



Cumbria
Wildlife Trust



**Lancashire
Manchester &
N Merseyside**



The Marine & Coastal Heritage Programme

(SF-12-06833) 2014 – 2017

EVALUATION REPORT



LOTTERY FUNDED

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Introduction

Background

The Irish Sea is home to a vast array of marine life from giant whales and basking sharks, to delicate brittlestars, sea pens, and microscopic plankton. However, the Irish Sea is also a very busy sea, under increasing pressure from development, overfishing, pollution and climate change. There is a need to ensure we save a space for our marine life, and having the appropriate coastal and marine conservation specialists are vital if we are to do so.

At a time when knowledge and experience of UK marine and coastal species and habitats is critically needed, there was a growing skills shortage and a lack of 'work ready' individuals for the UK environmental sector (LANTRA 2010). Research conducted by the National Environment Research Council identified that the top 15 'critical skills gaps' included:

- ❖ Fieldwork skill including surveying, sampling and identification skills.
- ❖ Translating research for policy makers, businesses and society.
- ❖ Multi-disciplinary communication.

For the marine conservation sector, this was further compounded by the fact that there were very few experts and organisations working in marine conservation, particularly in the North West of England, who could support individuals to develop these skills. However, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and The Wildlife Trusts for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside were two such organisations who were currently active in marine and coastal conservation.

Both Cumbria Wildlife Trust and The Wildlife Trusts for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside work towards delivering the Royal Society of Wildlife Trust's 'Living Seas' vision where:

“Marine life thrives from the depths of the oceans to the coastal shallows”

Together the Trusts wanted to contribute to lessening the skills gap and felt confident to do this after the success of the Heritage Lottery Fund funded Marine Graduate Training Programme (2011-2014); a programme that offered training positions to 12 marine/environmental graduates under the previous Skills for the Future Programme, all of whom have gone onto work in the sector.

▼ Rich diversity of life in our seas. Photo: Paul Naylor



In 2014, the Trusts applied for and were delighted to be granted £368,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver a 'Marine and Coastal Heritage Programme' and offer a unique training opportunity to 16 individuals.

The Trusts wanted to develop and evolve the training programme and were keen to offer traineeships to individuals from varying backgrounds. The proposal was to continue to offer placements to graduates and also to expand the programme to offer places to young people who may not have had the opportunity to go through higher education. It was predicted that by recruiting non-graduates, more applications would be received from young people in and around Cumbria; which would mean that after the traineeship, some of the knowledge and experience gained on the programme may be retained by local employers.

The training placements were carefully designed to provide formal training as well as 'on-the-job' experience in the areas identified in the skills gap report. In addition, the programme was planned so that the trainees had the opportunity to undertake community engagement events and activities; with the aim of inspiring and enthusing people about our wonderful marine heritage.

The Trusts were able to work closely with partner organisations that also have marine and coastal conservation responsibilities, such as North Western Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (NWIFCA), Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB), Natural England and the National Trust to deliver the programme.

Programme aims

The programme was aimed at:

- ❖ Bringing young people together from different backgrounds, which included graduates and non-graduates.
- ❖ Providing formal training and work experience in marine and coastal heritage skills such as:
 - Species identification and ecological surveying.
 - Practical conservation and habitat management of marine and coastal areas.
 - Interpreting the ecology of marine and coastal habitats for communication with a variety of stakeholders.
- ❖ Delivering activities that enable the general public to learn about the 'Living Seas' and experience their local marine and coastal environments.

The programmes' measures of success as agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund were:

- ❖ To offer 16 training positions in marine identification, ecological surveys, practical conservation and community engagement and outreach to the following target groups:
 - Twelve 9-month placements for graduate trainees
 - Four 12-month placements for trainees from local communities who did not hold a degree qualification (later termed 'non-graduate').
- ❖ To positively target young people through the recruitment strategy.
- ❖ To retain 14 out of 16 trainees for the duration of their contract.
- ❖ For 14 out of 16 trainees to achieve at least 70% of their learning outcomes as outlined in their Training Plan.
- ❖ For the trainees to complete 100% of the personal projects agreed by both Trusts and associated partnership.
- ❖ To evaluate the use of trainees as means of diversifying skilled specialists working in the heritage sector.

This programme has been hugely successful for graduate trainees. All of the graduate trainees have secured paid roles in marine conservation within six months of completing their placement. Without this notable opportunity, providing valuable skills and experience, they may not have been to do so.

For non-graduates this programme did not provide the same result; issues with recruitment and retention meant that none of the non-graduate trainees completed the programme. Whilst this was not the result expected, it has provided a valuable opportunity to consider the needs of non-graduate trainees within the marine conservation sector and make recommendations for future training programmes.

Evaluation methods

The Marine and Coastal Heritage Programme has been evaluated using a number of quantitative and qualitative methods that have been compiled into this report.

"The Marine and Coastal Heritage Programme has been a rewarding project to be part of. Cumbria Wildlife Trust has been delighted to share with and show these enthusiastic young people how wonderful and important the conservation sector is. With a background in marine biology myself, I have kept an interested eye on their development and the fascinating new techniques they have been learning. It's fulfilling for all at the Trust to see them grow in confidence and get the amazing jobs that they do, it gives us a great sense of achievement. The programme has also shown me how having young people working in the Trust, energises us all and made us more determined to continue to develop the next generation of conservationists."

Peter Bullard
Director, Cumbria Wildlife Trust

▼ South Walney Nature Reserve



The programme's objectives and results

Objective	Result
<p>To offer 16 training positions in marine identification, ecological surveys, practical conservation and community engagement and outreach to the following target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Twelve 9-month placements for graduate trainees. ❖ Four 12-month placements for trainees from west coast/coastal communities who did not hold a degree qualification (later termed 'non-graduate'). 	<p>Fourteen training positions offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Twelve 9-month placements were taken up by graduate trainees. ❖ Two placements were taken up by trainees who did not hold a degree qualification. One 12-month placements for a trainee from west coast/coastal communities and one nine-month non-graduate trainee placement.
<p>To positively target young people through the recruitment strategy.</p>	<p>Of the placements offered, 10 of the 14 were to trainees under the age of 25. Four were between the ages of 25 and 35.</p>
<p>To retain 14 out of 16 trainees for the duration of their contract.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 11 out of the 14 trainees completed their training contracts. ❖ 11 out of the 12 graduates were retained for the duration of their contract. ❖ Neither of the 2 non-graduates were retained for the duration of their contract.
<p>For 14 out of 16 trainees to achieve at least 70% of their learning outcomes as outlined in their Training Plan.</p>	<p>At least 70% of the learning outcomes as outlined in their Training Plan was achieved by 13 out of the 14 trainees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Twelve graduates reached 100%. ❖ One non-graduate reached 70%. ❖ One non-graduate reached 50%.
<p>The trainees to complete 100% of the personal projects agreed by both Trusts and associated partnership.</p>	<p>All of the trainees who completed the training placement completed their personal project to a high standard.</p>
<p>To evaluate the use of trainees as means of diversifying skilled specialists working in the heritage sector.</p>	<p>Twelve graduate trainees were employed in the marine conservation sector within six months of finishing their placement.</p>

The programme's highlights

The trainees: who they are and how they were selected

Our aim was for our highly motivated trainees to deliver activities that enabled the general public to learn about our 'Living Seas' and experience their local marine and coastal environment:

- ❖ 14 trainees were offered placements.
- ❖ 446 applicants applied for a placement on the programme.
- ❖ 34 members of staff were involved with the recruitment of the trainees.



The development: the skills, knowledge and experience they gained

Our aim was to deliver training which would enhance the trainees employment prospects:

- ❖ 130 training courses were attended.
- ❖ 747 hours of taught training were completed.
- ❖ 27 species identification courses were attended.
- ❖ 70 one-to-ones were completed.
- ❖ 30 different training providers delivered training.
- ❖ 15 partner organisations supported the programme by providing 'on-the-job' training opportunities and/or advice.
- ❖ 13 trainees completed over 75% of the training plan.
- ❖ 12 trainees completed 100% of the training plan.
- ❖ Trainees on average increased their marine identification skills by 40% (tested at the beginning and end of their placement).
- ❖ 60 staff and volunteers gave their time to the programme.
- ❖ 12 personal projects were completed.
- ❖ 97 marine and coastal surveys were completed.
- ❖ 12 trainees are committed to careers in marine conservation.
- ❖ 12 trainees secured roles in marine conservation within 6 months of leaving their placement.
- ❖ 4 trainees are employed in the local area.



The impact: on the natural heritage

Our aim was for our highly motivated trainees to deliver activities that enabled the general public to learn about our 'Living Seas' and experience their local marine and coastal environment:

- ❖ There were over 20,000 attendees at the trainees' events.
- ❖ The trainees delivered 331 events which included:
 - 30 education sessions to the public.
 - 21 education sessions to local schools.
 - 13 education sessions to local colleges.
 - 14 beach cleans.
 - 25 presentations/talks.
- ❖ 4 TV interviews/appearances.
- ❖ 145 media articles written about the trainees/marine environment.



The trainees – who they are and how they were selected

The programme aimed to offer 16 placements to trainees. Who they are, and what they personally wanted to achieve, was extremely important to the end result of the programme; producing 'work ready' individuals for the UK marine conservation sector. Therefore, the recruitment and selection processes adopted over the three years were incredibly important.

Recruiting graduates proved to be hugely successful and the full quota of graduate placements (12) were offered. However, only 50% (two out of four available) placements for non-graduates applicants were offered.

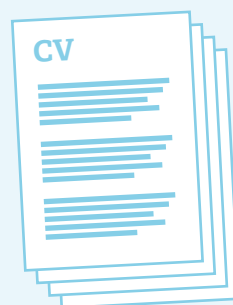
How we advertised for our trainees

The recruitment timetable for the two groups (graduates and non-graduates) was intentionally staggered. The aspiration was to recruit a cohort of graduates, commence their induction and then to recruit and start the non-graduates. In this way, the graduates would have enough knowledge of the programme and with their initial training that they would be able to support/mentor the non-graduates when they started. For the graduates, adverts were placed nationally on environmental job websites and also sent to universities that offer marine related degrees. This approach produced over 200 applications in the first round and a high number of applications for the graduate placements continued over the following two intakes. This was a good indicator that there was a need for such programmes. The quality of the applicants was also high, with only a small number (less than 10%) of applications that did not meet the minimum criteria required.

After the first round of recruitment for graduate trainees, the focus went to recruiting two non-graduate trainees. Adverts were placed locally, targeting schools and universities. Career fairs were also attended by the Programme Manager. Despite this carefully targeted approach, only 10 applications were received. Disappointingly, half of these applications did not meet the minimum criteria needed for the placement. However, there were enough applications to continue with the selection process and three candidates progressed to the selection stage, and one was ultimately offered a placement on the first round.

In an attempt to increase non-graduates applications, it was decided to run the next round of recruitment concurrently with the graduate recruitment. The recruitment was also broadened to a national campaign, opening up to a larger pool of candidates. This approach did increase the number of applications to 22. Although this was still significantly lower than the number of graduate applications received. Encouragingly, 14 of the 22 applicants met the minimum criteria required and this gave us, what we felt, to be a reasonable number of applicants to select from.

QUICK FACTS



446
APPLICATIONS
WERE RECEIVED OVER THE
THREE YEAR PROGRAMME



53
candidates
attended
one of three
selection days



34
members of staff were part of
the recruitment process –
as assessors or interviewers

How we selected our trainees

Once applications had been reviewed against the required criteria on the person specification and a shortlist was created, two thorough selection stages were followed:

Stage 1 – Shortlisted candidates were invited to attend a selection day. The selection day, had two purposes:

- ❖ To select candidates to go through to the next stage of the process.
- ❖ To provide information to the candidates so they knew what to expect if they were offered a training placement.

The selection day consisted of a series of group activities to test competencies such as teamwork, communication and organisational skills. The activities were designed very carefully to replicate the type of work the trainees would complete on the programme; survey work and public engagement. In addition, the trainees had a short interview and also spent time with the previous year's trainees so they could ask questions about the programme. Assessors observed and scored candidates throughout the activities and interviews. Assessors were available during breaks and lunch to talk about the programme and their experiences of working for a Wildlife Trust.

The assessors, agreed who to invite back to the next stage of the selection process based on who met the required criteria best. All candidates who were not successful were offered verbal feedback about their performance during the selection day.

▼ Candidates completing a group survey activity on one of the selection days



"I have had the pleasure of being an assessor on the selection days for the programme over the 3 years. What is great about the selection days is that they provide lots of information to the candidates about the programme so they are really sure when they join us that it's the right placement for them. It is a really good objective method of assessing the candidates. Of particular interest to me are the team exercises – seeing how candidates interact as part of a group is an invaluable assessment tool as so much of their work on the programme is working with their fellow trainees and other people. It's also fascinating to be involved with the rest of the project and in particular, to see how far the trainees come from their assessment day to when they finish the programme."

Pete Jones

(Reserves, Officer Cumbria Wildlife Trust)
Selection day assessor

Stage 2 – Successful candidates from the selection day were invited to a final stage. This involved an interview, presentation and species identification test.

When graduates were invited to attend the final stage, nearly all accepted the invitation. However, when non-graduates were invited to return for the final stage 50% declined. Their feedback was that the selection day had made them realise this placement was not where they wanted to focus their career. We were pleased that we had provided them with enough information for them to be able to make this extremely important decision.

After the results of the interview, the presentation and the identification test were reviewed, candidates who matched the criteria most were offered placements. The overall result was that the full quota of placements available to graduates was offered, but only two of the four placements available to non-graduates were offered.

“The variety of training given to the marine trainees is excellent and I am pleased to see that all participants clearly recognise this and grab the opportunity with grateful hands – a sure sign that the Trusts have targeted the appropriate students. The programme bodes well for our future marine science workers.”

Steve Benn
Senior Reserve Manager, Natural England

“The level of skill, ability and dedication of the trainees was outstanding, testament to the advertising and recruitment process of the Trusts filling the places with the right people.”

Dave Blackledge
Warden, RSPB

Why the recruitment and selection process was so successful for graduates

We believe the recruitment process for graduates was successful because:

- ❖ There is a need for this type of trainee scheme, demonstrated by the skills gap in the sector.
- ❖ The advertisement reached the right audience shown by the consistently high number of applications.
- ❖ The selection methods used ensured the right candidates were offered placements.
- ❖ The right level of information was provided to allow candidates to consider if the training placement was right for them.
- ❖ The traineeship is a unique opportunity to gain paid work experience, whereas many similar placements are offered on voluntary basis.

Why the recruitment and selection process was not successful – non graduates

We believed we were offering a unique opportunity for non-graduates to work in the conservation sector. We were surprised when the application rate was low and we were unable to fill all four placements. As such, we commissioned some research into why we were unsuccessful in offering young people without a degree, a placement. On our behalf, Wingspan Consulting held focus groups with young people in Cumbria (full report can be obtained by emailing admin@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk).

Surprisingly, the focus groups held with young people from local schools and colleges found that the participants:

- ❖ Knew relatively little about what working in conservation would entail.
- ❖ Knew even less about marine and coastal conservation.
- ❖ Didn't think they had enough of an 'appreciation' of current environmental/marine conservation issues (which was a requirement of the placement).
- ❖ Felt that focusing explicitly on marine and coastal conservation could be one of the reasons for the low number of applications.

This lack of knowledge seemed to be confirmed by one of the non-graduate trainees who started a training placement. In a questionnaire, when asked why she applied for the training placement role, she stated:

“I wanted to see what the conservation field was like to work in and see if that was the direction I wanted to go in.”

After completing half the placement, unfortunately this trainee decided conservation wasn't the direction that she wanted to go in and she left the programme early.

When graduates were asked the same question about why they applied for the training placement their responses were significantly different. Their responses were focused around wanting to secure work experience in the marine and coastal conservation sector, which would complement their knowledge gained at university. Essentially, their career path in marine and coastal conservation was set before joining the programme.

The results of the non-graduate focus groups also suggested that:

- ❖ There were some minor wording changes that could be made to the person specification, which may increase the number of applications.
- ❖ The length of the placements were about right.
- ❖ The bursary was attractive and the hours of work appropriate.
- ❖ The programme would mostly be attractive to local non-graduates and advertising should be targeted there.
- ❖ The requirement of being able to drive may restrict the number of applications (although they did agree with why an applicant would need to drive).

However, it could be argued that any changes made to the person specification would not significantly increase the number of applications. The purpose of this programme was to fill a skills gap in the marine and coastal conservation sector, and if young people don't know or understand what these roles entail, it would seem unlikely that any amendments to the person specification would change this. Therefore, a clear legacy from this programme should be to promote and raise awareness, within this demographic group, of the career options and paths available and why they are so important to our natural heritage. With this awareness, it would be hoped that we can increase the interest of the younger generation.

The trainees that joined the programme

Our aim was to bring young people together from different backgrounds, which included graduates and non-graduates. Although it was disappointing not to have succeeded in recruiting all 16 trainees, we were very delighted to offer 14 positions to enthusiastic and passionate trainees from varying backgrounds:

Qualifications:

- ❖ 12 trainees were graduates with marine related degrees – 6 of which also held Masters qualifications.
- ❖ 2 trainees were non-graduates.

Age:

- ❖ 10 trainees were under the age of 25.
- ❖ 4 trainees were aged 25 to 35.

Gender:

- ❖ 12 trainees were female.
- ❖ 2 trainees were male.

Location:

- ❖ 5 trainees were from the North West of England ('local').
- ❖ 2 trainees were from Midlands.
- ❖ 3 trainees were from the South West of England.
- ❖ 2 trainees were from Scotland.
- ❖ 2 trainees were from Wales.

▼ Second intake of graduate trainees with Programme Manager (middle) – 2015



The development of the trainees – the skills, knowledge and experience they gained

The programme aimed to offer training placements that enhance an individual's employability by offering training and work experience in marine identification, ecological surveys, practical conservation and community engagement.

It was important that each trainee had an individual training plan so their personal training needs and career aspirations could be met. Adopting this tailored approach was hugely successful and meant that all 12 graduates completed 100% of their personal training plan and also completed an extensive personal project. Both of the non-graduates completed over 50% of their training plan but neither completed a personal project due to them both leaving the programme early. This section of the report will review how the placements were structured, supported and will describe the training activities completed.

Placement structure

Having learnt from the Marine Graduate Training Scheme which finished in 2014, we believed the optimum length of this type of training placement was nine months, and this proved to be the case, with 11 of the 12 graduate trainees completing the placement. The one early leaver did so to secure a role in marine conservation; a positive result for the individual.

Both non-graduate trainees decided that their immediate careers did not lie in marine conservation and left half way through the placement. One trainee left to go to university to study physiotherapy, a career path she had been thinking about for a number of years. The other trainee felt conservation was not the right career path for her and returned to work in retail. It is therefore unknown whether nine months would have been the right amount of time for non-graduate trainees.

Graduate trainees spent 50% of their placement based at Cumbria Wildlife Trusts main offices in Kendal. This allowed the trainees to experience working in a busy office environment. The other 50% of their placement was spent living and working at South Walney Nature Reserve, a remote but amazing location where the trainees experience conservation in action. This split in location proved to be highly successful and trainees enjoyed and appreciated the different aspects of each location.

Placement support

In scoping out the requirements of the programme, a full time Programme Manager was allocated to the project. The Programme Manager, as well as arranging and delivering training, was able to spend a significant amount of time observing the trainees, giving them feedback to reinforce their learning, and holding regular one-to-one meetings with them. It is felt that this dedicated support contributed to the success of the programme.

Placement content

Before the trainees joined the programme, they were asked to complete a skills audit, which asked how much experience they felt they had in a wide range of activities (26 in total) such as written communication, social media, field identification and event organising. They were also asked to provide examples of the type of jobs they would like to apply for after their time on the programme. This knowledge allowed the Programme Manager to tailor the trainees' placements.

When the trainees joined they were met with an extensive induction programme which comprised of coastal visits around Cumbria and Lancashire, meeting partner organisations and key project staff, as well as ensuring plenty of time for team activities so the trainees could get to know one another quickly. This included a four day field trip to Ulster Wildlife to support them with a maritime festival and an exchange of ideas between the two Skills for the Future projects.

Taught training

The taught training comprised of two areas, technical and soft or transferable skills. Technical skills training included subjects such as GIS (digital mapping software), Shoresearch (rocky shore citizen science survey methodology), various species identification training, outdoor first aid and also health and safety modules. This taught training provided the trainees with skills and knowledge needed to work in the sector. Feedback from the trainees included:

- ❖ Excel training – *"I can back my experience in Excel with the training and I can now do more things with Excel which could come in handy during employment."*
- ❖ GIS training – *"It was a very good introduction. There is a load more about QGIS that I want to learn but I feel like I was given a good grounding and information on how to progress my skills myself."*
- ❖ Invasive, non-native species training – *"I have definitely learned a lot more about the types of invasive species that are present in the UK. I will now be a lot more confident in being able to identify different invasive species. Everything I learned can also be reinforced through practical use on the shore, coupled with studying the handout and ID book given to take home."*
- ❖ Honeycomb worm reef survey training from NWIFCA – *"I look forward to doing more surveys with NWIFCA and potentially doing my own personal project with NWIFCA. This training has also given me the confidence to continue to carry out ecological surveys during my traineeship."*



▲ Trainees undertaking a mussel survey with the NWIFCA

Soft/transferable skills training included subjects such as volunteer management, project management, media training, team working, and how to successfully apply for jobs. Feedback from the trainees has included:

❖ **Volunteer management**

"The knowledge could come in handy to use in a community engagement based role and working for a charity."

❖ **Presentation skills workshop**

"Despite previous presentation skills training and experience giving presentations I still learnt new things and now feel confident going forward. Whilst the task was hard, I enjoyed doing it and the feedback received was useful."

❖ **Train the trainer workshop**

"Interesting content, I really enjoyed looking into how different people learn. I will definitely use this information when planning any sessions in the future."

❖ **'Get that Job!' workshop**

"Extremely useful session, I came away with some fantastic ideas. Morning session was extremely useful, good to have the chance to gain experience undertaking an interview."

There was also the option for all trainees to complete units from the Assessment Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Unit Award Scheme, which offers accredited recognition for achievement. This award scheme was hoped to be taken up predominately by the non-graduate trainees to provide them with a nationally recognised award to complement the work experience gained. Due to the non-graduate trainees leaving early, neither completed any AQA units. Most of the graduate trainees did not feel it necessary to complete AQA units due to their already excellent academic record and the extensive taught and on-the-job training that they received on the programme.

'On-the-job' training

Following the 'taught' training sessions, the trainees were encouraged to put their newly gained skills and knowledge to use. Often, there was the opportunity to support or shadow a member of staff to deliver either an event or conduct a survey. Once they felt confident, they were expected to organise and deliver their own events or surveys. The type of survey and or event usually increased in size and complexity as their traineeship continued and their confidence grew. The trainees also conducted many surveys which followed an established survey methodology and many of the trainees went on to establish new methodologies to collect marine and coastal data, such as using a drone to survey a grey seal population.

For every piece of 'on-the-job' training the trainees did, they were required to complete a 'Personal Development Review' (PDR) form, which created a substantial portfolio. The discipline of completing these forms, meant both the trainee and the Programme Manager could see their progress and what they have learnt. In addition, through reviewing these PDR forms, the placement could continue to be tailored to meet the trainees' individual needs.

The type of educational and/or public engagement activities the trainees completed included delivering marine sessions to primary schools, delivering 'beach schools', writing articles for newspapers, posting information on social media, interviews with the press, running events on the coast, such as rockpool rambles, sea watches and guided walks, delivering presentations and organising large scale event such as 'Beached Art', Cumbria Wildlife Trust's marine themed summer event. A wading bird festival, 'Walney Wader Festival', organised by a trainee clearly demonstrated how the skills, knowledge and confidence levels of trainees increased dramatically over their time on the programme. The trainee, who delivered this



▲ *Beached Art festival at St Bees*

two day multi-activity festival, had not, before joining the programme, had any experience of event organisation. The event was attended by over 200 people who learnt about, and enjoyed the wading birds that visited South Walney Nature Reserve on a cold but beautiful November weekend. The feedback received was fantastic and this newly created event will continue to be run by Cumbria Wildlife Trust.

Personal projects

Each trainee was required to deliver a personal project. This had to be a significant piece of work that involved using essential skills learnt, such as project and time management, leadership, working with partner organisations and report writing skills. Most trainees chose to complete a research project, with the support of partner organisations, often using identification and methodology skills learnt earlier in the placement. One trainee's personal project was to create an exhibition from marine litter collected on the beaches of Cumbria. This demonstrated and enhanced her campaign management and public engagement experience.

Result of the training

At the end of their placement, the trainees complete the same skills audit they completed at the start of their placement, the same identification test they did as part of the recruitment process and were asked to rate their confidence levels of securing a role in the conservation sector.

All trainees increased their scores on the skills audit significantly, including the non-graduate trainees. The identification test boosted the trainee's knowledge by an average of 40%; one trainee increased their scores by 66%. Confidence levels about securing work in the marine conservation sector also increased, with 11 of the 12 graduates going from 'no confidence at all' or 'not very confident' to all 12 feeling 'quite' or 'very confident' after completing the placement.

The ultimate test of whether the training and the work experience is effective is whether the trainees secure a role in UK marine conservation shortly after completing their placement.

Overall, 11 of the 12 graduate trainees secured a role in the UK marine conservation sector (one took a marine conservation role in Madagascar but is looking to return to UK marine conservation). The two non-graduates have not, however, one is committed to continuing to work in conservation in a voluntary capacity and it is hoped that Cumbria Wildlife Trust will see her on the coast soon.

Here's where they are in 2017...

The Marine & Coastal Heritage Programme – the results



**Amy Pennington
Nee Bradshaw**

Fylde Sand Dunes Officer

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside



Helen Hiley

**Assistant Marine
Community Engagement
Officer**

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside



Nick Walters

Enforcement Officer

North Western Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority



Vicky Foster

Fisheries Biologist

British Antarctic Survey Team

**Previous role:
Habitat Regulation
Assessment Officer**

Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority



Catherine Oliver

**Education &
Interpretation Officer**

North Devon Coast AONB



Christina Pullan

Marine Science Officer

Reef Doctor, Madagascar

The Marine & Coastal Heritage Programme – the results



Kathryn Borrowdale

Marine Monitoring Officer

Natural Resources Wales



Sally Tapp

Marine Community Engagement Officer

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside



Amy Hopley

Dolphin Watch Public Engagement Officer

RSPB, Scotland



Hayden Hurst

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer

Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority



Georgie Blow

Coastal Survey Officer

Somerset Wildlife Trust



Jade Chenery

Education and Community Officer

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

The impact – on the trainees, the natural heritage and the public

Over the course of three years this programme has made a difference in many ways. It has accelerated the career paths of 12 graduates and helped to lessen the skills gap in the conservation sector. Scientific data has been collected, which will help Non-Governmental Organisations and decision makers to protect our seas. The programme has also been responsible for over 20,000 attendees at events learning about, enjoying and visiting our wonderful coastline.

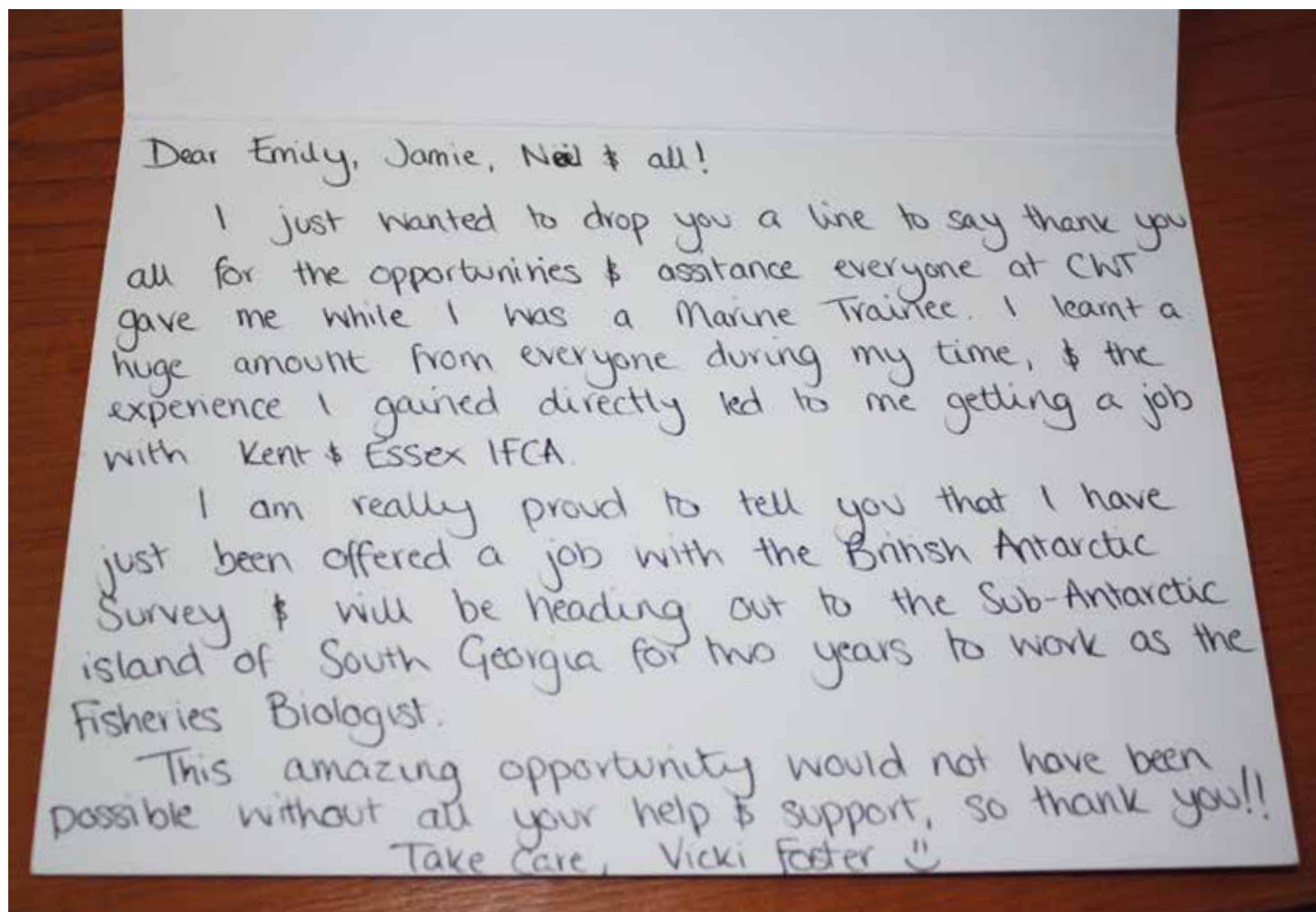
The impact on the trainees – graduate trainees

The programme has contributed to lessening the skills gap in UK marine conservation and produced 'work ready' individuals who are committed to a career in the sector. This is shown by the fact that within six months of completing the programme, all graduate trainees had secured paid employment in the marine conservation sector, 11 in the UK and nearly all the trainees are working in roles that are close to their original career aspirations.

Feedback from trainees shows that for many of them it has been life changing experience:

Vicki Foster, ex trainee (June 2014 – January 2015)

▼ Card from Vicki Foster thanking the Trust and giving an update on her new job



Kathryn Borrowdale, ex trainee (May 2015 – February 2016)

"There is absolutely no way at all that I would've got the job without the traineeship, so a massive thank you to all involved. The photo is from a walk I did yesterday from Llangennith to Rhossili and Worms Head on the Gower along the coastal path – an absolutely beautiful place"

Email from Kathryn Borrowdale to Programme Manager – October 2016

"I am a Marine Monitoring Officer at Natural Resources Wales, this basically means I carry out the monitoring work and write the reports required for Wales to adhere to the Water Framework Directive. So I will be doing saltmarsh, fish, macro algae, sea grass, invertebrate etc. surveys and then doing subsequent data analysis and report writing."

Hayden Hurst, ex trainee (May 2016 – Jan 2017)

"My goal from the outset of the traineeship was to work for an IFCA, whose role it is to manage the marine environment and its fisheries resources in a sustainable manner. The traineeship has helped me achieve these goals, as I have just secured a job as an Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer with Kent and Essex IFCA. Without the diverse experiences and extensive skillset I have developed during my traineeship, I wouldn't have been able to secure this position, so for this I am extremely grateful. I feel hugely privileged to have worked with passionate individuals from a diverse range of organisations, who are ultimately working towards a common goal of increased sustainability for our seas and the wildlife that inhabits them."

Hayden Hurst's blog on Cumbria Wildlife Trust website – January 2017

The impact on the trainees – non-graduate trainees

Even though the two non-graduates did not complete their training placements, both agreed that everything they did on the programme was useful and that their career options had been broadened as a result. **Louise Gurney** (trainee in 2015) said "A lot of the training I undertook is transferable so can help me in other jobs" and the one new skill that stands out for her was "Time/stress management training because I found it really useful and it is transferable into any job".

Rebecca Gledhill (trainee in 2016), also stated that "I have loved my time working with the Wildlife Trust and would love to take any opportunity of future employment within the conservation sector" and "I am leaving the placement to go to university to study physiotherapy but will be continuing to volunteer with the Trust."



▲ Rebecca Gledhill (left)

The impact on our natural heritage

The trainees received extensive training in species identification, ecological surveying and habitat conservation. As a result of this training, they were able to collect valuable data that will be used by experts and decision makers in the marine conservation sector. Some of the surveys the trainees completed were to collect much needed data on mussels, cockles, honeycomb worm reef, seabirds, seals and the rocky shore. The personal project completed by Hayden Hurst, on invasive non-native species in North West marinas, was completed with advice and support from the Marine Biological Association and Natural England. The final report has also been displayed by NWIFCA on their website for other stakeholders to see the results. In addition, over the three years the trainees have enjoyed working closely with the RSPB to complete surveying terns and wildfowl on a fortnightly basis.

Trainees also completed pilot studies with new methodology, such as using a drone to survey the grey seal population on one of Cumbria Wildlife Trust's reserves. They also completed a new study to assess the disturbance of commercial fisheries in Morecambe Bay on wading birds. Without the trainees the amount of data collected in the North West, over these three years would have been considerably less. Not only is the data important for decision makers today, but the results of the surveys will continue to be significant for years to come by being compared to historical data and future data collection. Having this data will help to show changes to our precious species and habitats.

Mandy Knott, Senior Scientist, NWIFCA in reference to Hayden Hurst's personal project:

"The NWIFCA has produced its own Biosecurity Plan and supports working together with other agencies to raise awareness of the risks associated with marine INNS, some of which could have drastic effects on the NWIFCA District fisheries if they were to be introduced."

"The Wildlife Trusts' Marine and Coastal Heritage Programme has proved to be unique and valuable through the contribution the trainees' work has made to overall knowledge and understanding of the North West coastal and marine environments."

As well as providing data, this programme has also left a legacy and added benefits to others people who have been involved with the programme:

- ❖ Apprentices (who's original remit was land based conservation) from Yorkshire Millennium Trust, have been able to get involved in marine education and conservation activities. This has resulted in one apprentice continuing her studies at degree level in both terrestrial and marine ecology. In addition, the two current apprentices will continue to undertake some of the survey work initiated by the trainees for Cumbria Wildlife Trust and some partner organisations. They will also continue to deliver some of the marine and coastal public engagement events such as Beached Art and the newly created Walney Wader Festival.
- ❖ The Senior Education and Volunteering Officer at Cumbria Wildlife Trust has increased his knowledge of marine species and habitats and now delivers detailed marine themed workshops to local schools and colleges.
- ❖ The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and Merseyside came to appreciate the gap in their own portfolio of conservation work and as a direct result of this programme established and raised funds for a three year marine awareness project called 'Our Irish Sea'. This project aims to help local communities to explore their coastline by getting them out on the shore to investigate the huge diversity of marine life that can be found along the North West coast of England. Two of the trainees from this programme are now project officers on this stimulating project and another ex-trainee also works in a coastal role for the Trust.
- ❖ Kendal College and the University of Cumbria remain supportive of the work of Cumbria Wildlife Trust and are interested in continuing some survey work with the Trust.
- ❖ As a result of the trainees work with Kendal College, four students have been inspired to learn more about the sector; two have applied to study ecology and two have applied to study marine biology at university.
- ❖ Staff from the Trusts and partner organisations who have supported the programme, have told us they have learnt more about the Irish Sea and the Marine Conservation Zone designation process, and its importance. They have applied skills they have learnt, such as recruitment selection methods, to other areas of their work and most importantly they are keen to get involved in other training and development initiatives in the future.

"The programme has helped greatly with the management and running of our RSPB Hodbarrow reserve, allowing us to carry out skilled tasks which would have been impossible using general volunteers or existing staff. The trainees undertook a large part of the organisation and monitoring of the tern colony, allowing invaluable data collection on the dynamics of the colony and trialling scaring techniques of large gulls to improve the productivity of the terns. Other projects such as mapping and removal of sea buckthorn has helped maintain the SSSI favourable condition status of the site and reduced the possibility of spread onto neighbouring dune systems. This skilled input has not only contributed to the achievement of habitat and species targets for the reserve but has helped inform best practice and the work programme for future years."

Dave Blackledge
Warden, RSPB

This skilled input has not only contributed to the achievement of habitat and species targets for the reserve but has helped inform best practice and the work programme for future years

QUICK FACTS



PERSONAL PROJECTS COMPLETED

involving surveying marine and coastal habitats and/or species along the North West coast



surveys completed by the trainees



Extract from an evaluation form completed by Sarah Neill, Lecturer, Kendal College

What benefit has the Marine & Coastal Heritage Programme had on your organisation?

The programme has had a huge benefit on my organisation. My students are studying BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Animal Management and study modules such as Ecology, conservation and managing wildlife populations. It has been fantastic having members of the programme delivering classroom sessions regarding the relevant topics and has been really enriching for the students. The fact they have been well trained in survey techniques and been able to apply what they have learned in the field through Shoresearch and seal surveys has had tremendous benefit of meeting the required BTEC criteria in an exciting way. In fact two of my students had no idea what they wanted to pursue on leaving college and upon completing the module involving the programme they have applied to study Ecology at university, another two students have applied to study Marine Biology.

Would you recommend a training programme such as the Marine & Coastal Heritage Programme?

YES!!!

► Kendal College students completing a seal survey at South Walney Nature Reserve

Please use this space to provide any other feedback that you would like to provide to us about the programme:

The marine graduate trainees have delivered training sessions to Kendal College students for the last two years. Each person who has delivered sessions to our students has been enthusiastic and worked hard to ensure the students really gained a lot from their sessions. The scheme has been a real credit to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust and has helped many of my students achieve the criteria for their assignments in a creative and exciting way, therefore enthusing the students about the topics studied. The marine trainees who have visited us proved to be a real inspiration to my students and we are very grateful for the time and effort they have put into planning and carrying out sessions for us. Now the scheme is ending, it will be greatly missed by Kendal College.



The impact on the public

The marine environment presents many obstacles for public engagement; whilst people may have a strong affinity to the coast, many people find it difficult to visualise the wonders below the waves. Research by Natural England in 2009, found that 44% of people regarded the sea as generally or mostly barren in 'their' UK region. At a time when our seas need protecting and restoring, public engagement is needed to drive and build support for marine conservation. Public engagement can also be difficult due to by the complex scientific and technical language that sometimes shrouds the marine environment. It was therefore really important that the trainees learnt how to communicate such a hard to comprehend subject matter, in plain language for the general public. Hence, the work of the trainees involved educating, enthusing inspiring and communicating with people about the creatures of the sea and where they live. The engagement methods the trainees learnt and used were a mixture of delivering education workshops, presenting to local support and interest groups and running family events on the beach and shoreline. Over the course of three years we estimate that over 20,000 people attended the events delivered by the trainees. We also know from feedback that members of the public enjoyed and learnt from the events; a great contribution to marine conservation.

Throughout the programme the press and media have been very interested in the trainees' journey and the campaigns they have been involved in. Appearing on local and national TV and getting valuable airtime on news and educational programmes (e.g. BBC One's Countryfile Winter Diaries) started to become the 'norm'. In addition, the trainees have left lasting impressions via the articles they have written for newspapers, the presentations they have delivered and the social media posts they have made. The Wildlife Trusts' Irish Sea website (www.irishsea.org) has had a lot of content contributed by the trainees. This will continue to reach people long after the trainees have left their training placement and programme has finished.

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to you, Hayden and Jade for making Joel's birthday extra special. Please pass this on to Hayden and Jade. Everyone had an absolute blast, despite it being 9am and blowing a gale! Hopefully the experience has inspired his friends to go rock pooling again. I had actually never been to Heysham before but will definitely go back."

Parent emailing Cumbria Wildlife Trust 2016



Here's a very small sample of feedback from the public:



Whale & Dolphin Watch

- ❖ "Wonderful, informative & knowledgeable staff"
- ❖ "I spent an enjoyable 1 and a half hours and the leaders were good with their knowledge"

Rockpool Ramble

- ❖ "Excellent – knowledgeable and expert tutors – children totally fascinated. Brilliant!"
- ❖ "I mentioned at the beginning that my son has ASD and may wander off. I felt very comfortable that the leaders would help. They were very friendly and both of my children wanted to attach themselves to them. Thank you"



Seal Identification Workshop

- ❖ "Excellent delivery, passionate speaker – v. engaging. Both facilitators engaged with the group in the field in terms of further information and wildlife conversations."
- ❖ "Very friendly and interesting knowledge at the right level."
- ❖ "Really fun, amazing people, good seals!"
- ❖ "A lovely experience - we will be back - thank you!"

Guided Walks

- ❖ "A super event with lots of information. Would definitely attend another one."
- ❖ "Lots of fun had by all and kids loved the seals. 21month old impressed by the sand! Excellent."
- ❖ "Very informative walk and great guides. Very happy to see seals! If I lived in the area I would be very likely to visit again. Thanks for a great afternoon!"

Wading Bird Identification Workshop

- ❖ "I enjoyed learning about the different wading birds and ways to identify them. It was awesome."

Creatures of the Mud Event

- ❖ "I liked finding living creatures and looking at them, creatures I had not seen before, using microscopes and magnifying lenses."
- ❖ "I really enjoyed it all. Everyone was eager to join in. Good fun and informative."

Learnings from the Marine & Coastal Heritage Programme

Cumbria Wildlife Trust and The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside through delivering the Marine and Coastal Heritage Programme have developed a very successful model for creating 'work ready' individuals for the marine conservation sector by:

- ❖ Using targeted and robust recruitment and selection methods.
- ❖ Selecting graduates with career aspirations in marine conservation.
- ❖ Having a dedicated programme manager who can ensure a challenging and supportive environment.
- ❖ Tailoring the programme to meet the needs of the skills gap in the sector.
- ❖ Creating individual learning plans with the trainees.
- ❖ Testing the trainees skills at the beginning and end of their placement to demonstrate an increase in knowledge.
- ❖ Ensuring the trainees learn, review and practise skills learnt.
- ❖ Having fantastic project staff and partners who offer real work experience.

This is the second Skills for the Future programme completed by the Trusts and as a result, the placements structure, content and support have been finely tuned and achieved outstanding results. The relationship with project partners flourished over the years and many offered stimulating work experience to our trainees for which we are grateful. It is hoped these relationships will continue to remain strong and partnership working in other areas can be explored.

Through this programme, we also have a better understanding of AQA awards. We believe they may be better suited to individuals without other relevant level qualifications. However, we are pleased that we are now able to offer them to young people and volunteers in other areas of our work as a legacy of the programme.

Whilst this programme was not successful in getting non-graduates into employment in the marine conservation sector, it is still a belief that there are roles in this sector which can be completed by individuals without degree qualifications. To enable this to happen, raising awareness with career advisers and young people about the rewarding and fulfilling career opportunities available in conservation should be a priority for any natural heritage organisation.

Raising awareness about the vast array of marine life in the Irish Sea and the increasing pressures it faces has been a large element of the trainees work. This has allowed the Trusts to promote the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts' 'Living Seas' vision where marine life thrives from the depths of the oceans to the coastal shallows. This has been achieved by work closely with adults, families, local nature groups, schools, colleges and universities. The appetite, desire to learn and the appreciation shown by these groups for our marine life has been truly remarkable. Now the programme has come to an end, innovative ways to maintain this high level of engagement will need be explored to maintain public awareness of the marine environment.

In delivering this programme Cumbria Wildlife Trust in particular, has been able to gain valuable experience in delivering training specifically for younger people who are seeking a career in the conservation sector. The enthusiasm and energy the trainees have brought to the Trust as a whole has been of real benefit. It has had a positive impact across the organisation, not just on staff but also on our Trustees, supporters, partner organisations and members. Staff and project partners who have been involved in delivering training, have also developed skills and experiences and many have expressed their desire to continue to develop others.

The success of the past two Heritage Lottery Fund Skills for the Future programmes is recognised at every level within the Trust, right up to the Trustees. They appreciate that investing in training, especially for young people, is a vital way in which the Trust can deliver its overall aim of **protecting wildlife for the future**. There has therefore been a subtle change in our focus to explore how training placements can be offered to young people in a sustainable way and in making best use of grants that are available. For example, we have started to work with the University of Cumbria to provide a year of training and work experience for students on relevant degree courses and we have been able to offer conservation apprenticeships as part of externally funded projects and in partnership with others.

Vitality, this project has provided us with a proven track record on which we can build in the future. Of course funding will always be a limiting factor, but the will and enthusiasm that now exists within the Trust to build on this experience and seek all opportunities to further this area of our work. Providing the skills and training for young people to move into careers in the conservation sector is now a key consideration in our strategy going forward and a long term benefit of this programme.

“Thank you to one and all (HLF included) for the privilege of being present at the Orca Awards, i.e. a celebration of the 3 year HLF funded Marine Trainee programme. I found it a moving occasion for the reason that I regard the practice of nature conservation as akin to a relay race. During my career I had the opportunity of promoting many a nature conservation initiative and am, indeed, lucky to be able to continue to do so through many different nature conservation organisations on a voluntary basis, including of course Cumbria Wildlife Trust. The concept of a relay race requires, of course, fresh runners to whom to hand the relay. Hence it was tremendously impressive to see that the Marine Trainee programme has equipped a whole new batch of a dozen or so ‘runners’. Here’s wishing them every success in their careers – may they achieve much in these uncertain times; also a huge thank you to Cumbria Wildlife Trust in its successful liaison with HLF.”

Email **Stephen Ward**, member of Conservation Group, Cumbria Wildlife Trust – January 2017

We were delighted to be able to film all the trainees to make this video describing the benefit of running training programmes. To view this footage please go to:

<http://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/discover-learn/marine-and-coastal-heritage-programme>

With thanks to:

All who have contributed from NWIFCA, RSPB, Natural England, National Trust, Sea Watch Foundation, MARINELife, Solway Firth Partnership, Solway Coast AONB, Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, Kendal College, Blackpool & Fylde College, Furness College, University of Cumbria, Trustees, staff and volunteers of Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Staff and volunteers of The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and Merseyside, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, North Wales Wildlife Trust, Manx Wildlife Trust, Ulster Wildlife and all the training providers who have supported this programme.

With special thanks to:



▼ National Trust's Sandscale Haws National Nature Reserve (National Trust)





Cumbria
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Lancashire Wildlife Trust Limited, a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 00731548. Registered Charity No. 229325.

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