



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Date of release: 10 January 2022**

### **Healthy Hedgerows Save Carbon**

The humble hedgerow is having something of a revival after many years of being neglected and removed from our countryside.

At High Whitaker Farm near Padiham over 800 metres of new hedge has just been planted, thanks to support from the Environment Agency and the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership.

Farmers and landowners are being asked to plant more trees, and creating new hedgerows is a great way to do this as the hedge can quickly become a useful aid to farming sheep and cattle by dividing up fields naturally, and also providing shelter from the wind, rain and sun.

Hedges store carbon both in the new woody growth of the shrubs (like hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and holly); and in the soil and living matter underground. This is carbon that would otherwise be lost into the atmosphere: so hedges can help us fight the climate crisis and help us to meet our carbon zero targets.

The new hedgerows at High Whitaker actually replace old hedges that were removed decades ago when the land was used for opencast coal mining. Because of the mining the soils on the farm are thin and when it rains the water seeps and flows downhill to the Calder, adding to the flood risk downstream at Padiham. The new hedges will intercept and slow down the water, and any soil moving with it.

Farmer Bob Atkinson is delighted with the new hedges, and being able to restore features to the landscape that he has farmed for over 50 years. The three new hedges will link up areas of woodland on the farm and create valuable homes for wildlife.

Environment Agency Catchment Coordinator Helen Dix said "The importance of healthy hedgerows cannot be overstated. They help slow the flow of flood water, reduce pollution and prevent soil erosion. They're great for carbon reduction and provide many of our native wildlife species with a place to call home.

"Thanks to this willing landowner and this exciting project, the Padiham area now has more than 800m of these natural corridors which will help solve the crises of climate change and biodiversity loss."

If you would like to learn how to lay a hedge in the traditional way, the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership, with support from the Environment Agency, is holding a free two-day training course on 21 and 22 February at Downham village, followed by the annual Bowland Hedgelaying Competition on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>. Anyone can come along and watch the competition, which will be hosted by the Lancashire and Westmorland Hedgelaying Society, and held beside the village car park and information centre in Downham. If you would like to take part, or join the training course, please contact [pendlehill.lp@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:pendlehill.lp@lancashire.gov.uk) for more details or call Cathy on 07891 537835.

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Images below of two of the new hedges just created at High Whitaker Farm.





## EDITORS NOTES

- The Pendle Hill landscape partnership is led by the Forest of Bowland AONB.
- The partnership aims to:
  - I. restore, enhance and conserve the heritage and landscape of Pendle Hill
  - II. reconnect people with their past and their landscape
  - III. bring the two sides of the hill together
  - IV. create a sustainable future for the environment, heritage and for visitors' experience of Pendle Hill
- The scheme was awarded a National Lottery grant of £1.8million by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in January 2018. These funds will be delivered from 2018-2022 and will be matched with a further £1m raised locally.
- The scheme is made up of a dozen projects which safeguard the area's wildlife and heritage and improve people's access to this popular countryside area. We will do this by providing opportunities for training and volunteering; by supporting research and devising creative and digital interpretation to inspire a new generation about our heritage; by restoring important landscape features, and by working with communities to re-tell the stories of radical Pendle people. The scheme will increase

pride in this special place and raise aspirations amongst communities, and it will bring in new investment to support the environment and the economy.

- The Pendle Hill landscape partnership is supported by National Lottery players through the Heritage Fund and by the Forest of Bowland AONB. Partners include representatives of parish councils, the landowning and farming community, Pendle and Ribble Valley Borough Councils, Lancashire County Council, statutory bodies, tourism businesses and volunteers.
- Projects will be delivered by the AONB team, plus local delivery partners including In-Situ Arts, the Dry Stone Walling Association, Mid Pennine Arts and Ribble Rivers Trust.
- The Pendle Hill LP covers 120 square kilometres, stretching from Gisburn down to Whalley, and from Clitheroe across to Nelson and Padiham.
- The Hill is well known as a beauty spot and is heavily visited by residents of the local towns: it is a perfect place for walking and cycling. The area's heritage is dominated by the story of the Pendle Witches, but there are lots more stories to tell including the founding of the Quaker movement, non-conformists and radicals, Roman and Bronze Age settlers, medieval farming systems and early industrial developments. The network of dry stone walls and hedgerows give the area a distinctive feel, and the landscape is also important for its wild moorland, rare birds and woodlands.
- For further information contact the LP Scheme Manager [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk) on 07891 537835 / 01200 420420
- Visit the project website at [www.pendlehillproject.com](http://www.pendlehillproject.com) or visit our Facebook page 'Pendle Hill Project' for up to date news and views.

### **About the Heritage Fund**

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk) Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #HLFsupported



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