife as possible whilst creating an accessible space for the benefit of

all. To this end, a new path was created using the funding provided and over 50 trees and 1,300 hedges planted. Native wildflowers and grasses were sown and benches installed.

The end result is that local residents and visitors to the Football Club can now walk through and enjoy a walk through a beautiful grassed area alive with wildflowers on a winding path through trees and hedges, taking a moment to sit and reflect if they so desire. The scheme has also had a positive impact on wildlife, creating a more natural and diverse environment for the enjoyment of all.



Efficient Warmth at Liverpool Road Hall, Skelmersdale £48,280 The Greenhill Community Hub Ltd



The Liverpool Road Hall is a community building situated close to the heart of Skelmersdale. Previously popular with local groups and running an extensive programme of community led events, the facility had in recent years experienced a reduction in use with those groups withdrawing citing the cold and dampness as a major factor in their decision. The Hall had hitherto played an important role in encouraging better health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation and promoting an improved quality of life for those residing in this economically disadvantaged area.

The Greenhill Community Hub, who manage the building, approached LEF for a grant to replace the ancient boiler system and to make the facility more energy efficient with the installation of LED lights and underfloor insulation. However, once work commenced, further problems were identified by



the contractors who came across rotting floor joists caused in part by blocked and overflowing gutters. They recommended that the gutters and joists be replaced which meant further unbudgeted expense and a shortfall in funding. LEF were contacted with the problem and after discussion were able to reassess the project finances and provide both advice and further funding to allow remedial works to take place and for the project to achieve all its aims.

As a result the community hub has now started to return to its former glories, providing warm, dry and comfortable meeting facilities for a wide range of local community groups from tap dancing to table tennis.

Clayton Community Garden £1,162 Hyndburn Leisure (Clayton Community Centre)

Visitors to the Clayton Community Centre Café had started to comment about a neglected piece of land directly next door which was overgrown and beginning to be used for fly tipping. Local residents and businesses were also starting to mention the nuisance that was becoming increasingly apparent. To address the situation and to improve the site it was decided to clear the area and create raised beds to be planted with a mixture of fruit trees, herbs, vegetables and flowers.

This was done with the help of a dozen young volunteers who were students with emotional and behavioural difficulties over a five month period. The fantastic work they undertook included constructing the raised beds and filling them with compost and then completing the planting. Wild flowers which are particularly attractive to bees were included. Paths between the beds were also created and this has resulted in a much more aesthetically pleasing area which has received positive comments from both visitors to the centre and from neighbours who are impressed by the improvement. It has also given important life skills to the volunteers and has had the effect of boosting their confidence and self-worth and quite rightly giving them great pride in what they have achieved.



After completing the works, the space has been used for a number of unanticipated purposes with a bereavement group regularly using the site as a quiet space for reflection and plant identification workshops as well. Local pupils from Accrington and Rossendale college have established a design workshop and their initial project is to design a mural to be installed at the site to further enhance its appearance.

The Base II Project Leyland £30,000 Key Unlocking Futures Ltd

Key Unlocking Futures is a charity which helps people and families going through tough times enabling them to build brighter futures by giving them home support, jobs advice, encouraging community involvement and boosting health and wellbeing. This was being done from a small single retail unit which had reached saturation point and was unable to cope with the demand for services.



The grant from LEF was used to equip two adjacent additional units to complement the existing facility. Within these new units is contained a laundry facility to help families with no working washing equipment and those struggling with energy bills. There is also a one stop employability shop helping residents hone IT skills and thus removing barriers to education and employment. The additional space will be used for community fun days for families to improve wellbeing and also contain kitchen facilities to support healthy eating and cookery sessions. Independent support and advice is provided to help

tackle financial exclusion.

If this wasn't enough, there is an external area with seating for residents to relax in and enjoy and a divisible space that can be used as a large room or split depending upon the demand for the sessions being run.

It is amazing to see how much has been achieved with the support from LEF, with many more people in the local community now being able to access these vital support mechanisms and improve their lives and life chances.



Red Rose Peatland Recovery £39,000 Lancashire Wildlife Trust

In the UK, at least 80% of peatland habitats have been lost or damaged. Healthy peat bogs act as 'carbon sinks' storing huge amounts of carbon. However, damaged bogs dry out and release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, accelerating climate change. Recovering this habitat is important for climate and nature.

This project is focused on two peatland sites and aims to address issues arising from historical drainage and heavy grazing including the removal of newly established agricultural grasses and the absence of key bog species. Lancashire Wildlife Trust has worked alongside Natural England, the

Environment Agency and the North-West Rare Plant Initiative to improve site hydrology and the aim is now to revegetate the area with peat forming species such as sphagnum mosses and cotton grass. Indeed over 2 years



an incredible 10,000 sphagnum, 73,000 common cotton grass, 37,000 hare's tail cotton grass and 10,000 cross leaf health plugs will be planted. These will all be planted by hand at times and in areas best suited to each species survival and to minimise disturbance to the site.



Once these plants become established, their return will in due course benefit fauna such as invertebrates - especially the rare large heath butterfly which has been reintroduced to the local area. This is in addition to protecting the peat soil, helping carbon sequestration long term and creating conditions for other bog fauna and flora to spread.

Accessible Nature Trail and Toilets at Claver Hill £15,000 Claver Hill Community Project

Claver Hill supports community resilience and mental wellbeing by encouraging local residents who live in one of the countries more deprived areas to enjoy nature and develop friendships when visiting the site. The existing paths around much of the area tend to become muddy very easily and this causes significant access issues not only for wheelchair users, but also for able bodied visitors. Feedback from the local community has been that this is a major factor in limiting use of the site, particularly for those with additional needs.



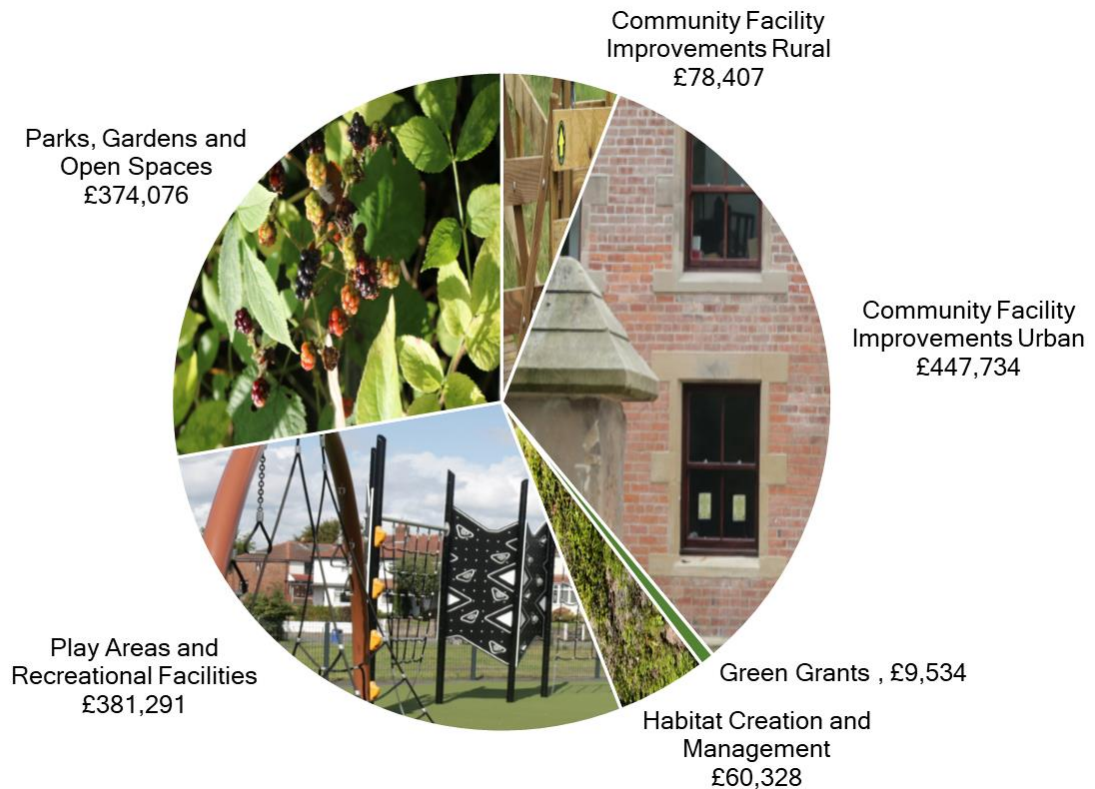
The aim of this project is to create a nature trail which is accessible to all including those with limited mobility, impaired sight and pushchairs. With the help of a grant from LEF, the new path will contain a gravel bed packed down and topped with a lime and crushed stone topping. There will also be a viewing platform which will be paved with reclaimed stones and benches constructed



from reclaimed wood which will also be used for signage. Reclaimed bath tubs are to be used as raised beds to grows plants and herbs.

Accessible toilets have been built and it will not be too long before the local community are enjoying this wonderful new trail.

Funding for projects awarded January 2024 to December 2024



Since 1998 the Fund has received over £33M in Landfill Communities Funds through the Landfill Tax Credits scheme.

Since the launch of the Green Grants in 2015, there have been over 140 successful applications with over £110,000 awarded.

Funding highlights 2024:

- 52 projects supported with £1.351M of grants.
- 25% of the supported projects totalling £301k have been in areas of the county considered to be deprived, and eight of these are in highly deprived areas.
- 21 community buildings projects supported with £526k of grants including eight focussed on energy efficiency measures.
- 12 play areas supported by grants totalling £381k, including three wheeled sports infrastructure projects.
- 8 Green Grants awarded including planting of a sensory garden.

Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Landfill Tax credits	£1,258,513	£1,265,423
Interest Received	£66,724	£24,189
Donation	£0	£0
Total incoming resources	£1,325,237	£1,289,612
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Grants (paid and payable)	£1,620,531	£1,331,210
Grants cancelled - minus this figure	(£137,672)	(£112,159)
Entrust Levy	£43,052	£43,069
Management and Administration	£73,104	£76,912
Total resources expended	£1,599,015	£1,339,032
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	-£273,778	-£49,420
Surplus at 31st December 2023	£944,062	£1,217,840
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023		
Current Assets		
Debtors	£48,456	£21,085
Short Term investments	£0	£0
Cash on deposit at bank	£2,929,127	£3,009,073
	£2,977,583	£3,030,158
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(£2,033,521)	(£1,812,318)
Net current assets (including £150,000 reserve)	£944,062	£1,217,840



Improving Access to Swindells Wood- The Woodland Trust

Photography: With grateful thanks to all project contributors.